

Family-school partnerships: from action research to sustainable good practice

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Our central input to Australia's education processes is to raise awareness of research findings on the importance of parent engagement and sustainable partnerships between families, schools and their wider community. Because resulting policy statements and directives are alone insufficient to achieve consistent and effective practice, from 2005-2006 we have lead action research to:

- Explore the dynamics of parent engagement in a variety of school communities and how the extent, range and impact of these positive behaviours can be improved;
- Explore in some 300 schools the processes of building effective partnerships between families, schools and their communities with a focus on well-being and coping skills in students, families and the community – providing a supportive and nurturing environment that contributes to students' sense of belonging, self-worth and optimism for the future: essential underpinning for effective learning;
- Work with family-school action teams in 61 case-study schools to explore their experiences and learning in partnership initiatives that reflect the context and dynamics of their diverse communities and circumstances.

The results inform strategies to strengthen these partnerships and to assist an exponentially expanding range of other school communities to establish and sustain effective partnerships as a fundamental element of good education practice.