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The Importance of Family Engagement in Early Childhood

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Sometimes parents can get so wrapped up in trying to find the perfect preschool or program for their little one that it is easy to forget that the single most important factor in a child's education is family involvement. While this is a well-known fact, we often overlook just how large an impact engagement with our kids makes on their academic and social development. It is so easy to get lost in the daily grind and to forget about the quality time we spend with our kids. Keep reading to find out just how important role parents play upon a child's life, and what activities are best to support their early education.

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Family Experiences Impacts a Child's Future Performance in School

It is widely published that children who start life in poverty or high-stress situations have more difficulty in school, and often begin school behind their less disadvantaged peers. It is obvious that early engagement with children directly affects their future performance in school in a variety of ways.

Long before a child begins school, they are first exposed to the beliefs, traditions, and culture of their parents. Parents begin social development by talking to children and hopefully reading to them in an effort to teach children language skills, how to socialize, and to follow rules. While this is very fundamental, parents are also in the unique position to prime their children for academic learning, and can help lay the foundation for school and beyond.

By engaging and spending quality time getting to know children, and teaching them about the world around them, parents can identify and address any developmental or intellectual delays that may pop up. In contrast, early engagement can also identify giftedness and a child's strengths and interests. Parents are the number one authority regarding their own child, and are in the best position to address both strengths and weaknesses in order to support healthy development.

How Parents Can Get More Involved

Fortunately, parents don't have to go broke trying to engage with their children. It is entirely possible to foster a free early year's education. Here are some ideas to help get more involved with your child's education"

Have a conversation - Sometimes the best learning takes place through the stories we tell. Make any moment a learning experience, and take full advantage of the questions your little learners ask on a daily basis. If you're driving with your child in the evening or early morning, talk about the moon and stars outside. Tell stories about your childhood. Explain why rules exist, or why some things are the way they are. Through conversation, children can learn a world of information that they can expand upon in the future.

Be present - Even while your children are playing video games or apps on a

smartphone or tablet, pay attention from time to time and play with them. Ask them about what they're doing, and help them if they struggle. Offer to play [fun learning games](#) or watch [educational videos](#). You can even set aside time to watch a movie or favorite TV show together. Ask questions about what they saw or liked about what you did together to help quiz their comprehension skills.

One-on-one practice - On rainy days or lazy weekends, sit down and [practice academic skills](#) with your child. This can take the form of helping them through [free printable worksheets](#), or creating art with construction paper and cotton balls. Practice teaching sight words or counting with flashcards, and help them write letters with dry erase markers or sidewalk chalk. These activities don't have to take long, and can help ready your child for future learning. The best part is that you'll still be spending quality time with your child, which is something your child will remember for the rest of his/her life.

One of the most important factors in a child's life is how their parent interacts with them during their early years. As you can see, it is simple to engage with your child in a way that won't take up all of your time, and is also a free. By utilizing the above tips, it is possible to achieve a free early year's education that will help your child build the skills that he/she will use for a lifetime.

