



Parents Cooperative Preschool

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Why a Cooperative? Parent Involvement Increases Academic Success

We pride ourselves, at Parents Cooperative Preschool, in the level of parental involvement we incur each year. This involvement is truly what sets us apart from other schools in the area. Many studies have linked the level of parental involvement with the academic success of students. The author of one such study found that increased parental involvement was associated with positive development in communication, daily living, and motor skills for preschool children, especially boys. Children whose parents were more involved also showed greater mastery of basic school skills in this study of 708 four year olds attending public pre-kindergarten or 4K programs. Results were significant for both passive (parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and other forms of communication) and active (volunteering and class visits) parent involvement. The study's findings suggest that increased contact between home and school can contribute to school readiness for all children.

At Parents Cooperative Preschool, families are provided many opportunities for involvement, unique from any other school in the area. While we thrive and function on a daily basis through the active involvement of our families to volunteer time in the classrooms, we understand that many parents are unable to help in this way. Many of our parents work and are better able to be involved in other ways. We strive to reach a high level of involvement for every family at our school. Involvement looks different for each family. We believe the higher the level of involvement and investment in the school, the greater the return on student learning. This belief has been firmly supported by many research findings. Some examples of involvement for working families that we support would be: at home helper (cutting and prepping materials for our teachers), donating items or cooking food for special school events, fundraising, videotaping themselves reading books to show on our SmartBoards during class times or participating in projects sent home to encourage family collaboration.

What we do in the early years of education, will have lasting implications on a child's future. The findings of another study have indicated that higher frequencies of school participation among parents with children in preschool and kindergarten and greater participation in activities resulted in higher reading achievement, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer years in special education among children until age 14. The researchers conclude that parents are "crucial in helping to sustain the immediate positive effects of early intervention." They outline three implications of this study: 1) parent involvement should be an important part of early childhood programs; 2) beginning parent involvement activities during early childhood can provide a "strong foundation for family-school relations" that can ensure successful transitions to first grade; and 3) parent involvement can be a "protective factor in counteracting risk conditions that may lead to school underachievement." With these implications in mind, researchers stress that encouraging parent involvement is especially important in schools serving children from low-income families. These are just a few examples of research based studies linking parental involvement to academic success. All families want academic success for their child. Parents Cooperative Preschool provides an opportunity for success like no other in the area.

Marcon, R.A. (1999). Positive relationships between parent school involvement and public school inner-city preschoolers' development and academic performance. *School Psychology Review*, 28, 395-412.

Miedel, W. T., & Reynolds, A. J. (1999). Parent involvement in early intervention for disadvantaged children: Does it matter? *Journal of School Psychology*, 37 (4), 379-99.