

Policy Brief: Parent Involvement

Parents have the basic right to be involved in their children's education

Parents hold a fundamental right to influence their children's education. As primary caregivers, they bear both moral and legal responsibility for raising their children, which extends to their education. Parents have a vested interest in ensuring that their children are receiving a high-quality education, and they trust schools create a positive learning environment to help their children reach their full potential.

Parents shouldn't just be kept informed—they should also have a say in how schools are run and what their children are learning. They deserve to be part of the conversation with teachers, principals, and education leaders to help shape their children's school experience.

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Why It Matters

Children do better in school when their parents or caretakers are involved

By teaching reading, writing, and math skills, they help shape the next generation—young people who will one day lead, work, and contribute to their communities. What students learn in school affects not just their own future, but the future of the entire community.

When parents are left out of their children's education, students often suffer. Research shows that when parents are involved, students do better in school, behave more positively, and are more likely to graduate. On the other hand, when parents are kept in the dark, it can lead to mistrust, frustration, and a lack of engagement.

Decisions about what children learn in school shouldn't be made by school leaders and policymakers alone. Parents know their children best, and they deserve a real say in shaping what happens in classrooms. Involving parents isn't just a courtesy—it's a key part of building schools that reflect the needs, values, and hopes of the families they serve.

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Why Should You Care?

When Parents Are Left in the Dark: How Lack of Transparency Hurts Families and Schools

Modern life puts a lot of pressure on families. More children are growing up in single-parent homes or in families where both parents work full time. Because of this, many parents find it hard to stay involved in their child's daily education. Even when they want to be more engaged, their busy schedules often get in the way. And yet, parents must fulfill the responsibilities they accept when they have children: to help shape them into fully functioning, civil adults capable of leading successful lives.

On the other hand, many parents don't really know what's happening in their local schools. Most of the information they get comes from occasional parent-teacher conferences, report cards or school newsletters. Without easy access to view the curriculum, textbooks, or lesson plans, it's hard for parents to make informed choices about their child's education.

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Why Should You Care?

Taxpayers and community members also have little insight into what their tax dollars are funding in public education. If families had clear, full access to what's being taught and how students are doing, they could push for better solutions and real improvements. While some school districts share information to meet legal requirements, they can make it hard for the average parent to truly understand what's going on.

As a result, many parents are caught off guard when new lessons, materials, or policies are introduced—especially if they're controversial. Instead of being part of the conversation early on, parents are left to react after decisions have already been made. This makes it harder to make sure schools are working in ways that reflect the values and expectations of families and the community.

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Our Position

Engaged parents make the best partners in improving education

Parents' involvement is key to student success and stronger schools. When schools are open and honest, and when parents and teachers work together, everyone benefits.

Parents are the first and most important educators in a child's life. They should have a meaningful say in what their children learn and experience at school. They also need to be playing their part in checking that their children know how to read and do math.

To build a better future for all students, we must listen to parents, respect their rights, and encourage their involvement in every part of the education system. Schools, school boards, and leaders must recognize that engaged parents are their greatest partners in improving education.

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What Must We Do?

A Clear Call for Parent-Teacher Partnership and Accountability

We believe every child's success depends on a strong, open partnership between parents and educators. That partnership must be built on transparency, communication, and a shared commitment to academic excellence and student well-being. To make this vision a reality, we support the following priorities:

1. Curriculum Transparency and Parental Access

Parents have a right to know what their children are being taught. Schools must provide clear, easy access to information about curriculum, materials, and school activities through:

- User-friendly school websites with up-to-date details on curriculum, testing, incident reports, and support services
- Regularly scheduled meetings with school staff
- Mailed updates about what students are learning, reading, and using in class

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WHAT MUST WE DO?

2. Parents' Right to Know and Consent

Parents should be fully informed and give consent before their children are exposed to anything that may conflict with their values or rights. This includes school library books. Schools must:

- Not expose young children to sexually explicit or age-inappropriate content in classrooms or school libraries
- Avoid unauthorized medical procedures or exams without clear parental approval first
- Never share a student's personal data with third parties without explicit parental consent

3. Parent Voice in Policy and Decision-Making

Local school boards should reflect the values and priorities of their communities—not political agendas. We support:

- School board accountability to parents and local families
- Involving parents in shaping educational policies, especially those related to curriculum and student well-being
- Respecting the diversity of family values while focusing on the shared goal of student success

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WHAT MUST WE DO?

4. Stronger Parent-Teacher Collaboration

Parents and teachers must work together—not in opposition. Schools should actively support and welcome parental involvement by:

- Encouraging frequent, open parent-teacher communication
- Inviting parents to school events and planning activities
- Sharing school performance data, including test scores and student outcomes

Everyone—parents, teachers, and school leaders—must be accountable for building a culture of trust, cooperation, and high expectations.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Parents matter. They need to establish a close partnership with educators

Parent voices, values, and involvement are essential to creating schools that truly serve students and communities. They need to back up the school when it comes to their child's behavior at school.

As the communities representative, school board members need to ensure that the right policies and outreach to parents are occurring.

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