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ABSTRACT

This guide describes program elements considered essential to any successful collaboration between families and schools. Initial contents offer a brief discussion of the basic types of parent involvement and the benefits of and barriers to effective parent involvement programs. The guide then focuses on ways to insure that necessary program elements are implemented. Roles and responsibilities for each key player in the parent involvement effort are described. These include responsibilities pertaining to administrators, teachers, outreach workers, parents, community members, and children. Suggestions about the implementation of effective programs follow. These suggestions are based on a review of the research on parent involvement and on experience with a federally funded parent involvement demonstration project that was conducted in two elementary schools in the Northwest. The two schools were an inner-city, predominantly African-American school and a rural school with about 25 percent Hispanic student population. Selected references, and key organizations which offer publications, training materials, and informational kits for parents and teachers, are listed. (RH)

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Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement

by

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The relationship between families and schools is comparable to that of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Both are necessary to each other -- complementary, nonduplicative, unique, and vital.

--Dorothy Rich, Schools and Families: Issues and Actions

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Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement

Introduction

Congratulations! You obviously care about helping children get the best education possible. You're looking for ways to improve what you do with and for children.

This Guide is for educators, parents and other members of concerned families and communities who recognize the need to work together to improve the education of their children.

Changing times. As you are well aware, educating children has become more difficult. The statistics are discouraging: Graduates without basic job skills. High dropout rates, especially among poor and minority youth. Families with multiple social and economic problems. Changing family structures. Teen pregnancy. Alcohol and other drug abuse. At the same time, funding for educational programs is limited, and demands are increasing for greater accountability -- better return on the investment.

The demographics of our nation have been changing dramatically, due to the influx of immigrants, the growth of minority populations and the declining birthrate among Whites. Within the next decade, minority children will be taking their places at one of every three desks in school. For many families and teachers, the connection between home and school is becoming ever more difficult to make.

Are we as educators, parents, and concerned community members prepared to address the issues these statistics bring with them? More than ever, schools and communities must work together to determine how we will respond to these changes. What resources are available to best prepare our children to live in, work in, and contribute to the world of the 21st century?

An untapped resource. One resource that often goes untapped in most schools is the energy and influence of parents and families. Although, as we shall see, this resource is not free, it is far more widely available and effective than many have assumed.

This Guide has been written to enable schools and communities to activate this largely latent resource. After a brief discussion of the types of involvement, and the benefits and barriers to effective parent involvement, the Guide describes the ingredients that are absolutely essential to any successful collaboration between families and schools. Then it focuses on how to make sure that these ingredients are in place. For each key player in parent involvement efforts -- administrators, teachers, outreach workers, parents, community members, and children, the roles and responsibilities are described. This is followed by a section of suggestions for how to implement effective parent involvement programs.

The suggestions in this Guide are based on a careful review of the research on parent involvement and on our experience with a parent involvement demonstration project (funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement), conducted in two elementary schools in the Northwest: an inner-city, predominantly Black school and a rural school with approximately 25 percent Hispanic student population. Both schools have suffered from extremely low involvement of parents and other family members.

The demonstration project was undertaken as an early intervention strategy. By expanding the involvement of parents in their children's educations at an early age, we hope to stem the tide of minority students dropping out at a later age. This Guide reflects that experience with parents and teachers of children in the early elementary grades. Its suggestions are not limited, however, to elementary grade levels. It is an unfortunate fact that many parents believe that there is less need to be involved as their children get older or that they are less able to help. Contrary to that belief, parent involvement continues to be critical throughout the junior high and high school years. The underlying concepts and many of the suggested roles, responsibilities and activities in this Guide are valid and appropriate for middle and secondary schools as well.

There are many different models for parent involvement, as well as specific types of involvement. We have chosen not to focus on these in detail. Rather, this Guide presents the basics of effective parent involvement efforts, fundamental principles and practices needed to enable schools and communities to reach out to each other, to communicate and collaborate across gaps due to different cultures, languages, socioeconomic statuses, and lifestyles.

To make this Guide practical, we have chosen a concise, easy-to-use format. The multiple lists of responsibilities and activities can be used as guidelines to developing programs and as checklists to evaluate how you're doing in setting things up or as the program progresses. For those of you who wish further detail, we provide a section on additional resources, including selected references and key organizations from whom to obtain publications, training materials and informational kits for parents and teachers.

I. Overview: Understanding Parent Involvement

"Givens" in Parent Involvement

There are fundamental principles that underlie any successful parent involvement effort. They are so basic that they should not have to be stated. However, if the participants in parent involvement do not share these beliefs, their efforts will be doomed to failure. These "givens" include:

- The focus is on the child and his/her success.
- All children can learn.
- Parents want the best for their children.
- The school cannot do it alone.
- Parents, regardless of ethnic group, socioeconomic status or educational background, are a key resource in their children's education.
- Together as partners, schools, families and communities can succeed in educating children to be able to lead happy, healthy, productive lives.

Types of Parent Involvement

"Parent involvement" can encompass a vast range of activities, from something as simple as signing a report card to the complex commitment of chairing a school governance committee which has authority to determine curriculum and hire and fire staff. Parents can play many different roles in their child's education. Each is important.

Parents are "involved" from the start, of course, as their child's first teachers. Once a child reaches school age, if parents do no more than (1) make sure their son or daughter gets to school on time, and (2) look at the papers s/he brings home, they will have contributed to that child's education. Of course, there are many more ways a parent can be involved. And the nature and degree of parent involvement can have a tremendous impact on the child's attitude and success in learning.

Researchers and trainers have categorized parent involvement in diverse ways. Basically the types of involvement include:

- Fulfilling **basic parental obligations** for a child's education and social development at home
- Taking an active role in **home learning** activities -- collaborating with teachers (monitoring homework, tutoring, etc.)
- Being an **audience** for school events
- Being a **participant and supporter** of school events and programs
- Being a **learner** (participating in training offered through the school, whether on ways to be more involved, on parenting skills, or to improve basic skills, for example)
- Volunteering or being paid to be a **classroom aide or provide other assistance at school**
- Being an **advocate** for the school and school programs in the community
- Being an **advisor or decision-maker** (serving on a board or committee with responsibility to advise school leaders and/or help make school governance decisions)

Benefits of Parent Involvement

Trying to educate children without the involvement of their family is like trying to play a basketball game without all the players on the court. -- Senator Bill Bradley, New Jersey

The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side. --Margaret Carty

Studies of parent involvement programs overwhelmingly confirm a positive relationship between parent involvement and children's schooling, particularly achievement. Schools with well-structured, consistent parent involvement programs have experienced benefits in a variety of areas.

Students experience improvements in:

- Achievement
- Motivation and attitudes (toward school; homework; teachers; etc.)
- Behavior
- Attendance
- Self-concept
- Suspension rates for disciplinary reasons
- Communication with teachers and parents/families

Teachers and administrators experience improvements in:

- Morale (and self-esteem)
- Teaching effectiveness (proficiency)
- Job satisfaction
- Communication/relations with students and with parents, families, and communities
- Cost-effectiveness (parents will spend more time with individual students than teachers can)
- Community support of schools

Parents also experience improvements in:

- o Communication/relations with children and teachers
- o Self-esteem
- o Educational level/skills
- o Decision-making skills

The School Development Program. Although there are now many examples of the positive impact of parent involvement, perhaps one of the most striking can be found in the two inner-city New Haven, Connecticut, schools in which James Comer and the Child Study Center of Yale University first began to work in 1969. The students were 99 percent Black and poor (over 70 percent of the families received Aid to Families with Dependent Children). The schools ranked near the bottom in achievement and attendance among the 33 schools in the city.

Using the School Development Program, which evolved out of Comer's work there, these New Haven schools are now ranked among the city's top five in academics. Gradually, the Program was adopted by seven other school districts. It has proved so successful that the Rockefeller Foundation recently dedicated $3 million per year for the next five years to facilitate the spread of this model to schools across the country.

Parents play a key role in Comer's School Development Program. The three main components of the program are:

- o A mental-health team
- o A governance and management team (comprised of the principal, parents, teachers and a mental-health worker)
- o A parents' group

The governance and management team develops a comprehensive school plan which includes academics, social activities and special programs. The three component groups work closely together to implement the plan. The model validates the contributions of parents by giving them a voice in decision-making and nurtures a school climate conducive to learning by providing ample opportunities for the development of social relationships among all participants (children, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators) while they work together for the good of the children and the school. (See Comer 1980, 1984, 1987, 1988).

Teacher job satisfaction. On the national level, teacher job satisfaction has been found to be tied to relationships with students' families. The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1987 found that relations between home and school are closely linked to the morale of the nation's teachers. Only 36 percent of teachers who enjoy excellent relations with parents have ever considered leaving teaching, as compared to 60 percent of those who have fair or poor relations with parents. In New Haven, teachers enjoy their jobs and feel the School Development Program has helped them avoid burnout.

Family benefits. A major benefit of effectively involving parents in their children's education is the long-range impact it may have on society. Parent involvement can contribute to creating a more democratic and equitable society. Both parents and children can gain skills that will help them make decisions and determine directions for their future. A sense of empowerment and hope can result which will carry over into their daily lives.

New Haven parents are very actively involved. Last year, 92 percent of the parents at one of the schools visited the school at least 10 times. Parents not only have become active contributors to school management but have also made changes in their personal lives (such as going back to school and getting better jobs).

Barriers to Parent Involvement

Before we came in, there was a sign on the outside of the school saying, "Parents: Wait outside for your children." --Vivian Johnson, Institute for Responsive Education project coordinator

We do the best we can. But what can you expect of these children? Look at the homes they come from. --Teacher

By the time I get home and get dinner on the table, I just don't have time -- or energy! -- to go to school meetings. --Parent

A number of factors have contributed to a growing sense of separation between schools and communities. As communities have grown and incorporated more diverse groups, the public schools have gradually become less connected to the communities they serve. The increased mobility of our society has contributed to the fact that most teachers and administrators do not live in the communities or neighborhoods in which they work. Also, the education professions have not successfully recruited sufficient numbers from various ethnic groups to enable better representation of minorities and better communication between schools and communities.

Part of this separation is due to a long-held philosophy of the role of education. As James Coleman has stated rather starkly, most public schools for the last century have viewed their primary mission to be the freeing of children from the constraints and backgrounds of their families. Schools are, indeed, one of the major socializing forces in our society. Education has the potential to be the great equalizer. However, that potential must be understood as provider of skills equally to all, not as homogenizer. This nation was built on the strengths of many culturally diverse groups. It will never be as strong, nor its creativity as great, if educators and communities view diverse backgrounds as negative influences to overcome, rather than as strengths on which to build.

Common barriers to effective parent involvement include:

- Parent involvement is not well understood, not highly valued and thus not well implemented. It is largely limited to traditional activities, such as participation in school events.
- Schools of education do not provide training in parent involvement.
- During the school year, little time is available for staff development and parent involvement is not a high priority for training.
- Teachers may feel overworked (and underpaid) and may not wish to spend extra time and energy contacting and interacting with parents.
- Teachers' unions and/or school district regulations may indirectly discourage teachers from spending extra time with parents.

- State and district policies may limit provision of information to noncustodial parents.
- Most communication tends to be one-way, from the school to the home.
- Most contacts between school and home are negative (communication only occurs in response to crises).
- Teachers and administrators may have low or negative expectations of low-income and minority families and communities.
- Teachers and administrators may view low-income and minority parents as hard-to-reach.
- Teachers and parents often prefer different times for meetings.
- Teachers may feel parents aren't interested or don't know how to be supportive.
- Teachers may feel threatened or fear interference by parents in their classrooms.
- There may be serious social class differences between families and school personnel.
- Low-income or minority parents may have had negative experiences with schooling and may have low or negative expectations of themselves and their children and distrust of schools.
- Parents may not understand what the schools expect of them -- what their roles and responsibilities are.
- Parents may not feel welcome at school.
- Working parents have limited time and energy.
- Parents often lack transportation or child care.
- Organizational change is difficult and slow.

Although this list of barriers may seem overwhelming, as we shall see in the pages that follow, there are many promising ways that parents and schools can work together to overcome them.

Key Players in Successful Parent Involvement Programs

When elephants fight it is the grass that suffers. --Kikuyu Proverb

Parent involvement is truly a team effort. To be effective, all of the following players must believe in the potential of parent involvement efforts and participate to the fullest in them:

- **Strong school administrative leaders** -- who understand, encourage and fully support parent involvement
- **Teachers** -- who are committed to working closely with parents in a variety of capacities
- **Outreach staff** -- who are well-respected by the school and the community and who conduct intensive personal outreach to families
- **Parents and family members** -- who understand their potential influence and are ready to contribute actively to their children's education
- **Community members** (including businesses and community organizations) -- who are willing to support the role of parents and families in education
- **Children** -- who understand why their parents or other family members are involved with their schooling, see their school and families and community as a supportive team working with them, and are willing to play a responsible role in their own educations

Essential Ingredients in Parent Involvement

No academic progress is possible...until there is a positive environment at the school where teachers, students, and parents like each other and work together for the good of all the students. --James Comer, Child Study Center, Yale University

Parent involvement programs that truly have an impact on the students, schools and families with whom they work share the following characteristics:

- **Parent involvement is a school-wide priority.** This means it has adequate support as well as good intentions. Support includes:
  - Written school and/or district policies that establish parent involvement as a legitimate and desired activity
  - Sufficient funding so that the parent involvement program can be consistent and maintained over time
  - Leadership and encouragement by the principal and other administrators
  - Staff with time allocated to the coordination of parent involvement activities
  - Staff and parent training
  - Necessary materials and facilities (space and equipment)
  - Food, transportation, and child care as needed for parent meetings
- **Parent involvement is a community-based effort.** School personnel work in partnership with parents and other community members so that all players have a strong sense of ownership:
  - Types of involvement and activities are planned jointly.
  - Nothing is imposed by the school or the community.
  - School personnel have a good understanding of the community's history, leadership, appropriate role models, appropriate channels of communication.
  - Activities address issues of concern to the community (felt needs).
- **Roles and responsibilities are well defined, but not inflexible.** Training is provided to both staff and parents to help them understand these roles and responsibilities and learn ways to collaborate effectively.

- **There is open, 2-way communication among the various key players.** Administrators, teachers, outreach workers, parents, other community members and children -- each have some knowledge of the values and expectations of the other groups of players and of appropriate modes of communication across groups. Players accept and respect diverse viewpoints. There are mechanisms in place to allow and facilitate open communication.

- **There is intensive and ongoing personal outreach to all parents.** Specially trained staff use a variety of media and activities to engage families and other community members.

- **A wide variety of culturally appropriate opportunities are available for parents to become involved.** This is the meat of the program once the other ingredients are in place.

- **All players participate in ongoing evaluation and revision of activities.**

Steps in program implementation. In 1986, the Tennessee Legislature appropriated $1 million to implement model parent involvement programs in distressed communities. Two years later case studies of four of the models were conducted by Donald Lueder and John Bertrand of the Center of Excellence: Basic Skills, Tennessee State University (1989).

The four models all were successful programs which included some form of parent education. The distressed communities in which they operated were very different: an inner city metropolitan area, two very poor rural counties (one transitioning to manufacturing), and a community in the most poverty stricken region of the state.

The way these models succeeded illustrates most of the essential ingredients for parent involvement programs. Despite different contexts and program focuses, these four successful programs went through surprisingly similar steps in development and implementation:

1. A needs assessment was conducted and problems were defined.

2. Funding was obtained.

3. A coordinator was hired who reviewed the problems identified and immediately began to reach out to anyone who could help. Thus, the program developed from the bottom up, not the top down.

4. The coordinator began to implement the strategy named in the funding proposal, but was flexible and able to reevaluate problems and progress and find new strategies as needed.

5. The coordinator identified and used personal motivators/rewards to involve parents (door prizes, fieldtrips, social services, etc.).

6. The coordinator built good interpersonal relationships with parents, school people and other community members, which led to developing a reputation of trustworthiness.

7. Project decision-making was a group process in which parents were given as much ownership as possible. Project practices were changed as needed, adapting to fit the population being served.

8. This led to a sense of empowerment among parents which was passed on to their children.

9. The coordinator took any opportunity to expand the program and collaborate with other community programs (JTPA, for example).

10. All staff (coordinator, principal, teachers and aides) had positive attitudes towards people -- they respected the parents of at-risk children, believed that they would respond to positive programs, and believed that they would become involved in their children's education.

The results in two short years have been impressive. In the inner-city program, for example, children's math and reading scores for each of the two years were significantly higher than those in two control groups.

Some of the innovative Parent Club activities included:

- Putting on comedy versions of traditional fairy tales for the children
- Fieldtrips -- to the library, a cosmetology lab (for "make overs"), nursing homes, museums, etc.
- Role plays of typical parent-child situations and group discussions about ways to resolve them
- Preparing a Thanksgiving Brunch for parents and teachers (learning etiquette and how to host)
- Making holiday gifts for teachers and children
- Learning to use materials for helping children at home with basic skills

Parent participation far exceeded expectations: Of the 275 mainly Black, single, unemployed parents, 80 attended the first meeting, and 205 attended at least one meeting during the year.

II. Key Players: Roles and Responsibilities

Key Players: Administrators

Our children need to see their parents involved in the school. If their parents are involved in education and welcome in the school, then it's likely the children will value their education more. --Ray Haag, Principal, Cornelius Elementary School

A principal who cares to understand the community (or communities) from which his students come is a true educator. Only then will he be able to do his job well. The principal's leadership sets the tone -- the climate -- of the school. The principal, through her policies and her actions, must embody the image the school wants to put forth to the community about children and their ability to learn, and about the vital role of families in the learning process.

As a principal, you:

- Provide educational leadership for all of the other key players -- school personnel, students, parents and families, and other community members
- Set the tone for the school climate as positive, friendly, open to the community , serving all children equally
- Overtly recognize and affirm the fundamental premises of parent involvement (all children can learn, parent involvement is a valuable resource, all parents/families can have an impact, etc.)
- Take time to get to know the community (or communities) served by your school -- the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-rearing practices, worries and aspirations
- Assess school and community perceptions of needs and available resources
- Encourage opportunities for staff and parents and other community members to get to know each other
- Lead a team of staff, parents and community members who together design and develop your school's effective parent involvement program
- Require and encourage staff members to make use of parent involvement as a resource
- Provide for and facilitate staff training in parent involvement

- o Designate staff to coordinate the school's parent involvement efforts
- o Facilitate the provision of parent training in parent involvement and other topics of interest to parents and family members
- o Establish mechanisms for open, 2-way communication between the school and the community, and encourage their use
- o Provide opportunities for parents to have a voice in school management decisions
- o Communicate regularly with all other key players, actively soliciting their input (both formally and informally)
- o Monitor the program and encourage the team to evaluate progress and revise program activities as necessary, using multiple indicators of program success, such as:
  - Student achievement, attendance, attitude and behavior
  - Teacher morale and quality of instruction
  - Amount and nature of communication between parents and school, level of parent participation
  - Amount of community support
- o Acknowledge and reward outstanding efforts by teachers, coordinators and outreach workers, parents, community members, and children

Depending on the size of the school and the amount of funding available for parent involvement, the principal may delegate many of the coordination activities to the staff person designated to be the parent coordinator or community outreach specialist. Nevertheless, the principal must provide the overall school leadership to establish and maintain the parent involvement program, including visible moral and financial support and required staff participation.

In addition to school administrators, **school boards** have a critical role to play in encouraging parent involvement. School boards have the responsibility to plan and establish well-designed, clear policy about the role of parents in the schools. Boards need to include parents in that planning. They must also provide adequate budgetary support for their policy, and publicly demonstrate their support of parent involvement. Also, school boards should conduct periodic reviews of the policy and its implementation. (See National School Boards Association, 1988, for further information.)

Key Players: Teachers

Is you the One? --West African traditional midwife greeting to newborn

Treat a child as though he [she] already is the person he's [she's] capable of becoming. --Haim Ginott

They come to me so bright and ready to learn...We could do so much more if we had the support from home. --Teacher

Teachers in schools where parents are actively involved find that their jobs become easier. Working in partnership with students' parents creates an environment of trust, positive interactions and optimism for what can be accomplished. Having the support of parents relieves considerable stress for teachers who often feel they are struggling alone to improve children's options. Effective parent involvement programs can prevent burnout and the loss of hardworking, dedicated teachers.

Teachers are a pivotal link in establishing and maintaining solid parent involvement efforts. Without teachers who are actively committed to encouraging parents in the important roles they can play, schools will have a difficult time recruiting parents and keeping them involved.

As a teacher, you:

- Maintain high expectations for every child to learn and achieve
- Examine your own assumptions about ability and interest (based on behavior, nonstandard English or lack of English, physical appearance or family background) and remain alert to negative images
- Take time to get to know the community (or communities) represented by the children you teach -- the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-rearing practices, worries and aspirations
- Treat all children and their families with respect
- Welcome every family into your classroom and make them feel comfortable in the school
- Establish and maintain open, 2-way communication with parents and other family members
  - Contact the parents of all children regularly, for positive as well as negative reasons
  - Establish regular times when parents can contact you

- Provide a variety of options for parents to collaborate with you in the teaching of their children (including homework activities, class projects, volunteer work in the classroom and on fieldtrips, fundraising, etc.)
- Participate in staff training about parent involvement
- Participate in school activities designed to help staff and families get to know each other
- View cultural diversity as a resource and teach children to value it
- Identify and use ways to validate children's experiences outside of school and incorporate them into instructional activities
- Collaborate with other professionals and parents to address particular children's learning or emotional problems
- Take stock of your parent involvement activities regularly, with input from other key players, and revise them as necessary
- Never give up on any child

Key Players: Parent Coordinators/Community Outreach Specialists

The position of coordinator or lead teacher for school and family connections is just as necessary as a guidance counselor, an assistant principal, a school psychologist, or a social worker. --Joyce Epstein, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins University

You've got to have faith, yes, that together we can make it happen. --Dapo Sobomehin, community outreach specialist

As we have noted several times, parent involvement requires teamwork, with solid efforts by every player. However, one of the most crucial jobs in getting parents involved is that of the parent coordinator or community outreach specialist. Parents of nearly any community respond best to personal contact. Over and over again, successful schools with high rates of parent involvement report that extensive personal outreach was the best method to recruit and retain parents.

It is critical not to undervalue this position. Successful programs allocate funds to hire a parent coordinator or community outreach specialist. They are careful in their selection, looking for the following characteristics:

- Well-known and respected both by the school and the community, with strong ties in the community
- Ability to interact with and represent both the community and the school
- Strong interpersonal social skills (friendly, open, good communicator)
- Commitment to the value of excellent education for all children
- Commitment to strong school-community relations and the power of parent involvement as an educational resource
- Willingness to reach out to all families at times of day most appropriate for them
- Positive outlook and high energy

As a parent coordinator/community outreach specialist, you:

- Coordinate the school's parent involvement efforts
- Act as a liaison between the school and the community, opening up channels of 2-way communication, providing relevant information to all players, and making sure that they are communicating regarding expectations and concerns

- Reach out to all parents to learn their views, interests, concerns about their children's schooling
- Use a wide variety of media and methods (using appropriate languages as necessary) to obtain information from parents and provide information to them, including:
  - Parent surveys
  - Interviews
  - Orientation and brainstorming meetings
  - Home visits
  - Phone calls
  - Hotlines
  - Newsletters
  - Social gatherings
  - Workshops
  - Announcements through other community agencies
- Gather resources (information, materials, workshop presenters, volunteers, ...)
- Coordinate, prepare and/or schedule, present (at times), monitor and evaluate training of parents and staff (one-on-one or in groups)
- Monitor the program -- keep records of activities, rates of involvement, input and feedback from key players, informal and formal evaluations
- Be responsive and flexible at all times (troubleshoot to keep communication flowing both directions and to make sure that activities accomplish the goals identified)
- Facilitate parents' access to other community services as needed so they may provide and maintain a positive learning environment at home for their children

To be truly effective, the parent coordinator/community outreach specialist does all of these things in ways that help parents help themselves. In other words, the underlying goal of the facilitation provided by the outreach worker is parent and family empowerment. Just as the role of a good teacher is to provide students with the tools to do the tasks they choose, so too parent involvement efforts should provide information and tools for parents and families to use as they choose.

Key Players: Parents

Now that we're here in the United States, I want them to go to school and to get a good education. As long as we work at this, we will stay strong. -- Maria Cano de Gutierrez, parent

I'm involved with my kids in school because I want them to know that I'm concerned about what they're doing...I want them to know that I'm there for them. --Rose Jordan, parent

The principal and the teachers -- I think they are more aware of us now. I think for awhile they thought we didn't care, that we didn't have the same concerns and hopes for our children. Now they know that we do. --Grace Godinez, parent and community outreach specialist

It has been said many times, but it bears repeating: Parents are a child's first teachers. And parents spend more time with each individual child over the course of his/her lifetime than any teacher will. Parents can play a very positive role in educating their children.

By working together with the schools, parents can have an even greater influence. They can encourage their children to excel, build self-esteem, and reinforce skills being taught through the schools.

Clearly, not every parent can volunteer in the classroom, go on fieldtrips, or attend evening meetings. Parents can be involved (and have a strong influence) in a wide variety of ways from the simple (but powerful) practice of asking their children daily about school activities and homework to belonging to a school governance committee and having direct input on school management decisions.

As a parent involved in your child's education, you:

At home:

- Send your child to school every day, well-rested and fed, with a positive comment about him/her
- Take an active interest in your child's schooling and let your child know how much you care about it (find out what happened at school each day and how your child felt about it)
- Learn as much as you can about being an effective parent (about parenting skills)
- Try not to let your past schooling experiences (if negative) keep you from supporting and encouraging your child's education
- Be sure there are a variety of interesting reading materials available in your home -- spend time reading and writing with your child
- Take your child to the local library and encourage reading for fun

- Provide an area in your home where your child can keep her/his school things and, if possible, where s/he can do school work without continual interruption (if this is not possible, find ways to involve the family in the homework or similar activities, or in being supportive of the child's need to do homework)

- Show pride in your child's work and display it in special places in your home

- Establish regular blocks of time when you expect your child to do school work

- Follow up with your child and monitor homework -- be consistent in your expectations

- As appropriate, work with your child on school-related projects on a regular basis

- Include your child in daily household tasks and make the connection between things learned in school and their application in daily life

At school:

- Establish a positive relationship with your child's teacher early in the school year and maintain it by:
  - Meeting with the teacher and other school personnel as regularly as possible
  - Calling, writing notes or stopping in at school (on the way to work or on a lunch break)
  - Never missing a parent-teacher conference and using the opportunity to share information with the teacher

- Ask for ways you can work with your child at home to reinforce what the teacher has done in class

- Make sure that communication flows 2-ways, both from school to home and from home to school:
  - Exercise your right and responsibility to voice your questions and concerns in constructive ways
  - Recognize and acknowledge how difficult teachers' jobs can be
  - Take every opportunity to let school personnel know when they are doing a good job

- Volunteer to help on school projects, events, fieldtrips, etc., if possible

- Volunteer to help in the classroom if possible

- Become an active member of the school's Parent Club, PTA or PTO
- Participate in school governance by serving on the school's Parent or School Advisory Committee, the school management or governance team

In the community:

- Network with other parents in support of the school and the provision of quality education for your children
- Encourage other community members to support effective education in your community (through your church, social club, business, employment, neighborhood, city or state government)
- Hold high expectations both for your child and for the school

Key Players: Community Members

It's important for kids to know we support them in their studies -- we have provided space and volunteers to help with homework. --Father David Zegar, St. Alexander's Church

Children, families, and schools form the core of the larger community. Employers and community-based service groups are becoming ever more aware that schools and families need their help to be able to do an effective job of educating children to become productive community members.

As a concerned, involved community member, you:

- o Support your local school
- o Participate in school events
- o Volunteer for school committees
- o Help with fundraisers
- o Use your forum (business, church, social service club) to help publicize school activities
- o Donate inkind services (food for parent meetings; other merchandise for incentives/rewards; etc.)
- o Adopt a school on which to concentrate efforts to increase parent involvement
- o Support and facilitate employees' involvement in their children's schooling:
  - Allow parent groups to meet in your building during lunch, after work or in the evenings
  - Provide parent education seminars/workshops
  - As an employer, stagger schedules as necessary so parents can attend important school events, parent/teacher conferences, etc.

Key Players: Children

Ignorance doesn't kill you, but it makes you sweat a lot. --Haitian Proverb

Luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity. --Oprah Winfrey

As a student, you:

- Take school seriously
- See your parents, teachers and administrators as people who can help you learn and prepare for what you want to do in the future
- Talk openly with them about your interests and concerns
- Tell your parents and other family members about your day at school
- Always deliver notices from school
- Bring home school work and show it to your family
- Set aside a regular time to do your homework
- Ask for help with your homework when you need it
- Spend time reading with and to your parents and other family members
- Encourage your parents and other family members to come with you to school events

III. Implementation: "How to" Sample Activities

Gathering Information from Parents

What Parents Want to Know

Most parents have numerous questions and concerns about their children's schooling. Unfortunately, they don't always feel comfortable asking or know whom to ask. Opportunities for open communication -- especially for raising issues of concern -- are not readily available in most schools. Also, parents from cultures or socioeconomic groups that differ from those of the majority of school staff may not understand or feel comfortable with the communication mechanisms (opportunities) that are offered by the school.

The more a school can reach out to parents for input, the better job the school will be able to do in educating children. Schools must not mistake parents' reticence for indifference. All too often, schools view minority and poor families as "difficult-to-reach." This comes as a surprise to most of those families, who often view the school teachers and administrators as "difficult to get a hold of."

We based our demonstration parent involvement project on the results of interviews with parents, teachers and administrators in the two schools in which we worked. Parent concerns in the inner-city, predominantly Black school included:

- Appropriate discipline by teachers (including better ways to control student fighting)
- Appropriate discipline at home
- Need for a drug-free, safe environment
- More interaction between parents and teachers:
  - Better communication about how a child is doing
  - More information about what parents can do in school
  - Better teacher response to parental concerns
- More direction to help kids learn to socialize better
- More love and understanding shown by teachers towards children
- More information about the school system (parents lack information, are afraid to ask, don't trust the system)
- Poverty, unemployment, and lack of good basic skills among parents and relatives

Among the rural Hispanic parents with whom we worked, issues were somewhat different, a clear reflection of cultural differences and priorities:

- Lack of spoken and written English skills and good basic skills (limits parents' ability to communicate with teachers, willingness to participate in school and parent activities, and ability to help child with homework)
- Lack of a tradition of being involved in the child's education (especially fathers)
- Need for teachers to command more respect from students
- Need for better diagnosis of potential learning disabilities or handicaps (i.e., difficulty pronouncing certain letters/sounds)
- Lack of information about school registration, start dates and other policies (notes sent home were not routinely translated to Spanish)
- Lack of information on how to help children with homework
- Need for more frequent contact with outreach worker
- Need for earlier meeting times in evening (due to hard physical labor and early morning work schedules)
- Need for more teacher aides in the classroom (both Anglo and Hispanic, but especially Hispanic)
- Need for information/training for children on personal safety

We also found that parents have other questions about the school system itself, but had never asked them directly because they didn't know whom to ask. These included:

- How are the principal and teachers selected?
- What did staff members know about the community before coming here?
- Who decides what to teach?
- How are budget priorities decided? (Why was money found immediately to build a fence when there was a gang-related incident and yet there was never enough money for books in the library?)
- Are any nurses available in school?
- What kind of training do staff get regarding cultural awareness?

When schools reach out to families to request their opinions and assistance, they must be prepared for a variety of issues to emerge. It is not uncommon to uncover disturbing personal family problems, ranging from alcoholism and other drug abuse to child abuse to separation and divorce. Understanding the child's family situation will help the school do a better job of educating the child. To work in partnership with families and help them provide and maintain stable home learning environments so that children can and do learn well, schools need staff who can link families to other community-based services and opportunities as the need arises.

Ways to Gather Information

As we've noted before, communication is a two-way street. There are several ways for schools to find out what kinds of information parents need and what issues most concern them:

- Parent interest surveys (written)
- Parent "Report Cards" (parents periodically evaluate the school and express their concerns and interests)
- Personal interviews (preferably at home, but these can be conducted at other mutually acceptable locations)
- Group brainstorming meetings
- 24-hr. phone message recorder
- Call-in talk shows on local radio stations
- Personal contact before and after school

Parent Surveys or "Report Cards"

Thomas Hoerr, Principal of the New City School in St. Louis, makes it a practice to poll parents periodically with a very brief written survey, customized to the particular time of year or topic of concern: in the fall to learn new parents' initial reactions; after the first parent-teacher conference; in the spring to gather information about school values, strengths and weaknesses of particular programs, administration helpfulness, etc.

He started this practice with something as simple as:

"I'm happy about _____."

"I'm unhappy about _____."

"I'd like to know _____." (Hoerr 1989)

This minimal request for information or something a little more detailed such as a form that requires checking off levels of agreement with statements about specific topics can provide school personnel with a quick temperature check on parents' perceptions of how they're doing. It also gives parents a sense of involvement and partnership in their children's schooling.

Parent survey information can be collected in a variety of ways. It can be:

- Included in the registration packet
- Sent home with children
- Mailed home
- Administered on the spot at the school's openhouse or at any group meeting

Mailing is expensive, and in areas where families tend to move frequently it may not be effective. Sending forms home with children is not always a reliable method either, but can be effective if you build in a contest among classrooms or some other reward system for returning the form. Incorporating the form into some other group activity provides the greatest return rate, but omits anyone who did not attend. With the proper publicity, however, and after parents see that you do respond to their ideas and concerns, you may find that parents are pleased to be asked their opinions and have the opportunity to provide some input into their children's schooling.

Parent Interest Surveys

As you establish your parent involvement program and begin to decide what activities to offer, a parent interest survey can be very helpful. It can be as simple as the following five questions, or more detailed as illustrated further below.

Parent Interest Survey

This project belongs to you and your child. Help us provide you with the best information possible! **Please** take a minute to **tell us what you want:**

1. These are some of the "top" topics mentioned by parents.
   Please rate them: 1 = highest priority, 5 = lowest.

   _____ developing self-esteem in children

   _____ positive parenting (child behavior and discipline)

   _____ getting a new/better job

   _____ being a single parent

   _____ alcohol and other drug use prevention
   (What I can do for my child)

2. Is there something else you'd really like to have more information on?
   _____

3. When is the best time for a meeting for you? Day of week: _____
   Time: _____a.m._____p.m.

4. If a series of meetings is needed, how often should we meet?
   _____

5. Realistically, will you come to a special meeting (or group gathering/workshop) on one of these topics? Yes ___ No ___

   If no, what would work better for you?_____

Please send this back by _____. Thanks so much for your help!!

Parent Involvement Program Survey

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Children in School(s)

Name of Child	Age	School

I would like to learn more about:

___ things I can do to help my child in school.
___ how to help in the school and classroom.

I would be interested in:

___ just getting to know more parents in the community.
___ being in a fun group that gets me out of the house.
___ craft classes.
___ learning more about what's going on in the community for me and my family.

If a group of parents got together, I would like to talk about:

___ ways to talk and listen to my children and work out problems.
___ ways to get my children to do what they need to do.
___ ways to manage so that my children get good food and health care.
___ ways to feel more comfortable talking with teachers, counselors, doctors, nurses . . . all the people who work with my children.
___ ways to deal with living in a community of many different cultures and a chance to learn more about each other.
___ ways to deal with my children about big things like life, death, love, sex, work, responsibility, education, money, trust, honesty, prejudice, drugs, alcohol, etc.

I could go to meetings:

___ in the morning.
___ in the afternoon.
___ in the evening.
___ on weekends.

I think the best place for parents to get together is:

___ in a home.
___ at the school.
___ community center/library.
___ other: _____

Return this form to your child's teacher by: _____

From Lyons, Peggy, Robbins, Al & Smith, Allen. (1983). Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools. pp. 168-69

Parent Interviews

Individual parent interviews may seem a luxury, but they serve two very important purposes:

1. They can provide the school with invaluable information about the homes and neighborhoods of the children and families it serves, and

2. they can be a powerful affirmation to the families that school staff care enough to meet them on their own turf.

Although some families may prefer not to have school visitors in their homes, for most the personal contact and extra effort expended by school personnel to come to their homes is appreciated. (We have found this to be true across different ethnic groups also.) When scheduling home visits, if the outreach specialist or teacher encounters reluctance, every effort should be made to meet the parent or other family member at another location of their choosing.

The following provides examples of the types of questions you might want to ask in a parent home interview. Be sure to create questions that fit the issues most important to your school and community. In addition to relevance, the key is to keep the interview informal and friendly, focused on the mutual purpose you share with the family: helping to ensure the child's success in school. Always start the conversation with a positive comment or two about the child. Also, be sensitive to parents' schedules. This sample list is rather long. You don't need to learn everything you might want to know in one visit. Prioritize your questions to gather the information you need most.

Parent Interview

1. What do think the kids in this community think about school?

2. How does _____ (name of child) feel about going to school?

   - How does s/he show you this?
   - What do you think are his/her reasons for feeling this way?
   - What about your other children -- how do they feel about school?

3. What kinds of things do you and _____ do together in the evening?

4. Do you have any concerns about _____'s schooling?

   - If so, what are they?

5. Do you have comments or questions about:

   - the teachers(s):
   - the classroom:
   - the aides:
   - the homework:
   - the principal:
   - or _____:

6. During the school year, if you have a question or concern about _____'s schooling, what do you usually do?

   - About school work:
   - About _____'s behavior:
   - About school policy:

7. What kinds of questions would you like to ask _____'s teacher or the principal?

   - Have you ever asked him/her?
   - If not, what kept you from it?

40

- (Probe: Do you feel you can call the teacher or the principal whenever you have a question?)
- How often did you talk to _____'s teacher this past year?

8. What would you like to see done differently at _____ School?

9. Have there been any School Board or District policies you were aware of that concerned you?
   - If so, did you know where to go with your concerns?
   - What did you do?

10. Are you aware of programs offered at the school-- PTA, parent nights, Family Math nights, etc.?
   - Have you ever gone?
   - If not, what kept you from it?
   - What is your opinion of their usefulness?

11. Have you found parent/teacher conferences useful?
   - If so, in what ways?
   - If not, why not?

12. What do you think your child's strengths are? (either in school work or in getting along with other students and the staff)

13. Can you share some area you've seen your child improve in during the last school year? (i.e., telling you about friends, school, teachers; improved social skills -- getting along with friends and teachers better; homework)

14. What do you think helped make those improvements possible?

15. What areas does your child need improvement in? (school work or socially)

16. What do you think would be helpful for the teacher to do?

17. Has anyone ever shared ideas on how to get involved in helping your child learn?
   - Would you be interested in some ideas?

18. What information would you like from the teacher so that you could help more?

- What's the best way to get that information to you?

19. If there were special meetings with other parents about topics parents requested, would you be interested?

- Realistically, would you come?
- If not, what would keep you from it?
- What would make it easier for you to participate?

20. Do you think other parents would participate?

- If not, why not?
- What could we do to make it more attractive for them?

21. What topics would <u>you</u> like to have parent meetings focus on?

22. Where should we hold these meetings? (Where would be most convenient, most comfortable?)

23. What time of day is best?

- And what day of the week?
- How often should we meet?

24. Are there other activities you'd be interested in?

- If so, what kinds of things?

25. What kind of event would be a good way to start the project? (something fun and interesting)

26. When is the best time to contact you?

Outreach Strategies That Work

The key factor in successful programs is to take the schools to the community. Get out of the school buildings and go into the communities. --National School Public Relations Association, Helping Parents Help Their Kids

Ways to Encourage 2-way Communication Between Home and School

Once you have reached out to request parent and family input, there are a variety of other strategies you can use to establish and maintain communication with as many families as possible:

- Regular personal phone calls from teachers and/or administrative staff to parents, for positive as well as negative reasons
- 24-hour telephone message recorders, so parents can leave messages for teachers any time of day or night
- 24-hour recorded message service, so parents and students can call for school announcements and messages on topics of particular concern
- Dial-your-assignment recordings, so students and parents can call in at any time to check on homework assignments without having to speak directly to the teacher
- Dial-a-teacher -- selected teachers are available for questions on homework over the phone during certain hours of weekday evenings
- Homework hotline (TV or radio call-in show for help on homework or on specific subjects, or phone line to school, library, or other location -- run by teachers, aides, students, parents or community members)
- Parenting hotline (phone hotline or radio call-in show for advice on specific parenting issues)

These examples of uses of readily available technology to improve communication flow between home and school have been implemented quite successfully in a number of different programs. However, any use of technology, rather than interpersonal communication, requires care in introducing it to the community being served. Demonstrations and appropriate publicity (including personal contact to explain the use of the technology as necessary) should be employed to ensure the effectiveness of the technology for all groups. If the community is bilingual or multilingual, messages must be available in the various languages and the technology demonstrated and promoted by respected representatives.

Recruitment Strategies: Reaching Parents

The key here is to try to think creatively of as many different ways as possible to get the message out and bring the people in. To do this effectively, you must know the communities you want to reach, what modes of communication are most used within them, and what items or activities they hold in high regard. If you have selected your parent coordinator/community outreach specialist from the community you are recruiting, that person can identify the recruitment strategies that will work best. If, however, you are trying to engage different groups, you'll need to request help from parents and community leaders to determine the best ways to spread the information and encourage participation.

If you are using written materials to spark interest and recruit participants, be sure to make the materials visually attractive and easy to read. Word them so that the activities sound interesting and fun, not like a parental obligation. Also, always present the information in English and in other languages used in the communities.

Here are some common, and perhaps not so common, ways to recruit parents for parent involvement activities:

- Send fliers home (see samples)
- Publicize through school and local newsletters and neighborhood newspapers
- Use local popular radio and television programs to announce the activities
- Use publicly respected figures to invite participation
- Identify other appropriate public forums in the communities you want to involve, such as churches, social service clubs, recreational facilities, shopping centers, laundromats -- put announcements in their bulletins and fliers on their bulletin boards or ask representatives of those organizations to make public announcements to encourage participation
- Identify local private businesses and industries that employ many of the parents you wish to reach -- request their cooperation with bulletins, announcements, and fliers or notices in paycheck envelopes
- Schedule a community-wide event (rally, reading celebration, etc.) to inaugurate (or renew) your program of activities
- Schedule events and meetings at times appropriate for the community (after you've polled them through a survey or brainstorming meeting or have consulted several community representatives)

REMINDER!!

Parents Of Third Graders:

YOU'RE INVITED

WHAT: A Make–Your–Own–Book Holiday Party

WHEN: Tuesday, December 5th, at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Humboldt School

It's the holiday season! Please join us for a fun evening of book–making! Bring your child. We'll help our children make their own personal books. Use the book your child creates as a special gift or save it to read at home.

Come join in the fun! Inventing and decorating the books! Every child is creative –– Come and help your child's talents grow!

Hope to see you there!

Parent Involvement Project
Dapo Sobomehin and Karen Reed Wikelund
Northwest Regional Educational Lab
275-9571

Don't Forget!!!

DON'T FORGET!

A SPECIAL INVITATION

DEAR PARENTS:

If you have a son or daughter in second or third grade at Cornelius School -- YOU ARE INVITED to come with your children to A SPECIAL PARTY for Hispanic parents:

WHAT:	**A SPECIAL BOOK-MAKING PARTY**
WHEN:	This Wednesday, April 11, 1990
WHAT TIME:	At 6:30 p.m.
WHERE:	Cornelius School Mrs. White's Room

Come have fun with your children! We invite you to spend a pleasant hour. helping your children make special little books.

Afterwards, you will take home a personal book. You can use it as a reminder of the party to read with your children or as a gift for someone special.

Each child has imagination and talent. Come and encourage your children -- help their talents grow!

Hope to see you Wednesday!

Grace Godinez and Karen Reed Wikelund

Cornelius Hispanic Parent Program
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
357-0184 or 275-9590

(This invitation is translated into Spanish on the other side of this page.)

* Hope to see you tonight!

No se olviden!

UNA INVITACION ESPECIAL

ESTIMADOS PADRES DE FAMILIA:

Si tienen un hijo o una hija en segundo o tercer grado en Cornelius School -- LES INVITAMOS A USTEDES a que vengan con sus hijos a UNA FIESTA ESPECIAL para padres de familia hispanos:

QUE:	**UNA FIESTA ESPECIAL PARA HACER LIBRITOS**
CUANDO:	Este miércoles, 11 de abril, 1990
A QUE HORAS:	A las 6:30 de la tarde
DONDE:	Cornelius School Salón de clase de la Sra. White

Vengan a divertirse con sus hijos! Les invitamos a pasar una hora agradable, ayudando a sus niños a hacer libritos especiales.

Después, llevarán a casa un libro personal. Lo pueden usar como recuerdo de la fiesta para leer con sus niños o como regalo para alguien especial.

Cada niño tiene imaginación y talento. Vengan a darles ánimo a sus hijos -- a que crescan sus talentos!

Les esperamos el miércoles!

Grace Godinez y Karen Reed Wikelund

Programa de Padres de Familia Hispanos de Cornelius
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
357-0184 - ó - 275-9590

(Esta invitación está traducida al inglés al otro lado de esta hoja.)

* Esperamos verlos esta noche!

- Schedule events and meetings (including parent-teacher conferences, if necessary) at locations convenient for the community -- use a community center, church basement, or company lunchroom (during lunch or after work) rather than always scheduling everything at school (parents you most want to reach may be too uncomfortable to come)

- Establish regular times and locations when staff will be available to the community for informal contact, for example:

  - Walk the neighborhood one Saturday a month

  - Spend one Saturday morning per month at a specific location in the community where many people gather (the local supermarket, union hall, a church or park recreation center)

- Be accessible and visible in the community -- attend community events, shop in local stores -- even if (especially if) you don't live in the community

- Recruit and train a core group of parents to make phone calls and/or visit other families at home to recruit more participants or to hand out information or materials

- Offer a meal at the initial meeting and refreshments at other gatherings

- Provide transportation if needed

- Provide child care if needed

- Offer door prizes (donated from local supportive businesses)

- Have a raffle as part of the event

- Include a social activity (rather than all business)

- Include a performance by the children or something they are interested in doing (they'll bring their parents)

- Schedule a "make-and-take" activity that parents and children can do together and take home

Retention Strategies: Keeping Parents Involved

Once you've reached them, how do you keep them interested and involved? If you've done your homework well and have gathered representative information from parents and other community members and have incorporated that input into the design of your parent involvement activities, you will have less trouble retaining people than if you have imposed your view of the world with no input from potential participants. However, you probably will still have uneven participation and discouraging moments. Parents are busy people. As we all know, in today's world there are many distractions and problems to be dealt with on a daily basis.

Here are some strategies to help you maintain interest in your parent involvement program:

- Get to know parents as individuals, be friendly and establish personal relationships of trust
- When approaching parents about their child, always have something positive to share about the child
- Offer activities that are based on what parents want to know or do (even if that means addressing needs that are not directly school-related)
- Be sensitive to local customs and values and to regular church or club meeting times and special holiday observations (for example, Wednesday night prayer meeting or choir practice, or the 12th of December, the Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe)
- Always ask for and accept feedback from all key players
- Build a sense of ownership in the program by having representatives of all key players participate in planning, reviewing and weighing feedback and revising the program as needed
- Take pictures (always asking if it's okay, in case parents' legal status or cultural beliefs make it unacceptable) and display them in the classroom, the parents' lounge, the school halls or offices, or in a school/community scrapbook. Seeing pictures of their children and of themselves helps people to identify more personally with the school environment as a place where they belong.
- Frequently show your appreciation for participation and contributions, through display charts or scrapbooks, special tags and ribbons, thank you notes, announced acknowledgements and recognition of volunteers and special efforts

School Climate

If parents are to feel comfortable entering their child's school and offering to be a partner in his/her schooling, the school climate must be welcoming and friendly. The surroundings and the administrative policies must communicate that the school views parents as partners and values their assistance.

Here are some things you can do to ensure a positive, welcoming school environment:

- Place a welcome sign on the door (if appropriate, make sure the sign is in all the languages represented by the students and their families)
- Train all staff to welcome parents openly and in a friendly manner and make sure that school policy regarding parent visitors is clearly understood and implemented by all staff
- Set up a Parent Center or lounge where parents can drop in, have a cup of coffee or soft drink, and talk with each other or with teachers and other staff
- Furnish the Parent Center with resources of interest to parents -- materials on parenting skills, information on local opportunities for adult education and training, materials currently in use in the school, etc.
- Establish a monthly time when parents of particular grades can meet with the principal or with the teachers (a breakfast hour, for example, or a late afternoon coffee break -- being careful to establish times that will fit the work schedules of major local employers)
- Have parent or grandparent luncheons or dinners at which parents can interact socially with school staff
- Establish a policy which allows greater flexibility in times teachers are available for parent-teacher conferences (for example, if necessary, the principal will take over a teacher's responsibilities while s/he meets with a parent)

Social Events

Get Acquainted Party

In addition to traditional school events to which parents are invited (such as Back-to-School night, Openhouse, the December holiday play or bazaar, etc.), be sure to plan a social evening for parents early in the school year. This should be something fun, with little or no business to accomplish. It's an opportunity for staff and parents to interact socially, as well as for parents to get to know each other better.

If possible, get local businesses to donate food (have a pizza party, for example, or an ice cream feed). Have door prizes (also donated by local retailers). Set up a variety of games -- with pairs and teams of people who've just met, or play bingo or other group board games.

Keep the evening short and sweet -- a little interactive fun for everyone. Then, the next time parents drop their children off and run into the assistant principal with whom they shared a pizza or tossed a balloon, they'll recall the evening and may feel more open to ask a question or give a suggestion.

Be sure to provide name tags so that everyone can meet each other. You may also want to have a sign-in sheet which you will later distribute to parents (if they agree) so that they can follow-up and contact each other if they wish.

"Make and Take" Parties

Having a party where parents and children work together on a project they can take home with them is not a new idea. However, it remains a particularly effective way to bring parents together and give them a positive experience as part of their child's schooling. If you schedule this around a holiday or special occasion, such as Thanksgiving or Mother's Day, the item they make can be used to decorate the table at home or can be given as a gift.

In addition to having a fun party, you can build educational objectives into the project. For example, a popular activity in our demonstration project was the Make-Your-Own-Book Party, at which parents worked with their children to create a book about each child and his/her family. Through this activity children and parents associate books with fun and meaningful (personal) information. And they are encouraged to read the book they made to others in the family and neighborhood after they take it home.

We provided the materials -- punched pages with open-ended questions on them and room for drawings or collages, heavier colored cover pages and binders (yarn, string, ribbon, plastic chicken rings, etc.), paints and crayons, glitter, cotton, feathers, etc., and glue. Families became very engrossed in their creations. At the end we took pictures and the books went home, with encouragement to add pages from time to time on other favorite family topics.

Another topic for making individual books is special customs or holidays. This activity can be particularly useful in schools which serve ethnically mixed communities. Through this activity, parents and children can have fun together while sharing information about special practices or holidays across different ethnic groups.

Parents' Night Out

Faye Palmerton and Roy Pittman of the TLC/TnT Program based at Portsmouth Middle School in Portland, Oregon (co-sponsored by Portland Public Schools and the Portland Parks Bureau), have created a very successful self-esteem promoting program for students and their families in inner North/Northeast Portland. Getting to know the parents and getting them involved is just one part of their program. The program recognizes that parents have many demands made on their time and are rarely invited to an evening "out." So, as one of their parent activities, the TLC/TnT program makes it a practice to reward parents with their own night out.

With the collaboration of a local well-known restaurant, the program invites parents out to dinner. No children are allowed -- it is a special event just for parents. It is also an opportunity for parents to socialize with other parents and with program and other school staff without any formal agenda. (For example, the principal comes to dinner, too, and is thus available for any questions parents wish to ask.)

Staff send hand-written invitations. To encourage parents to attend, they follow up with phone calls or home visits if there is no phone. If child care is a problem, the program may help arrange it, and parents arrange for transportation with other parents. These nights out are a tremendous success and make parents feel special.

If your budget is tight and local business donations are not forthcoming, a parents' night out does not have to be held at a restaurant. An evening of popcorn and videos at a local community center or at the school can be a special event just for parents. If child care is a problem for many of your parents, you may be able to set up separate videos for the children with volunteer babysitters (from the local senior citizens center or a high school service club, for example).

Lunch (Breakfast/Dinner) with the Principal

Offering a meal, however simple, makes it easier for busy parents to feel they can participate in school meetings. Linda Wakefield, Principal at Humboldt School (Portland, Oregon) invites 10 different parents to lunch each month. (For some, it may be a "box dinner" after work.) There is no agenda for the meal, simply a chance to sit and chat and get to know each other better. These lunches are one way to help rebuild a sense of community in and around the school.

Meetings and Workshops

The Utility of Workshops

The meeting or workshop forum is a useful one for sharing information with a large number of people, rather than having to go door-to-door or meet in small groups in parents' homes. It also offers people the opportunity for face-to-face personal interaction, which can help expand and cement positive relationships between the school and home as well as among parents.

Although there are many other ways to get information to parents, group meetings or workshops still seem to be the method of choice of many schools. When they attract sufficient numbers, they are an efficient method. Unfortunately, as more mothers have joined the workforce and more children are being raised by single parents, it is (understandably) becoming more difficult to entice parents to school meetings. If you have taken the suggestions in this Guide to heart and are basing your parent involvement efforts on solid knowledge of and communication with the community, then the group meetings or workshops you offer are more likely to succeed. The following pointers and examples can help ensure that success.

Conducting Workshops

Successful parent workshops do not require professional workshop presenters. If your budget permits, bringing in a specialist on a particular topic can give your school and community a shot in the arm. However, you can also conduct very successful, informational and enjoyable workshops or meetings without a big budget or an expert who just flew in for the occasion. Sometimes, the most effective presenter is someone who has the respect of the community and with whom people have a shared experience (such as single parenting, for example). We urge you to explore local resources and talent when planning a workshop or topical group meeting.

Rules of Thumb for Workshop Planning

1. Include representatives of the key players (especially the intended participants) in the planning
2. Select topics of high priority for the intended participants (meaningful content)
3. Choose presenters who can communicate well with the intended participants
4. Select activities that require active participation and result in some tangible outcome or product
5. Check community calendars and customs to determine preferred days and times and schedule accordingly

6. Choose a location that is convenient and comfortable for the participants

7. Use a variety of media and forums to publicize the workshop, and make sure the message is simple, clear and personal

8. Do intensive personal outreach -- personal invitations, follow-up phone calls or home visits, reminders (from other parents as well as staff)

9. Provide food

10. Provide child care and transportation if needed

11. Greet participants personally, introduce everyone, and recognize parents' efforts to participate

12. Keep the program short and allow time for questions (total time: 1 to 1-1/2 hrs.)

13. Ask participants to evaluate the workshop

Generic guides to workshop presentation abound. Handy checklists for workshops with and for parents include "Model Workshop: Planning Is the Key" in the NSPRA Kit Helping Parents Help Their Kids, and the first chapter of *Getting Involved: Workshops for Parents*, by Ellen Frede (1984). Although Frede's workbook was written for working with parents of preschoolers, it can be a helpful resource. In addition to her concise checklists to use in planning, leading and evaluating parent workshops, the rest of the workbook gives examples of workshop topics, formats and exercises, some of which can be easily adapted for use with parents of elementary age children (attitudes about learning, reading, writing, use of television, and problem-solving, for example).

Alternatives to Workshops

If, even after you have done everything "right," attendance is a problem, there are ways to use the workshop forum to reach a larger audience. With the proliferation of VCR's and the advent of excellent quality reproduction by camcorders, one of the most promising ideas is to videotape the workshop presentation and/or discussion. The tape can then be:

- Made available on loan to parents who were unable to attend
- Used for small group gatherings in people's homes
- Broadcast on local television or Cable TV

If video equipment is unavailable, some presentations lend themselves well to audiotaping and can then be broadcast over popular local radio stations.

Also, school staff or parents can summarize the workshops for articles in the school or neighborhood newsletter. Audio and video tapes, however, have the advantage of reaching people who aren't likely to read the information.

- Workshops and meetings are not the only or necessarily the best way to reach parents. Don't get stuck trying to find a way to get more parents to attend workshops. If that forum doesn't fit your community, take another look at how people get their information. Enlist parents to help you think of other ways to communicate that might be more compatible with people's schedules and customs. Always use a variety of means to provide information. (As a start, you might review the checklist of outreach strategies presented earlier, for other ideas.)

Workshop Topics

The list of potential workshop or meeting topics is nearly endless (as illustrated by a look back at the questions parents want to know, presented earlier in this section.) The critical element in selecting topics to present is to be certain that they represent the interests and concerns of parents in your school or community, not what you think parents should be concerned about.

In the pages that follow we present some sample activities and/or resources for some of the most basic topics for parent involvement programs. Use these as a starting point, but please don't let them limit you! The more you brainstorm within your school and community -- using your own creativity and that of the families living there, the more relevant and successful your parent involvement activities will be. The goal is ownership: All the key players must feel they have a personal investment in the parent involvement program.

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Sample Workshop: Introducing Mainstreet Elementary

(For parents new to the school system
or to this particular school)

Welcome and Introductions:

Warm-up introduction activity: Divide participants (including school staff) into pairs who don't know each other. Give them time to ask each other 2-3 questions (name, something they like about this community, something they like to do), and then have them introduce each other to the group.

Introduce school staff.

School Information:

Briefly present essential information on:

- Hours and attendance
- Safety rules and regulations
- Transportation
- School-year structure (grade periods, vacations, etc.)

Handouts:

School Information List (names and phone numbers of key staff -- who to call about attendance, discipline, school lunches, etc. Be sure to include the parent coordinator/outreach specialist.)

Diagram of School System Structure (including other support organizations, such as PTA/PTO, etc.)

School Calendar

Parents' Rights and Responsibilities

Types of Parent Involvement Activities Offered

Discussion and Sign-up:

Parents' questions, concerns, topics of interest

Sign-up for specific involvement activities

Refreshments

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As an introductory meeting, be sure to keep this brief and allow time for social interaction among parents and staff. Try not to overwhelm people with stacks of written information. The most important handout is the School Information List of names and phone numbers. If you have a pamphlet or booklet about parent involvement (see section IV of Selected References), you may wish to hand that out at this first meeting. If your community is comprised of groups whose first language is not English, make every effort to provide the same information in all the major languages in use. The simple lack of a translator or of written information in one's native language can discourage parents from ever attending a school meeting again. Don't lose them at the start.

Helping at Home Workshops

Of the variety of ways parents can become involved in their children's schooling, working directly with their children at home is the type of involvement which has shown the clearest connection to academic achievement. It also has the greatest potential for continued parent participation. This type of involvement can take several forms, from reading to one's baby, to playing educational games, to the traditional (and often painful) monitoring of homework, to tutoring in specific subject areas. Here we present samples of workshops on home learning activities (not traditional homework-based) and on homework and tutoring activities.

The focus of these sample home learning exercises is on the individual child and what each parent can do easily at home to encourage and stimulate that child's interest in learning. This focus is particularly appropriate for the growing number of families in which both parents work or the head of household is a single parent, because their time for other types of involvement may be limited.

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Home Learning Workshop: You Can Be Your Child's Best Teacher

Says who?!? In this session, parents will learn how easy it is to help mold their children's learning experiences by including them in everyday activities (whether it's measuring ingredients for cooking, drying the dishes, watching TV, taking a walk, talking about the day, or telling or reading a story).

1. Things you like to do with your child

   As the workshop facilitator, lead a group discussion of activities parents do with their children after school, in the evenings, or on weekends. Draw out parents' experiences and interests as a basis for the activities below, stressing the positive values of time spent with one's children.

2. How everyday activities can be learning opportunities

   Use examples from parents' own experiences (#1 above) to show what was (or can be) learned during everyday activities, incorporating the following suggestions:

   a. Talk with your child about the activity -- what you both like or dislike about it; (as appropriate) the steps involved; the reasons for doing it; the results you expect, what actually happens and why; what you might do differently next time; etc.

   b. Listen well to your child -- be sure to give ample time for the child to think about your questions or comments and to express himself or herself before you go on.

c. Ask questions to stimulate his/her thinking: who, what, when, where, how and why questions. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers. You can build other learning experiences into the questions you and your child have yet to answer -- by using other resources, such as a phone book, cookbook, storybook, TV Guide, newspaper, magazine, library, dictionary, encyclopedia, or by making a phone call to consult with someone in your family, church or neighborhood who would know.

Simply modeling behavior that shows how you find out information can be a learning experience for your child. Including him or her in the search for information adds to the experience and begins to give the child skills of his/her own. Even if your child is just learning to read, seeing and hearing you read the cereal box, for example, the comics in the newspaper, or a letter from a relative sets a powerful example.

3. Games you can play

Ask parents for examples of games they play or have seen played with materials found at home. Demonstrate some. Also discuss how daily activities, such as going to the grocery store, can be turned into a game simply by asking questions. (What's the price? How many pieces do you get in a loaf? Which one is bigger? etc.)

a. Collect rocks, beans, buttons, or pennies in a jar. From time to time, guess the number in the jar. Counting and estimating are essential tools in daily life. As occasions arise where something has to be counted or estimated, be sure to include you child in the task so s/he can see the actual use of the skills.

b. Collect words. Teaching children to read includes orienting them toward the written word. Start by showing your child words representing objects that are important to him/her (certain toys, clothing, toothbrush, TV, etc.). Some parents tape index cards (or pieces of scratch paper) with the word on it on objects around the house. As the child learns the word, s/he collects it (takes it off the object and keeps a collection of cards). You can "play" with the cards by occasionally reviewing them with your child.

Once the child has collected a small group of cards, you can play other "games" to practice the words.

c. Cut pictures of the items out of magazines. Even something as simple as looking for pictures and pasting them on the word cards can be fun and effective to reinforce learning the words.

d. Play Concentration. Help your child make a duplicate set of word cards and play the card game "Concentration." (Demonstrate how to play, mixing cards up, turning them face down and having each player search for matching pairs.) Concentration can also be played with numbers, using a regular deck of cards or making your own. Variations on what you match in this game are limitless. It can be fun and useful just as a memory tool, too.

e. Make up a story using the new words your child has collected.

f. Sort the words into groups with common characteristics. This can be simply by color of the object or location of it in the house, or by letters the word contains (beginning, ending, number of letters), etc.

g. Sort canned goods by matching labels. Get your child to help you put away the groceries and turn it into a word skill game. Ask questions about what letter each canned item begins with, or ends with.

4. Read to your child

Discuss the following with parents:

a. Take full advantage of any opportunity to read with your child. Parents, teachers, principals and researchers agree that the more reading that goes on in a family, the better the child will do in school. It is important to have reading material around the house -- magazines, newspapers, catalogs, storybooks, etc. Just a few minutes each evening telling and reading a story together sets the stage for developing an interest in the fun and information that can be had from reading.

5. Write with your child

a. Use any occasion to encourage your child to write, whether it's copying words for the Concentration game, helping to write a note to a sibling or friend, making a grocery list, or writing to a grandmother. Write notes to each other and stick them on the mirror or the refrigerator. Keep track of special occasions, activities or the weather on a calendar. Make writing fun and don't worry about how correct or well-formed it is at first. The usefulness and the fun of writing should be your goals, especially at first.

b. Learn about time and practice writing -- have your child keep track of a day by writing down his/her activities and the time they were done.

6. Go on special outings

Suggest that parents take special outings -- to the library, a park, a street fair, a concert, the zoo, a museum. There are many free places that can be fun learning experiences. Brainstorm with them about their favorites or places they've heard about.

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There are innumerable activities parents can do at home to create an environment that encourages a positive attitude about learning. Section IV of the Selected References for this Guide lists several resources for pamphlets and materials for parents.

The best activities, of course, will be those parents can do easily at home with materials they already have available. Beans, rice grains, pins, leaves, twigs, jars, egg cartons -- all of these can be converted into games or collages which can have an educational outcome. (Remember, doing something fun or well with other family members contributes to the growth of self-esteem.) Use your collective creativity to come up with fun projects.

One of the most fun parent meetings in our parent involvement program was when a community leader and educator, Virginia Phillips, gave a workshop on the home as a learning environment. Parents spent the evening painting their own special jars. As a group we all described the potential uses of jars, and then used them as musical instruments while we made up and sang a song. This evening illustrated the importance of demonstrating games and activities with parents. So seldom do we take time as adults to be playful and creative.

Among the best-known proponents of school-family partnerships, Dorothy Rich (founder of the Home and School Institute) has been producing materials for many years that encourage the important role of parents in their children's education. Rather than focusing on specific homework activities, Rich urges parents to help their children build "megaskills" -- the skills that form the foundation for all other kinds of learning. Megaskills include confidence, responsibility, initiative and perseverance. Her book, MegaSkills: The Power to Change Your Child's Life (1988), offers ideas to parents who want to work on these skills with their children.

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Homework Workshop: What Can You Do?

Many people dreaded homework when they were kids and now approach helping their children with little enthusiasm. In this session, parents will discuss ways they already help their children, easy techniques to encourage kids in their studies and foster positive attitudes about school and homework, and the importance of being in touch with the teacher.

1. Got any homework?

   Start the discussion by asking for examples of parents' daily interactions with their children when they come home from school or when the parent arrives from work. Encourage parents to share their perceptions of the role of homework in the child's progress and what helps to create positive attitudes about homework.

2. Easy ways to encourage good homework attitudes and skills

   Building on examples from parents, describe basic practices any parent can do, no matter what his/her educational background, to help a child with homework. Parents do not need good basic skills to be able to provide the types of encouragement and support outlined below. Mention that studies have shown that parents with limited educations have had a very positive influence on their children's schooling. Discuss the following easy tips:

   a. Always ask to see papers your child brings home. Whether it's homework or not, showing immediate interest in what your child does at school and brings home can have a great impact on his/her attitude about schoolwork.

   b. Try to say something positive about the work.

   c. Set up a special time for homework each day so that your child begins to have a routine that includes a regular time for schoolwork.

   d. If possible, arrange for a special place with good lighting for him/her to do homework (and other quiet activities).

   e. Help your child make sure s/he has the necessary materials to do the homework (pencil, paper, etc.) and encourage him/her to keep them in a special place.

   f. Show an interest in the assignment. Ask your child about it and check periodically to see how s/he is doing with it. What about study habits? Any trouble concentrating? Procrastinating? Talk together about how it's going. If there is a problem, listen to the child's view to try to identify the kind of problem. Does s/he understand the assignment? Is the task too difficult? If necessary, talk with the teacher about it.

g. Encourage your child to finish assignments on time or even early.

3. Help with homework

Demonstrate ways to help with homework without doing the work for the child:

a. Look over the work done. Suggest rethinking if something is not correct. Give clues, but do not do the work for the child.

b. Review assignments by asking questions about the work. This can be done formally or also while talking over dinner. (Check on the plot if the assignment was a story to read; give a quiz on spelling words; review math facts or use flash cards; etc.)

c. Listen carefully and with interest while your child reads to you. If you can, set aside time specifically for this.

d. Show interest by following up later to find out how the work was received or graded and discuss the results. Also watch progress on projects that take place over a period of time and encourage the development of ideas for the project by asking questions.

4. Make contact with the teacher and keep in touch

Ask parents about the nature of their contact with their children's teachers, what has helped them make and maintain contact, and what barriers exist to talking with teachers. Use the group's experiences to consider ways around barriers. Emphasize the importance and value of talking with the child's teachers as a parental right, as well as a responsibility.

Be sure to encourage questions and comments from participating parents, focusing in particular on steps people think are difficult or don't fit their home situation or schedule, and drawing on other's experiences with ways to support their children's homework efforts.

If some parents show interest in improving their own basic skills, make every effort to either link them up with appropriate programs in the community or, if none are available, explore options to provide basic skills training to help parents help their children in school.

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Many teachers appreciate having parents review and reinforce what they have taught in school. However, simply going over what was done often ends in boredom (and sometimes in confusion). Creating complementary activities for parents to do with their children, while preferred, requires more time and creativity than many teachers are able to give. A useful option has been created by Joyce Epstein of the Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins University (Nov. 1987).

Epstein, a leader in the field of parent involvement, and her colleagues have conducted numerous studies on the effects of teachers' practices of involving parents in learning activities at home. Based on the results of that research, they developed a process and materials called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS). Prototypic materials are available for teachers to use to involve parents in helping with Math homework and hands-on Science homework (elementary school - Level 3). Materials are also available to organize parents or other volunteers to discuss art appreciation and social studies (American Art, World Cultures, and Government and Citizen Participation) at the middle school level.

Family Reading: Throw a Story-Telling Party

One way to encourage family reading activities is to throw a story-telling party. Telling stories is a family activity which can cut across many different cultural groups. Even when stories aren't formally recognized as being "told," family members usually have some anecdotes and memories they can share. As the accompanying handout notes, story-telling is a useful activity for a number of reasons: It helps build children's language skills, while reinforcing their sense of family and self-esteem, and encourages their imaginations and motivation to read stories.

As a special attraction, invite someone known in the community as a good story teller. In addition to that "performance," be sure you demonstrate and have parents and children practice some of the suggestions you want them to try at home. Engaging participants in something hands-on and active is essential to make the workshop enjoyable and memorable. Written handouts are nearly useless unless you make the activities come to life. Once parents have tried them out and experienced a fun interaction with their child, or have ironed out a problem about "exactly how" to do something, they are far more likely to use and adapt the idea at home.

We used the flier and handout on the following pages when we held our story-telling party. The school provided box-dinners, which parents had to reserve in advance. The event was a big success. Some parents turned out who had never attended one of our parent activities before.

Of course there are <u>many</u> other activities you can do to encourage family reading and writing. This is an area rich with potential. (For starters, see the lists of suggestions for teachers and principals to use in "Helping Parents Help Their Children Become Literate," by Nancy Mavrogenes (1990).)

Don't Forget!

PARENTS OF THIRD GRADERS:

YOUR DINNER HAS BEEN RESERVED!

We're glad you'll be joining us for **an evening of story telling, food and fun!**

Hear **Julianne Johnson**, star of many Portland theater productions!

Learn new ways to get your children excited about reading.

And find out about fun things to do this summer!

WHAT: **A STORY-TELLING PARTY**

WHEN: Wednesday, May 23, 1990, at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Humboldt School Library

Come with your child to hear some good stories.
Come tell one of <u>your</u> favorite family stories, too.

We look forward to seeing you **<u>tonight!</u>**

Principal Linda Wakefield
and

Dapo Sobomehin and Karen Reed Wikelund
Parent Involvement Project
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
275-9571

Special Attraction – Julianne Johnson, a familiar face in Portland theater productions, will demonstrate the art (and fun!) of story telling. Julianne recently starred as Iyaloja (Mother of the Market) in the New Rose Theatre and Northwest Afrikan American Ballet presentation of *Death and the King's Horseman*. She has appeared in numerous other plays in Portland, including *Rap Master Ronnie*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *The Resurrection of Lady Lester* (in which she played Billie Holiday). You may have heard Julianne sing around town -- she's the lead singer with the Swingline Cubs.

Story Telling -- What For?

Families have been telling stories since the beginning of time. Why? Stories pass on the family history. Stories instill values and traditions in children. Stories are fun. (Try to imagine what it was like before television and radio!)

Even today it can still be fun to sit down and tell stories with your family. And telling stories together can really help your children with their school work, especially with reading.

- Telling stories together helps children understand how much you care about them -- it's good for their self-esteem.
- You are using language in fun and memorable ways. It helps them see the pleasure in words.
- Telling family histories builds a stronger sense of family and family traditions. Children are building memories they'll draw upon throughout their lives, and especially when they become parents too.
- Telling stories builds children's language skills and vocabulary. They learn to use language appropriately and in ways that are meaningful to them. This helps build better reading skills.
- Telling stories sparks children's imaginations. This can lead to wanting to read books.

Here are some fun activities to do with your children. Try taking 10 minutes without TV and see what happens:

1. Start a storytelling notebook of original family tales or family history.
2. Try a "serial" story, where each family member adds a line -- a new twist, taking turns.
3. After making up a good story, have your child write it down.
4. Take dictation while your child is telling a story, then read it back together. Have the family illustrate it and save it for the family notebook.
5. Pick topics, favorite fairy tales, or real life stories of interest to your children and take them to the library to look up books about them. Your librarian will be glad to help you find things they're interested in.

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Discipline Workshop: The "D" Word

"Discipline" means different things to different people. In this session parents will share their concerns about discipline and learn about school codes, effective discipline strategies to use at home, and school and community resources available to them when a problem arises.

1. Discipline: What is it?

   In group discussion, draw out parents' definitions of "discipline," how they practice it, the problems they've encountered, and how they view the school's role in handling discipline problems. Allow time for parents to describe their experiences and concerns, but channel the discussion so that you discuss parents' suggestions about strategies and resources at the appropriate times later in the session.

2. School codes and rules

   Ask the group what they know about the school's discipline code, and discuss the school's rules as understood by parents.

   Hand out copies of the local school's rules. (For example, Portland Public Schools has both a small, pocket-sized card summarizing their discipline policy and a "Handbook on Student Responsibilities, Rights and Discipline.") Discuss what is expected of students and levels of disciplinary action.

3. Whose responsibility is it? Family discipline strategies

   Where does the family's responsibility end and the school's begin? Can such a line be drawn? Neither home nor school can do it alone. Lead a discussion on family strategies for fostering the child's development of self-confidence, self-control, and appropriate social behavior.

   a. What works for you? Ask parents to share their positive experiences with discipline. Refer back to the initial group discussion and build on parents own strategies. This can form the basis for future parent mutual support activities and networking.

   b. "Effective family" concept -- Briefly introduce Reginald Clark's research on poor Black and Hispanic families whose children succeed, paying special attention to how the effective family deals with discipline. For example, such families have clearly understood standards and household rules which are enforced consistently, but the balance of parents' energy is not spent on keeping the kids "in line," but rather on identifying useful learning activities for them.

   c. "Sponsored independence" as a goal -- the importance of being authoritative without being authoritarian.

d. Handout of "Discipline at Home = Behavior in School" (National School Public Relations Association).

4. Where to Get Help

a. Who do you turn to? Talk with parents about the resources they usually draw upon when confronted with discipline problems.

b. What else is available? Provide information about community and school resources available to parents with discipline problems. Examples include local community projects such as those sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, Portland Public Schools' Project Return, the Desegregation Monitoring Advisory Committee, the Migrant Education Parent Advisory Committee, local churches, etc.

c. Form a Parent Support Network. End with a discussion of the utility of a parent support network to help parents deal with discipline and other child-rearing and school-related issues. If there is sufficient interest, offer to type up and distribute the list of participants' names and phone numbers, so that parents can contact each other.

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Communication Workshop: Talking with the School

Teachers often note how difficult it is to make contact with parents, particularly minority and low-income parents. In many cases, communication is minimal if not nonexistent. Sometimes parents are so isolated from the school that they don't even know the date of the first day of school. Most parents care deeply about their children's schooling, but some barrier keeps them from getting the necessary information. Some even walk their children to school every day, but never set foot inside the building.

There are many reasons for this distance between parents and the school. It may stem from feelings of inadequacy, lack of English, shyness, bad memories of school, a sense of not being welcome, a hectic schedule . . . Whatever the reasons, parents and schools need to find ways to overcome them and recognize that parents have a right, as well as a responsibility, to play an active role in their children's formal education.

In this session, parents will have the opportunity to express their views on the reasons for lack of communication between the home and the school. As a group, explore the barriers, noting concerns and possible strategies that might be helpful for teachers and administrators to know. Discuss ways to overcome these barriers and gain greater familiarity and comfort in dealing with aides, teachers and administrators. Be sure to provide information about the school's expectations about parent-teacher conferences, and about appropriate school staff to talk with about specific questions.

1. Can we talk?

   Brainstorm with the group to stimulate discussion about why parents don't talk with teachers and vice versa. Encourage a candid discussion so that barriers to communication can be identified and addressed.

2. Getting to know each other

   Ask parents who do have contact with the school and teachers to share their initial experiences and how communication channels developed. Focus on ways to start the process.

   a. Make an effort to meet your child's teacher. Even if parents have little other contact with the school, the teacher will at least have a starting point of contact and will be more likely to contact you later.

   b. Try to attend events for parents, such as open house, parents' night, school plays, etc. (If you can't speak English well, try to let the teacher know you are interested but need an interpreter. If no one is available to interpret for you at first, don't give up and stay home. Showing your interest, even if you don't understand English well, lets the school know you care, and it can have a very positive influence on your child's interest in school.)

c. Respond to all written and phone communications from the teacher or the school administration. In this way you let them know you take your child's education seriously, even if you do not have time to attend many school activities.

d. Go to all parent-teacher conferences. Be sure you spend some time in advance thinking about what YOU want to learn from the meeting, what you need to know about what your child is doing and how s/he is progressing.

e. Find out the names and positions of the key people you should be talking to at school and don't be shy about contacting them when you have a question. It is your right (and responsibility) as a parent.

3. What is a parent-teacher conference?

Describe your school's version of a parent-teacher conference -- what is expected of the parent and what the parent can expect of the teacher. Encourage parents to share their experiences and discuss what goes into a good meeting with the teacher.

Use any information your school has available to orient new parents to the concept of the parent-teacher conference.

4. Who's in charge?

Provide parents with a list of the hierarchy of the local school system and discuss examples of problems or questions and appropriate levels (people) to call in such cases. Ask parents to give examples from their own experiences and identify appropriate channels in the current school system.

Be sure to invite teachers and administrators to attend the social part of this session, or a subsequent meeting or social activity, so that parents and teachers can begin to interact as adults on neutral turf and become more comfortable with each other.

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The key to having a useful parent-teacher conference is to emphasize that it is an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information and find ways to work together with the child. Communication must flow back and forth, between the family and the teacher -- this is not an occasion when the teacher simply reports to the parent. Thus, parents can look forward to the conference as a time when they can ask questions and make suggestions, too. Some schools help parents prepare for their conferences by sending home a planning sheet with questions parents may want to ask.

There are also numerous descriptions and checklists available for both parents and teachers to help them prepare for and improve the quality of these conferences. Dorothy Rich, of the Home and School Institute, has compiled useful pointers to facilitate parents and teachers communicating with each other "adult-to-adult" (1987b). Janet Chrispeels, coordinator of San Diego County

Office of Education's parent involvement program, has produced materials to promote collaboration and improve communication between home and school (see Communicating with Parents, 1990, and "Building Collaboration Through Parent-Teacher Conferencing," 1988).

Effective Parenting Skills

The one thing most parents have in common is the knowledge of how difficult the job of parenting is. When polled about topics of interest, many parents request information on how to be a better parent. They may not say it quite that way -- and if you put on a workshop on this topic, take extra care not to send out a flier inviting people to "come learn how to be a good parent"! -- but questions about discipline, control, talking back, drugs, and "getting him to do his homework" all translate into effective parenting.

Appropriate parenting styles and methods vary across cultural groups, of course. Since the overarching goal is the child's successful education, one way to approach this subject is to focus on what is known about the impact of parenting styles on children's behavior and achievement in school. This is what parent involvement is all about, after all.

Reginald Clark has spent a decade researching the question of why some poor and minority students succeed and others fail. He has worked with Black and Hispanic high school and elementary students in low-income, big-city neighborhoods. The answer he found had to do with family lifestyle. Clark calls the families of high-achieving students "effective families," and their parenting style "sponsored independence." By this he means:

> ...making a lifelong commitment to each child, ranging from caring for physical needs and emotional well-being in early years to advocating publicly for a child in schools and with other institutions as the need arises. The parent who authoritatively "sponsors" his child maintains authority in the household, without being authoritarian. The same parent eases each child toward independence as she matures, without being overly permissive and without making the child feel intimidated. (Clark 1987:104)

Sounds good, but how do you translate this type of "sponsorship" into what parents can do with their children? It is important that parents -- especially low-income and minority parents -- hear about the successful children and their families. They must know that there is concrete proof that family background and income do not predict success or failure.

Clark (1987) has identified 10 characteristics of effective families:

1. A feeling of control over their lives
2. Frequent communication of high expectations to children
3. A family dream of success for the future
4. Hard work as a key to success
5. An active, not a sedentary lifestyle
6. 25-35 home-centered learning hours per week
7. The family viewed as a mutual support system and problem-solving unit

8. Clearly understood household rules, consistently enforced

9. Frequent contact with teachers

10. Emphasis on spiritual growth

Without lecturing or merely handing out the list, this information can be shared with parents in a workshop through a variety of ways, including:

- Brainstorming with the group about what to do to achieve or maintain such family characteristics
- Discussing personal experiences or situations that illustrate these characteristics
- Role-playing alternative ways to deal with such situations

Clearly, each characteristic could be the focus of a workshop or substantial discussion (although parents or teachers might choose not to explore some of them). For example, the identification and enforcement of clear household rules might be covered in a workshop on discipline. Another might be on ways to communicate high expectations to your children. Yet another could present families with local, accessible options for exercise.

Exploring examples of what goes on in #6 -- "home-centered learning hours" -- should be one of the first workshops you offer. Clark has published typical after-school activity schedules of achieving children and underachieving children (1988, 1990). Comparison of the two typical afternoons quickly and clearly illustrates what "home-centered learning" activities can be. The workshop could focus on discussing these with parents and doing an exercise to help them begin to plan and structure similar activities with and for their children.

Teacher Training

...Every attempt should be made to create an atmosphere that places value on the children's growing sense of competence and independence so that their lives are not separated from the outside world.

Such policies, if promoted by our schools, would depend upon close contact between teachers and parents. Family and community involvement in school programs would be essential, and our children would surely benefit from the connections that were being made in their everyday lives.

We must love them, engage their imaginations, laugh with them, and sometimes cry. The vividness of children's experiences should not be dulled by the pedantry of programs that lack respect for their everyday lives. --Denny Taylor and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines, Growing Up Literate: Learning from Inner-City Families

The Key Role of Teachers

As we have noted earlier, for parent involvement efforts to succeed, all key players must be deeply committed to the process. All have very important roles to play. Teachers, however, have great potential to help link home to school. If they can warmly welcome a parent or family member to the classroom every time s/he appears, greet people personally in the supermarket, send notes home or make phone calls -- in short, open the doors for communication to flow, the process has a chance to become established and grow. If, on the other hand, teachers are isolated from the community and disinterested in anything outside their classrooms, efforts by parents to become involved or by others to involve them will be greatly hampered.

Many teachers recognize the important contributions parents can make to their children's schooling. Some have found very effective ways to work in partnership with parents. Many, however, feel inadequately prepared to find appropriate methods to reach out to parents. Others feel they understand the parents all too well and know just how much can be asked of them (judging on the basis of superficial or stereotypical assumptions). And still others feel it isn't part of their job as teachers to be trying to encourage parents to take on a greater role.

Teacher Training and Inservice

Although parent involvement has once again become a goal of many educators, few teacher training institutions prepare potential teachers to be able to nurture and use this valuable resource. Nancy Feyl Chavkin and David L. Williams, Jr., of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) conducted a 6-year study of parent involvement in the Southwest. Of the 575 teacher educators they surveyed, only 4 percent taught a complete course on parent involvement; 15 percent provided part of a course; and only 37 percent had one class period on

the subject. Yet, when they asked teachers if they needed training to work with parents, 87 percent said yes, and 92 percent of principals agreed with them (Chavkin & Williams, 1988).

To address the lack of training available, Williams and Chavkin have developed Teacher/Parent Partnerships: Guidelines and Strategies for Training Teachers in Parent Involvement Skills (1986). They include suggestions for designing both preservice and inservice training. They have been thorough in their approach, covering personal, practical and conceptual issues.

Other resources to use in developing teacher inservice training in this area include some of the numerous guides and handbooks available (see section II of the Selected References). The National Education Association, for example, has a packet of materials for teacher inservice entitled Schools and Parents United: A Practical Approach to Student Success (1987). Other comprehensive handbooks with useful checklists and examples that would be good resources with which to begin, include:

- Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986)
- Involving Parents: A Handbook for Participation in Schools (Lyons, Robbins, & Smith, 1983)
- Teachers and Parents: An Adult-to-Adult Approach (Rich, 1987b)
- A Tool Kit for Parent Involvement: Helping Parents Help Their Kids (National School Public Relations Association, 1988)

Obviously, teacher training in parent involvement is not simply a matter of how to welcome parents to the school. As we have seen throughout this Guide, there are many aspects to working in partnership with parents and the other key players. If you are unable to devote time to developing your own inservice trainings, or if you lack funds to bring in other resources, don't give up. You can still provide teachers with inservice assistance.

One of the most fundamental areas in which to encourage teachers to expand their knowledge is their understanding of the community or communities served by the school. We suggest here an easy way to incorporate community exploration into the teaching process. This approach serves several purposes:

1. It makes children feel that where they live and what they do outside of school is important. (This is particularly valuable when there are visible socioeconomic and/or cultural differences between home and school.)
2. It draws parents, family members and other community members into children's school life through their school work. (This makes families feel more respected and more welcomed by the school.)
3. It provides teachers with information about their students' lives, families, neighborhoods, backgrounds, and interests. (This is the first step in helping teachers open direct channels of communication with families.)

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Building Bridges Between Home and School

Suggested Activities for Teachers:

I. To learn more about your students' daily lives:

a. Have a group discussion about "a day in the life of ..."

b. Brainstorm with your students about questions to ask someone about their daily life.

c. Have students write their own questions, then work in pairs interviewing each other (taking notes as they do).
(Be sure to include questions about their families and the people most important to them in the community.)

d. Have your students keep a diary or journal for one week about their daily activities (what they do, where they go, what they read and write, what TV shows they watch, etc.).

e. Have students give oral reports about a day in their lives.
(This can become a language experience approach activity if you tape record the reports and write them up for each child to read and reread.)

II. To learn more about reading and writing in your students' out-of-school environments:

a. Have your students describe (in detail) the block they live on and make maps of it.

b. Have them copy signs in their neighborhood.

c. Have them look around their house for anything with writing on it and make a list.

d. Have them bring in examples of things at home that they know how to read or write or written items for which they understand the use (even if they cannot read them well).

e. Have students compile a notebook of written materials used in their daily lives. (They must know something about them to be able to include them in the notebook.)

f. Discuss each child's notebook (or individual items) with the class to elicit other students' knowledge about the items.

III. To learn more about individual students' and families' interests (and thus increase motivation for learning and positive attitudes about school):

a. Send home a brief parent survey (or gather this information over the phone, during a home visit, or at a parent-teacher conference) about the students' personal interests or hobbies, likes, dislikes. Be sure to include a question about "why my kid is great" and one about anything the parent/caregiver thinks the child might improve. Also include a section about the parent's (or other significant family member's) own interests and expertise. (This can be something the parent/caregiver and child fill out together.)

b. Brainstorm with your students about their special interests and those of their family members. (This could be part of the interviewing process mentioned above.)

c. Have students bring in any materials they have at home about their interests or hobbies (magazines, books, scrapbooks, drawings).

d. Once you've identified special interests, bring in books, magazines, and newspaper articles about them for individual children to take home and read with other members of their families (parents, older siblings, grandparents, aunts, etc.).

e. Alert the school librarian about your students' special interests.

f. Build other activities around these interests -- oral reports, interviews, class discussions, "non-book-reports," field trips, video tape showings, art projects, etc.
(Note: This is a good basis for inviting parents and other significant family members into the classroom to share their personal special interests or expertise, or to see their child present a project to the class.)

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IV. Pamphlets, Booklets and Other Materials

American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Parents...Partners in Education.

Booklet available in six languages . Also several other booklets, including Parenting Skills: Bringing Out the Best in Your Child. Available from:

American Association of School Administrators
1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 875-0730

Association of American Publishers, School Division. (1989). Helping Your Child Succeed in School.

36-page booklet for parents. Available for $1.50 (price breaks on 10 or more) from:

School Division, AAP
220 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
(212) 689-8920

Hispanic Policy Development Project. (1990). Queridos padres: La escuela es nuestra tambien. (Dear Parents: It's Our School Too).

Guide to help acquaint recently migrated Hispanic parents with ways to become involved in their children's education in the U.S. Available in combination with Together Is Better: Building Strong Partnerships Between Schools and Hispanic Parents for $9.00 from:

Hispanic Policy Development Project
250 Park Avenue South
Suite 5000A
New York, NY 10003
(212) 529-9323

International Reading Association (IRA). Creating Readers and Writers.

New parent booklet to help parents create home environments that encourage early literacy development. Available for $1.75 from:

International Reading Association
Order Department
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139

IRA. "News for Parents."

Column appears six times a year in Reading Today, the membership newspaper of the International Reading Association. Available from the IRA.

Missouri Department of Education. "Learning Begins at Home."

Bill Cosby brochure reprinted by The American Library Association, Commission on Individual Development--The National PTA, and World Book--Childcraft, Division of World Book, Inc. Available from:

The American Library Association
50 E. Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 944-6780

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). "Developing Family/School Partnerships."

Brochure that suggests ways for schools to draw parents into schools. Available for free with a self-addressed envelope with 45-cent stamp from:

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
Box 39
1201 - 16th St. N. W.
Washington, DC 20036
(703) 684-3345

National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). Network for Public Schools.

24-page magazine issued 6 times during the school year, provides articles on key educational issues, plus recommended reading, and catalog of many other useful NCCE publications, including several in Spanish. Available for $12.00 per year from:

The National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044
(301) 997-9300

NCCE. (1990). Parent Involvement Kit.

Starter kit, includes reproducible fact sheets, pocket references, reprints of six articles, two fliers, and 2 bibliographies. Item # NC9047 available for $10.00 from NCCE.

NCCE. (1988). Developing Family/School Partnerships: Guidelines for Schools and School Districts.

8 panels focusing on six kinds of involvement: (1) The Home Environment. (2) School-based Services. (3) Learning Activities. (4) Parent Assistance at the School. (5) Parents as Advocates. (6) Two-way School/Parent Communication. Available for $.25 each from NCCE.

NCCE. (1985). Parents Organizing to Improve Schools.

60-page booklet guide to organizing parent groups that make a difference. Available for $3.50 from NCCE.

National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). (1988). A Tool Kit for Parent Involvement: Helping Parents Help Their Kids.

Very useful kit of materials includes: 8-page information resource booklet; Models, Research and Resources packet with sample survey and checklist forms and program examples; and a Tool Kit for Parent Involvement with "tip sheets" and brochures to duplicate for parents. All materials are "camera-ready" (reproducible). Available for $55.00 from:

National School Public Relations Association
Dept. H
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-5840

NSPRA. Four Parents' Guides booklets: First Day; Helping Your Child Learn; Standardized, Aptitude and Achievement Testing; and A Parent-Teacher Conference. Available in English and in Spanish from:

NSPRA, Dept. A
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-5840

Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). U.S. Department of Education. Series of five leaflets: "Help Your Child Do Better in School" (402R), "Help Your Child Improve in Test-taking" (403R), "Help Your Child Learn Math" (404R), "Help Your Child Learn to Write Well" (405R), "Help Your Child Become a Good Reader" (401R).

Available for $.50 each from:

Consumer Information Center
Pueblo, CO 81009

OERI: How to Help Your Children in School.

23-page booklet (stock #065-000-00176-4). Available for $3.75 from:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

Push Literacy Action Now (PLAN). Laying the Foundations: A Parent-Child Literacy Training Kit.

Kit with guidelines on developing parent-child reading curriculum, using community resources, and supporting parent involvement. Includes book Like Parent, Like Child; Read to Me (with cassette tape); Learning and Reading Tips for Parents; and All About Me. Available for $24.95 from:

PLAN, Inc.
1332 G Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 547-8903

Parent Outreach Project. (1990). Parents and Children Together.

New audio journal from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) -- 48-page monthly magazine with accompanying audiocassette. Encourages parents to read and write with their children, speak and listen to them, develop their own literacy skills, and strengthen communication in family relationships. Available for $6.00 per month or $60.00 per year (journal also available without cassette) from:

Editor
Parent Outreach Project (POP)
2805 E. 10th Street, Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847

Selected Parent Involvement Resource Organizations

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
1801 N. Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-0700

Appalachia Educational Laboratory
P.O. Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325
(304) 347-0400

Aspira Association, Inc.
1112 16th Street, N.W.
Suite 340
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 835-3600

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy
1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 338-2006

Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools
School and Family Connections Project
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(301) 338-7570
Contact: Joyce L. Epstein, Director

Citizens Education Center
Parent Leadership Training Project
105 South Main Street
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 624-9955
Contact: MaryLouise Alving, Program Coordinator

Hispanic Policy Development Project
250 Park Avenue South
Suite 5000A
New York, NY 10003
(212) 529-9323
Contact: Carmen Ramos, Parent Involvement
and
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8414
Contact: Ray Valdivieso

Home and School Institute, Inc.
Special Projects Office
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-3633
Contact: Dorothy Rich, President

Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc.
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8405

Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309
Contact: Don Davies, Director, Schools Reaching Out Project
Owen Heleen, Manager, League of Schools Reaching Out

International Reading Association (IRA)
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714
Contact: Patricia Dubois

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-3345

National Association of Partners in Education
601 Wythe Street
Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
Contact: Daniel W. Merenda, Executive Director

National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
(703) 860-0200

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
Box 39
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(703) 684-3345

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents
(National Parent Center)
1314 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 483-8822

National Committee for Citizens in Education
10840 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21044
(301) 997-9300
(800) NETWORK (638-9675)

National Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA)
700 N. Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 787-0977

National Council of La Raza
20 F Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-9600
Contact: Lori Orum

National Education Association (NEA)
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

National School Boards Association
1680 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-6722

National School Public Relations Association
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 528-5840
Contact: Joseph J. Scherer, Executive Director

National School Volunteer Program (NSVP)
701 N. Fairfax Street, #320
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4880

Office of Bilingual Education
and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA)
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Parent Institute of Quality Education
6306 1/2 Riverdale
San Diego, CA 92120
(619) 265-9904
Contact: Vahac Mardirosian

Parent Involvement Center
Chapter 1 Technical Assistance Center
RMC Research Corporation
400 Lafayette Rd.
Hampton, NH 03842
(603) 926-8888
Contact: Diane A. D'Angelo

Parent Involvement in Education Program
San Diego County Office of Education
c/o Janet Chrispeels
6401 Linda Vista Rd., Rm. 407
San Diego, CA 92111-7399
(619) 292-3500

Parent Outreach Project
2805 E. 10th Street
Suite 150
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847
(Parents and Children Together Magazine)

Parents in Touch
and
Methods for Achieving Parent Partnerships (MAPP)
Indianapolis Public Schools
901 North Carrollton
Indianapolis, IN 40202
(317) 266-4134 or (800) 232-MAPP

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 476-6861
Contact: David Williams

Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children and Youth
Building 460, Room 150
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
(415) 723-1706
Contact: Sanford M. Dornbusch

Texas Education Agency
Division of Program Planning
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 463-9512

Work in America Institute
700 White Plains Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583
(914) 472-9600
Contact: Jeri S. Darling, Director of Policy Studies and Technical Assistance

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