

PARENTS 2017: UNLEASHING THEIR POWER AND POTENTIAL BY LEARNING HEROS.

A national study reports that parents are far more optimistic about their children's academic successes than data indicates they should be. The study also includes recommendations for helping parents with such areas as learning goals, financing college, life skills, parent-teacher communication, and learning tools.

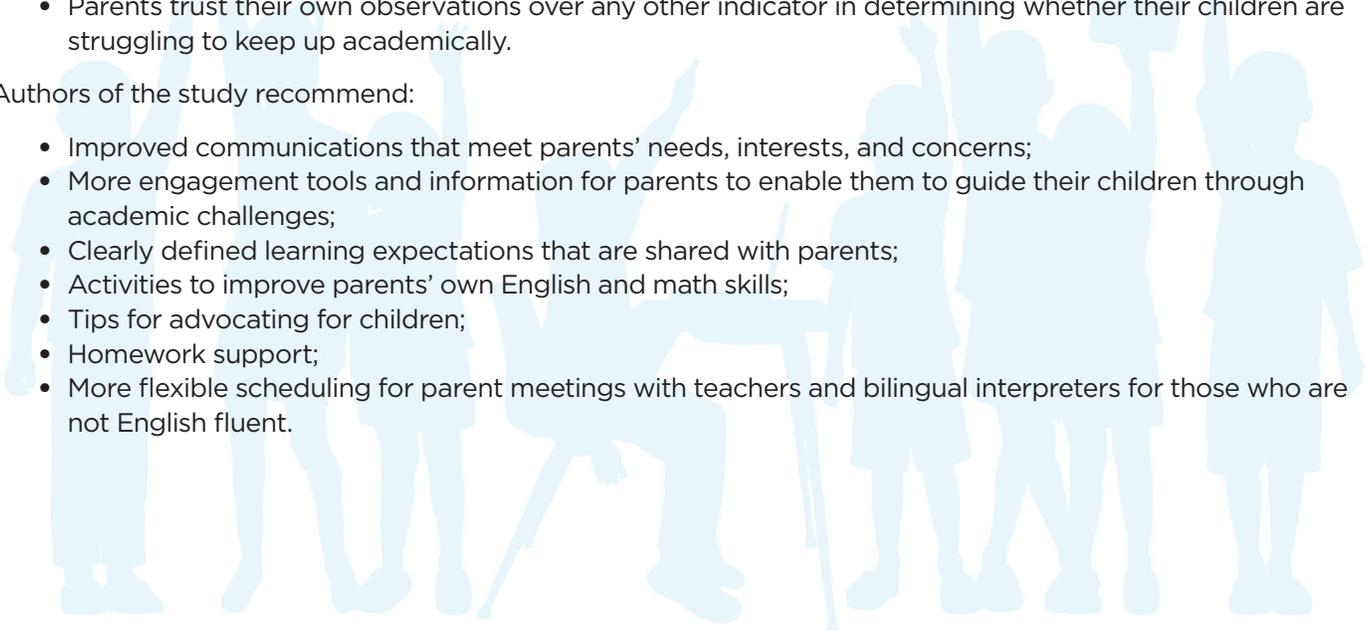
Learning Heroes, whose mission is to enable parents to best support their children's educational success, commissioned a national survey to study parents' attitudes, beliefs and goals about their children and academic progress. The study, conducted in collaboration with Univision Communications and in partnership with the National PTA, National Urban League, NCLR, and UNCF (United Negro College Fund), also includes recommendations for helping parents with such areas as learning goals, financing college, life skills, parent-teacher communication, and learning tools.

A key finding of the research shows that parents are far more optimistic about their children's academic successes than data indicates they should be. For instance, 90 percent of parents believe their child is performing at or above grade level in math and reading, despite NAEP data that shows only one in three 8th graders are proficient in math and reading. The study also identifies other disconnects, including the fact that most parents surveyed place their children's emotional and social well-being and happiness above their academic performance without recognizing the role that academic success plays in a child's overall emotional and social health. Also, when parents think about their children today, they prioritize happiness above education. But when they imagine their happiness and well-being as an adult, it all changes and education becomes a top priority.

Other findings:

- Most parents accept primary responsibility for their younger children's success, but shift that responsibility to their children by the time they reach middle school;
- Most parents believe report card grades provide a more accurate picture of their child's achievement than standardized state tests;
- Parents want to be more involved in their children's education;
- Most parents say that they are lacking information and resources for greater engagement;
- There is a gap between activities educators believed were important to support family engagement and the degree to which those activities were taking place;
- Parents trust their own observations over any other indicator in determining whether their children are struggling to keep up academically.

Authors of the study recommend:

- Improved communications that meet parents' needs, interests, and concerns;
 - More engagement tools and information for parents to enable them to guide their children through academic challenges;
 - Clearly defined learning expectations that are shared with parents;
 - Activities to improve parents' own English and math skills;
 - Tips for advocating for children;
 - Homework support;
 - More flexible scheduling for parent meetings with teachers and bilingual interpreters for those who are not English fluent.
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Learning Heroes with Univision Communications and the National PTA created the Readiness Roadmap, which offers steps for assisting parents with learning goals, financing college, life skills, parent-teacher communication, and learning tools. The steps in the map include:

- Academic expectations by grade-level, including videos that show parents what specific skills look like and how they can help at home;
- Tips for how to save for and pay for college;
- Information and resources for supporting children with acquiring skills needed for success in life;
- Conversation guides to maximize parent-teacher conferences and discussions;
- Games, activities, and videos from trusted organizations to meet children's individual needs.

Learning Heroes. (August 2017). "Parents 2017: Unleashing their Power and Potential." Survey Report. https://r50gh2sslic2mww8s3uvjq1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LH_ParentsReport2017_20170719_MasterScreen_SinglePages_AN.pdf



Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.