Improving Learning

Australian Council for Educational Research
Parent Engagement:
What can we learn from national assessments?

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Education Policy and Practice Research Program
Focus questions

• How do parents encourage their children’s learning before school?
• How do parents assist their children’s learning at school?
• What do parents think about their children’s schools?
• How do schools rate parents’ engagement?
• How do these relate to student achievement?
International studies

• Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)
  – Year 4 & Year 8 students
  – Every four years since 1995

• Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
  – Year 4 students
  – Every five years since 2001

• In 2015, the studies were held in a single sample of schools and students
What’s in TIMSS?

- Assessment in mathematics
- Assessment in science
- Context questionnaires
  - Student questionnaires
  - Home questionnaire (early learning survey)
  - Teacher questionnaires
  - School questionnaires
  - Curriculum questionnaires
Parents and early learning

Before your child began primary school, how often did you or someone else do literacy activities with him or her?

- **All Schools**
  - Often: 58%
  - Sometimes: 41%
  - Never or almost never: 1%

- **More Disadvantaged**
  - Often: 50%
  - Sometimes: 49%
  - Never or almost never: 1%

- **Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged**
  - Often: 58%
  - Sometimes: 41%
  - Never or almost never: 1%

- **More Affluent**
  - Often: 62%
  - Sometimes: 37%
  - Never or almost never: 0%
Parents and early learning

Before your child began primary school, how often did you or someone else do numeracy activities with him or her?

- **All Schools**: 57% Often, 41% Sometimes, 1% Never or almost never
- **More Disadvantaged**: 55% Often, 43% Sometimes, 2% Never or almost never
- **Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged**: 56% Often, 43% Sometimes, 1% Never or almost never
- **More Affluent**: 60% Often, 39% Sometimes, 1% Never or almost never
Parents and their children’s learning

How often do you or someone else at home do the following?

- Ask about homework: 50% (More Affluent), 56% (Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged), 64% (More Disadvantaged), 0% (All Schools)
- Help with homework: 18% (More Affluent), 21% (Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged), 26% (More Disadvantaged), 16% (All Schools)
- Review homework: 16% (More Affluent), 22% (Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged), 30% (More Disadvantaged), 30% (All Schools)
Parents’ views of their schools

The school does a good job including me in my child’s education

- **All Schools**: 53% Agree a lot, 37% Agree a little, 8% Disagree a little, 2% Disagree a lot
- **More Disadvantaged**: 51% Agree a lot, 37% Agree a little, 8% Disagree a little, 4% Disagree a lot
- **Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged**: 52% Agree a lot, 39% Agree a little, 7% Disagree a little, 2% Disagree a lot
- **More Affluent**: 54% Agree a lot, 35% Agree a little, 8% Disagree a little, 2% Disagree a lot
Parents’ views of their schools

The school does a good job informing me of my child’s progress

- **All schools**: 50% agree a lot, 36% agree a little, 11% disagree a little, 3% disagree a lot
- **More Disadvantaged**: 52% agree a lot, 33% agree a little, 10% disagree a little, 5% disagree a lot
- **Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged**: 50% agree a lot, 37% agree a little, 11% disagree a little, 3% disagree a lot
- **More Affluent**: 50% agree a lot, 36% agree a little, 11% disagree a little, 2% disagree a lot
Schools’ views of their parents

Parental involvement in school activities

- All Schools:
  - Very high: 9%
  - High: 26%
  - Medium: 43%
  - Low: 19%
  - Very low: 3%

- More Disadvantaged:
  - Very high: 4%
  - High: 8%
  - Medium: 39%
  - Low: 41%
  - Very low: 8%

- Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged:
  - Very high: 3%
  - High: 32%
  - Medium: 51%
  - Low: 14%
  - Very low: 1%

- More Affluent:
  - Very high: 18%
  - High: 36%
  - Medium: 40%
  - Low: 60%
Schools’ views of their parents

Parental support for student achievement

- **All Schools**
  - Very high: 11%
  - High: 36%
  - Medium: 43%
  - Low: 10%
  - Very low: 1%

- **More Disadvantaged**
  - Very high: 1%
  - High: 14%
  - Medium: 55%
  - Low: 28%
  - Very low: 3%

- **Neither More Affluent nor More Disadvantaged**
  - Very high: 5%
  - High: 40%
  - Medium: 50%
  - Low: 40%

- **More Affluent**
  - Very high: 24%
  - High: 49%
  - Medium: 27%
  - Low: 0%

- **Very low: None**
Links to achievement

How are mathematics and science achievement related to early literacy and numeracy activities?

Correlation between early literacy activities and maths = 0.15
Correlation between early numeracy activities and maths = 0.16

Correlation between early literacy activities and science = 0.21
Correlation between early numeracy activities and science = 0.17
Links to achievement

How are mathematics and science achievement related to parents’ perceptions of school performance?

Correlation between perceptions and maths = 0.11

Correlation between perceptions and science = 0.05
Links to achievement

How is mathematics achievement related to parental involvement in school activities?

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## Links to achievement

*How is science achievement related to parental involvement in school activities?*

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What does it all suggest?

• There are differences by socioeconomic status in engagement in literacy and numeracy activities in the early years

• Early activities in literacy and numeracy are associated with higher achievement in mathematics and science

• Parents in more affluent homes are less likely to ask their children about homework, or to help them or review their homework
What does it all suggest?

• There is no difference by socioeconomic status in how parents feel about how schools engage with them, but …

• Schools’ perceptions of engagement with parents differ greatly by socioeconomic status
What does it all suggest?

• There is only a small relationship between parents’ perceptions of their children’s schools and their children’s performance in mathematics or science, but …

• There is a stronger relationship between parent participation in school activities and their children’s achievement

• This may be related to the socioeconomic status of the school
For more information

• TIMSS and PIRLS Study Center
  Lynch School of Education, Boston College
  https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/

• Australian results
  Australian Council for Educational Research
  https://www.acer.org/timss