



A new study concludes that parental involvement is more important than the school environment in preventing or limiting children's use of alcohol or marijuana.

Researchers evaluated data from more than 10,000 students, parents, teachers and school administrators. They looked at "family social capital"—bonds between parents and children—as well as "school social capital"—a school's ability to provide a positive environment for learning, Science Daily reports.

Measures of family social capital include trust, open communication and active engagement in a child's life, while school social capital includes student involvement in extracurricular activities, teacher morale and the teachers' ability to address student needs.

"Parents play an important role in shaping the decisions their children make when it comes to alcohol and marijuana," study co-author Dr. Toby Parcel of North Carolina State University said in a news release. "To be clear, school programs that address alcohol and marijuana use are definitely valuable, but the bonds parents form with their children are more important. Ideally, we can have both."

The researchers found students with high levels of family social capital and low school social capital levels were less likely to have used either marijuana or alcohol, or to have used them less frequently, compared with students with high levels of school social capital and low family social capital.

The study appears in *Journal of Drug Issues*.

Raising children is one of the most challenging roles that any man, woman or couple can ever experience in life. Much joy as well as significant heartache can come from being a parent. Being a parent requires patience, nurturing, discipline, support and, most important, love and support. As our children go through their developmental stages from infants, to toddlers, to teenagers, to young adults and adulthood, the challenges and rewards change.

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