

**Webcasts for Educators**  
**Student Achievement Division**

**Viewer's Guide**

**Co-producing Learning:  
The Family Path**

**Multimedia resource for professional learning**

reach every student



On this DVD you will find a Print and Video Resources folder which contains WMV files for the videos, this Viewer's Guide (PDF), Organizers #1–#3 and resources from the ministry's Parent Engagement Office (see page 18).

To order the multi-media package  
**Co-producing Learning: The Family Path**

Contact ServiceOntario  
416-326-5300 or 1-800-668-9938  
<http://www.publications.serviceontario.ca/ecom>

The video segments and related resources are also accessible online at [www.curriculum.org/secretariat/coproducing/](http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/coproducing/)

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## Overview

*Co-producing Learning: The Family Path* explores the potential of home-community-school collaborations to improve student learning. And it does so on several different fronts:

- It features Ken Leithwood's overview of the extensive research that he and others have done on why engaging families and communities in education is so important.
- It outlines the key principles of the Scholars Program, an after-school family engagement program, now being piloted in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
- It shares the discussion and commentary of the leadership team that is supporting the Scholars Program in Hamilton and includes reflections and testimonials of participating parents, teachers and community members.
- It provides a look at the kinds of benefits the students involved in home-school collaborations are reaping by way of new confidence, new skills and new insight into how they learn best.

On the one hand, *Co-producing Learning: The Family Path* is for educational leaders who seek ways to maximize their influence on student learning; on the other hand, it is for everyone who is interested in making public education systems as relevant, engaging, supportive and inspiring for students as they can be.

Experience and research tell us that parents who have confidence in themselves, in their children and in their school can make a difference in their children's learning and achievement. When parents hold high expectations for their children – and have concrete information on how to help them – everyone benefits.

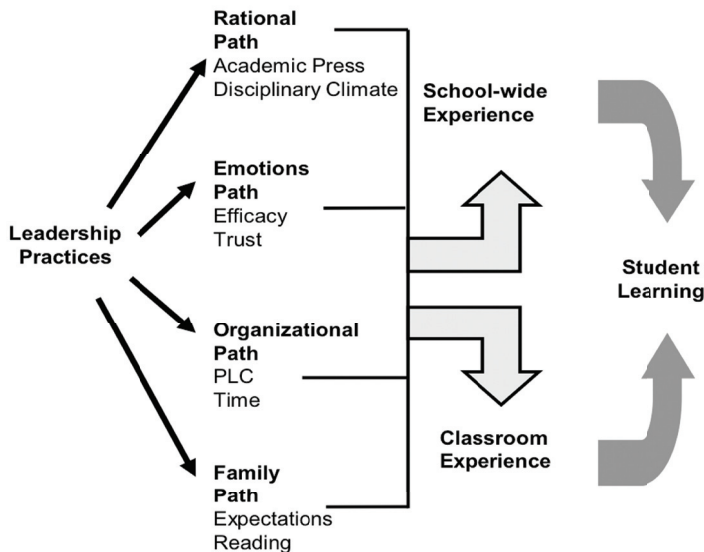
Mary Jean Gallagher  
Assistant Deputy Minister

## A Note on the Family Path

The notion of the family path comes from a theory of action for educational leaders developed by Ken Leithwood and his colleagues. The theory proposes that a leader's influence travels along four paths – the Rational, Emotional, Organizational and Family paths. Each path is populated by different variables, or “things educators do in schools”, some with greater and some with lesser known empirical effects on student learning. “Your job as an instructional leader,” Leithwood says in a recent address to Ontario principals, “depends on picking a variable on one or more of these paths and trying to make it better.”

The following chart shows the four paths and the most powerful variables for each according to research evidence.

### Organizer #1 - School Leaders' Influences on Student Learning: The Four Paths



This diagram is reproduced with permission from Leithwood, Anderson, Mascall & Strauss, 2010

The *Rational Path* variables are about the “technical core” of schooling – curriculum, teaching and learning. At the classroom level, the general quality of teaching, using reciprocal teaching strategies, providing students with immediate and informative feedback, paying attention to teacher-student relationships and classroom management are all variables which impact student learning. At the school level, two stand out in the research as having the greatest impact on student learning – academic press (setting high but achievable school goals and classroom standards) and disciplinary climate.

The *Emotional Path* variables relate to teachers’ feelings about their work. More than 90 empirical studies of the impact of teachers’ emotions on classroom practice suggest that leaders should pay more attention to such variables as teachers’ sense of collective or professional efficacy and trust in colleagues, students, and parents, for these are strong predictors of student achievement (across background, prior achievement, race and gender).

Variables on the *Organisational Path* are often not given much thought until they malfunction. At minimum, the research suggests, a school’s infrastructure should not prevent staff and students from making best use of their capacities, while at best, school infrastructures should magnify them. One of the more powerful (and fully researched) variables is protection of instructional time.

Variables on the *Family Path* relate to factors outside the school which, research suggests, account for as much as 50 per cent of the variation in student achievement – making it evident that influencing variables on the Family Path is a “high leverage” option for school leaders. Among the most significant family path variables are reading with one’s child and communicating high but realizable academic and occupational aspirations.

Based on his own research and evidence gathered from the international research community (e.g., Hattie, 2009), Professor Leithwood states unequivocally that “half of the achievement we’re responsible for as educators happens out there, so if we can do something out there to encourage more productive learning conditions, we can hit some home runs!”

To learn more about Ken Leithwood’s theory of action and the variables that hold greatest promise for student learning:

<http://resources.curriculum.org/LSA/files/LSATheoryofAction.pdf>

# From Viewing to Action

## Family Engagement

Evidence from Leithwood's research indicates that parent engagement in school is nurtured when parents come to understand that such involvement supports improved school outcomes by their children. Current research reveals that engagement increases when parents believe they have the skills and know-how to make meaningful contributions to the school's efforts and when they believe that both the school staff and their own children value their participation in the school.

The parents highlighted in this resource are deeply involved in their children's school.

- *What insights do their comments reveal regarding what motivates their commitment?*
- *How might school leaders support staff in continuing to engage parents in the life of your school?*

Throughout this resource, the learning team members refer to the importance of asking the parents for input.

- *How might you continue to be responsive to the needs of parents in your community? How do you know when you are successfully meeting their needs?*

## Spheres of Influence

Leithwood's research suggests that some variables that impact on student learning are alterable and others are not.

- *How might you proceed to identify the path and the variables that will make the greatest difference to your students?*

## Assuming a Reflective Stance

Effective practitioners are highly reflective.

- *How do you encourage your colleagues to reflect on and assess the impact of their work on student learning?*



- *How might you facilitate appropriate action based on teacher reflections?*
- *How might students be influenced to assume this reflective stance in relation to their own learning?*






## Key Messages

Families, community members, staff and students have a strong voice in this resource, each sharing their perspectives on how to support student learning.

- *Which parts of the video provoked you to take action in relation to your learning community?*

You may wish to use the following chart to record your thinking. Each role brings a unique perspective to the challenge of improving student achievement. As you view this resource, record the key message and possible actions that people in each role might take to improve student learning and achievement.

## Organizer #2 - Key Messages and Possible Actions

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Key Message</i>	<i>Personal Reflections Possible Actions</i>
<i>Student</i>		
<i>Parent</i>		
<i>Teacher</i>		
<i>Principal</i>		
<i>Superintendent</i>		

## A Learning Culture

The professional dialogue evident in this resource indicated a respectful, open-to-learning culture in which members were committed to improving student learning. They monitored the impact of their actions and sought and acted upon feedback from all participants.

- *How might you build and nurture an open-to-learning culture in your learning environment?*

## VIDEO SEGMENTS

### Spheres of Influence on Student Learning

(8:46)

Research conducted by Ken Leithwood and his colleagues highlights the positive influence the “family path” can have in supporting student achievement. It is important that all partners in education support this path.

Leithwood et al., 2009

Student achievement improves when educators, families and community are engaged in co-producing student learning.

- *What does this statement mean to you?*
- *What action might you take to further promote this genuine collaboration?*

In this segment on the family path, Ken Leithwood states that educators and parents are engaged in co-producing student learning. He also states that those who want to work on variables on the family path (e.g., parent expectations, student social capital in the home) may need to focus attention beyond the school.

- *What might this look like in practice in your work environment?*

Leithwood describes how variables across the various spheres of influence need to be aligned (e.g., the rational path may influence the emotional path).

- *Can you recall an experience where influencing a variable in one sphere of influence resulted in change within another?*

# Scholars Program

Parents need to hold high aspirations and expectations for their children, and schools need to work in partnership with parents so that the home and the school can share in these expectations and support learning.

Hattie, 2009, p.70

## Key Principles

(10:17)

While visiting New York schools, Pat Rocco, a superintendent with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, discovered that additional academic programming offered before and after school was a common factor that resulted in improved student achievement.

- *What conditions do you think would be necessary to set these programs up for success?*

Rocco also identified teacher professional learning as a key element of the after-school program.

- *What sort of learning do you think might be beneficial to your staff?*

Parental involvement is essential to the learning and well-being of children.

- *What do you think needs to be in place for a high level of home-school collaboration to occur?*
- *What efforts/opportunities do you think the parents in this video most appreciated?*
- *What ideas might you take away to apply to your own learning community?*
- *What does “the language of schooling” mean? How do you support those members of your learning community who might not know “the language of schooling”?*

## Getting Started

(10:45)

Parents' sustained attendance and input were important to the success of the Scholars Program. The program also included teachers and families eating dinner together after a session in an effort to celebrate their collaboration.

- *What strategies might you use to bring parents into the school to help them understand what school is like for their children?*

Leithwood's research indicates that helping parents help their children at home is one of the most influential strategies to improve student achievement.

- *How might you support parents to help their children at home?*

## Powerful Learning Partnerships

Joyce Epstein describes six types of parent involvement in their children's education, all valued equally: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community.

Epstein et al., 2009, p.14 & Epstein, 2011, p.135

## Bringing in the Community

(7:17)

How might you encourage the parents who are not participating in school life to become more involved? How might you engage those parents that you did not reach initially?

Think about the relationship that exists between your school and its community.

Joyce Epstein notes that homework no longer means only "work that students do alone" ...The concept of help at home refers to families encouraging, listening to, praising, guiding, monitoring and discussing schoolwork with their children, and not whether or how they teach school subjects.

Epstein, 2009, p.156

- *What strategies might be effective in continuing to bridge the cultures of families and schools? How would you help families make the connection between student learning and parent learning?*

When parents understand the key concepts of what students are learning, their engagement increases.

- *How do you keep parents informed about what is happening in their child's classroom?*
- *How might you help your parent community and your students realize the relevance of what they are learning to their school and future lives?*

### **Strengthening Home-School Connections**

(6:00)

By experiencing what their children's school day is like, parents gain a clearer understanding of school life.

- *What further opportunities might you provide to increase parent engagement in the classroom?*

The team in this school is very respectful of the learning community. They seek, value and take action based on parental feedback. Consider your learning community.

- *What actions might you take to genuinely include families in the planning of programs designed to meet their needs?*

In this segment, it is suggested that schools must strike a balance between delivering a specific program for parents and allowing time for the parents to take the lead.

- *What does this statement mean to you?*

### **Family Path in Action**

(8:11)

Learning continues beyond classroom time and space. Having a class website provides many advantages.

- *What are you wondering about in relation to classrooms having their own websites?*

Making language accessible to parents is important to building their understanding of what happens in school.

- *How might you make the language of schooling more accessible to your parent community?*

Feedback supports everyone's learning.

- *How might you gather feedback from parents about the success of your family support program?*
- *What strategies would you use to help staff develop sensitivity and respect for the learning community?*

A parent featured in this segment expresses her appreciation of the teacher's focus on helping students develop lifelong habits of mind that will serve them well throughout their lives.

- *How might you involve parents in their child's school life so that they develop an understanding of the relevance of their child's learning?*

## Supporting School-wide Collaboration

(1:34)

Teachers in this school realized that their collaboration and professional learning supported student learning.

- *What actions might facilitate greater collaboration and professional learning in your school?*
- *How might teachers gather feedback from students?*
- *How might students gather feedback from their teachers?*

When schools communicate directly and seek information from parents about what they want and need for their child's success, school-family connections are strengthened. Schools need to look at a variety of ways of communicating with and hearing from parents.

Mapp & Kong, 2010

## From Disengagement to Engagement

(5:23)

Outreach to families reluctant to participate makes a difference to student achievement.

- *What strategies might work in your school community to bring people into the school?*
- *What ideas shared in this segment resonated with you? How might you follow up with your learning community?*

Students with special needs are often bused in from out of the school community. This could present a challenge to involving parents in school life.

- *How might you address this challenge?*

## Toward 21st Century Learning

(6:41)

- *What do you think the benefits are of engaging students in the assessment process?*
- *How might you encourage teachers to engage students in self/peer/teacher assessment of their work?*

A parent in this clip appreciated hearing her child explain the significance of what and how he was learning. In this school, students build their metacognitive awareness by reflecting on themselves as learners. Teachers also gain new insights into the impact of their instruction.

- *How will you continue to encourage this powerful partnership in your school?*

# Instructional Leadership: Team Reflections

Principals assist parents in supporting their children's academic progress. Doing so may mean ensuring that communication is available in several home languages; providing workshops for parents on school-related issues, forums for parent concerns, and learning materials that parents can use at home; or helping parents to access community resources to support family needs.

Glaze, Mattingley & Levin, p.159

## Principal Learning Team Reflections

(4:47)

This team mentions that building strong relationships between home and school is essential.

- *How might you continue to build these important relationships within your school community?*

The principals highlighted in this resource are co-learners and also leaders of learning.

- *What does this mean to you in relation to your work? What strategies would you use in order to maintain momentum and move forward in the learning journey of your team?*

Principals reflect with their supervisory officer about the impact of their work with families. They think about what to stop, start and continue.

- *What ideas shared by this team resonate with you in relation to your own work?*

Principals on this team make it very clear that the approach to engaging parents must be responsive to the specific needs of each community.

- *What aspects of the learning community would you advise principal teams to think about when deciding on an approach?*
- *How does your team discover the strengths and needs of your community?*



## Teachers' Perspectives

(4:10)

The teacher featured in this segment encourages her students to become independent learners. She sets her students up for success by scaffolding instruction and including students in creating anchor charts, exemplars and assessment rubrics.

- *Which strategies do you or your colleagues use in order to support students as they develop into independent learners?*

The learning continues beyond the school day via a classroom blog.

- *How might you promote the idea of using a classroom blog with your colleagues?*

## Students' Perspectives

(2:37)

These students are very articulate and knowledgeable about their learning.

- *What conditions do you think were necessary to get students to this level of understanding?*
- *What are you currently doing to support students in developing their understanding of themselves as learners?*
- *What might you do to further support their growing independence?*

When assessing the contributions of home to overall student achievement, a major concern is that some parents know how to speak the language of schooling and thus provide an advantage for their children during the schooling years, and others do not know this language, which can be a major barrier to the home making a contribution to achievement.

Hattie, 2009, p.61

## Parents' Perspectives

(1:44)

This parent understands, respects and values the learning and teaching occurring in her son's classroom.

- *How might you build this sort of understanding in your learning community?*




This parent talks about how clear language around the rubrics better enabled her to help her child at home.

- *What are some other things you can do to better enable parental support?*

## Concluding Thoughts

You may wish to use the following chart to reflect on the content of this resource as it relates to your own practice.

### Organizer #3 - Reflecting on My Practice

	<i>Current Reality</i>	<i>Future Possibilities</i>
<b>Repeating</b> These practices have proven successful and are supported by current research.		
<b>Re-thinking</b> These practices have had some measure of success but may need some modifying to enhance their effectiveness.		
<b>Removing</b> These practices have had little success and are not supported by current research.		

## Resources and Further Reading

Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools* (2nd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Epstein, J.L. et al. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Glaze, A., Mattingley, R., & Levin, B. (2012). *Breaking barriers: Excellence and equity for all*. Ontario Principals' Council: Exemplary Leadership in Public Education. Toronto, Canada: Pearson Canada.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Annual synthesis 2002. Austin, TX: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

Leithwood, K. (2010). *How the Leading Student Achievement project improves student learning: An evolving theory of action*.  
<http://resources.curriculum.org/LSA/files/LSATheoryofAction.pdf>

Leithwood, K., Anderson, S. E., Mascall, B. & Strauss, T. (2009). School leaders' influences on student learning: The four paths. In Bush, L. Bell, & D. Middlewood (Eds.), *The principles of educational leadership and management*. London: Sage Publications.

Mapp, K. L., & Hong, S. (2010). Debunking the myth of the hard to reach parent. In S. L. Christenson & A.L. Reschly (Eds.), *Handbook of school-family partnerships*. New York: Routledge.

Mapp, K. L. (2002). Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning. *School Community Journal*, 13(1).

### Ontario Ministry of Education Webcasts:

*Student-led Conferences (Apr. 2010)*

<http://resources.curriculum.org/secretariat/studentled/index.shtml>

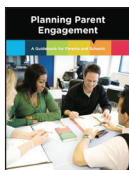
*Supporting your Child's Learning (Dec. 2008)*

<http://resources.curriculum.org/secretariat/SYCL.shtml>

# Some Resources to Support Parent Engagement in Your School ...

“Parent involvement that is focused on learning has the greatest impact on student achievement.”

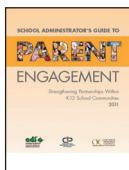
Henderson & Mapp, 2002



**Building Parent Engagement – Parent Tool Kit and Guidebook**  
[http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent\\_Engagement/Parent\\_Engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent_Engagement/Parent_Engagement.html)



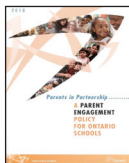
**The Capsule Family Gets Involved**  
– Animations and Discussion Guides  
<http://www.infocopa.com/capen.html>



**School Administrator's Guide to Parent Engagement**  
[http://www.cpeo.on.ca/PL\\_Site/PE.pdf](http://www.cpeo.on.ca/PL_Site/PE.pdf)



**abc123**  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123/>



**Ministry of Education's Parent Engagement Policy**  
[http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE\\_Policy2010.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE_Policy2010.pdf)

# Technical Instructions

## How to Access the Print and Video Resources

To access the **Print and Video Resources** folder in Windows, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer and:

1. Click on the Start menu.
2. Select My Computer.
3. Right-click the mouse on the DVD icon titled **COPRODUCING\_LEARNING\_DVD** to open a drop-down options list.
4. From the drop-down list, select and click on the Open option.
5. Double-click on the folder titled **Print and Video Resources** to access the files. Ignore the folders titled **Audio\_TS** and **Video\_TS**.
6. Select the resources you wish to use directly from this folder, OR Copy onto the Desktop and open files from the Desktop.

**Alternatively, when the DVD is inserted and the options box opens:**

1. Select the option **Open Folder to View Files**.
2. Click on the **Print and Video Resources** folder.
3. Select the files you wish to use directly from this folder, OR Copy the files onto the Desktop and open them from the Desktop.

To access the **Print and Video Resources** folder in Mac OS X, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer and:

1. Exit from the DVD player (which typically opens automatically when a DVD is inserted in the drive).
2. Double-click on the DVD icon titled **COPRODUCING\_LEARNING\_DVD**
3. Select the files you wish to use directly from this folder, OR
4. Copy the files onto the Desktop and open them from the Desktop.

## How to Save the Video Files to Your Computer

The video files can all be copied and saved to your computer using either of the following methods for copying and pasting files.

### Method 1

1. Right-click on the file and choose the Copy option.
2. Right-click within any computer folder into which you would like to save the file, and choose the Paste option.

### Method 2

1. Left-click the mouse on the file you want to save, so that the file is highlighted.
2. Simultaneously press the Ctrl and C keys (or, for Macintosh users, the Command and C keys) to copy the file.
3. Left-click within any computer folder in which you would like to save the file, and simultaneously press the Ctrl and V keys (or, for Macintosh users, the Command and V keys) to paste the file there.

For Macintosh users, the Command key is the one with the following symbol:  

**NOTE:** If you want to insert video files into a PowerPoint presentation, you must save these video files in the same folder that contains your PowerPoint file. If you save a PowerPoint presentation to another location (e.g., a memory stick, CD-ROM, etc.), you must also save the video files in the same location in order for the video to play. So, if you transfer the presentation to another computer, you must also transfer the video files with it, or else the video will not link to the PowerPoint presentation.

## How to Insert Video Clips (WMV files) into a PowerPoint Presentation

On this DVD, you will find WMV versions of all segments of the webcast. To insert a clip into a PowerPoint presentation, follow the directions below:

1. Open your PowerPoint program.
2. Create a new PowerPoint presentation OR open an existing PowerPoint presentation, and within it, open the slide on which you would like to add the video.

3. Insert the webcast DVD into the DVD drive of your computer.
4. If a new window opens asking how you would like to view the files on the disk, choose the option Open Folder to View Files; OR

If a new window does not open, open the My Computer window from the Start menu. In the My Computer window, double-click on the icon that is shaped like a disk, which will likely be labelled D: or E:.

5. Save the video segment that you want to insert in a PowerPoint into the same folder that contains your PowerPoint presentation.

**NOTE:** Video files that have been saved to your computer can be cropped and edited into smaller segments using Movie Maker (free on PCs) or iMovie (free on Macintosh).

6. Open the PowerPoint slide on which you would like to insert the video, and click on the Insert menu in the PowerPoint menu bar.
7. From the Insert menu, select Movies and Sounds, and click on the Movie from File option.
8. A window opens, prompting you to select the video file that you would like to add. Find and select the video file that you saved in step 5.
9. Once you have chosen the video file you need, another window opens and asks whether you want your movie to play either automatically when you enter the slide, or only when it is clicked. Choose your preference. (You will notice that the starting image of your movie is not displayed on the slide.)



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