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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help parents, educators, and communities facilitate parent and family involvement in the education of their children. Eight chapters provide: (1) a discussion of the basics of parent involvement, including the benefits of parent involvement, elements common to successful parent involvement programs, and types of parent involvement; (2) strategies for obtaining parents' points of view, assessing parents' needs, establishing parent advisory committees; (3) strategies for initiating and improving two-way communication between home and school, including positive phone calls, automatic telephone answering or message machines, and home visits; (4) ways to involve parents in the life of the school, including motivating parents to participate, social events, and volunteer programs; (5) suggestions for increasing parent involvement at the preschool level, including new developments in parent involvement and the family support model for parent involvement; (6) joint home-school learning activities, including homework and home learning activities, how parents can help with homework, and homework and home learning resources; (7) parent education activities and workshops, including topics for parent education activities and parent workshop speakers; and (8) a list of 39 organizations providing parent and family involvement resources. Appendix A contains a parent survey. Each chapter contains a list of references. (MDM)

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Contents

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Introduction

Why This Guide?

This booklet was written to help parents, educators and communities facilitate parent and family involvement in the education of their children. Research studies on parent involvement in the last 20 years has shown conclusively that *parent involvement increases student achievement and self-esteem.* This has been proven to be true from preschool through high school, in large and small communities, in poor and affluent neighborhoods, in urban, rural and suburban communities.

Who Should Use this Guide?

Any parent, educator, or community member who is interested in knowing more about parent and family involvement in education, becoming more involved in their children's education, facilitating an existing parent involvement program, or beginning a new parent involvement program should use this booklet.

What Does This Guide Contain?

* A rationale and philosophy for parent involvement.
* Practical strategies to facilitate two-way communication between home and school.
* Suggestions on how parents can join with the school in helping their children learn at home.
* Positive suggestions for involving parents and families in the social life of the school.
* Strategies to address the needs of multi-cultural, minority and at-risk families.
* A survey to assess the needs, strengths, and satisfaction of parents with their involvement.
* Plans for parent education and workshops.
* Positive suggestions for bringing parents into the school to visit, volunteer, socialize, and be involved in their children's classrooms.
* Special attention to parent involvement in preschool.
* Ideas for forming a parent, school or community advisory committee.
* National and state resources for parent involvement in education.

Chapter 1

The Basics of Parent and Family Involvement

The most basic statement that can be made about parent and family involvement in education is that when it happens, everyone benefits. Research has shown us conclusively that parent involvement in education benefits students, parents, teachers and schools, whether the program is at the preschool, elementary or high school level.

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Students

The benefits of parent involvement for students are:

* More positive attitudes toward school;
* Higher achievement in reading;
* Higher quality and more grade appropriate homework;
* Completion of more homework on weekends;
* Observing more similarities between family and school. (Epstein, 1991)

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Parents and Community

The benefits of parent involvement for parents and community are:

* Receive ideas from school on how to help children;
* Learn more about educational programs and how the school works;
* Become more supportive of children;
* Become more confident about ways to help children learn;
* More positive views of teachers (Epstein, 1992; Henderson, 1987; Liontos, 1992).

Benefits of Parent Involvement for Teachers and Schools

The benefits of parent involvement for teachers and schools are:

* Teacher morale improves;
* Parents rate teachers higher;
* Teachers rate parents as more helpful;
* Student achievement improves;
* Parents support schools and bond issues (Davies, 1988; Epstein, 1992; Liontos, 1992).

Assumptions Upon Which Successful Parent Involvement Programs are Built

Parent involvement in education is not new. Head Start brought parent involvement into the spotlight in 1965, and since then thousands of parent involvement programs have been implemented. Research on successful parent involvement programs shows us that effective parent involvement programs are built on the following assumptions (Henderson, 1987):

* The primary educational environment comes from the family.
* Parent involvement in a child's education is a major factor in improving school effectiveness, the quality of education, and a child's academic success.
* The benefits of parent involvement are not confined to preschool, or elementary school, but extend on up through high school.
* Low-income and minority children have the most to gain when schools involve parents.

Seven Elements Common to Successful Parent Involvement Programs

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory looked at programs from 1986 to 1989 and attempted to identify the characteristics of "promising parent involvement programs." Here are the results (Williams and Chavkin, 1989):

* *Written policies.* The programs had written policies that showed parent involvement was viewed as an important component.
* *Administrative support.* Administrative support was provided in at least three ways: funds were made available in the district office budget; materials, space and equipment were available; people were designated to carry out programs.
* *Training.* Promising programs made ongoing training available for staff as well as parents.
* *Partnership approach.* There was joint planning, goal setting and so on. Both parents and staff developed a sense of ownership.
* *Two-way communication.* Communication between home and school occurred on a regular basis. Parents felt comfortable coming to school, sharing ideas, and voicing concerns.
* *Networking.* Promising programs networked with other programs to share information and resources.
* *Evaluation.* Regular evaluation activities were included at key stages as well as at the conclusion of a phase or cycle.

Types of Parent Involvement in Education

There is not unanimous agreement upon the definition of "parent involvement in education". Different groups and organizations hold different perspectives. Historically, two traditions, each operating with a totally different set of assumptions and values have influenced the development of parent involvement. The **parent education tradition** reflects a child-centered, professional orientation. This tradition is based on the assumption that parents need access to knowledge in order to perform adequately as parents. The other tradition, the **citizen participation approach**, is based on the assumptions that adults have the right and competence to share in making decisions which affect their own lives and the lives of their children (Valentine and Stark, 1979).

Today most groups acknowledge the importance of both traditions of parent involvement, and advocate several different components of parent involvement. The National PTA (1992) describes the following types of parent involvement:

* Parents as the first educators in the home,
* Parents as partners with the school, and
* Parents as advocates for all children and youth in society.

Head Start (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992) describes four primary avenues for parent participation:

* Parents join in decision-making about what kind of program to have and how it will operate.
* Parents are involved in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers, and observers.
* Parents participate in adult and parent-oriented activities which they have planned.
* Parents, as prime educators, work with their own children in learning activities at home and at school, with the support of the Head Start staff.

The Arizona Department of Education distinguishes five categories of parent involvement.

* Home-school communications -- involves the exchange of information between parents, teacher and the school. Good communications serve as the foundation for all other home-school partnership activities.
* Parents as supporters -- represents the traditional role that parents have played such as fund-raising for the school, attending open house or school performances.
* Parents as learners -- means that parents have an

opportunity to increase their knowledge about the school curriculum, school policies, and other aspects of school life and parenting skills.

* Parents as teachers -- reflects the crucial fact that parents are the child's first and foremost teacher. Home-learning activities represent one important strategy.
* Parents as advisors, decision makers, and advocates -- means that parents share with teachers and administrators their views and influence decisions on issues that affect their children. (Chrispeels, 1987)

Research indicates that there is no one best way to handle parent involvement. What seems to work best is for parents to be involved in many different roles over time. It is more important that parent involvement be well-planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting than that it take one particular form. As long as parents are the basic ingredient in the improvement strategy, students do better in school (Henderson, 1987).

Families as Systems

When planning parent involvement programs, it may be helpful to view families in a systems or transactional approach (Gordon, 1979). This approach recognizes that no one agency or system operates in isolation. Rather, each system affects and is affected by other systems. Gordon sees the family as a micro-system, or the smallest system, surrounded by a meso-system, which includes the neighborhood, local stores, children's schools, and recreation facilities. The meso-system is enclosed within an exo-system which includes mass media, the local work or job climate, local agencies and the school system. Surrounding all other systems is the macro-system which includes national policies in areas such as economics, social problems, and political climate.

Gordon suggests that the various types of parent participation -- decision maker, classroom volunteer, adult learner, para-professional, adult educator, teacher of own child -- are of equivalent importance. Each type is necessary, and at various times family members may participate in one way or another.

The Changing American Family

The family structure in the United States is changing at a rate faster than ever before. A variety of new words describe today's families: traditional, blended, extended, multi-generational, migrant, minority, single-parent, divorced, dual-worker, and refugee. Those who plan parent involvement programs must be aware of the profile of the modern American family if they are to successfully involve parents in school activities.

* The proportion of married women working outside the home rose from 41 percent in 1975 to 62 percent in 1988 (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1991).
* The proportion of children living in single-parent families is increasing. In 1989, 22 percent of children lived in single-parent families as compared with 11 percent in 1970.
* More than one-half of African-American children lived in single-parent homes in 1989.
* Twenty-eight percent of Hispanic children and 17 percent of White children lived in single parent homes (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1991).
* In 1989, 19 percent of children under age 18 lived in poverty. Of children in families with a female head of household and no husband present, 51 percent lived in poverty (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1991).
* As of 1990, about one in 11 Americans, or 9 percent, is Hispanic. At the current rate of growth, Hispanics will become the largest ethnic minority in the U.S. around the turn of the century (National Council of La Raza, 1991).
* An increasing proportion of children live with their grandparents. About 13 percent of African-American children under age 18 lived in their grandparents' homes in 1989. Five percent of Hispanic children lived with their grandparents and about 3 percent of White children (Education Week, 1990).

Most often it isn't lack of interest that keeps parents from becoming involved in their children's education. There may be barriers of poverty, single-parenthood, non-English literacy, and cultural and socio-economic isolation in the way.

Barriers To Parent and Family Involvement

In 1992 The National PTA sent a survey to its 27,000 local and unit presidents and 3,000 council leaders, asking them what barriers they faced when they tried to get parents involved. The chart below recaps their responses (The National PTA, 1992):

BARRIERS	PERCENT GIVING THIS RESPONSE
Parents do not have enough time	89%
Parents feel they have nothing to contribute	32%
Parents don't understand; don't know the system; they don't know how to be involved	32%
Lack of child care	28%
Parents feel intimidated	25%
Parents are not available during the time school functions are scheduled	18%
Language and cultural differences	15%
Lack of transportation	11%
Parents don't feel welcome at school	9%
Other barriers	21%

Breaking Down Barriers: Reaching Out to All Parents

Research in parent involvement has taught us that barriers to parent involvement can be overcome. Below are some of the barriers to parent involvement and some possibilities you may use to overcome them.

Time. Be flexible when scheduling meetings. Try different times of the day or week to allow all parents to take part at least occasionally. Occasionally make a meeting a potluck to meet working parents' needs. Have meetings at community centers, apartment buildings and places of worship.

Not valued. Personally welcome all parents, especially those who appear to be withdrawn or uncomfortable. Learn their interest and abilities. Actively seek opportunities for hesitant parents to use their experiences and talents to benefit the school.

Don't know how to contribute. Conduct a talent survey, then think of ways to use the parents' many talents. Encourage parents to share information on careers, hobbies, and pets. Arrange for workshops and seminars for parent and community members on leadership and organizational skills.

Not understanding the system. Write a parent's handbook covering the rules, procedures, and where to find the answers to typical problems.

Child care. Find an available room in the school for child care. Hire students to baby-sit.

Language barrier. Have printed materials translated -- English on one side, another language on the other. Arrange for an interpreter at meetings and conferences.

Cultural differences. Be sensitive to other cultures' values, attitudes, manners and views of the school. Know the religious holidays and observances of all groups in your school.

Transportation. Visit parents in their home. Hold small group meetings in a community center, at a parent's home, or another convenient place. Arrange car pools and walk pools. Arrange for transportation.

Offer of only "token" participation. When people are invited to a meeting, too often it is to inform them of something, sell them on an idea, pacify them, influence or manipulate them, or to get them to donate time or money. Parent meetings should look at real issues to gain parents' ideas, and listen to and consider their solutions. Parents should be involved in the planning stages of a program, rather than after nearly everything has been decided.

Not welcome. Arrange for training in parent involvement for all school staff. Make sure that parents are welcome to drop in at school during the day. Have a parent's room at school. Post welcome signs in all languages spoken at the school.

Resistance on the part of formal leadership. Is there an unwillingness -- conscious or unconscious -- among some of the existing leadership to involve others in decision-making? Ensure that parents and citizens are involved in planning, policy making and implementation of programs.

Parents have overwhelming problems. Provide information and advocacy to help parents secure the services they need, such as food stamps, job training skills, medical treatment, child care, etc.

Low literacy. Call on the telephone. Contact your library to find literacy groups or tutors of English as a second language to do programs. Plan a family literacy program as part of your parent involvement program.

Snobbery. Actively seek new participants who represent different cultural, socio-economic and religious groups in your school. Do not tolerate snobbery during parent programming.

The Concept of In-group and Out-group

Advocates for parent involvement need to think about the concept "in-group/out-group" (PTA, 1992). In almost every group there is an in-group -- the group that usually holds offices, is highly involved and is "accepted", and the out-group -- the group that does not get involved, or hold office. Because research has shown that children from at-risk homes, or out-group homes have the most to gain from parent involvement, a program that involves only the in-group may be excluding the very group which it could most impact.

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Chapter 2

Getting Parents' Point of View

In the past decade there have been major changes in the philosophy and procedures of parent involvement programs (Powell, 1989). The traditional model of parent education was based, in part, on the assumption that parents were deficient in their abilities and dependent on professionals for guidance. It has been replaced by the family support model which is based on four fundamental principles (Kagan, 1991):

* The importance of the early childhood years.
* An ecological, or systems approach to service delivery.
* A developmental view of parents.
* A universal need for family support.

The two models of parent involvement share many types of parent involvement activities, for example, communication between home and school, and getting parents involved in their child's educational programs. What is different between the two, and what has changed in the past decade, is the emphasis on supporting parents in their developmental needs, starting with family strengths, and acknowledging that successful programs must be culturally responsive (Rogler, Malgady, Constantino, & Blumenthal, 1987). We no longer expect parent education methods which are successful with middle-class populations to necessarily transfer to low-income, minority or culturally different groups. The theoretical and empirical work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) has profoundly influenced this shift in the field of parent involvement.

Strengths of Families

Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, ethnic or cultural background. Consequently, every family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993).

All families have certain strengths which can be tapped into by schools and other groups seeking to build effective home-school partnerships. Among these are the following:

* Parents have intimate knowledge of their children's

needs, skills, and interests; they know their children better than anyone else does.
* Parents have a keen interest in their children's schooling and want their children to be successful.
* Most parents want to work with the schools for their children's benefit.
* As their children's first and most important teachers, parents have opportunities to teach, to serve as role models, and guide their children as they enter society (Chavkin, 1989; Henderson, Marburger, C.L. & Ooms, 1986).

Designing Programs That Fit Parents' Needs

At the heart of the parent support model of parent involvement is understanding the parents' perspective and designing programs which meet their needs.

In federally funded programs for young children, such as Head Start, and state funded At-risk Preschool Programs, meeting families' comprehensive health, nutrition, social and emotional needs are integral program goals. In conventional public school programs, the broad goal of comprehensive family support is less common. However the philosophy of providing programs based on parents' needs is becoming accepted.

The obvious way to design a parent involvement program which meets parents needs, is to ask parents what they need and want in a parent involvement program. The parent involvement survey is one means of accomplishing this.

The Parent Involvement Survey

The parent involvement survey is a written form which asks parents to answer questions like:

* What specifically would you like to know about the school?
* From what sources do you get most of your information about the school?
* Would you be interested in participating in a small group coffee discussion hour at the school?
* Check the kinds of resources and services you would like to see made available at the school: homework hotline, parent resource center, after-school child care, parent support group, family use of gym, pool or school library.

The advantages of the parent involvement survey are:

* You can reach a large number of parents at minimal expense.
* Parents who might not come to a meeting or

discussion group might respond to the written form.
* It gives everyone an opportunity to respond.

Parent involvement surveys vary in length from one page, to many. A school or group may need to create their own individualized survey, written and printed in each of the native languages of the community. A sample Parent Survey is included in Appendix A. Three sources for ready-to-use parent involvement surveys are:

A Leader's Guide to Parent Involvement.
Published by the National PTA
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2571
(312) 787-0977

This booklet contains a one-page parent involvement survey to be used with PTA groups.

School and Family Partnerships: Survey and Summaries
Published by Johns Hopkins University
Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-0370

This packet contains surveys for parents and teachers. The seven-page parent survey gives parents a chance to write-in their own concerns and opinions.

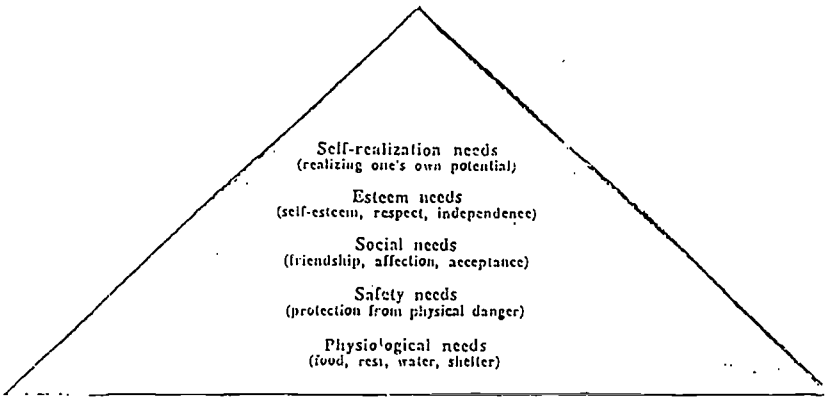
Taking Stock/for Families
Published by the National Committee for Citizens in Education
900 Second Street NE, Suite 8
Washington, D.C. 2002-3557
(202) 547-9286

This seven-page survey for parents is a good evaluation tool for existing programs, but does not allow parents to write in their own concerns and needs.

Assessing Parents' Needs

Assessing needs begins with understanding the vast range of human needs and understanding parents -- their problems, as well as their expectations. A prominent psychologist, A.N. Maslow, has devised a system or hierarchy of human needs. According to Maslow, people's most basic needs are physiological -- food, sleep and water. Those basic needs must be met before a person moves on to achieve the next

level of needs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992).



Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

Using this model we understand that parents who are worrying about where their next meal will come from, and keeping the electricity turned on, will probably not be good candidates for attending the Wednesday Morning Parent Volunteer Tea. They are using their energies to meet more pressing needs.

Parent Advisory Committees

Head Start and the state-funded At-risk Preschool Programs require that parents be represented on a Parent Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee is for parents to work with center staff to make decisions for the center, to advise, counsel and consult on policy and planning for the center, including parent involvement in the program. The Parent Advisory Committee may have a slightly different name in different programs, however the primary mission of such a committee remains constant -- to give parents access and input into decision making. These groups provide an excellent forum for assessing parents' needs.

Following are some "trigger devices" for beginning a needs assessment session:

* On a chart, list needs that parents have expressed in the past.
* Distribute a brief needs assessment questionnaire and discuss it together at the same meeting.
* Brainstorm a list of needs parents might have -- accept and record all ideas. Discuss only when all ideas have been shared (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992).

When forming the Parent Advisory Committee it is important to recruit members who represent the various sub-groups within

your program. For example, recruit some single-parents, some minority parents, some dual-working parents, some fathers, and some linguistically and culturally different parents. If the Parent Advisory Committee represents only the "in group," or the majority, it cannot accurately reflect the needs and wants of all the parents.

In public schools, parents should be encouraged to serve on local and district advisory boards. These groups are often in charge of developing school policies, choosing curriculum and textbooks and planning for parent involvement. Many schools have established school site advisory councils to help parents play the role of advisor, decision maker, and advocate. Training needs to be provided for parents willing to undertake these advisory and advocacy roles (Chrispeels, 1987).

Cultural Diversity and Outreach

It is estimated that by the year 2000 more than 50 percent of the children in our nation's schools will come from minority populations. Unfortunately, families are often grouped along racial and ethnic lines. Communities may also divide along lines of income, age, religion, cultural background, gender, marital status or language (National PTA, 1992).

In the 1990's, the largest number of immigrants to the United States will be from Asia and Latin America. Parents from these cultures, as well as others, may expect the school to do its job without a great deal of dialogue. They may feel out of place and disrespectful if asked to offer suggestions to teachers. Children may miss school visits because their families are involved in visits to social agencies, trips to medical clinics or other activities.

Here are some suggestions for improving parent involvement among culturally diverse families.

* Choose a bilingual person to be responsible for outreach.
* Look at the ethnic and racial composition of your students. Identify groups not represented in parent involvement and target them for involvement.
* Find out how your parent involvement program is viewed by a diverse sampling of parents -- including those who do not return surveys or participate in school events.
* Build trust between parents of all children and teachers through focus groups, and small group discussions.
* Be aware that applications for free and reduced price school lunches written in Spanish, French, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Urdu, and Hmong are available from the Department of Public

Instruction.

* Get to know opinion leaders in the community, how they make decisions, and how they communicate. Tap into this network.
* Set up a telephone tree. Parents and volunteers call other parents. Initial contact should come from a person of the same language and ethnicity.
* Talk openly about divisions in your school community. Acknowledging differences can be the first step toward better relations.
* Identify the strengths of different groups within your community. Focus on aspects of each group's culture or beliefs that can enrich your parent involvement program.
* Develop goals, objectives and an action plan for increasing participation by culturally diverse parents (National PTA, 1992).

Limited-English Speaking Parents

Communication with limited-English speaking parents can be improved by:

* holding meetings or conferences rather than communicating in writing, or over the phone.
* having a translator available for limited-English speaking parents.
* sending information home written in the native language of the parents.
* having parents volunteer in the classroom.
* putting progress reports in the parent's native language.
* communicating with the parents if their child has a problem.
* trying to solve problems, rather than ignoring ther..
* having someone to answer the school telephone who speaks the language of the limited-English speaking parents.
* administrators recognizing parents visiting the school and making them feel welcome (Arizona, 1989).

Limited-English speaking parents can be aided in helping their children learn by:

* having books and other materials available which the parents can borrow.
* letting parents know what is being taught and the methods the teacher uses.
* having workshops for parents on how they can help their children learn.
* beginning a family literacy program for parents and children to learn at home together.
* sending home explanations and forms to help the children do homework (Arizona, 1989).

Teachers Make a Difference

Research on teacher's practices to promote parent involvement indicates that when teachers take clear, deliberate actions to involve parents, then the socioeconomic status and education level of parents disappear as factors in the willingness of parents to be involved. However, when teachers don't actively work to involve parents, then those factors become important indicators for the level of parental involvement. Typically, mainstream parents of higher social class and level of education are more involved in their children's education (Epstein, 1986).

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Chapter 3

Two-way Communication Between Home and School

The foundation for all other forms of parent and family involvement in education is communication between the home and school. Good two-way communication between families and schools is essential to student success in school. Without good communication it is unlikely that other facets of parent involvement will be successful, as well (Chrispeels, 1987).

Although research shows that parents with less than a high school education and very low incomes were the most likely to have low levels of contact with teachers and schools (Moles, 1993), these same parents indicate a strong interest in their children's education. Parents of young children at-risk appear anxious to cooperate with teachers despite all the stresses in their environment and their difficulties in doing so (Countryman, 1994).

Although parents and teachers may share a common goal of children being successful in school, there may be differences in socio-economic status, values and attitudes that make communication difficult. Educators realize the importance of communicating with families, yet they often feel frustrated in their efforts. Some reasons are:

* lack of communication skills,
* a natural tension between teachers and parents,
* differences in perspectives. (Chrispeels, 1987)

Two-way Communication Versus One-way Communication

Two-way communication implies that the two parties in communication have a two-way flow of ideas and information. As one party talks or writes, the other party listens or reads, and then has a chance to respond and initiate. When communication exists without the opportunity for the second party to respond or initiate, it is one-way communication. The traditional parent newsletter is an example of one-way communication. The school and teachers write to the parents and the parents read, but there is no provision for them to either respond or initiate communication. A parent-teacher conference, on the other hand, is an example of two-way communication.

Some schools think they are communicating effectively with parents because they engage in a lot of one-way communication with parents in the form of newsletters, papers, notes and messages sent home with the children. These educators have ignored the fact that parents may not consider the one-way flow of paper from school to home to be communication because they have not had an opportunity to express their own ideas and opinions.

Techniques for Two-Way Communication

Effective parent involvement programs use a variety of forms of two-way communication to reach parents. Some are face-to-face, others rely on written communication and responses, still others rely on the telephone or other technical devices. Notice that all these forms are interactive, or two-way communication, which allows parents to both respond to and initiate communication with the school.

Letters requesting a response. Send letters, notes, post cards, memos, half-and-half letters, which ask parents to respond. These might be games, questionnaires or a simple survey which a parent completes with his or her child.

Folders. Send school work home once a week in a folder with a place provided for parent comments. Require a parent/guardian signature.

Newsletter with surveys. In addition to the regular newsletter reporting school activities, include a mini-survey about discipline, homework, conferences, other related information, and publish the results in the next newsletter.

Conferences. Ask parents to identify two or three concerns before coming to the parent-teacher conference. Use active listening skills at the conference and develop a plan of action together with parents.

Tape recorders. Send small tape recorders home to families whose first language is not English (who speak but do not write English). The children can bring messages back to the school.

Telephone surveys. Conduct periodic random telephone surveys of parents asking them how well the school is communicating and how well their children are learning.

Meet Informally. Once a month randomly select a small group of parents to meet informally with the principal, director or a teacher. Listen to their views and concerns. Discussions can be open-ended or focused on a specific topic.

Classes for parents. Organize classes for parents in which they learn about child development, mental health issues, job search skills, job placement, study skills and student motivation. These classes can be provided through cooperation with county extension services, mental health agencies, human service agencies, and schools.

Home Visits. Home visits are a unique opportunity for two-way communication between home and school. The teacher and family members can get to know each other in a setting which is comfortable for the family. Home visits may be the only way of communicating with hard-to-reach parents who are reluctant to come to school meetings, who do not have a telephone, or who cannot read written material sent from the school.

Active Listening

The way in which parents and teachers communicate during conferences, home visits, phone calls and brief conversations can be more important than what is said. Body language, voice quality, and silences can convey meaning as well as words. Those working to facilitate parent involvement should be aware of these active listening techniques.

* Notice especially the attitudes and feeling involved in the message.
* Tell the person as exactly as you can what you heard him or her say in terms of the feeling and attitudes you heard expressed.
* Try to use words different from the sender's without changing his/her meaning.
* Do not subtract from the sender's message, but deal with the feelings you hear instead of staying with the facts.
* Do not respond with a message of your own, such as evaluating, sympathizing, giving your own opinion, using logic or persuasion, analyzing, advising, ordering or questioning.
* Start your response in the following ways:
  "You feel that...,"
  "Sounds like you feel...,"
  "What I hear you saying is...," (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992)

Some benefits of being an active listener are:

* It shows that the listener is interested and cares for the speaker.
* It proves that the speaker has been heard and understood.
* It offers the speaker a chance to express feelings and ventilate.

* It communicates acceptance.
* It fosters the speaker's moving from the superficial to deeper feeling and fosters insights.
* It fosters the speaker's growth as his own problem-solver.
* It establishes a warm and honest relationship. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992)

Positive Phone Calls

The telephone has tremendous potential as a low-cost means of direct, two-way communication between home and school. Unfortunately, in the past most telephone calls from school brought bad news: a child was late, had incomplete homework, or had behavior problems. Imagine how you would feel as a parent if your son's or daughter's teacher called you to tell you how well he or she was doing in school. Personalized positive telephone contact between teachers and parents enhances home-school communications.

Here are some suggestions for developing a positive phone program (Wisconsin State Department of Education, 1989; Office of Educational Research and Improvement; 1993).

* Provide adequate access to telephones. Teachers need a private and comfortable place from which to make their calls. Schools may need to install extra phone lines in teacher workrooms.
* Make time available to teachers to make the calls. Designate certain months of the year for making positive telephone calls, or encourage one call per week.
* With teachers, develop a set of guidelines for making telephone calls.
* Provide translation services for parents, if needed.
* Keep a reporting system. Maintain a log book so that the school has a record of positive phone calls and can help measure the effectiveness of the program.
* If possible, advertise one evening a week when parents or students can call to ask questions or discuss problems with a teacher or staff member.

Automatic Telephone Answering or Message Machines

A number of schools are using automatic telephone answering or message machines to provide information to parents on a call-in basis. Information on topics such as school policies, optional programs, parenting skills, adult education, school calendar/events, ways to help children succeed in school, and drug and alcohol prevention can be provided. Although it is not a form of direct, two-way communication, the advantages of the automated system are:

* that they are relatively inexpensive to operate;

* the messages can be recorded in the languages spoken by the parent community;
* the caller can remain anonymous.

For maximum effectiveness, callers need to be given numbers where they can get additional help (Chrispeels, Boruta, Daugherty, 1988).

Home Visits

The home visit is a unique form of home-school communication, because unlike most other forms of home-school communication, it takes place in the home rather than the school. Home visits can serve a variety of goals. They can be used to:

* introduce parents and teachers to each other,
* welcome new families to the school district,
* demonstrate home learning activities to the parents,
* report on student progress in school,
* solve specific problems,
* reach parents who are impossible to reach otherwise,
* survey parents for their views on school policies and programs. (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993)

Home visits can be mutually beneficial for students, parents, teachers and schools. The student can have the opportunity of welcoming his or her teacher into the home, and showing the teacher new aspects of him or herself. The parents can communicate from the security and comfort of their home, and have the opportunity to ask questions of a professional educator. The teacher can gain insight into the child's home learning environment and can enlist the parents' cooperation in the child's educational progress. The school can signify its willingness to "go more than halfway" to involve parents in their children's education.

Home visits can be conducted by teachers, community aides, or trained volunteers. At all times the home visitor should be sensitive to cultural differences and always set a tone for mutual respect. If parents refuse a home visit, their rights should be respected. A familiar third party, such as a friend of the family, a neighbor, or a respected clergyman may be a helpful accompaniment for reluctant parents. Home visits may also be held in housing project meeting rooms, church recreation halls, or community meeting rooms (Chrispeels, Boruta and Daugherty, 1988).

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Chapter 4
Involving Parents in the Life of the School

The traditional role for parents in the schools is to come three of four times a year; once to open house or back-to-school night and two or three times a year to parent-teacher conferences. A middle-class "involved" parent might come more often, acting as a room parent, attending PTA meetings, or volunteering in the school.

Successful parent involvement programs are those that extend these traditional roles for parents at school, and encourage all parents, not just white middle-class mothers, to become involved in many different aspects of school life.

Motivating Parents to Participate

The secret to getting parents to participate in school events isn't convincing them to do something they don't want to do, it's providing them with something they *do* want to do. Each individual has a different "hot button" that will motivate him or her to participate. When discussing parent involvement we tend to spend time looking for ways to motivate communities, rather than concentrating on the motivation of individuals. In fact, parent involvement is an individual, developmental process (Arizona Department of Education, 1989b). Consider the following ideas:

* Parent participation is best developed on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis. Studies show that most people get involved in voluntary action because some friend or neighbor personally asked them to.
* Develop a telephone network. Ask volunteers to call a small group of parents within one classroom, neighborhood or ethnic group to encourage participation in school events.
* Appeal to the individual's basic needs and interests. Individuals will participate in different issues, activities and groups only to the extent that their personal needs and interests are appealed to and met.
* Encouragement, accomplishment, and recognition are essential to maintaining active involvement.

The Culture of Schools

Schools develop pervasive cultures which include shared attitudes and beliefs about the families of the children who attend. These beliefs shape the school's patterns of

interaction with families. The patterns of interaction may create an open, positive and warm environment, or a closed and defensive one where parents know they are not really welcome (Office of Educational Research and Information, 1993). This pattern may vary within the school for different groups of parents, especially if students come from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

If parents are not welcomed into the school, and made an integral part of the learning process, culturally diverse children may find it difficult to integrate the separate experiences of home and school. According to Yale psychiatrist James Comer, who has designed successful programs to transform schools through parent involvement, children learn from people to whom they bond. If the attitudes, behavior and expectations of the school staff are substantially different from those at home, children often become completely alienated from school by the time they are eight years old (Henderson, 1990).

Parents should have at least one opportunity a month to get acquainted with the school. Social events such as a spaghetti dinner, an evening awards assembly, a week-end family picnic, or an all-day open house should be planned every month.

Parents as Visitors in the Classroom

For parents to share in the life of the school they must be welcome in the school building at all times. This means they have blanket permission to have lunch with their children, visit their children's classrooms, use the library, or talk to the principal, guidance counselors, and teachers (Henderson, 1990).

If schools want families to be more actively engaged with their children's learning both at school and at home, they should first examine the school's culture and make sure parents are truly welcome. This should include examining the attitudes and actions of all school personnel, including custodians, gardeners, secretaries, classroom assistants, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, administrators and teachers.

Schools That Say "Welcome" in Every Language

What follows is a check-list to evaluate your school's relationship with parents (Wisconsin Department of Education, 1989). Does your school say "Welcome" in every language?

* Office staff greets visitors in a friendly, courteous way.
* Teachers, staff and students answer the telephone

in a friendly, professional way.
* A welcome sign (in all the languages of your community) and school map are displayed near the entrance.
* There is an area where visitors can easily find information about the school and curriculum.
* An orientation program is provided for new families in the district.
* There is a suggestion box where teachers, students, and parents can contribute ideas.
* Parents are welcome at all times in the school building, and to visit classrooms.
* The building is used frequently by the community for planned events.
* Alternative communication methods are used with parents speaking limited English in order for them to understand the curriculum and participate in activities.
* Information about school rules, parent-teacher conference, school and classroom policy, and bus and lunch schedules is available to parents/ guardians.
* Students are encouraged and praised by staff.
* A resource center for parents and teachers is available. It is furnished with comfortable furniture and provides parenting information.
* There is a bulletin board on which parents can post news and announcements.
* A computer or other source is available for parents to gain access to information about events and curriculum.
* Local businesses and associations offer information and enrichment projects to students.
* Principal and staff are willing to listen to parent/ guardian concerns about incorrect student placement and are willing to make adjustments when necessary.
* Whenever possible, staff is willing to honor parental requests and class assignments.

Social Events Bring Parents Together

If there is little parent involvement at your school, start with social events to bring parents together. For example, host a parent-faculty-student talent show, a community theater performance, and a parent-child athletic event, such as a one-mile race, donkey ball game, or basketball game.

Other suggestions for involving parents in the social life of the school include (Arizona Department of Education, 1989b):

* Invite parents who are new to the district on a tour of the schools.
* Plan an evening movie (film or video) night for

teenage students, parents and teachers. Hold a discussion of the movie afterwards.

* Plan a pizza potluck for parents at each grade level. Each family brings a pizza; the school furnishes beverages, plates and napkins.
* Attract parents to school events by putting their children on the programs. Children can introduce speakers, perform, serve as ushers, be greeters or have many other duties.
* Initiate rap sessions on topics like communicating with your teenagers, discipline, peer pressure, study habits, careers, or drug and alcohol abuse for junior high students and their parents.
* Plan school and community summer activities workshops and enrichment programs.
* Host an ice cream social where each family brings either ice cream, a topping, or cookies.
* Announce informal, regularly scheduled coffee times and encourage parents to drop in when they can.
* Organize a toddler fair -- an afternoon of entertainment, education and fun for parents and their preschool children.
* Invite parents to visit classrooms whenever they wish and send special invitations for in-class plays, poetry readings, puppet shows, songfest, etc.
* Have children prepare a luncheon for parents, teachers and themselves. Send handwritten invitations.
* Invite each parent to have lunch with their child at school during American Education Week.
* Hold a "Grandparent's Day" to honor grandparents with a special ceremony at school.

Use the secret that gets parents to attend events at school: pick up the phone and call them. Many parents do not automatically feel welcome at school. If you make a personal effort to invite parents, more will come (The National PTA, 1992).

Take parents' pictures at group functions. If you announce in advance that photos will be taken of parents with their children, you should prepare for a crowd.

Parents as Volunteers

The tired cliché in parent involvement is the PTA bake sale. There's nothing wrong with a bake sale, per say. The problem arises when a bake sale is the only way parents are encouraged to volunteer their time and talents at school. With a little time and imagination, schools and parents can find hundreds of productive ways for parents to volunteer. Here are some examples:

* help with instructional activities for students, such as bike rodeos, book and video swaps, theater

workshops, or art shows.
* speak to their child's class about their career, a hobby, a pet, or a special interest.
* share about their holiday celebrations, foods, songs, dances, costumes, games, art and stories.
* be classroom aides.
* write, lay out, or type a newsletter.
* act as an interpreter for non-English speaking parents.
* participate on the committee to write the parent involvement plan.
* plan and conduct parent meetings.
* organize food, baby-sitting, and other kinds of co-ops and buying clubs.
* recruit other parents to participate in school events.
* plan and put on a cultural fair and food day.
* call parents to inform them of meetings and school events.
* plan and chaperone field trips.
* join a parent advisory group.
* be tutors.
* be reading buddies for individual students.
* serve on curriculum development and textbook adoption committees.
* assist in the lunch room, library, or school office.
* plan parties to celebrate special days in the life of the school.
* assist in special clinics, such as vision screening.
* become a parent volunteer coordinator.

The School as a Resource Center

Arrange for school facilities such as the gym, swimming pool or classrooms to be open for family and community use after school hours. The school should also serve as a primary referral point for needed social services. Schedule a community resource fair as part of your parent education program.

Establish a parent resource center where parents can socialize and find useful information. Use a spare room or a corner of the school library. Display parenting information and resources suited to the age-level of the children. For example, at the high school level, include information on career choices and colleges. A local business may donate a computer for parents' use. Be sure to include a bulletin board for parents to display news and information items.

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Chapter 5
Parent Involvement in Preschool

The launching of Project Head Start in 1965 thrust parent involvement in early childhood programs into the spotlight. Although Head Start's primary goal was to prepare economically disadvantaged children for school, the comprehensive program was designed to involve members of low-income families in the planning of their children's education and to help families and children cope with physical, social, emotional problems and other special needs (Scarr and Weinberg, 1986). After Head Start's controversial success, the term parent involvement became an integral part of the professional vocabulary to describe various types of programs for young children, and in particular, for young children at-risk from poverty (Knitzer, 1972).

Head Start: A Legacy of Successful Parent Involvement

Several landmark reviews of Head Start focused on the benefits of involving parents in early intervention programs, and concluded unanimously that early intervention programs were more effective when parent were involved (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Karnes and Lee, 1978; Florin and Dokecki, 1983).

The Head Start philosophy was that of strengthening family life, and consequently, society as a whole (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992). So rather than evolve as a child-centered intervention or solely an educational program, Head Start emerged as a comprehensive, family-centered intervention.

New Directions in Parent Involvement

Three years after Head Start began, staff noticed that children were coming into the program with irreversible deficits. Intervention had to begin earlier, consequently 34 *Parent and Child Centers* were established throughout the country. These centers recognized the total family as a child-rearing systems. Their goal was to reach and strengthen the total family -- infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, adults -- through various, flexible intervention strategies. These included home-based programs for infants and toddlers, centers for preschoolers, day care for children of working parents, services for pregnant teenagers, child and family advocacy programs, and parent education programs.

In 1972, the federally funded *Home Start Program* offered a different model for parent involvement. Using paraprofessional home visitors to help parents increase their parenting skills, Home Start began to answer some of the questions about how adults learn, how parents teach their children, and how programs can most effectively support parents.

The Family Support Model for Parent Involvement

There is widespread understanding today of the need to provide programs that support families with young children (Powell, 1990). This is due, in part, to the grim statistic that about 25% of all young children are born and spend some portion of their formative years in poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Concurrent with the urgent need to support families with young children is a shift in perspective from a child-centered approach to development to a family centered or ecological approach, which emphasizes the importance of the interrelationships between the child, the family and the social support available for them (Weiss, 1987). Family support programs can be defined as those programs which provide services to families, working from the strengths of the families in order to empower and strengthen adults in their roles as parents, nurturers and providers.

When preschools are housed in public schools and administered by public school districts, the family-center model of parent involvement in the preschool may find itself in contrast to the more traditional parent involvement in the elementary grades. Parent activity mornings, when preschool parents bring younger siblings to school to share a finger-food potluck, or make bird feeders may take some traditional elementary teachers by surprise. Home visits days, when teachers make regular visits to the home of their preschoolers, may also seem unusual.

While many of the suggestions and techniques for successful parent involvement at the elementary, middle school and high school level also apply in preschool, the focus on family-centered intervention and attention to support for the family are equally important. Effective early childhood programs should also join with other family service providers to offer a network of support services to families.

Suggestions to Increase Parent Involvement in Preschool

Increasing parent involvement in the education of their young children is one of the missions of the At-risk Preschool Programs for three- and four-year-olds, funded by the Iowa Child Development Coordinating Council. These programs have found the following techniques successful for increasing parent involvement:

* holding meetings at different time -- some in the day, some during the evening, some on Saturdays -- to accommodate the schedules of working parents,
* offer a wide variety of opportunities for parents to participate -- help in the classroom, making materials for the classroom, others include baby-sitting during Advisory Board Meetings,
* Parents-as-Partners Homework -- a creative project that is fun for both adults and children is sent home for parents and children to do together over the weekend,
* offer incentives for attendance, such as door prizes at parenting classes, quality sport shirts for accomplishing goals, and free donated clothing and food items as available,
* ask parents to develop participation goals for themselves at the beginning of the year,
* use a chart to track parental involvement and participation,
* ask parents to return slips stating if they will or will not attend, if they need transportation and childcare. Then follow up.
* design a volunteer calendar each month with each parent assigned one or two days to participate. They may volunteer in the classroom, or make materials, bake treats, accompany on a fieldtrip, or provide classroom maintenance,
* ask parent to set up and maintain a supply of recyclable materials for the art and literacy centers,
* establish a parent check-out library with books, videos, cassettes, brochures, and magazines as educational sources,
* list volunteers in the weekly newsletter, along with ideas, suggestions and classroom activities,
* send notes to parents without phones to remind them of special events; remind parents of events verbally when they pick up their children at preschool,
* send daily "newsletters" which includes information about menus, each child's eating and napping activities, including a "Please Note" section where parents are reminded of things that they need to know. This is also the area where a thank you is given to parents for helping, sending treats, etc.

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Chapter 6
Joint Home-School Learning Activities

Parents are their children's first teachers. From infancy through young adulthood, children depend on their parents to provide what they need physically, emotionally and socially to learn and grow. Throughout childhood, parents set the stage for learning in everyday activities at home. Young children learn through exploring, acting on their environment, and imitating what they see and hear. Crawling, walking, and talking, for example, are all skills children learn on their own at home with the practical guidance of their parents. When children begin their formal learning at school, parents continue to play an important role.

Learning Begins and Continues at Home

Parents help structure the home learning environment, or the context in which home learning activities take place. Research has shown a number of characteristics of home learning environments that are helpful in promoting success for children in school.

Establishing a daily family routine (Clark, 1988). Children need regularity and consistency in their lives. Parents can:

* Provide time, space, quiet and materials for a child's studying, reading and hobbies.
* Assign chores and household tasks.
* Encourage good health habits -- rest, activity, regular meals, health care as needed.
* Eat meals together.
* Be firm about a regular bedtime.
* Help children, especially teens, manage their time. Make a chart showing when chores need to be done and when homework assignments are due.

Monitoring out-of-school activities (Clark, 1990). Once children are in school, they still spend 70 percent of their waking hours outside the school setting. This time represents a tremendous learning opportunity which schools and families need to recognize and develop for the student's advantage.

Parents can:

* Guide the use of leisure time, so that it is spent in constructive out-of-school activities.
* Set clear rules and standards about appropriate activities.
* Set limits on television use.

* Call on other family members or neighbors to check up on children while parents are not at home.

Modeling the value of learning and hard work (Mayeske, 1973). Students who value education and understand the connection between success and hard work tend to do better in school. Parents can:

* Set an example by reading, writing and engaging in other learning activities at home.
* Use family leisure time productively. Playing games that demonstrate planning ahead and problem solving.
* Establish a family communication style that values learning by inviting questioning, discussion, and explanation.
* Demonstrate that hard work is necessary to achievement by involving children in household projects.
* Use reference materials at home or in the library to answer questions.
* Volunteer to help at school on a regular basis.

Expressing high but realistic expectations for achievement (Scott-Jones, 1984). Parents' expectations for achievement definitely have an influence on the child. Parents who make it clear from an early age that their children should plan on higher education tend to have children who go on to college. Parents can:

* Set goals and standards for a child's conduct that are appropriate for their age and level of maturity.
* Urge your child to work hard in school.
* Encourage effort for long-term gains versus short-term benefits.
* Recognize and encourage a child's special talents.
* Communicate parents' high expectations for a student's achievement to teachers and ask for suggestions on how to reinforce that message.
* Let family members, friends and neighbors know when a child is successful in school.

Encouraging a child's overall development and progress in school (Clark, 1990). Children should be treated as winners. Parents who provide frequent verbal support, praising children's skills and efforts, telling them they are loved and cared about tend to have children with higher self-esteem who do better in school. Parents can:

* Cultivate a warm and supporting home atmosphere.
* Reward success and apply sanctions appropriately and consistently.
* Show interest in what children are learning in school.
* Express affection and approval.
* Discuss regularly the value of a good education.
* Post children's work on the wall or refrigerator and send children's poems, artwork and stories to other family members and friends.
* Ask teachers for home learning activities and

homework.

Reading, writing and discussions among family members (Epstein, 1991). A wealth of studies show that home learning activities such as reading aloud, and frequent open family discussions are associated with improved student achievement. Parents can:

* Read to children at a regular time. Listen to children read.
* Discuss the school day, family members' lives and current events.
* Tell stories, recall experiences and share problem-solving strategies.
* Write letters, messages, grocery lists and diaries.
* Use everyday experiences to teach.
* Watch a favorite TV program or video together and discuss it afterwards.

Use community resources (Clark, 1990). Children need direct and continuing access to people with whom they can develop healthy, helping relationships. As children increasingly plan and develop their own leisure time, parents need to steer them to other adults who can provide guidance, skills and mentoring. Parents can:

* Take children to libraries, museums, movies and organized sports.
* Enroll children in youth enrichment programs, such as sports, art, or music programs.
* Introduce children to responsible mentors such as coaches, counselors, and friends.
* Stay in touch with children's teachers and other
* school staff.
* Use community services for family needs, such as medical and mental health facilities.
* Participate in religious services and youth groups.

Homework and Home Learning Activities

One important way parents are involved in their children's school and learning is through homework and home learning activities. When parents' time for school involvement is limited, home learning has been shown to be one of the most efficient ways for parents to spend their time (Walbert, 1985). Research has shown that homework given in the elementary grades is an important means of extending children's learning time and building positive study habits which benefit students throughout their academic careers (Cooper, 1989). Research has also shown that most parents, regardless of their income or family situation, can and do help their children with schoolwork at home (Epstein, 1984). Surveys of parents show that most families want to help guide their children through school, but they say they need more

information from the schools about how to help their children at home.

How Parents Can Help With Homework

Parents encourage good study habits by establishing homework routines early. Here are some suggestions to help children be successful with homework.

* Agree together on a regular time and place for homework.
* Turn off the TV when it is family homework time.
* Make sure your child understands the assignment.
* Ask to see your child's homework folder or assignment calendar each day. Talk about what your child is learning in school.
* Make suggestions in a positive way such as, "The teacher will understand your ideas better if you write in your best handwriting."
* Discuss teachers' homework expectations during teacher-parent conferences.
* Don't *do* your children's homework. Make sure they understand that homework is their responsibility.
* Contact the teacher by phone, note, or in person when your child is having trouble with homework assignments. Don't fight with your child about homework.
* Help with assignments by checking for completeness, neatness, and accuracy.
* Establish a place where complete homework is placed (for example, by the front door or in the child's backpack, so it won't be forgotten when your child leaves for school).
* Follow-up on homework assignments by asking to see your children's homework after it has been returned by the teacher.
* Be sure to encourage your children and praise them for a job well done.
* Display particularly good papers in your home.
* Be tolerant of homework not being done perfectly - your child is learning many new skills that are not yet perfected.

Special Home-School Learning Projects

Parent involvement with children's homework and school learning has been shown to make dramatic differences in children's school performance. For that reason, many groups and schools have developed home-school learning activities for children which are designed specifically to be interactive with a parent.

One such project is Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork or

TIPS. Designed by the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, this program is designed to be implemented by teachers . There are two TIPS processes -- one that increases parent involvement at home on interactive homework assignments, and one that increases parent involvement at school as volunteers.

TIPS activities are homework assignments that require students to talk with someone at home about something interesting they are learning in class. With TIPS, homework becomes a three-way partnership between students, families and teachers. There are three basic steps to implement TIPS Homework:

* Teachers work together during the summer to develop interactive homework assignments to match their own curricula and learning objectives.
* Teachers use the assignments with students and families throughout the year.
* Revisions are made based on feedback from students, parents and teachers who are using the program.

TIPS prototypes activities are examples that teachers can use to design their own interactive homework. There are TIPS prototype activities in math, science, health, and language arts. Included in every TIPS activity is a section called "home-to-school communication" so that parents can provide observations and reactions to their children's work.

In Baltimore, parents, students and teachers have responded positively to the TIPS program in both interviews and surveys. Additional TIPS information, prototypes, and materials can be obtained by writing or calling:

The Johns Hopkins University
Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: (410) 516-0370

Another project designed to involve parents in homework is IMPACT Maths Homework. This program, designed in England, is intended to work alongside any math program -- preschool to 6th grade -- to encourage parent involvement and to keep parents informed. IMPACT is intended for any school or teacher who wishes to implement some form of shared math homework. The IMPACT Project has developed a set of materials designed to get the program up and running, the IMPACT lessons themselves, and IMPACT diaries which provide a simple means for regular dialogue between parents and teachers. IMPACT Maths Homework materials are available from: Scholastic Publications Ltd.
Westfield Road

Southam, Leamington Spa
Warwickshire CV33OJH
Phone: (071) 607-2789 ext. 6349

Homework and Home Learning Resources

The California State PTA (1990). *Parents Empowering Parents.* Los Angeles: Educational Assessment Publishing Company.

Written from the parent's point of view in both English and Spanish, this publication offers sections on homework which are particularly useful on reading, writing, and math. There are samples of daily schedules, lists of supplies, homework contracts, and assignment calendars.

Canter, L. (1989). *Homework without tears.* Santa Monica, LA: Lee Canter Associates.

Every teacher should have a copy of this book in their classroom library to use in planning, organizing and assigning homework, and to share with parents who are having difficulty getting their child to complete homework. Topics include how to establish a homework policy, how to teach children to do homework, how to motivate students, and ten common homework problems and how parents and teachers can solve them together.

Clark, R.M. (1991). *Home involvement activities.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

This series of booklets, by Houghton Mifflin, is intended to be a companion to their elementary mathematics textbooks. Each grade level book contains home learning activities that parents can do with their children to reinforce math skills being taught in the classroom.

Frender, Gloria. (1990). *Learning to learn: Strengthening study skills and brain power.* Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications.

Appropriate for the upper elementary student, this book discusses a variety of study skills, including learning styles, time management, organizational skills, note-taking, reading skills, memory development, and test taking. The last chapter gives specific tips on how parents can help students and conference with teachers.

Goldsmith, E. and Handel, R.D. (1990). *Family reading.* Syracuse, NY: New Reader's Press.

Through this program adults learn to read to children while they develop their own literacy skills. *Family Reading* contains 10 instructional units which build around a specific reading strategy and a literary genre. A teacher's guide,

student materials, adult reading selection and writing exercises are included.

Home and School Institute. (1984). *In any language: Parents are teachers.* Washington, D.C. Authors.

This publication has 20 bilingual home learning activities designed to help parents and children practice English and then use skills together. The program is especially designed for elementary school limited-English proficient students and their parents. The book is published in English and Spanish.

National Association of Elementary School Principals (n.d.). *The little things make a big difference.* Alexandria, VA: Authors.

This organization publishes a videotape and accompanying brochure, *The little things make a big difference,* which offers parents advice and practical activities to help their children succeed in school.

Rich, D. (1988). *Megaskills.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

The author identifies ten skills as important to success in school and life: confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense, and problem solving. She presents strategies which enable parents to teach these skills to their children. Simple, inexpensive, fun "home learning recipes" are included.

Stenmark, J.K., Thompson, V. and Cossey, R. (1986). *Family Math.* Berkeley, CA: Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California.

Focuses on parents and children learning mathematics together. The book which accompanies six to eight lessons, one to two hours long, gives parents and children an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills and build an understanding of mathematics with hands-on materials.

References

Clark, R. (1988). Parents as providers of linguistic and social capital. *Educational Horizons,* 66(2), 93-95.

Clark, R. (1990). Why disadvantaged students succeed. *Public Welfare (Spring):* 17-23.

Cooper, H. (1989). *Homework.* New York: Longmen.

Epstein, J. (1984). Paths to partnership: What can we learn from federal, state, district, and school initiatives?

Phi Delta Kappan, 72, 344-349.

Epstein, J. (1991). Effects of student achievement of teacher practices on parent involvement. in S. Silvern (ed.). *Advances in Reading/Language Research, Vol. 5, Literacy through family, community and school interaction.* Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Mayeske, G.W. (1973). *A study of achievement of our nation's students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 102 666).

Scott-Jones, D. (1984). Family influence on cognitive development and school achievement. *Review of Research in Education,* 11, 259-304

Walbert, H.J., Paschal, R.A., & Weinstein, T. (1985). Homework's powerful effects of learning. *Educational Leadership,* 42(7), 76-79.

Chapter 7
Parent Education Activities and Workshops

Most effective parent involvement programs include a parent education component. Parent education consists of activities, workshops, lectures and discussions which are intended to answer questions, improve skills, provide information and provide social interaction for parents with children in school (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1992).

Provide Programs That Meet Parents' Needs

It is important to remember that a successful parent education program responds directly to the expressed needs of the parents. Ideally, all parents involved in the program can be included in a parent education planning session. At the very least, they have responded to the Parent Involvement Survey. A cross-section of parents should be included in the planning, scheduling and implementing of all parent education activities.

Topics for Parent Education Activities

The topics parents are interested in varies widely, depending on the age of their children, and their individual circumstances. Topics which might occur as priorities for parents of younger children include:

* toys to make and buy
* games to make and buy
* trips to take
* how to help in school
* the role of TV in learning and education
* discipline and setting limits
* sibling rivalry
* nutritional needs of young children
* helping my child learn to read
* water safety
* bicycle safety
* family planning
* early stimulation for infants
* when should my child be involved in sports
* choosing extra-curricular activities
* puppet making and kite making
* prenatal classes

When children are older, topics which might interest parents include:

* study skills and homework
* communicating with teenagers
* avoiding alcohol and drug abuse
* discipline
* how and when to say "no"
* how to encourage children to help out at home
* help for latchkey kids
* talking about sexuality with children
* when is special help needed
* building self-esteem
* taming the TV monster

Topics parents of children of all ages might be interested in:

* dealing with divorce and death
* sex education
* handling stress
* family counseling services
* consumer resources
* stretching the family food dollar
* installment buying, loans, and credit cards
* income tax preparation
* do-it-yourself home repairs
* physical fitness
* literacy and basic education
* writing a resume
* career planning
* positive ethnic identity
* English as a second language for non-English speaking parents
* GED completion
* introduction to Macintosh Computers
* sign language

The following are activities which might interest parents:

* Sock hop.
* Setting up a lending library for toys, books, records C.D.'s.
* Sessions on hair-cutting and styling.
* Sewing classes.
* Monitoring supermarket pricing.
* Car repair.
* Spanish lessons, for non-Spanish speaking parents.
* Gardening.
* Cooking classes.
* Hobby demonstrations and display.
* Exercise classes.
* Family pot-luck suppers.
* Crafts classes.
* "Everything you've always wanted to know..." fairs with specialists such as pediatricians, cancer detection screenings, blood pressure screenings,

food stamp representatives, scholarship officers from local colleges, psychologists, etc.
* Couples dinner-dance in school or community center.
* Bowling, basketball or swimming teams.
* Demonstration of how to can and freeze fresh foods.
* Quilting bees, knitting and crocheting classes.
* Square dance or hay ride.
* Flower-arranging workshop using fresh or dried flowers.
* Thanksgiving feast.
* Community resource fair,

Use a Variety of Teaching Methods and Materials

Most adults think of themselves as responsible, independent, and self-directed people. They resent being "taught" and treated like children. Adults learn best when a wide variety of teaching methods are used, so parent education activities should be a balance of small and large group activities, school and home-based meetings, formal and non-formal formats, and working and playing situations. Forums for parent education can be meetings, small group discussions, readings, projects, guided observations workshops, lectures, field-trips, demonstrations, fairs and picnics.

Many materials are available to stimulate parents' interests. These include: books, pamphlets, records, videos, films, art materials, crafts and sewing supplies. Any activity which invites parents to "jump in and get involved" will make it easier for parents to get involved.

Parent Workshop Speakers

Finding good resource people is crucial to the success of a workshop. Schools have a wide range of resources available, for example:

* community groups
* state and national organizations
* professional groups
* local teachers
* counselors
* school administrators
* school psychologists
* librarians
* local speaker's bureau
* county extension office staff
* public health nurses
* doctor and dental clinics
* hospitals

Additional Techniques for Successful Parent Education

Publicize meetings in a variety of ways such as: the parent newsletter, home bulletin, school marquee, posters, community agencies, and churches. Send personal invitations through the mail. Use clubs and organizations to help publicize your programs, host a continental breakfast or luncheon -- this always gets parents involved. Set up a table with coffee for parents the first weeks of school and at open house to invite parents to participate in school activities. Have some literature available about what the school has to offer and how parents can get involved.

Provide adequate advance notice. Start planning immediately. Make a time line of everything that is needed beforehand and assign different jobs so that you don't have to do everything. Send your bulletins ahead of time.

Send timely follow-up reminders. Pass out reminders in the morning when parents drop children off at school. Include a reminder in a home newsletter. Stress the value of family participation.

Get teachers and students involved and provide incentives. Give prizes to the classroom that has the most parents attending. For a series of workshops, you may want to provide a bus for a field trip as a culminating activity for families.

Target a particular group of families. Provide an interpreter. Decide who your audience should be -- all families, a grade level, a language group. Have speakers available in the different languages whenever possible. Provide an interpreter to encourage discussion with parents.

Have handouts available in different languages. This takes a lot of planning but is worth the effort. Parents really appreciate it. Make sure there are no errors in the translations.

Provide child care and/or involve children in the program. Plan family workshops where parents and children learn together. If a separate meeting is planned with the parents, incorporate children into at least one part of it -- parents are more likely to attend if their children are involved. Plan activities for child care: include books, coloring books, bingo, etc. Don't forget prizes or certificates. Videos are a hit. Plan snacks to keep your audience happy.

Provide transportation if needed. Organize a parent carpool. If funds are available provide a school bus. Hold meetings at different locations in the community such as churches or recreation centers.

Have a door prize at the end of every meeting. Solicit prizes from staff, PTA, community business partners. Have a fund-raiser to purchase prizes. Give away books, stickers, bookmarks or other family learning materials as prizes.

Provide refreshments. Coffee and cookies are always a hit. Have special goodies such as a continental breakfast, a free luncheon or a potluck. You provide the paper goods.

Evaluate meetings. Make improvements a priority. Evaluations are important. There's always room for improvement. Publicize your efforts to staff and parents. Keep a portfolio or notebook of the activities you are having. Take pictures. Publish a parent newsletter. Invite the administrator to your activities so that they can have a first hand look at what's happening.

Resources for Parent Education Activities and Workshops

Many of the organizations annotated in Chapter Eight provide books, videos, pamphlets and workshops and other materials for parent education activities.

References

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1992). *A handbook for involving parents in Head Start.* Washington, DC: Authors.

Chapter 8
Organizations Providing Parent and Family Involvement Resources

We have provided some basic information about getting parents and families involved in education. There is a wealth of additional information available. This chapter is a guide to national and state organizations which provide information and assistance regarding parent involvement in education and parent education. Many of these organizations produce and/or distribute materials, publications and videos that address specific concerns discussed in this booklet.

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

Publishes the following: *101 Ways Parents Can Help Students Achieve, What To Do If...A Guide for Parents of Teenagers, and Parents...Partners in Education.*

American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 879-4400

One of the largest professional organizations for teachers in the United States. Publishes: *Home Team: Learning Activities.*

Alliance for Parental Involvement in Education (AllPIE)
P.O. Box 59, East Chatham
New York, NY 12060-0059
(518) 392-6900
Program Contacts: Seth Rockmuller and Katharine Houk.

This parent-to-parent organization provides information about family education options (public, private and home school), and parent and student rights within those options. Services include a newsletter, a book and resources catalog, a referral service, pamphlets, workshops and conferences.

Arizona Department of Education
1535 West Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 255-5008

This state department of education publishes several guides on parent involvement. Two of those are: *Parent Participation for Effective School. Parent-teacher Communication: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents*, and *Parent Participation for Effective Schools. Planning for Parent Involvement: A Handbook for Administrators, Teachers and Parents.*

ASPIRA Association, Inc.
1112 16th St. NW, Suite 340
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 835-3600
Program Contact: Lisa Colon.

A national Hispanic education leadership development organization, ASPIRA administers a national parent involvement demonstration project in Hispanic communities in nine cities and produces booklets to help Hispanic parents with their children's education. Request a catalog of materials in Spanish.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 549-9110

Request information of the video program *Involving Parents in Education.*

Adult Education Association
810 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 347-9574

Publishes a leadership pamphlet series. Each pamphlet is 49 pages and costs $1.25. Some titles are: *How to Lead a Discussion, Taking Action in the Community, How to Use Role Playing*, and *Conducting Workshops.* A list of publications is available.

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 363-6936

A non-profit organization, concerned with education and well-being of all children. Provides workshops for credit, conferences, a library and information services, and publishes, *Childhood Education* (a bi-monthly journal), and the publication, *Parenting*.

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
2544 Etna Street
Beverly, CA 94704

An organization developed by and for those whose job is parent involvement. Request the newsletter: *Apple Pie*.

Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-0370

Provides information, prototypes and materials on teacher practices of parent involvement; student's reactions to parent involvement, research and policy implication of parent involvement, and materials for teachers called TIPS, Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork. Request: *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork: Involving Families to Improve Student Achievement*. Prototype activities for TIPS Math, Science, Social Studies, Health and Language Arts are available. Also available: *School and Family Partners: Surveys and Summaries.*

ERIC/EDINFO PRESS
Indiana University
P.O. Box 5953
Bloomington, IN 47404
Toll Free 1-800-925-7853
Fax 1-812-331-2776

A private press that publishes *Parents Sharing Books*, which is a family literacy program that gets parents intimately involved with their children's reading and learning development. Materials include a *Parents Sharing Books Leader Training Manual;* bookmarks, transparencies, video, *Connect! How to Get Your Kids to Talk to You, and Parents Sharing Books Technical Report*. The program is appropriate for elementary, middle and junior high schools.

Families in Education
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
(608) 266-9757
1-800-243-8782

Publish *Families and Education: An Educator's Resource for Family Involvement*. This 100 page book includes chapters on understanding parents, parent-teacher communication, reinforcing classwork at home, and educator support for family communications.

Family Resource Coalition
200 S. Michigan Avenue
Suite 1520
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 341-0900
Contacts: Pat Maunsell and Stephanie Lubin

A not-for-profit membership organization, the Family Resource Coalition is the national leader in the family support field. Its mission is to build support and resources within the communities, to strengthen and empower families, enhance the capacities of families, and foster optimal development of children and youth. Available: *Programs to Strengthen Families: A Resource Guide.*

High/Scope Press
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898
1-800-40-PRESS

High/Scope press is one division of High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing, studying and training educators in providing model programs for young children and their families. Some publications include: *Getting involved: Workshops for parents; Involving parents: A handbook for participation in schools; Supporting the changing family: A guide to the parent-to-parent model; Good beginnings: Parenting in the early years.* Also available is a bilingual (Spanish-English) media package for parent involvement.

Home and School Institute, Inc.
Trinity College
Washington, D.C. 20017
(202) 466-3633
Program Contact: Dorothy Rich.

A non-profit educational organization which develops programs and publications to help parents become better teachers of their children and to help education work more effectively with parents and the community. Offers courses and published a newsletter six times a year. Request: *101 Activities for Building More Effective School-Community Involvement, Families Learning Together, Take Homes, Job Success Begins at Home, Three R's Plus, In Any Language, Parents Are Teachers, Survival Guide for Busy Parents: Help Children Do Well While You Do Well on the Job.*

Institute for Responsive Education (IRE)
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309
Program Contact: Owen Heleen.

Funded in 1973 to assist citizen involvement in educational decision making, the institute believes that parents and community, in collaboration with school officials and teachers, can make a difference. To foster parent and community involvement in the school, they publish a quarterly journal, *Citizen Action in Education*. The IRE is the principal contact for the National Center on Families.

Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146
515-281-4747--Susan Anderson
515-281-7844--Donna Eggleston

Provides information about legislation regarding parent involvement in preschool, elementary and secondary education. Request: *Iowa Chapter 1 Sourcebook of Successful Parent Involvement Practices* which offers example of newsletters, brochures, parent handbooks, surveys and questionnaires, home learning activities, parent-teacher conferencing, and more. Also request: *Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource for Parents, Educators and Communities*.

Iowa State University Extension
Richards 101
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011
515-294-0363
515-294-1557
Families Extension Answer Line 1-800-262-3804

Offers workshops, newsletters and publications on children, parenting, parent education and community needs assessment. Information and training is usually free or low-cost. Publications include *Zero to One* (a parenting newsletter series for the first year of life), and *1-2-3 Grow* (a parenting newsletter series for the toddler years), and *So Alive...Three to Five!* (a parenting newsletter series for the preschool years). Every county in Iowa has an Extension office that can provide assistance and information. Call for a current *Families Extension Publication List* or *Publications on Children and Parenting*.

International Reading Association (IRA)
800 Barksdale Road
Newark, DE 19704-8139
(302) 731-1600
Program Contact: Peter Mitchell, Executive Director.

This organization works with parents, educators, and researchers to improve reading instruction and increase literacy. IRA also offers information to parents on how to develop lifelong reading habits with their children.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th Street., NW
Washington, D.C. 20036-1425
1-800-424-2460
202-328-8777
Fax: 202-328-1846

The largest professional group of early childhood educators and child care providers. Publishes brochures, posters, videotapes, books and the journal, *Young Children*. Materials discuss ways to improve parent-teacher relations. National, state and local affiliate groups offer training opportunities. Call or write for a free catalog. Request the 40-page booklet, *Teacher-parent relationships*.

National Black Child Development Institute
1023 15th St. NW, Suite 600
Washington, D.C.
(202) 387-1281
Program Contact: Sherry Deane.

This organization provides direct services and conducts advocacy campaigns to improve the quality of life for black children and youth. Family and early childhood education are emphasized; speakers and publications are available. Request: *African-American Family Reading List* and a catalog.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)
Box 39, 1201 16th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

This organization is comprised of 34 national organizations involved in education, research and advocacy. It is dedicated to the development of family/school partnerships. Request the *free* brochure *Developing Family/school Partnerships: Guidelines for Schools and School Districts*. Also available: *Guide to Parent Involvement Resources*.

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter I Parents (National Parent Center)
Edmonds School Building
9th and D Streets NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 547-9286
Program Contact: Robert Witherspooon.

This organization provides a voice for Chapter I parents at the federal, regional, state and local levels. It publishes a newsletter, provides training, and sponsors conferences.

National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE)
900 Second Street NE, Suite 8
Washington, D.C. 2002-3557
Toll free help line 1-800-NET-WORK

Works to improve the education of children by encouraging and assisting citizens -- including parents -- to strengthen public school. A non-profit public interest organization, NCCE is an advocate for citizens and helps them gain and use information and skills to influence the quality of public education. Some titles available: *Annual Education Check Up Card, Beyond the Bake Sale--An Educator's Guide to Working With Parents, Effective Schools: How to Evaluate Them; How to Get Them, Developing Leadership for Parent/Citizen Groups, Finding Out How People Feel About Local Schools, Fund-Raising by Parent/Citizen Groups, Important Fact Sheets for Groups, The School Budget--It's Your Money; It's your Business, Single Parents and the Public Schools: Results of a National Survey, Your School: How Well Is It Working? A Citizens Guide to School Evaluation.* Highly recommended: *Parents Organizing to Improve Schools.* Request a free bookmark with information on parent involvement in the middle school.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
810 First Street NE, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20002-4205
(202) 289-1380
Program Contact: Denise De La Rosa.

This research and advocacy organization works on behalf of the U.S. Hispanic population and provides technical assistance to community-based organizations. NCLR's project EXCEL is a national education demonstration project which includes tutoring services and parental education.

National Education Association (Professional Library)
P.O. Box 509
West Haven, CT 06516
Toll Free 1-800-229-4200

One of the two largest professional organizations for teachers, this organization publishes materials on parent involvement. Request: *Parent-Teacher Conferencing.* Also request a listing of other parent involvement publications.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 275-9500

Request the publication: *School and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement.*

National School Public Relations Association
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201
Arlington, VA 22314
(703) 528-5840

Request: *Helping Parents Help Their Kids*. Contains a model survey to assess parents' needs.

Parents as Teachers National Center (PAT)
University of Missouri-St.Louis
Marillac Hall, 8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63121-4499
(314) 553-5738
Program Contact: Claire Eldredge

PAT encourages parents of children from birth to age 3 to think of themselves as their children's first and most influential teachers. Provides information and training to parents, supports public policy initiatives, and offers parent educator certification.

Parent-Educator Connection
Deb Sampson/Dena Goplerud
Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center
Drake University
Des Moines, IA 50311
(515) 271-3931 (515)271-3936

The Parent-Educator Connection program is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education. It began in 1984 to provide parents and educators with opportunities to work together in positive ways to improve educational programs for children with special needs.

Parent Leadership Institute
P.O. Box 50492
Palo Alto, CA 94303
(415) 424-8687
Contact: Patti Wipfler

Provides training and empowerment for parent involvement in education.

Parent Training and Information Centers, and Technical Assistance to Parent Projects
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 104
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 482-2915
Program Contact: Martha Ziegler

The Office of Special Education Programs supports a network of 60 Parent Training and Information Centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico to enable parents to participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. Technical Assistance to Parent Projects (TAPP) provides technical assistance to Parent Training and Information Centers and developing minority programs in urban and rural locations.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
National Educational Laboratory
Published, Inc.
P.O. Box 1003
Austin, Texas 78767
(512) 476-6861

A division of the U.S. Department of Education, this group develops and disseminates bilingual/bicultural curriculum programs.

The Parent Institute
P.O. Box 7474
Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
Toll fee order number: 1-800-756-5525

A private agency which publishes booklets, brochures and newsletters on parent involvement and produces videos on parent involvement. Two newsletters are available: *What's Working in Parent Involvement,* and *Parents Make the Difference.* Two booklet series are available: *The Skills for School Success Series,* and *The Parenting Series.* Call toll free for an order form.

The Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20036

In conjunction with The National Health/Education Consortium (NHEC), this organization distributes campaign materials to teach parents and parents-to-be the critical connection between good health and their children's ability to learn. Available in English and Spanish. Materials include a video, a *Community Action Guide,* a poster, message pads and magnets.

The National PTA
700 Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2571
(312)787-0977

The PTA is the national organization for parent involvement in education, having been around since 1897. One of its key objectives is "to bring into closer relationship the home and

school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth." Request: *A Leader's Guide to Parent and Family Involvement*. This 15 page booklet provides a condensed and useful guide to setting up a parent involvement program. Also recommended: *Reaching Out: How to Make Your PTA More Inclusive*, and the video *In Someone Else's Shoes*. Request a free copy of the *National PTA Catalog*, which includes brochures for parents, books for parents, planning kits, guides and videos for PTA leaders. To receive a free catalog include $1.00 to cover postage and handling.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

The Head Start Bureau publishes documents to support parental involvement in Head Start programs throughout the United States. *A Handbook For Involving Parents in Head Start*, DHHS Publication No.(ACF)92-31187, offers information specific to parent involvement in Head Start, but much is useful to all those aspiring to begin a parent involvement program.

Willow Tree Publication
P.O. Box 428
Naperville, IL 60566-9725

A private publisher produces a newsletter for parents of children in daycare and preschool: *The Well-Centered Child*.

21st Century Learning Corporation
Toll free: 1-800-538-7532

Private agency produces a comprehensive send-home, parent education program, *Smart Start*. Classroom sets for grades K-2 and 3-5 contain 10 copies each of two videos, and 10 parent packs which include a Parent's Guide, Activity Guide, poster, and stickers.

APPENDIX A

PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent:

_____School is in the process of developing a Parental Involvement Program. Parents play an important role in the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of their children, especially during the early years. This program will be designed to help children become more successful in school by working with their parents during these most important years. The program emphasis will be to provide training, guidance, and counseling for parents in the area of child growth and development. In order to determine the needs of the children in our school, we would appreciate your answering the following questions.

Sincerely,

_____

Superintendent or Principal

****

1. What specifically would you like to know about the schools?_____

_____

_____

2. From what source(s) do you get most of your information about the school?

_____Newspaper
_____Children
_____Teachers, Principal
_____School Newsletter
_____Television
_____Friends
_____Other_____

_____

3. Would you be interested in learning about the

_____testing program in your child's school?
_____improving your child's self-image?
_____improving your self-image?

4. What specific subjects taught would be of interest to you?

_____Reading
_____Math
_____Art and Music
_____Other

5. Would you be interested in becoming more involved in school affairs and/or school instruction?

_____Yes
_____No

6. Would you be interested in attending a class or session on how parents can help their children at home?

_____Yes _____No

7. Have you ever:

Yes	No	
_____	_____	a. Met the principal of your child's school?
_____	_____	b. Met the teacher(s) of your child's school?
_____	_____	c. Visited a class (in session) at your child's school?
_____	_____	d. Attended any school function?
_____	_____	e. Had lunch with your child at school?
_____	_____	f. Visited the school for any other reasons?

8. Would you be interested in participating in a small group, coffee-discussion hour at the school?

_____Yes _____No Best Time: _____Morning
_____Afternoon
_____Evening

9. Check the questions below that would help you help your child. Those checked should be the ones in which you would be able to participate.

_____parent-teacher conference
_____group meetings with a speaker
_____educational films
_____meetings just to talk with other parents
_____sessions about homework, reading, math, etc.

10. I feel that I can talk openly with my child's teacher.

_____Yes _____No _____To Some Degree

I feel that I am well informed about what my child is doing at school.

_____Yes _____No _____To Some Degree

I feel that the teacher needs to be aware of home problems that may affect my child's work.

_____Agree _____Disagree

11. How effective are the following toward improved communication with your child's teacher and the school?

Open House	_____Good	_____Fair	_____Poor
Evening Grade-Level Orientation	_____Good	_____Fair	_____Poor
Teacher-Parent Conferences	_____Good	_____Fair	_____Poor
Parent-Group Session	_____Good	_____Fair	_____Poor

12. As a parent, do you have trouble with: (Check those that apply)

_____your child's homework
_____spending enough time with your child
_____dealing with his/her problems
_____discipline
_____motivating your child

13. As a parent:
Is discipline a problem?
_____Often _____Seldom _____Never

Is it a problem to transport your child to school-related events?
_____Often _____Seldom _____Never

Is it difficult to spend time with your child?
_____Often _____Seldom _____Never

14. During an average week, do you spend time with your child in the following activities?

Yes	No	
_____	_____	a. Playing together with them
_____	_____	b. Reading to them
_____	_____	c. Just talking (Does not include telling them what to do)
_____	_____	d. Watching T.V. together
_____	_____	e. Helping them with homework

15. Please indicate how interested you are in knowing more about any of these areas: (If you are not interested, circle 1. If somewhat interested, circle 2. If very interested, circle 3.)

a. Things to do with my child at home that are fun and educational	1 2 3
b. Whether my child is developing the way he/she should	1 2 3
c. How to help my child do better in school	1 2 3
d. Services provided by the community	1 2 3

Thank you for taking the time to answer these important questions. Your child should return the survey to his/her homeroom teacher by _____.

(Community Education Section, 1985)