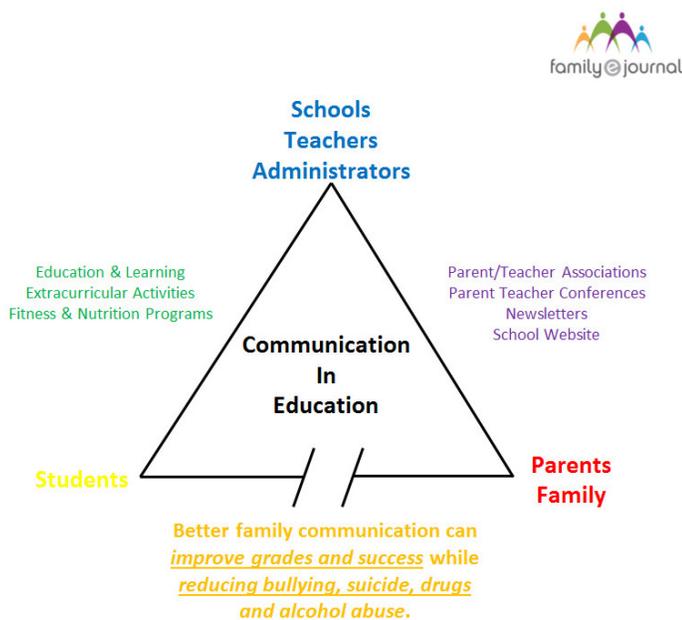


Why Our Education System Is Failing And The Simple Solution by Kevin Strauss, M.E.

Teachers/administrators, parents and students are what make education possible. The connection between teachers and students is obvious because that is the purpose of education. Schools recognize the importance of parental engagement but struggle to achieve it. The system certainly makes an effort with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), parent-teacher conferences and a myriad of tools, such as websites, to communicate with parents about the happenings at school and with their children. **The Triangle of Communication in Education fails because there are virtually no programs in place to support and nurture the parent-student relationship.**

Our society is passionate about education. We dedicate extensive resources to making it better yet we're still struggling to keep pace in the world. We try different philosophies and adjust curriculum. We build more modern classrooms and bring in computers, tablets and the internet. We try longer school days and school years and eliminate recess, art, music and physical education in order to give greater focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. We've shown that **fewer students in a classroom helps but I'm not sure if we truly understand why.**



Created by Kevin Strauss, M.E.

Education involves people interacting and that means relationships. Until we focus on each type of relationship, significant improvements are unlikely. The most obvious relationship is between teachers and administrators and students. This relationship requires little explanation because the fundamental purpose of education is to share knowledge between teacher and student. This occurs all day long.

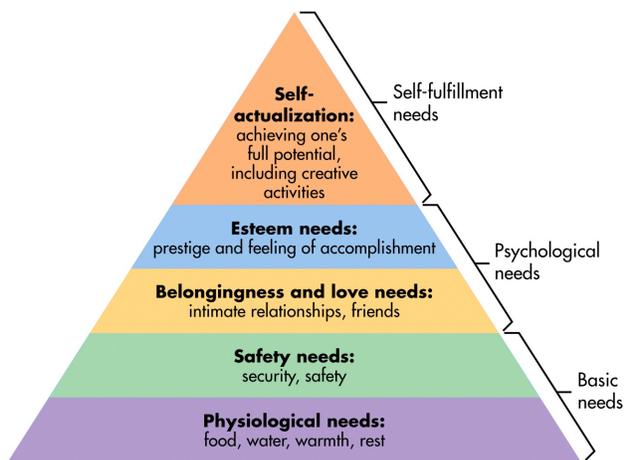
Teachers and administrators are tasked with improving students' grades, retention, test scores and graduation rates not to mention managing behaviors. Beyond curriculum and technique, they recognize that **the more parents are involved the better** the students perform and behave. Why?

Is it because the parent knows what is happening at school? In part, because the better informed the parent is the better they can help guide their child. However, could it also be that **when a parent is more involved with their child's school then they are also more involved with their child's life?** Albeit indirectly, the child may feel like they are important and supported by their parent because the parent is taking an interest in what the child is doing. The child feels important to their parent. (Incidentally, this is also why smaller classrooms make a positive difference. A teacher isn't changing their technique for fewer students. **Smaller classrooms allow a teacher to have a more personal connection with each student.**)

Assuming for a moment the above parental involvement premise is true then **by improving the parent-child relationship we can more directly and significantly improve the child's development and success.** According to the Triangle of Communication in Education, we have a well established teacher-student relationship. We also have a fairly robust teacher-parent relationship. In order to have the greatest improvements in education we need to support and encourage the parent-child relationship. (It seems so obvious but it's not happening and we know this because of the myriad of symptoms we experience everyday - in children and adults.)

When parents and their children feel supported and connected their behaviors improve. This phenomenon is documented in the research and affects more than just

scholastics. People, at every age, need to feel connected. It is a basic human need as theorized by Abraham Maslow in 1943 when he presented his Hierarchy of Needs (image).



When a person does not feel connected they attempt to fill that void by resorting to alternative behaviors. Our society is feeling those effects and they present as drug and alcohol abuse, depression and suicide, bullying, eating disorders including obesity, gun violence and more. **When someone feels a sense of connection their**

behaviors improve and so do their scholastics.

We always hear about the importance of family and of communication. We instinctively know why but I'm here to state it as plain as day. **People need to feel genuinely connected and until each person's fundamental need is addressed little will change... for the better.**

We have a real opportunity **to significantly improve our education system and it won't occur in the classroom, it needs to happen in our homes.** Just like we're encouraging our

students to incorporate fitness and healthy nutrition choices throughout their day, we can do the same to encourage a positive family communication and connection. **Overall wellness is more than just physical and when we feel connected and a sense of belonging to others it feeds our mental and emotional health.**

Incidentally, if you're looking for a fun and easy way to improve communication and connection we encourage you to give [FamilyeJournal](#) a try. With our database of questions, you'll create guided mini-journals that are shared privately with only your family members in just 5 minutes.

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