

The Enduring Importance of Parental Involvement

By [Lily Eskelsen García](#) and [Otha Thornton](#)

American Education Week (AEW) is celebrated each year during the last full week before Thanksgiving. Founded by the National Education Association (NEA) and The American Legion in 1921, with the U.S. Department of Education joining in 1922, AEW was created in response to 25 percent of World War I draftees being illiterate and nine percent deemed physically unfit to serve their country.

In its resolution, NEA called for “an educational week... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs.”

Today, American Education Week is co-sponsored by National PTA and 11 other national education organizations. The theme for this year’s celebration is Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility, a renewed call to all citizens—parents, teachers, education support professionals, elected officials, community leaders, and yes, students—to make our schools great for all Americans.

As part of the weeklong celebration, Tuesday, Nov. 18 has been designated “Parents Day” to encourage parents to visit their child’s school and spotlight the importance of family engagement in education.

While the nation and our public education system have changed a lot since 1921, one factor—family engagement—remains critical to student achievement. Ongoing research shows that family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents’ confidence in their children’s education. Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior.

Becoming active in a school’s parent group is an important way to increase involvement. Involvement also encompasses:

- Setting goals with children and fostering achievement of those goals;
- Accessing and using children’s academic scores to ensure they’re on track;
- Frequently viewing the parent portal (or whichever tool their school uses);
- Developing a relationship with children’s teachers and keeping in touch with them often; and
- Advocating for improvements in the school building and with local school boards and state and federal government to ensure schools have the resources they need to provide a world class education to every student.

The most significant type of involvement is what parents do at home. By monitoring, supporting and advocating, parents can be engaged in ways that ensure that their children have every opportunity for success.

As the leaders of the nation’s largest education and child advocacy associations, we have seen firsthand the positive impact of family engagement on student success and school improvement.

We encourage all parents to take an active role in their children's education on "Parents Day" and all year round.

Great schools are a basic right and our shared responsibility. To all parents and families, "thank you" for being part of the education team. Find out more on how parents and families can contribute to student success by visiting the [National Education Association](#) and the [National Parent Teacher Association](#).

We Also Recommend

Lily's Blackboard: [We Love it When Parents Are Involved in School](#)

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