



FACT SHEET

09 PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONS AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

1 CONTEXT

Parents' involvement in their child's school can not only foster academic success, but also his/her feeling of well-being, motivation, aspirations, and desire to stay in school, all the while having a positive impact on themselves and the child's teachers.

SOURCE

This fact sheet is a brief summary of the results presented in the following fascicle: NANHOU, Virginie, Hélène DESROSIERS and Luc BELLEAU (2013). "La collaboration parent-école au primaire: le point de vue des parents," (in French only), *Québec Longitudinal Study of Child Development (QLSCD 1998-2010) – From Birth to 12 Years of Age*, Institut de la statistique du Québec, Vol. 7, Fascicle 3 (in French only). <http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/education/prescolaire-primaire/collaboration-parent-ecole.html>

Note that the QLSCD has been following a cohort of children who were born in Québec in 1997-1998.

2 HIGHLIGHTS

Mother-teacher relationship

In general, mothers reported that their relationship with their child's teacher was fairly positive throughout the grade levels under study (kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 4, and 6).¹

Mother-teacher relations tended to be more positive among parents who had more involvement with their child's school or who reported that their school provided many opportunities to get involved in school activities.

Parents' involvement with their child's school

Parents' involvement varied with the type of activity and/or the age of the child.

- Whatever the age or grade level under study, communication with the child's teacher and a visit to the child's class were the most common school-related activities engaged in by the parents (90%).
- Between 50% and 70% of parents participated in a meeting at the school, according to the grade level. These were meetings with the principal or teacher, attending governing board or parents' committee meetings.
- Between 40% and 60% of parents had attended a school event in which their child had participated.
- A maximum of 10% of parents reported having helped out at the school, such as in the library or computer room, whatever the grade level under study.

The highest participation level of parents volunteering at school was observed in kindergarten, either in the classroom or on field trips (36%). The highest level of parents' involvement in fundraising was observed when the children were in Grade 1 (39%).

Nearly all parents had taken part in at least one activity at their child's school, even if their degree of involvement tended to decrease as the child advanced through the education system.

1. No data were available for Grades 3 and 5 of elementary school.



2 HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Parents' participation in a large number of school activities, namely 5 or more in the same school year, was more frequent among families:

- With a higher socioeconomic status
- With both biological parents living in the household
- In which the mother had a university degree
- In which the mother was Canadian by birth (only in kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2)
- In which the parents felt welcomed by the school or who reported that the school provided many opportunities to get involved in school activities.

In Grades 1 and 2 of elementary school, the academic performance of children was more likely to be reported as "Very good" by the parents when the latter had participated in a large number of school activities.

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3 OF NOTE

The positive association observed between parents' participation in school activities and their child's academic performance could in part be the translation of the effect of certain characteristics of the parents most involved in the school, since these were also commonly associated with academic performance.

The decrease in parents' involvement in the school as their child progressed through the education system is not necessarily a sign of disengagement on their part. Parental engagement can also be manifested elsewhere than at the school, such as monitoring homework, discussing school-related matters with the child, giving encouragement, etc.

INTERVENTION PATHS

A welcoming, friendly school provides opportunities for parents to get involved by taking into consideration their constraints and the needs of the school. The administration and other personnel implement strategies to create or develop a relationship of trust between the parents and teachers as well as the school in general, particularly among parents less likely to get involved.