

# **It Takes a Village to Educate a Child: Guiding Parents on How to Implement FCAT Strategies With Their Children During Home Learning**

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## **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement. This research further proposes to investigate the effects that reading comprehension workshops for parents will have on the level of their involvement. Moreover, results from the study will contribute to the establishment of effective structures of family involvement. The following research questions will guide the study: Is there an increase in parents' confidence in their abilities to help their child in school as a result of parent workshops? Will there be a gain in parents' understanding of FCAT strategies through the use of parent workshops? Will there be an improvement in students' test scores because of parental involvement in parent workshops?

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework guiding this study is the extensive literature on the involvement of family and its role in students' achievement. Although the literature supports the positive impact of parental involvement, there is a significant need to investigate the reasons for the deficiency of this type of involvement, as well as strategies for its enrichment. Research indicates that when parents are involved with their children's learning, academic performance and home learning efforts improve (Sanders & Epstein as cited in Biggs, 2001). Getting parents involved in a child's education has many benefits, which include greater retention of knowledge and higher FCAT scores. Currently, although the benefits of parental involvement may be abundant, the lack of such involvement is a phenomena that plagues urban schools all over the nation. "In an era of diminishing resources and increasing pressure for improved outcomes for our young people, the strengthening of family-community-school partnerships has become a hot topic" (Heleen, 1992, p. 5). Although much has been written with regard to the positive effect of family involvement in learning, there are several causes for the lack of it. Many parents are uneducated with regard to their role in education. They simply don't know what is expected of them or what is appropriate. For example, African American parents may believe that although they should monitor their child's education, they should not necessarily intervene (Hill & Craft, 2003). According to a survey of 42 urban schools that focused on parental involvement programs, the schools that had the most success with parent meetings had created programs that required in-depth participation from the parents (Heleen, 1992). Parental workshops are a great way of bringing families and schools together. Smalley and Reyes-Blanes (2001) found that when schools and parents work together toward the common goal of educating their children, "students move closer to, if not exceed, substantive educational goals" (p. 531).

## **Method**

This study involved parents of second, fourth, and fifth grade students in an urban elementary school. The Title I school has a student composition of over 70% African-American. The investigation utilized a one group pretest and posttest design measuring changes in parental involvement behaviors and its impact on the students' test scores. The instruments included a demographic questionnaire used to gather data pertaining to gender, income level, employment status, and number of children. Surveys were administered on a pre/post basis in order to

determine changes in parental perceptions regarding their efficacy in contributing to their childrens' education as well their knowledge of strategies associated with test taking and reading comprehension. Changes in students' reading achievement were measured on a pre/post basis with locally developed instruments.

### References

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