

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Parent Engagement

The concept of parent engagement has been used to describe parent behavior, expectations, and activities that have the potential to promote children's learning and development. Here the term is used to refer to parents' support for their young children's learning fostered through relationships with child care and early education programs and providers, which includes parent engagement with programs, as well as their involvement in their children's learning activities.

This **Topic of Interest** highlights a recent review of research on the role of parent engagement in promoting young children's early mathematics and literacy skills and social-emotional learning. Other resources examine parent engagement in the context of Head Start programs, features of family-provider and family-program relationships that may influence parent engagement, and opportunities to strengthen parent engagement through state policies. This **Topic of Interest** includes journal articles, reports, data sets, and webinars from the *Research Connections* collection published since 2010.

Impact of Parent Engagement on Education of Young Children

A recent extensive literature review included 95 studies on the impact of parent engagement on young children's literacy, math, and socioemotional skills. The authors examine the effects of various aspects of parent engagement, including parent involvement at school and schools' and teachers' efforts to engage parents.

See literature review:

- Van Voorhis, F. L., Maier, M. F., Epstein, J., & Lloyd, C. M. (2013). *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8: A focus on literacy and math achievement outcomes and social-emotional skills*. New York: MDRC.



Parent Engagement in the Context of Head Start

Parent engagement is an important aspect of Head Start, and recent large-scale, nationally representative research efforts such as the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) and the Head Start Impact Study explore parent engagement in the context of Head Start programs. Researchers have used FACES data to present a picture of parent engagement with Head Start programs, as well as to investigate parents' involvement in learning activities to support their children's literacy skills. Likewise, other researchers use Head Start Impact Study data to examine the impact of Head Start programs on parents' involvement in their children's learning. Head Start researchers are also developing parent engagement concepts and measures appropriate to the diverse population the program serves, including a measure for use with Latino Head Start families.

Explore data sets:

- United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2014). *Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES): 2000 Cohort* [United States]. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].
- United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2015). *Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES): 2003 Cohort* [United States]. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].
- United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2018). *Head Start Impact Study (HSIS), 2002-2006* [United States]. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor].

See reports and papers:

- Aikens, N., Bandel, E., Akers, L., Lyskawa, J., & Jerald, J. (2014). *Family Voices: Piloting a new qualitative measure of family engagement for Head Start and Early Head Start staff and families: Final report and instrument package*. (OPRE Report 2014-28). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Gelber, A. M., & Isen, A. (2013). Children's schooling and parents' behavior: Evidence from the Head Start Impact Study. *Journal of Public Economics*, 101, 25-38.
- Hindman, A. H., Miller, A. L., Froyen, L. C., & Skibbe, L. E. (2012). A portrait of family involvement during Head Start: Nature, extent, and predictors. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27(4), 654-667.
- Hindman, A. H., & Morrison, F. J. (2011). Family involvement and educator outreach in Head Start: Nature, extent, and contributions to early literacy skills. *Elementary School Journal*, 111(3), 359-386.
- McWayne, C. M., Melzi, G., Schick, A. R., Kennedy, J., & Mundt, K. (2013). Defining family engagement among Latino Head Start parents: A mixed-methods measurement

development study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 28(3), 593-607.

- Miller, E. B., Farkas, G., Vandell, D., & Duncan, G. J. (2014). Do the effects of Head Start vary by parental preacademic stimulation? *Child Development*, 85(4), 1385-1400.

Family-Provider Relationships

Scholars have also examined the quality of relationships between families and early care and education providers. The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation of the U.S. Administration for Children and Families has sponsored efforts to conceptualize and measure family-provider relationships more broadly, as well as to establish connections between parent engagement and related concepts, such as family-sensitive caregiving, which emphasizes programs' and providers' responsiveness to and support for families. *Research Connections* also has a series of three webinars exploring these issues.

Access literature reviews and papers:

- Forry, N. D., Bromer, J., Chrisler, A., Rothenberg, L., Simkin, S., & Daneri, M. (2012). *Family-provider relationship quality: Review of conceptual and empirical literature of family-provider relationships*. (OPRE Report No. 2012-46). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Forry, N. D., Moodie, S., Rothenberg, L., & Simkin, S. (2011). *Family engagement and family-sensitive caregiving: Identifying common core elements and issues related to measurement*. (Issue Brief OPRE 2011-26b). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Forry, N. D., Moodie, S., Simkin, S., & Rothenberg, L. (2011). *Family-provider relationships: A multidisciplinary review of high quality practices and associations with family, child, and provider outcomes*. (Issue Brief OPRE 2011-26a). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Porter, T., & Bromer, J. (2013). *Family-provider partnerships: Examining alignment of early care and education professional performance standards, state competencies, and quality rating and improvement systems indicators in the context of research*. (OPRE Brief 2013-35). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Porter, T., Guzman, L., Kuhfeld, M., Caal, S., Rodrigues, K., Moodie, S., Chrisler, A., & et al. (2012). *Family-provider relationship quality: Review of existing measures of family-provider relationships*. (OPRE Report No. 2012-47). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

View webinars:

- Forry, N. D., Porter, T., Bromer, J., Lutton, A., & Ayoub, C. (2013). *Promising practices in professional development related to family-provider relationships*. Washington, DC: U.S.

- Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
- Margie, N. G., Beltangady, M., Gonzales, R., Beigel, K., Chun, L., Gomez, R., & Toussaint, M. (2013). *Federal perspectives on family-provider relationships in early childhood programs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
 - Margie, N. G., Bromer, J., Forry, N. D., Porter, T., & Gibson, V. (2011). *Family-provider relationships in early care and education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

Policy Implications: Strengthening Parent Engagement from Preschool to Grade 3

This evolving body of research has important implications for policymakers, and a recent report for policy audiences distills research findings, and describes promising models, state initiatives, and policy strategies to strengthen parent engagement from preschool to grade 3.

Read policy brief:

- Smith, S., Robbins, T., Stagman, S., & Mathur, D. (2013). *Parent engagement from preschool through grade 3: A guide for policymakers*. New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.

Additional Resources

Explore recent additions to the *Research Connections* collection on the topic of parent involvement.

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