

# Pointers For Parents

## Family-School Partnerships Increase Student Success

(NAPSA)—A good way to help ensure your child's success in school is to get involved.

Research shows that students do better in school when families and schools work together toward the same goals. There are many ways that parents can get involved, such as monitoring their child's homework, reading books or magazines together to reinforce concepts learned in class and volunteering in the classroom or on school committees.

Forging a positive relationship with your child's teacher is another way to improve the chances of success. According to Dr. Michael G. Thompson, clinical psychologist and renowned author of *Raising Cain* and *Best Friends, Worst Enemies*, "When parents open up about their hopes and fears for the child, teachers are better able to understand, care for and create a plan to educate the child."

Parents, however, often miss opportunities to have such conversations, says Dr. Thompson in a new book, *Understanding Independent School Parents*, coauthored with Alison Fox Mazzola and published by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). They ask generalized questions about how their child is doing in school, which often lead to a straightforward review of the report card and a discussion of the curriculum.

Parents have a right to well-run parent-teacher meetings that make the most of the limited time that is budgeted for them, notes Dr. Thompson. By identifying at the start of the meeting the con-



cerns that need to be addressed, he says, parents can encourage a more effective parent-teacher meeting.

These concerns (hopes and fears) should form the basis of an agenda for the meeting. If, at the end of the meeting, parents do not feel that their questions have been answered, neither parent nor teacher need be defensive. They should be willing to schedule another meeting. Sometimes 15 or even 30 minutes simply is not enough time, even when a meeting is well run and follows an agenda. A need to schedule another meeting is not a failure on anyone's part.

When families get involved with their children's schools—by helping their children with homework, attending school functions and parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering at the school—children benefit. Children are much more motivated to excel academically when they see how much their parents value education.

To make a difference in your child's life today, get involved. For more information about independent (private) schools, please visit [www.nais.org/go/parents](http://www.nais.org/go/parents).