



# Boost Kids' STEM Grades – Simply By Talking!?!

- Published on March 6, 2017

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Researchers at University of Chicago, Northwestern University (my alma mater - Go Wildcats!), University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of Virginia recently published a study titled '[Utility-Value Intervention With Parents Increases Students' STEM Preparation and Career Pursuit](#)'.

In the study, the researchers evaluated the long-term effects of an intervention designed to help parents talk with their high school kids about the importance of mathematics and science courses. The researchers provided a group of parents with materials that helped them talk to their children about the relevance of STEM- showing how school subjects factor into specific careers or how math and science make cell phones work, for example.

When comparing the children that had such talks with their parents to a control group, researchers found that the intervention promoted STEM course-taking in high school and improved mathematics and science ACT scores by 12 percentile points. Such factors are associated with increased STEM career pursuit 5 years after the intervention!

Christopher S. Rozek, the lead researcher, says “Parents are potentially an untapped resource for helping to improve the STEM motivation and preparation of students. We could move the needle by just encouraging parents to have these conversations about the relevance of math and science.”

Do you think that talking to your kids might boost their STEM interest and grades? As the saying goes, ‘talk is cheap’, so this seems worth trying!