

# The Stats Speak—Parent Involvement Stats

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It might seem like teens don't pay attention to what parents say, but research and statistics show that parents have a lot of influence over the decisions teens make about education and the future. In fact, 76% of students say their parents have the greatest amount of influence on their "educational direction," whereas only 24% say the same about teachers. When parents are involved, students are more likely to attend school regularly, earn higher grades, graduate, and go on to post-secondary education.

## The stats speak: what are parents saying?

**Let's Talk Science (a national, charitable organization) did a survey about "parental attitudes and understanding of skills and careers" related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM):**

- 51% of parents surveyed say they talk with their kids about career goals.
- 57% of parents surveyed say they talk with their kids about educational goals.
- Three-quarters of parents surveyed say it is important for schools to discuss career goals with students.
- 53% of parents surveyed say their current jobs are very or somewhat related to STEM.

## What parents believe about the value of math:

- 69% of parents believe math prepares teens for critical thinking.
- 76% of parents believe math prepares teens to be innovators and entrepreneurs.
- 68% of parents believe math prepares teens to be global problem-solvers.
- 46% of parents would improve math and science education if given the opportunity.

## Who should take math and science past grade 10, according to parents:

- 37% of parents asked say students who want careers in those fields.
- 29% of parents asked say students going to university.
- 22% of parents asked say students going to college.
- 10% of parents asked say students starting apprenticeships.

At first glance, this might look like a jumble of numbers, but when combined with other information, stats speak to us by telling a story about what we do and how we do it.

## How do these stats speak to experts?

The report's authors (see **Report** below) encourage parents to use their influence to shape and support teens' decisions about taking math.

Three-quarters of parents said learning about math and science is very important for today's youth, and almost as many agreed on how important it is for students to take these courses until the end of high school. The data show that Canadian parents appreciate the value of

Research provided by Let's Talk Science (<http://www.letstalkscience.ca/>)



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math. However, even though parents appreciate it, they don't always follow up by, for example, encouraging teens to take optional as well as mandatory math courses.

## Next steps include:

- Continuing to be involved in teens' education throughout high school,
- Supporting and encouraging teen's interests and abilities, and
- Encouraging teens to take math seriously.

## The report (see Report below) also suggests “some tough questions” parents can ask themselves:

- Are parents “equipped” to support their children in making choices that keep career opportunities open?
- Do they talk — and listen — to their children enough and in the most effective ways about those choices?
- Do parents understand the changing nature of work that is related to STEM subjects such as math?
- **Report.** <http://www.letstalkscience.ca/Portals/0/Documents/RPS/Spotlight/LTS-Exploring-parental-influence-EN.pdf>. “**Let’s Talk Science. Spotlight on science learning exploring parental influence: shaping teen decisions regarding science education.**”

## Learn more about parental involvement

- **Report.** <http://www.letstalkscience.ca/Portals/0/Documents/RPS/Spotlight/LTS-Exploring-parental-influence-EN.pdf>. “**Let’s Talk Science. Spotlight on science learning exploring parental influence: shaping teen decisions regarding science education.**” Bonnie Schmidt.
- **Website.** [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html) Council of Ontario Directors of Education.
- **Website.** <http://www.letstalkscience.ca/research-publications/spotlight-on-science-learning>. Bonnie Schmidt.
- **Book.** *Breaking the Good Mom Myth; Honey, I Wrecked the Kids; Ain't Misbehavin.'* Alyson Schafe.
- Research. W. Jeynes. *Parental involvement and academic success.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- **Fact Sheet.** “**Help your child succeed in math: for parents of students in middle school.**” [http://www.peelschools.org/Documents/15.%20Help%20your%20child%20succeed%20in%20math%20-%20\(M\).pdf](http://www.peelschools.org/Documents/15.%20Help%20your%20child%20succeed%20in%20math%20-%20(M).pdf).
- **Article.** “**Supporting Your Child in Middle School Math.**” <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/math/math-tips-for-parents/middle-school-math/>. Diana Goldberg.

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