

# Family Involvement

A family's involvement in their child's education is recognized as the single most important factor in school success and achievement (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999). Research has shown that not only does parental involvement increase academic achievement as reflected in higher test scores and graduation rates, it increases the likelihood that a child will pursue a higher education, and positively affects behavior and optimistic attitudes in students, according to the California Department Family Involvement of Education (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Building successful relationships between schools and families requires educators, administrators, school staff, and families to come together in a mutual climate of trust, shared responsibility and commitment to focus on the needs of the child. Some key components in this effort include:

- Sensitivity to diversity which includes cultural, socio-economic issues including poverty, language, and various physical, emotional/behavioral, developmental and learning disabilities.
- Providing vehicles for families to speak about their needs and interests, followed by careful listening and school responsiveness that can lead to offering a wide variety of responsive involvement opportunities for families.
- Valuing a variety of ways families can participate in their child's education including involvement at home coupled with communication and support to families.
- Parents need both training and access to current research-based best practices. Many parents find this training and support through DOE supported training programs and through local community based agencies like Hawaii Families as Allies (HFAA), Special Parent Information Network (SPIN), and the Learning Disability Association of Hawaii (LDAH).

*Schools that have been successful in enhancing family participation have strong commitment from the Principal with follow through from the entire school staff.*

*Family involvement through home-based activities provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to nurture the spirit of their child by building on their natural curiosity and learning interests.*

Henderson, A.T. & Berla, N. (1994). A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement. California Department of Education, National Committee for Citizens in Education. [On-line] Available: [http://www.cde.gov/board/policies/parent\\_involvement.html](http://www.cde.gov/board/policies/parent_involvement.html).

Center for Mental Health in Schools. (1999). A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Interventions Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning. Technical Assistance Sampler. [on-line] Available: <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

For references and more information go to <http://www.sig.hawaii.edu>

