

Archived Information

Objective 1.5: Families and communities are fully involved with schools and school improvement efforts.

Our Role. Family involvement is critical to the systemic reform of schools. Thirty years of research has established a clear link between family involvement and student achievement. Parenting style, participation in their children's learning activities, and parents' expectations for their children have a stronger influence on student achievement than other family-related factors such as socioeconomic status. Additionally, research has shown that school policies, programs, and interventions can have a positive influence on increasing positive parent behaviors.

To help all children achieve high standards and to improve schools, the Department of Education supports grants in Title I, Even Start, Special Education, Bilingual, Migrant, Postsecondary Education, and Parent Information Resource Centers programs that further family involvement in education. The current Title I legislation, for example, (a) supports parent involvement by requiring local education agencies and schools to have a parent policy that integrates parent involvement with programs and the school improvement plan; and (b) requires the development of family/school compacts, written agreements that describe the shared responsibilities among schools, families, and other partners in improving student achievement.

The Department of Education has also initiated a unique public-private partnership, the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, which brings together more than 7,100 national, state, and local partners to implement nationwide activities in support of the Education Department's objectives: 1) improving reading in the early grades; 2) encouraging greater outreach to families as children go back to school; 3) helping middle and high school students and their families think about postsecondary school early; and 4) providing positive extended learning opportunities to children.

Our Performance

How We Measure. Performance indicators for Objective 1.5 focus on measuring family involvement in education from the vantage point of both the parent and child. Research has shown that parent involvement can make a positive difference in students' success in school when parents and other family members get involved in key areas such as homework, attending school activities, getting involved in volunteer activities and committees, and after-school learning.

Indicator 1.5.a. The percentage of students who come to school ready to learn and with their homework completed, as rated by their teachers, will increase substantially during the next five years, especially among children from low-income families.

Assessment of Progress. Recent data suggest that 82 percent of elementary school students, 69 percent of middle school students, and 58 percent of high school students completed their homework for school year 1999-2000. The data also show that the higher the poverty level of the students, the less likely the student is to complete their homework.

Figure 1.5.a.1

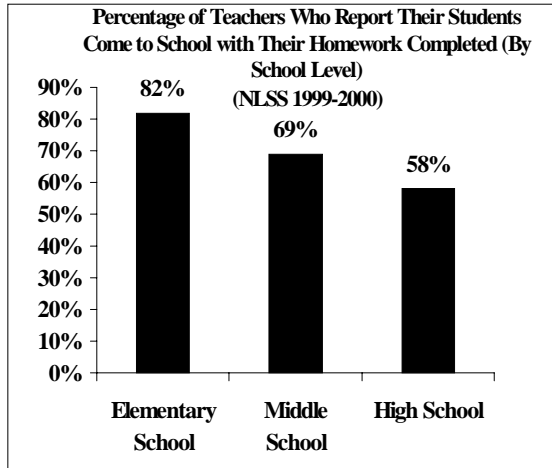
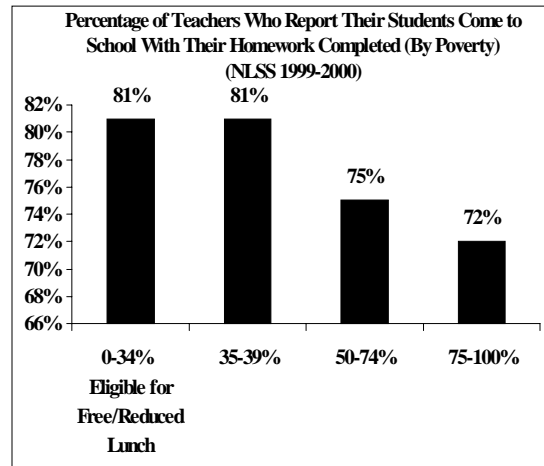


Figure 1.5.a.2

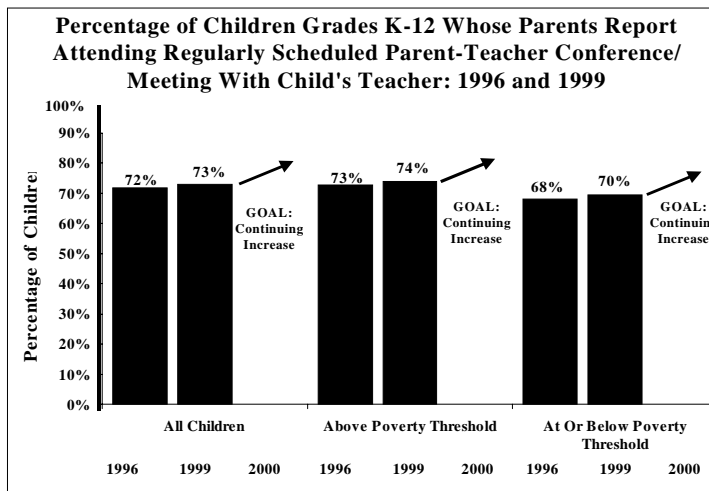


Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Schools (NLSS) unpublished tabulations (2000). Frequency: Annual. Next Update: 2001. Validation procedure: Data are validated by NCES review procedures and NCES Statistical Standards. Limitations of data and planned improvements: None noted.

Indicator 1.5.b. The percentage of parents who meet with teachers about their children’s learning will show improvement, and the gap in participation in parent-teacher conferences between high- and low-poverty schools will close.

Assessment of Progress. Achievement of the goal is likely. Nearly 70 percent of members of families at or below the poverty threshold reported attending parent-teacher conferences in 1999. There was no significant change in the percent of parents attending parent-teacher conferences across income levels. The data for 2000 are not available.

Figure 1.5.b.1



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys, 1996 and 1999. Frequency: Every four years. Next Update: 2003. Validation procedure: Data validated by NCES review procedures and NCES Statistical Standards. Limitations of data and planned improvements: No known limitations.

Indicator 1.5.c. The percentage of parents who say that the school actively encourages and facilitates family involvement will increase.

Assessment of Progress. There was essentially no change in the percentage of parents reporting that schools actively encouraged family involvement between 1996 and 1999. In 1999, 61 percent of parents said that the school made them aware of chances to volunteer. In 1996, 38 percent of parents reported that their school provided workshops, materials, or advice about how to help children at home; in 1999, the figure increased slightly to 43 percent. In 1999, 73 percent of parents said their school included parents on committees or other decision-making groups. Other measures of parental involvement remain unchanged. The data for 2000 are not available.

Figure 1.5.c.1

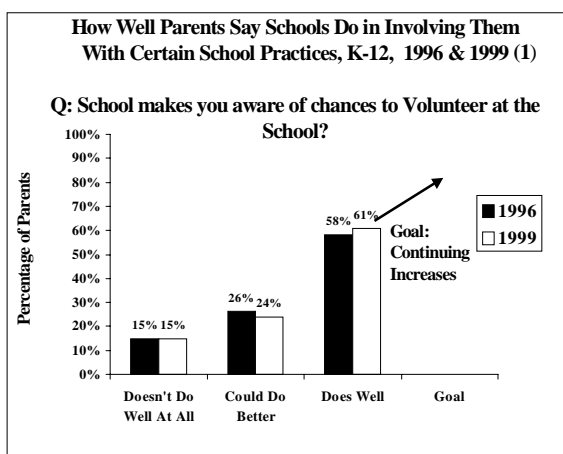


Figure 1.5.c.2

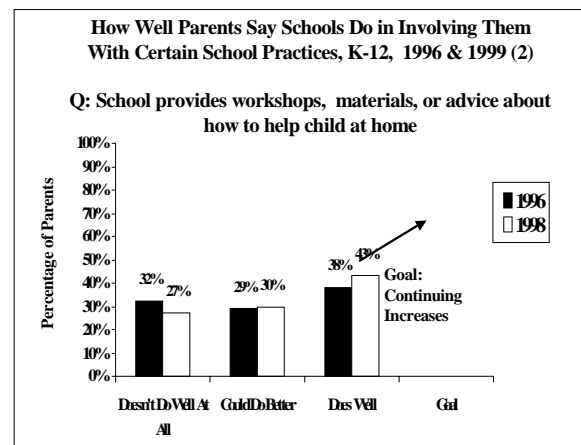
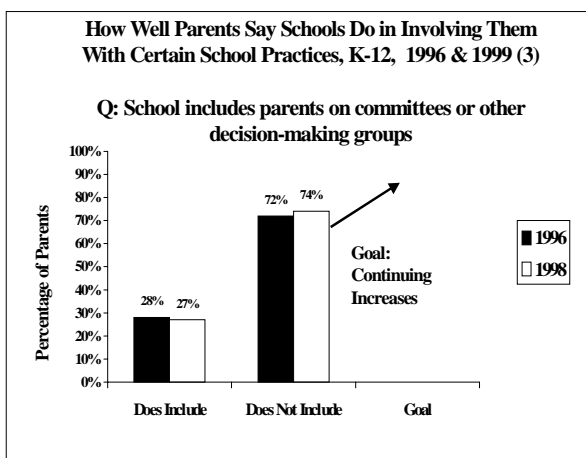


Figure. 1.5.c.3

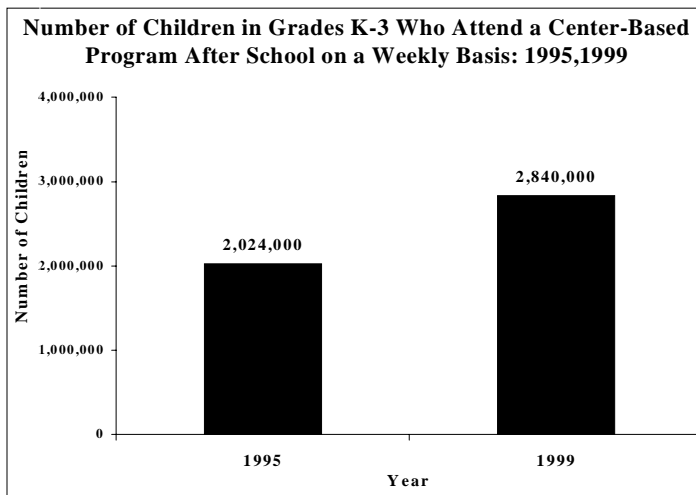


Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Household Education Survey, spring 1996 and spring 1999. *Frequency:* Every four years. *Next Update:* 2003. **Validation procedure:** Data verified by NCES, according to NCES Statistical Standards. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** No major limitations.

Indicator 1.5.d. By 2002, the number of school-age children participating in after-school programs will double, from 1.7 million to 3.4 million children.

Assessment of Progress. Achievement of the goal is likely. The 1995 and 1999 data seem to reflect a positive trend toward the goal. The number of school-age children attending a center-based out-of-school program increased from 2,024,000 in 1996 to 2,840,000 in 1999. High-quality after-school programs with goal setting, low staff-student ratios, strong family involvement, and linkage with classroom instruction help ensure children's continuous growth, development, and learning through the preadolescent and adolescent school years (Safe and Smart, 2000). While a number of communities are already developing such after-school programs, they are not widespread, particularly in the public schools. In 1998, there were 28 million school-aged children with parents in the workforce. According to the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES), 13 percent of the nation's primary school children (kindergarten through third grade) attended center-based after-school programs on a weekly basis. The data for 2000 are not available.

Figure 1.5.d.1



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Surveys, 1995 and 1999. *Frequency:* Every four years. *Next Update:* 2002. **Validation procedure:** The last major study of after-school programs used 1991 data. Data from the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey were used by NCES to determine school-based after-school programs in 1996. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** The participation data from the 1995 National Household Education Surveys only cover children in grades K-3. This survey will be followed up in 2002.