**What Kinds of Parent Involvement Really Make a Difference**
**By Angel Harris & Keith Robinson**

**So what does boost student achievement? According to the authors, it's stage-setting. The analogy is to what a theater's behind-the-scenes workers do so actors can perform successfully in the show. Thus, a good performance can be characterized as a partnership between two critical components: (1) the actor embodying his or her role, & (2) the stage-setter creating & maintaining an environment that reinforces (or does not compromise) the actor's embodiment of the role. Likewise, many parents construct & manage the social environment around their children in a manner that creates the conditions in which academic success is possible.**

**The most effective parents set the stage for their children's academic success by the life space & messages they orchestrate:**

- ➢ **They provide a secure home & neighborhood environment so children don't have to worry about food & shelter & getting to & from school safely.**
- ➢ **They make strenuous efforts to get their children into good schools.**
- ➢ **They are supportive of academics, but also on non-school activities like ballet, piano lessons, sports, etc. Research has shown that learning how to play a musical instrument relates to higher academic achievement.**
- ➢ **Their support comes across as caring about children's overall success, not pressure & micromanaging to get an A in math. This can be conveyed indirectly, for example, by a desk rather than a TV in a child's bedroom, & lots of books & magazines in the home.**
- ➢ **They convey the critical importance of academic achievement to future options & life success.**
- ➢ **They show confidence in the child's intelligence & ability to do well in school, fostering a positive academic identity & a sense of responsibility to not let the family down.**

**The big point here is stage setting, not being super involved in school activities, that makes the difference. Stage setting requires that parents focus on only two factors: messages & life space. Thus, a busy parent with a demanding career can be a successful stage-setter with minimal direct involvement in his or her child's schooling. By not micromanaging students' homework & school activities, parents may produce more autonomous children who are better equipped to make their own way through the challenges of school life.**

**Studies show that parents of all Socio-Economic-Status levels have high hopes for their children's school success. What matters is how those hopes play out day to day. The authors suggest four possibilities:**

- ➔ **Parents don't convey the importance of education & don't provide an educationally supportive home environment - This usually produces low achievers.**

- ➔ **Parents don't convey the importance of education, but there is an educationally supportive home environment - This usually produces average achieving students.**
- ➔ **Parents convey the importance of education & create an educationally supportive home environment - This usually produces solid high achievers.**

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**In a nutshell, the stage setting done at home is just as important as what happens at school.**

- ➢ **Please get your kids to school & on time. There are so many issues involved with this. Kids fall behind & must use free time at school to get caught up.**
- ➢ **Please have your kids prepared to go to school - clean, fed, & rested.**
- ➢ **Please have your kids do their homework when homework is presented. Please prepare your kids for tests & state assessments.**
- ➢ **Home conversations dictate how your students perform & perceive school. When talking to kids after school, ask them about the positives of the school day as opposed to what negative things happened at school. It is never positive when you talk about the school or school personnel in a negative manner, especially in front of the child/children. Life is all about attitude.**
- ➢ **Teach your kids kindness! It starts at home. Kids need to learn at an early age that there are many kids that come to school with many different issues. It is called empathy!**
- ➢ **At the elementary level, we focus on learning - grades are secondary. That conversation about learning should take place at home. Learning does not take place when a child is not ready for school.**
- ➢ **Learning habits are created in elementary school. A student cannot press a magic button when they get into high school or college if those habits are not established in elementary school.**
- ➢ **Please take a hard look at television, phone, computer, & gaming time. All are convenient ways to occupy a child. Please monitor what your children are watching or hearing on these platforms.**
- ➢ **My dad always told me that "they can never take your education away from you". Most kids that leave high school today must get an education in some form or fashion. You will never regret putting your best efforts into your child's education during this period in their life.**

**Mr. K**