Introduction

Parental involvement has been defined as "any interaction between a parent and child that may contribute to the child's development or direct parent participation with a child's school in the interest of the child" (Reynolds, 1992). The most basic reason to involve parents in education is student success.

Parental involvement is necessary from Kindergarten through grade 12. We need to have the best schools and the best parental involvement so we can help all children. Parental involvement has been shown to play a part in fostering children's cognitive growth and academic success. Direct involvement in children's learning and availability of learning resources at home all appear to influence academic success and cognitive growth. Research says that when parents are a part of their child's education, the student is more likely to stay in school and is likely to achieve. Parents should come to know and realize that they are important not only as parents for their children, but as a part of reform efforts in their children's and other children's schools (Cooper & Jackson, 1989). Also, increased parental involvement was associated with lower incidence of grade retention and less frequent school mobility. Involvement of parents also lowered the rates of special education placements.

Until parents appreciate their own personal influence on the education of their children, just listing instructional practices will do very little to expand parental involvement. Parents want to help, and parents want their children to succeed. If they fail to help their children develop good reading habits, it indicates that they are not convinced that their personal efforts make a difference with their children. Parental involvement helps children learn more effectively.

The Commission on Reading found that parents, not the schools, laid the foundation for a child's learning to read. This report also placed on the parents an obligation to support their children's continued growth as readers. The parents and educators were asked to cooperatively participate in creating a literate society (Anderson, 1985).

Parents have great potential; they stimulate their child's adult intelligence and lay the foundation for formal reading instruction. Extensive research demonstrates that programs of parental involvement in education significantly increase the development and achievement of children (Becher, 1982).

The reason I chose this topic for my report is during my 22 years of teaching, 14 years have been spent in the remedial department and 8 years have been spent in the regular classroom from kindergarten through ninth grade. I have taught three remedial classes: remedial reading, remedial Language Arts and remedial math. In one remedial reading class I taught a sixteen-year-old student who did not know simple Dolch words like "me," "she," "it," and "her." I have often asked myself, "What are the parents doing? Are they aware of their children's abilities? Are they helping at home at all?" This report will provide long-awaited answers to my questions.

Presently, 60% of the City of St. Louis regular classrooms K-5 are in dire need of remedial reading or special educational classes. The average classroom...

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