



Denita Young  
County Extension Agent - FCS  
Rains County

Yesterday while visiting a RISD campus, I had the opportunity to see a motivational program geared toward getting the students excited and ready to take a section of the TAKS test the following day. Thanks to a great program put on by a teacher, they were having an awesome time preparing to take a test! Later that evening I began to think about how much time and effort our entire school district spends educating our children. As a former teacher, I've had the privilege of watching our teachers spend countless hours, often at their own expense, to make learning fun and meaningful for the students of Rains County. However, that is only part of the equation that equals a well-rounded educated child. That process must start at home with the parents and continue on a daily basis. Our children will only be as successful as the environment they experience daily, which is both home and school.

Stephen Green, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Specialist-Child Development for Texas AgriLife Extension Service wrote the following article based the results of years of research that reinforces our need to be actively involved in our children's lives.

### **Parental Involvement Contributes to Children's Academic Success**

Caregivers, teachers, peers, extended family, media, heredity, and the environment all contribute to a child's development; however, parents (if present) are the most powerful influence in the lives of their children. Parental involvement not only shapes development during the initial years of life, but also during the adolescent and adult years.

Given this important role, to what extent should parents be involved in their children's development? According to the National PTA, "Parental involvement is the participation of parents in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents are the primary influence in their children's lives." Parents have a tremendous responsibility to be involved with their children both inside and outside the home.

Decades of research have demonstrated that the more involved parents are in their children's development, the greater chance children have to succeed, particularly in their academic performance. Consistently, researchers have discovered that greater parental involvement in a child's education is associated with:

- higher student grades and test scores,
- better attendance,
- higher rates of homework completion,
- more positive student attitudes and behavior,
- higher graduation rates, and
- greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.

When parents are involved, children achieve more regardless of their socioeconomic level, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' educational level (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

As recent research on early brain development has shown, positive parental involvement needs to begin long before children enter into formal schooling arrangements. The early years of a child's life are critically important for healthy brain development, attachment formation, and language acquisition. When parents become actively involved with their children at an early age, they lay a foundation for learning that will benefit children for the rest of their lives.

### References

Henderson, A.T., & Mapp, K.L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

National PTA. Online at  
="http://www.pta.org/"MACROBUTTONHtmlResAnchor<http://www.pta.org>.

The information herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended or no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

