

Relationships Matter

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Positive teacher-student relationships are associated with:

- Increasing student's feeling of safety at school ([Austin et al](#); [Basch](#); [Steinberg et al](#))
- Increasing academic test scores ([Basch](#); [CDC](#); [Comer](#))
- Increasing student understanding and meaningfulness of what is being taught ([Benard](#))
- Reducing absenteeism ([Basch](#); [CDC](#))
- Decreasing student dropout ([Benard](#))
- Decreasing student-student conflict ([Griggs et al](#))
- Improving school climate ([Cohen et al](#); [McClure et al](#))
- Improving transition to school ([Pianta et al](#))
- Decreasing risk-taking behavior ([Basch](#) ; [CDC](#); [Rudaskill et al](#))
- Developing language skills ([O'Connor et al](#))
- Improving self-esteem ([DeWit et al](#))
- Decreasing incidences of depression([DeWit et al](#))
- And has been highlighted as beneficial to learning by the major US educational associations, including the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), [National School Boards Association](#), [American Association of School Administrators](#), and of course our own [ASCD](#).

But it's not just teacher-student relationships. Positive family-school relationships have been shown to be associated with:

- Improving the development of student's social skills ([Powell et al](#))
- Improving the development of student's mathematics skills ([Powell et al](#))
- Promoting learning ([Christenson & Reschly](#))
- Decreasing student behavior issues ([Powell et al](#))
- Preschool social growth and academic development ([Marcon](#))
- And increasing motivation to excel ([Wentzel](#)).

And between peers. Studies have highlighted how positive peer relationships are associated with:

- Remaining in school ([Juvonen & Wentzel](#))
- Remaining in community college ([Napoli](#))
- Developing pro-social behavior ([Snyder](#))
- And improving academic achievement ([Zitzmann](#)).

And between teachers. Positive relationships between new and experienced teachers have shown to:

- Decreasing teacher attrition ([Gratch](#))
- And minimizing emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and feelings of low personal accomplishment ([Grayson & Alvarez](#)).

All relationship matters.

And in combination these relationships provide a broader support network and deeper influence. Studies have shown that teachers, family and peers all can have a positive effect on

- Developing resilience ([Benard](#))
- Reducing dropout ([Pittman](#); [Dunn et al](#))
- Improving attendance ([Epstein](#); [Klem](#))
- Increasing learning ([Klem](#)).

All in all -- relationships matter. So the next time school improvement, turn-around, or reform efforts are discussed, ask whomever is talking how their plan develops what we know is key and cannot be overlooked -- relationships.