

## ***Benefits of Improving Engagement in Education***

***Family engagement has become a hot topic in the field of education. Everyone from researchers to schools have been increasing efforts to get families involved to help students reap the benefits. LivingTree was designed by social media innovators to create a private social network for schools that is used to connect families and students with teachers, schools, and organizations in the context of K-12 education. More information about this innovative family engagement education technology can be found at [livingtree.com](http://livingtree.com).***

***Increasingly, schools are recognizing the importance of family engagement. School districts in Nashville, Denver, and other cities around the country have created positions with the purpose of improving parent involvement in schools. A growing number of states are directing schools to implement policies to improve parental involvement and engage families in schools.***

***Educational associations, researchers, and policy makers have taken notice of the evidence that supports the idea that when parents are involved in schools, students, schools, and families benefit. The National Education Association (NEA) has issued policy statements about the importance of partnerships between parents, families, and communities in the education of children.***

## ***How Family Engagement Helps Students***

***The NEA and school districts are encouraging family involvement for good reason. There is abundant evidence that partnerships between parents, students, schools, and communities increase student achievement. The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) released a report entitled, "A New Wave of Evidence," which synthesized 51 studies about the effect of parent involvement on student learning, which were collected over a decade.***

***The SEDL found that students with involved parents reaped a range of benefits, regardless of economic status and background. The studies showed that students earned better grades in class, had higher average test scores, enrolled in higher level programs, and attended school more regularly, when parents were involved at school. In addition, these kids tended to have better behavior, social skills, adapted better to school, and were more likely to graduate and continue their education beyond high school.***

***The National Education Association reported similar findings. NEA research shows that partnerships between home and school result in higher grades, improved student attendance, and increase the likelihood that students will remain in school longer and enroll in higher level programs, such as advanced, Honors, and AP classes, and go on to college.***

***It isn't just students that benefit. Involvement by parents helps the entire school improve. There is overall school improvement, particularly for low performing schools, as parent engagement increases. This is true for schools at all levels, from the elementary through the secondary levels.***

***Schools and communities are beginning to understand that it is in everyone's interest to help kids get the best quality education possible. Schools and districts throughout the country are creating positions to help engage parents and implementing technologies designed to connect students, parents, teachers, and schools with the common purpose of increasing student success.***

***Family engagement educational technology is being used to overcome the barriers of engaging families in education. Schools and districts are using a range of methods to accomplish this goal, from email and texting to using a family engagement app and creating a private social network for schools, teachers, students, parents, and communities to collaborate and communicate.***