

# Mobilizing Schools, Parents And Communities For Kids' Education

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(NAPSA)—Parental involvement is the single most accurate predictor of a child's academic success, according to 30 years of ongoing research cited by the U.S. Dept. of Education. Yet, despite being one of the best investments that can be made in a child's education, parental involvement is still one of the most often overlooked.

The long-term effects of involvement in education are real, according to the U.S. Dept. of Education. When schools, parents and communities are involved, children get better grades and have higher test scores, graduate from high school at higher rates, are more likely to go on to higher education and have more positive attitudes about their future. And, when students succeed, their future is brighter. In fact, a 1998 study by the College Board showed that the median annual household income of a high school graduate was \$34,373 as compared to \$62,188 for a person with a college bachelor degree. That could mean a difference of more than \$1 million in earnings over a person's career.

Schools, parents, businesses and communities all have an important role to play in building a child's academic success. Following are a few ideas to get everyone started regardless of their formal education or how much money they have, started in every child's education beginning with pre-school and extending through high school:

## *Schools*

- Invite parents to meet teachers and other staff on the first day of school
- Invite parents to attend lunch at the school during the year
- Ask students to engage their parents and guardians in school activities
- Set up parent/teacher e-mail networks to create an open forum of communication about the activities of young people

## *Parents*

- Make sure your child is well-rested, well-fed and dressed appropriately for school
- Get involved (and stay involved) in your child's education by asking questions about assignments and classroom activities
- Attend children's extracurricular activities
- Stay in touch with your child's teachers so you're aware of



school activities and your child's progress

## *Businesses / Communities*

- Adopt-a-school and set up mentoring programs
- Donate goods and services to school(s) in your community
- Encourage employees to get involved in children's education

Another way people are getting involved in education is through First Day of School America. First Day is a nationwide grassroots initiative that provides vision, structure, resources and encouragement to mobilize schools, parents and communities to get involved in their children's education, starting with the first day of school each year. "It's a national movement that encourages and enhances family involvement in education throughout the year," said Terry Ehrich, president of First Day Foundation and creator of the First Day of School celebration concept. "The first day of school is the one day each year when it's simultaneously most important and easiest to build positive relationships and partnerships with parents. Schools across the country are embracing the idea because of its proven effectiveness."

American Express believes a quality education is one of the most critical factors on the road to long-term economic independence. That's why the company is a proud supporter of First Day of School America. In fact, many American Express employees and advisors are contributing to the success of the program by bringing the concept to teachers, school administrators and community leaders in towns and cities nationwide.

For additional information and/or to learn how to start First Day of School America initiatives in your community, visit the First Day Foundation Web site at [www.firstday.org](http://www.firstday.org) or call toll free (877) First Day.