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ABSTRACT

Recognizing that communities can accomplish more for their children if all parts of the community work together in a collaborative effort, family-school-community-business partnerships have developed to provide comprehensive services to children and their families more effectively. This report contains information on the history, purposes, and structures of family-school-community-business partnerships and offers examples of such partnerships that are making a difference for children. Following introductory remarks, section 1 of the report discusses efforts to improve educational quality and accountability. Section 2 discusses the evolution of collaboration from the early 1900s to the present and presents the goals of family-school-community-business partnerships. Collaboration models are described, and three major types of partnership service-delivery models presented: school-based, school-linked, and community-based. Section 3 of the report describes the unique needs, key players, and primary characteristics of partnerships that target the following underserved or underrecognized areas: (1) early childhood education; (2) education of homeless children and youth; (3) education of migrant children, youth, and their families; (4) education of children of poverty; (5) preparation of teachers to work with children with learning disabilities; and (6) reduction of the achievement gap through improved educational opportunities. Section 4 describes the critical components of successful partnerships: client-access facilitators, delivery-system facilitators, and government facilitators. (Contains 128 references.)

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TOMORROW'S CHILD

Benefiting from Today's Family–School–Community–Business Partnerships

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TOMORROW'S CHILD

Benefiting from Today's Family–School–Community–Business Partnerships

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About the SERVE Organization

SERVE, directed by Dr. John R. Sanders, is an education organization with the mission to promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast. The organization's commitment to continuous improvement is manifest in an applied research-to-practice model that drives all of its work. Building on theory and craft knowledge, SERVE staff members develop tools and processes designed to assist practitioners and policymakers with their work, ultimately, to raise the level of student achievement in the region. Evaluation of the impact of these activities combined with input from affected stakeholders expands SERVE's knowledge base and informs future research.

This vigorous and practical approach to research and development is supported by an experienced staff strategically located throughout the region. This staff is highly skilled in providing needs-assessment services, conducting applied research in schools, and developing processes, products, and programs that inform educators and increase student achievement. In the last three years, in addition to its basic research and development work with over 170 southeastern schools, SERVE staff provided technical assistance and training to more than 18,000 teachers and administrators across the region.

SERVE is governed by a board of directors that includes the governors, chief state school officers, educators, legislators, and private sector leaders from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

At the core of SERVE's business is the operation of the Regional Educational Laboratory. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the Regional Educational Laboratory for the Southeast is one of ten programs providing research-based information and services to all 50 states and territories. These Laboratories form a nationwide education knowledge network, building a bank of information and resources shared nationally and disseminated regionally to improve student achievement locally. SERVE's National Leadership Area, Expanded Learning Opportunities, focuses on improving student outcomes through the use of exemplary pre-K and extended-day programs.

In addition to the Lab, SERVE operates the Southeast Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education and the SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR◆TEC). SERVE also administers a subcontract for the Region IV Comprehensive Center and has additional funding from the Department to provide services in migrant education and to operate the National Center for Homeless Education.

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In addition to the program areas, the SERVE Evaluation Unit supports the evaluation activities of the major grants and contracts and provides contracted evaluation services to state and local education agencies in the region. The Technology Support Group provides SERVE staff and their constituents with IT support, technical assistance, and software applications. Through its Publications Unit, SERVE publishes a variety of studies, training materials, policy briefs, and program products. Among the many products developed at SERVE, two receiving national recognition include Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development, honored by the National Staff Development Council, and Study Guide for Classroom Assessment: Linking Instruction and Assessment, honored by Division H of AERA. Through its programmatic, technology, evaluation, and publishing activities, SERVE provides contracted staff development and technical assistance in specialized areas to assist education agencies in achieving their school improvement goals.

SERVE's main office is at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, with major staff groups located in Tallahassee, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia, as well as satellite offices in Bonita Springs, Florida; Durham, North Carolina; and Shelby, Mississippi. Unique among the ten Regional Educational Laboratories, SERVE employs a full-time policy analyst to assist the chief state school officer at the state education agencies in each of the states in the SERVE region. These analysts act as SERVE's primary liaisons to the state departments of education, providing research-based policy services to state-level education policy-makers and informing SERVE about key state education issues and legislation.

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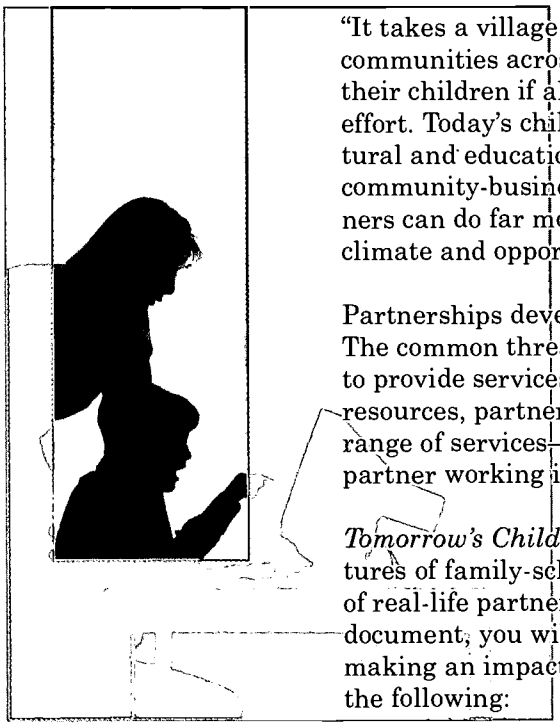
Introduction



"It takes a village to raise a child," says an oft-quoted African proverb, and communities across America are realizing that they can accomplish more for their children if all parts of their community work together in a collaborative effort. Today's child is seeing the emergence of what is likely to be the cultural and educational standard for the child of tomorrow—the family-school-community-business partnership, in which the combined efforts of the partners can do far more than any single organization to improve the educational climate and opportunities for America's children.

Partnerships develop for a number of reasons and in a multitude of forms. The common thread that connects these partnerships is an overarching goal to provide services more effectively. By combining talents, abilities, and resources, partnerships are frequently able to offer a more comprehensive range of services—and provide them more economically—than could each partner working independently.

Tomorrow's Child contains information on the history, purposes, and structures of family-school-community-business partnerships and offers examples of real-life partnerships that are making a difference for children. Within this document, you will find a cross-section of areas in which partnerships are making an impact and have been created, directly or indirectly, to improve the following:

- Education and care of young children
- Education of homeless children and youth
- Education of migrant children, youth, and their families
- Education of children of poverty
- Education of children with learning disabilities
- Education of children who have been placed at risk for school failure

Among those who might find this publication helpful are educators, school board members, and business and community professionals. Read on to become aware of remarkable possibilities and

- Understand the importance of family-school-community-business partnerships
- Learn about best practices for partnerships
- Generate ideas for your own family-school-community-business partnerships
- Explore examples of partnerships that are truly making a difference for learners and families

Today's Child

Today's child has a complex set of needs. All children need a safe, nurturing environment in which to grow and learn. They need stimulating materials, activities, and interactions with others. They need support in the areas of physical and mental health and spirituality.

Many of today's children may have problems related to poverty, homelessness, delinquency, difficulty in school, mental health, physical health (including teenage pregnancy), or poor-quality early-childcare environments. Today's children may be in families that frequently move in order to find work. They have needs that must be met at their own unique developmental and ability levels. Today's children need to learn how to effectively relate to the world around them, as both the children they are now and as the young adults of tomorrow.

They need continuity through important life transitions, such as moving from a preschool environment to school, from high school to college, or from living in a comfortable home to being homeless—all of which can disrupt a child's ability to receive a quality education. In the past, social, educational, and health agencies have independently developed programs to address these needs. But in today's complex society, such needs can no longer be met by any one resource, whether that resource is the family, the school, or a community organization. Creating a culture that supports the growth and development of today's child requires that all members of the "village" become involved. In recent years, to answer this need, many collaborative service models have emerged.

Today's child is seeing the seeds of change at national, state, and local levels, and those changes are significantly altering the services available to children and families. By working together toward a common goal, families and professionals within traditionally separate disciplines are collaborating in ways that are more responsive to the diverse needs of today's youth. Physical and mental health professionals, community agencies, and businesses are working with schools and families to provide holistic, transdisciplinary services. As a result of this type of collaboration, and as the breadth and depth of services have increased, duplication of many services has been reduced, and children's needs are being met, not only more efficiently but also more economically.

Family-school-community-business partnerships are springing up across the country and are making positive differences in the lives of the children and youth they serve. Terms such as *school-based, school-linked, family-centered, community-based,* and *youth service centers* are the new buzzwords among educators, social workers, and health professionals.

Tomorrow's Child

Tomorrow's child will find improved relationships between agencies, more family involvement, and increased community responsibility for the needs of its children. Most importantly, tomorrow's children and their families will be empowered to maintain better levels of health, education, social involvement, and recreation.

Background

During the past several decades, United States legislators, administrators, and educators have taken a number of steps to improve education and accountability for America's students. The first and most comprehensive of these was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Over the years, ESEA has been amended, expanded, streamlined, and revised nine times, creating programs that help migrant children, neglected and delinquent youngsters, limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and other children at risk of school failure. Other ESEA programs—designed to enhance math and science instruction, rid schools of drugs and violence, stimulate educational innovation, and achieve other targeted purposes—benefit all students.

This legislation has changed the face of American education in many ways. Title I, the cornerstone of ESEA, has helped raise the academic achievement of millions of disadvantaged children. Title VII Bilingual Education has helped generations of children learn English and succeed in school. Other ESEA provisions promote professional development, arming teachers with new knowledge and instructional techniques in math, science and other critical subjects; bring a greater focus to the processes of teaching and learning; and deliver a host of other benefits, difficult to realize without federal support, for students, teachers, and parents.

However, as the next three decades passed, it became apparent that this educational foundation needed further strengthening, particularly with regard to disadvantaged children. It was also apparent that the improvements made possible by the legislation concentrated mainly on assisting specific groups of children and accomplishing special objectives, rather than on addressing the intertwining needs of all children in a school. This piecemeal approach, with stops and starts, often unintentionally resulted in instructional programs designed solely to fit the parameters of federal funding, and federally funded programs operating in isolation from one another with few connections to state and local efforts.

In 1994, the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) reauthorized and redesigned ESEA. The amended law retained a focus on children with special learning needs but dramatically altered the shape of education systems. IASA encouraged comprehensive, systemic school reform and emphasized high expectations for all children. Coordination of resources to improve education for all children was a focus, and many specific process requirements that had been barriers to coordinated services were de-emphasized. Coordinated state and local planning efforts were key to improving services for all children, and schools were encouraged to pull in resources—people, funds, and materials—from federal, state, and local programs to make the plans work.

The latest reauthorization of ESEA—the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001—continued and strengthened the emphasis on high learning standards for all children and instituted new accountability requirements. Hallmarks of No Child Left Behind include

- **Accountability for results**, with strong standards for what children in grades three through eight should know in math and reading and annual assessments to monitor progress
- **State and local flexibility** in how federal education funds are used
- **Use of proven educational methods** that have a research base showing they are effective in helping children learn
- **Expanded choices** to give parents with children in chronically failing schools new options

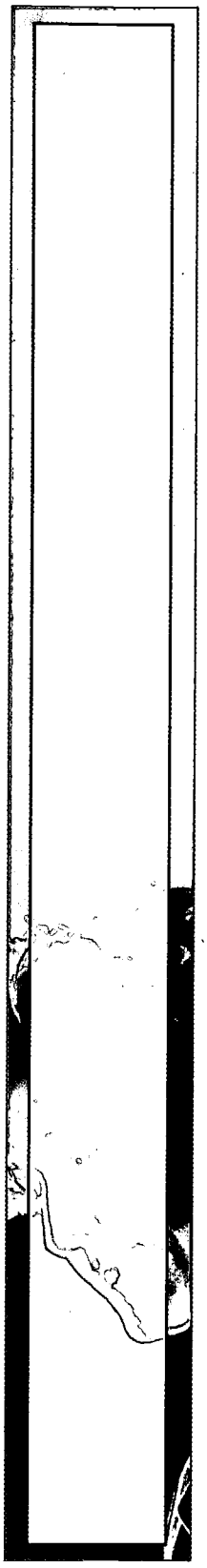
These laws established clear expectations that all children can and should reach high standards by developing the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind once expected of only the top students and they hold students responsible for results. They complemented and accelerated school-reform efforts already underway in several states and served as a catalyst in areas where school-reform efforts had not yet begun. They promote safe, healthy, disciplined, and drug-free school environments where all children feel connected, motivated, and challenged to learn, and where parents are welcome and involved.

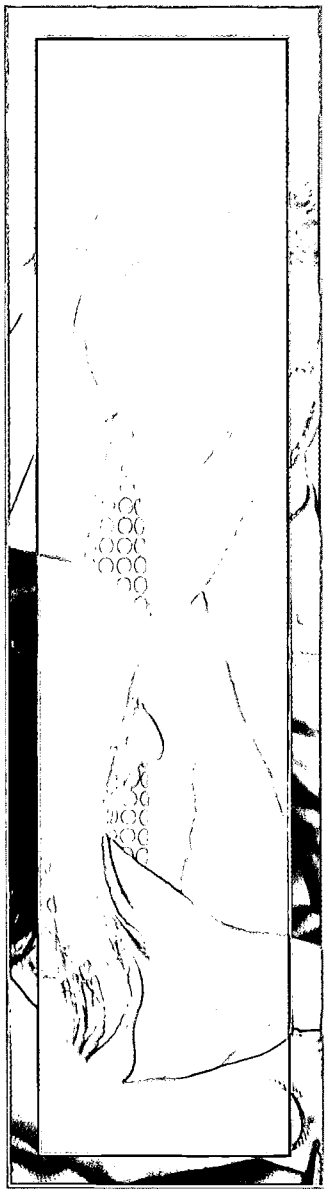
The following four principles are key to any comprehensive educational improvement effort:

- High standards for all students
- Teachers who have been effectively trained to teach to high standards
- Responsibility for results at the local level
- Partnerships among families, schools, and communities

This last component, partnerships, is the focus of this publication. As opposed to efforts that are short-term and that add and subtract materials, expertise, and cooperative associations depending on immediate needs and available funding, true partnerships are long-term collaborations in which all partners invest a relatively equal amount of tangible or intangible resources, consider other partners' contributions integral to the collaboration, and receive benefits. Families, for example, benefit from improved family harmony and security when discipline problems have been attended to and needs such as hunger and homelessness have been dealt with. Communities and businesses benefit from a well-educated and better-prepared workforce, and when public services can be provided in a more cost-effective manner. Teachers benefit when they receive professional development training. Schools can work more effectively when parents, businesses, and community members participate in educational programs for the benefit of the community's children. The list of benefits for everyone involved in a partnership is endless and includes such intangibles as satisfaction in a goal accomplished or joy at seeing a child succeed.

Tomorrow's Child presents a cross-section of programs where partnerships have made an impact. We hope readers will be challenged to extend the ideas presented here and apply them to their own unique sphere of education.





Supporting Children through Family–School–Community–Business Collaboration

Community volunteers, mental health workers, physicians, businesses, and educators have been collaborating for more than a century to contribute to the welfare and development of the whole learner. Their levels of involvement have fluctuated as the goals of the education system have changed in response to prevalent issues of the times. And just as each child, family, school, and school system is unique, the purposes and structures of these collaborative ventures have been tailored to fit the partnership goals, available resources, and needs of the children they serve.

Evolution of Collaboration

Enhancing the welfare of children by collaborating with the school system is not a new concept. The child of the 1890s and early 1900s received support from physicians and social workers who sought to improve living conditions for children and their families, and schools provided easy access to the multitude of immigrant poor who were most vulnerable to the spread of epidemics. Physicians came to the schools to instruct students in hygiene, give vaccinations, and conduct general physical examinations. Gradually, health programs for students became an integral part of the school structure.

Women's clubs—whose members were often former teachers and reformers with social connections and free time—provided playgrounds and other recreational opportunities during non-school hours, free or inexpensive meals for students, and vacation schools—safe places (often empty urban schools) where children who normally had little adult supervision could both play and learn during their summer vacations. At these popular progressive schools—a form of extended day care—children went on field trips to parks and the countryside, studied nature, learned crafts, staged plays, and visited museums and other city attractions.

Some nonprofessional volunteers took on the role of guidance counselor and worked to link older students with jobs. Others visited both homes and classrooms to determine why immigrant children were truant or having difficulty in school. These forerunners of social workers served as links between schools and immigrant families, guiding educators toward interpreting and understanding the needs of foreign-born children and helping immigrants adjust to a new land.

Business first became involved in schools as early as 1895. At that time, George Merrill provided the earliest documented opportunity to explore vocational opportunities through school-business interfaces when he offered exploratory experiences, along with job counseling and placement services, for students at the California School of Mechanical Arts. In subsequent years, preparing students for the workforce became a common goal for business and educational leaders as American industry promoted the movement toward universal schooling and vocational education. Business leaders became stewards of the schools by serving on school boards and participating in the development of programming and curricula.

At the same time, educators recognized the need for specialized training that would allow teachers to serve as vocational counselors, and in 1908, the Boston Vocational Bureau was created for that purpose. Five years later, as a result of the Bureau and a related organization, the National Society for Promotion of Industrial Education, the National Vocational Guidance Association was formed.

The child of the 1920s experienced wide fluctuations in services available through the school. During the early part of the decade, the availability of teachers who were trained to work with students' vocational needs and interests—combined with John Dewey's focus on progressive education in schools and William Burnham's emphasis on the mental health needs of students—contributed to the emergence of an organized guidance program that addressed educational, mental health, and vocational needs. However, by the end of the decade, many of these student services were no longer available due to financial constraints arising from the Great Depression and because conservative, anti-socialist views of the period created distrust of government intervention.

The child of the 1940s saw an era of expanded school services. As the psychodynamic theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung and the person-centered therapy of Carl Rogers came into vogue, social workers, mental health workers, and the mental-health aspects of the school guidance counselor's role gradually phased back into the educational arena. During the war years, a need for Americans who could quickly acclimate to work for which they had not been specifically prepared brought renewed emphasis on students' vocational preparation and renewed interest from business.

The child of the 1950s experienced a shift in the focus of school social services. While these services were initially intended for the poor, educators in the 1950s attempted to deliver such services to virtually all students, poor and prosperous alike. The 1950s marked the beginning of federal Special Education legislation. New laws established funds for research in the area of services to children with disabilities and for training personnel to work with these children. Also during this time, the launch of Sputnik raised questions about the degree to which schools were preparing students for careers in science and engineering. Strong links between schools and business provided opportunities for students to become more aware of the growing importance of technology.

The child of the 1960s had still greater support from policymakers, but implementation at the school level was frequently challenging. Improved services to women and people with disabilities became important, and services to poor and minority learners became priorities again as well. Issues of school integration, due process, and political power spawned organized coalitions of parents, teachers, advocates, legal professionals, and federal and state program managers. Federal initiatives, such as Head Start and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, led America farther down the road to structurally integrated service-delivery systems. Increasing recognition of the disparity of

services led federal and state governments to mandate services, often without allocating sufficient new funds to pay for them. Business leaders backed away from the possible financial and social costs of school involvement—especially school-policy development—as a result of desegregation, busing, and school violence. These complex and often interrelated problems forced professionals to think divergently and to work across disciplinary lines—at the same time that professions were becoming increasingly specialized.

With the number of high school graduates projected to decline 20 percent from 1980 to 1990, the child of the 1970s and 1980s found Americans concerned with the effectiveness of the country's school systems. On the basis of these projections, national concerns shifted from poverty and equality to academic standards and international economic competitiveness. Reduced workplace productivity was attributed to poorer educational performance. Emerging technological changes would require different skills than earlier workforce members had been taught in school. Business and industry leaders were concerned that neither the size nor the quality of the upcoming workforce would be sufficient for their needs. Again, it was time for business to strengthen its relationship with schools.

Making sure all children received a high-quality education became an issue of national importance and was documented in the 1983 publication *A Nation at Risk*, a report on public education that emphasized the economic consequences of an inefficient school system and compelled corporate America to get involved. This was followed by two policy statements from the Committee for Economic Development: *Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools* (1985) and *Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged* (1987). Both emphasized the importance of a persistent business involvement in educational reform and development.

In 1986, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 99-457) became the first legislation to mandate services for preschool children with disabilities. States were required to provide specialized education services for children ages 3–5. Services for infants and toddlers were optional at the time, although some federal funding targeted to this age group was available.

In 1990, PL 99-457 was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It established a mandate for inclusive education services for children with disabilities and extended that mandate to include infants and toddlers.

The child of the 1990s experienced significant school-system change as a result of the Improving America's Schools Act, which amended and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. As a result of this legislation, schools were required to focus their attention on specific goals, and work toward these goals in an accountable manner, using best and proven practices, innovative programs, and collaborative arrangements with families, communities, and businesses. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 further strengthened accountability requirements to ensure that all children meet high learning standards and, therefore, made partnerships among schools and other entities even more crucial.

Today's child can benefit from a higher level of support from a collaborative family-school-community-business effort than at any time in the past. From a foundation laid by short-term agreements between schools and service providers, true partnerships are emerging—equal partnerships in which all partners bring something to the table and all reap benefits.

School-family relationships have also progressed. Families participate in school efforts in a variety of ways, from school open houses and parent-teacher conferences to family math nights, science fairs, art fairs, and school carnivals. Families also frequently volunteer at their children's schools, serve on school improvement teams, and assume leadership roles.

Tomorrow's child will benefit from the momentum established in recent years. Multipurpose initiatives that have evolved through a century of social and political change are continuing to emerge. Successful collaborative efforts that are designed to serve the needs of today's child may become the standard models for educating tomorrow's child.

-School-Community-Business Partnerships: ses and Goals

Collaborative efforts between all four groups—families, schools, communities, and businesses—are more effective at meeting the needs of today's child than a partnership consisting of only one or two of these partners, however well-intentioned participants may be. As interdisciplinary collaboration increases, partners align their individual goals and strategies for the purpose of delivering services that will improve the lives of children and families. Such collaboration benefits all children, especially in light of changing family structures, limited school resources (personnel, time, expertise, and finances), and a demanding social environment rife with obstacles such as drug use among younger children, teenage pregnancy, and child abuse. These and other challenges make it imperative that all four groups work together to meet the ever-increasing needs of today's children. Schools can't do it alone.

There are many targeted directions a partnership can take to improve the lives of children and their families. However, the primary motivations for such efforts, which share resources in order to be more effective, include the following:

- Help a school improve existing programs
- Develop and implement specific projects
- Enable school reform

Many businesses in the 1980s partnered with schools in the "adopt-a-school" model, which typically involves a single company selecting a single school and donating resources and volunteer hours to support established student activities or school projects. These partnerships exemplify the generosity of the businesses, and schools benefit from additional materials and human resources. These collaborations do not, however, position any of the involved partners to affect the underlying causes of difficulties facing students and schools.

Partnerships that are project driven are usually formed to address specific academic or social problems with which the school is concerned. For example, a business/school system partnership might address falling performance in science by developing teacher internships in science-related businesses or industries. The partners may co-sponsor a district science fair, develop a speaker's bureau, or import a program developed and tested by a university or other organization. Projects that drive the creation of these partnerships involve a substantial commitment of personnel, time, resources, and work and may continue for several years. Unfortunately, transferring the project from one classroom/school/district to another or extending the partnership into other areas of school activity is not easily accomplished. The partnership's relatively short-term involvement is also a concern for those who seek more permanent school change.

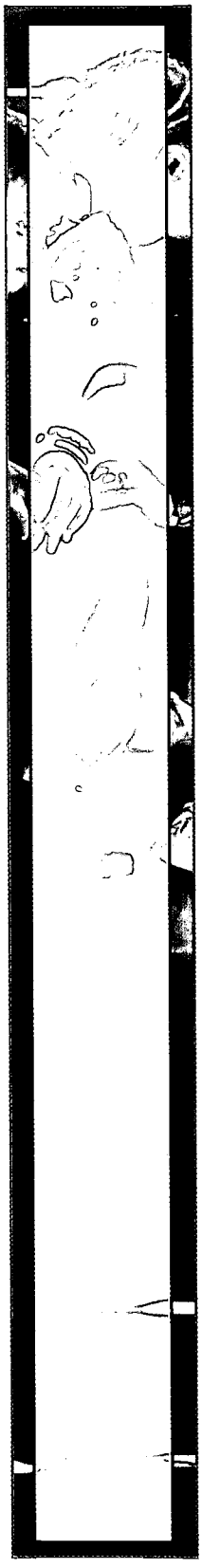
Collaborations that are formed to initiate, assist, or support school reform efforts are more long-term in nature. The Business Roundtable, an association whose members—CEOs of leading U.S. corporations—promote economic growth and a well-trained U.S. workforce, notes, "Working effectively in broad-based coalitions is significantly different from contributing money and supporting narrow or limited programs" (*The Business Roundtable*, 1991, p. 5). These reform-model partnerships are created to change common school practices and, thereby, effect positive results on students, teachers, and schools. They seek to address complex societal issues such as health, drug use, parental neglect or illiteracy, homelessness, and learning disabilities that underlie the need for school reform. Because of these negative influences, the simple collaborative model that relies on donating goods and services isn't enough to make a significant difference in today's schools.

Partnership Goals

In order to achieve the purpose for which the partnership was organized, goals need to be set and clearly understood. Such goals might include strengthening families by alleviating personal problems that can cause a child to become disconnected from family and school and giving parents opportunities to become better learners, thus setting good examples for their children to follow. Other goals might focus on empowering the community to reduce youth crime and improve community stability or boosting economic viability through an educated workforce. Partnership goals could involve improving operations and services at institutional and state levels—or even change within the school system.

Family-Centered Goals

Although the specific goals of each family-school-community-business partnership will vary with the distinct needs around which the collaborative has been developed, some general-purpose yet vital goals shared by many collaborative service-delivery systems include increasing family involvement in a child's education by empowering families to participate in school processes, improving continuity between home and school life, decreasing disruptions in the child's life (for example, out-of-home placements such as foster care), increasing school attendance and improving academic performance, decreasing discipline problems, and easing school-to-work transitions.



Community-Centered Goals

Partnership goals are not limited strictly to child or family-centered ideals. They also encompass community-centered goals such as building trust and cooperation between youth and community members, schools and businesses, parents and schools, and other stakeholders. The education system is part of the community, and the community is part of the school. Partnerships that benefit schools also benefit the community, and vice versa. By strengthening business, school, family, and youth links within the community, the community's ability to thrive and grow economically and culturally is also strengthened. Community-centered goals may include creating mutually beneficial economic outcomes such as a better-prepared workforce, which not only benefits the graduate and the employer but also reduces the need for community resources that are required to support under/unemployed adults. Communities also benefit when parents become invested in their children's education. Under such circumstances, parents are more likely to stay in the community, contributing to reduced employee turnover and a more stable workforce. Additionally, if partnerships reduce duplication of services and improve the effectiveness of those services, scarce resources are freed for other purposes.

Institutional and State-Level Goals

Institutional and state-level goals include decreasing costs to agencies, developing closer relationships between agencies or agents, avoiding duplication of services, maintaining continuity of services, increasing accountability, and expanding both the number and types of services that are available. Efficiency—providing services of the same quality while using less money and fewer human resources—is another goal of institutional and state-level partnerships. When agencies are faced with budgetary restrictions or cuts, efficiency becomes a strong motivating factor as well as a goal.

Systemic Goals

ESEA legistation during the 1990's underscored the movement toward whole-school and school-system reform and, at the same time, emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships to those ends. As a result, systemic partnership goals are closely linked with school-reform goals and reflect the interwoven movements of school reform and historic collaboration efforts. In addition to goals already mentioned, systemic goals include improvements in empowering teachers; improving organization, management, and accountability; creating school systems that encourage innovation; and developing effective program-assessment tools.

Collaboration Models

Children and families are at the center of the many models of collaborative service delivery. Collaborative initiatives have been implemented and joined by educators; social workers; pediatricians; businesses; Head Start and other federal, state, and locally funded programs; cultural-arts agencies, such as museums and libraries; civic groups; and other entities. They take many forms and have diverse structures and goals, depending on the needs of the children they were set up to assist. And they differ by program orientation, location, and form of governance.

Program Orientation

Although models described in the current literature place the child and family in the center, variations do exist. Some models focus only on children with severe behavior and emotional disorders. Others focus exclusively on early childhood intervention for "high-risk" children who are at risk for school failure due to factors such as economic impoverishment, limited parental education, stressful home situations, or cultural discontinuities between home and school. Many of the larger-scale partnership projects focus on the economically and socially disadvantaged.

Partnering efforts may vary by the type of family involvement, as seen in the subtle difference between early childhood collaboratives and "at-risk" adolescent programs. Early childhood partnerships are family-oriented and immediately involve parents who need help raising their children and supporting their families. While children are the main priority, contact is first made with parents. Youth-oriented programs, however, work first to meet the needs of older children and adolescents. For example, programs located in high schools and middle schools may begin with an adolescent's need for confidential pregnancy or substance abuse counseling. Only after gaining permission from the adolescent (except in instances where parental contact is mandated by law) will program personnel move cautiously toward family involvement.

Location

The three major types of partnership service-delivery models are referred to as *school-based, school-linked,* and *community-based.* In many collaborative programs, regardless of the type of service-delivery model, a coordinator, consultant, or family advocate is the first point of contact for the family. Often in the role of school counselor, social worker, or mental health worker, this contact person can broker services or link the family with appropriate agencies to meet the unique needs of the child and family. Having a unified point of entry where one program or a few people within a program are knowledgeable about the offerings available from other programs means a client can be easily enrolled in the appropriate programs, saving time and avoiding confusion. A single point of entry means there is only one set of paperwork to fill out, and clients need only make one stop to receive all needed services.

In *school-based* models, independently run health and social services are conveniently located on the school campus and available to a large number of children. Having non-school personnel administer these programs allows the school to remain focused on education while making expanded services available to students. On a more pragmatic level, the school does not need to provide liability insurance for any health or social services rendered. Logistically, schools, which serve the whole community and can provide convenient access to everyone—non-students as well as students—seem the optimal choice for delivery of services because their space is often under-utilized during non-school hours, and use of the buildings would be cost effective for the collaborative effort.

In one of the most comprehensive books on this issue, *Full-Service Schools*, Dryfoos (1994) describes the "ideal" collaboration as being located completely within the school and offering an array of educational, physical health, mental health, and other social services. [As opposed to the many variations that approximate cooperation and association but not true partnership,] this ideal full-service school would be a truly collaborative effort in which all partners invest a relatively equal amount of tangible (donations of equipment or money, for example) or intangible (time) resources, consider other partners' contributions integral to the collaboration, and participate in long-term, ongoing relationships that involve regular contacts, among other criteria.

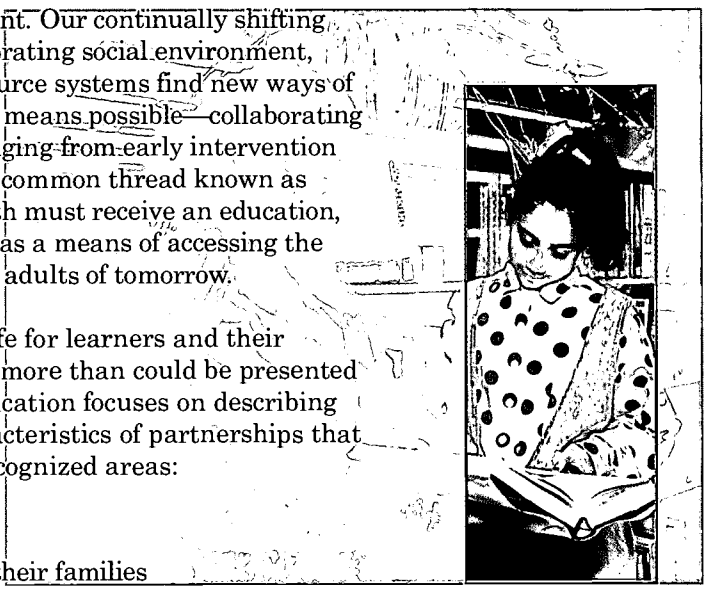
School-linked models are located in a building near the school and have an administrative structure that links the school to the model's provider agencies. School-linked services are provided through collaboration between schools, health care providers, social service providers, etc., with schools taking the lead in the planning and governance. Most partnership efforts of this type initially arose as a way to bypass the barriers to comprehensive care—barriers that included lack of space for services, the need for economies of scale (meaning that if just a few children needed a certain service, it might not be economical to provide it within the school system), logistical barriers such as liability insurance, and societal attitudes that could be problematic for the school if it provided on-site care for such "hot" issues as pregnancy counseling and substance abuse treatment.

Community-based models are much like school-linked models. These partnerships are located in the community, often near a school, and are administered by community agencies. Though they do not differ markedly from school-linked models and often contain similar partner organizations (including schools), community-based models—which have also been called *youth service centers* or *family resource centers*—also have the ability to connect with non-students or youth who have dropped out of school.

Governance/Organization

Governance is another key variable in family-school-community-business partnerships. At one extreme, some models are federally funded and have been developed by statewide initiatives. These models have formal structures in place for overseeing and monitoring the progress of the program. At the other extreme are models that are informal, often ad hoc, relationships among professionals. These informal systems tend to be started locally by one agency or an individual who is frustrated with the lack of available, coordinated services. In developing collaborative service delivery, participants designate a "lead agency" or organization that has fiscal and legal responsibility for the program. Often, this lead agency is not the school, but one of the other participating organizations or even a new entity (i.e., governing board) that is formed in response to the partnering process.

Partnerships with a Focus on Education



Educating today's child is a challenging commitment. Our continually shifting culture, with its changing family structure, deteriorating social environment, and increasing fiscal restraints demands that resource systems find new ways of serving families and children by the most effective means possible—collaborating with each other. These emerging partnerships, ranging from early intervention to teen health and adult literacy, are linked by the common thread known as *education.* Because all American children and youth must receive an education, large-scale interventions have wisely used schools as a means of accessing the children (and ultimately families) of today and the adults of tomorrow.

Partnerships based on improving the quality of life for learners and their families have focused on innumerable areas—far more than could be presented in a single publication. For that reason, this publication focuses on describing the unique needs, key players, and primary characteristics of partnerships that target the following underserved and/or under-recognized areas:

- ❑ Early childhood education
- ❑ Education of homeless children and youth
- ❑ Education of migrant children, youth, and their families
- ❑ Education of children of poverty
- ❑ Preparation of teachers to work with children who have learning disabilities
- ❑ Reduction of the achievement gap through improved educational opportunities

Early Childhood Education

Meet the Jordan Family*

The Jordans recently moved to Charleston, West Virginia, from another state. Alex, 23, is a high school graduate and a heavy-equipment operator with a road construction company. His wife, Jenn, 21, is a full-time homemaker and mother of three children who dropped out of high school in the tenth grade. Daughter Megan is a typical energetic four-year-old. Andrew, three, is still in diapers and has a vocabulary of fewer than ten words. Two-month-old Taylor has developed a rash and has not taken well to breast-feeding. He cries much of the night.

When Jenn asked a neighbor in the apartment complex where to go to apply for food stamps and the WIC program, the neighbor suggested she go to Starting Points. At Starting Points, Jenn and Alex were able to register for food stamps and WIC. And to their delight, they were also able to enroll Megan in Head Start, begin a developmental evaluation process for Andrew, receive a consultation to help Jenn and Taylor with the breast-feeding difficulties, get a referral to a pediatrician for Taylor's rash, and find out about the Parents as Teachers program—all at one facility. Starting Points staff talked with Alex and Jenn about the value of childcare during preschool years, differences in the quality of childcare, and factors that contribute to high-quality childcare environments.

*(*Names and events described in family profiles throughout this document have been altered to protect privacy.)*

Starting Points Centers

"We've brought services into one place, and these services are now accessible to children and families, whereas before they just weren't available. We all work together as a team for whatever is best for the family." —*Melody Brown, Director, West Union Starting Points Center, Doddridge County, West Virginia*

Starting Points Centers are neighborhood centers for early childhood care and education. They provide education, health, and social services at a single location, which could be a school, childcare center, public housing project, or other neighborhood site. Starting Points Centers are examples of collaborative partnerships that transcend typical services' boundaries such as funding, service site locations, types of services, and ages of participants.

In West Virginia, 18 Starting Points Centers are projects of the West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families. The Cabinet works in partnership with local communities throughout the state "to enhance the ability of families to protect, nurture, educate, and support the development of their children so each child's full potential is achieved" (Cabinet web page).

West Virginia's Starting Points Centers are examples of initiatives in 16 states and cities that emanated from the Carnegie Corporation of New York's 1996 grant program, Starting Points State and Community Partnerships for Young Children. Based on the recommendations of a Carnegie task force report, *Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children*—which highlighted the importance of the first three years of life as critical for subsequent healthy development—the mission of the Centers' network is "to provide the Core Services of family intake and assessment, family resource coordination, health and nutrition services, developmental screening and referral, parent and preschool education, home-based services and outreach, and referral and follow-up services" as determined by each community's needs. In addition to the Carnegie Corporation, partners in West Virginia's Starting Points Centers include the State of West Virginia, the Benedum Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, and the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. These centers provide a model of collaborative efforts to meet the needs of young children and their families through a "one-stop shopping" approach.

Governance

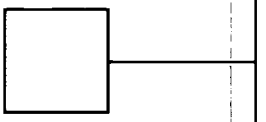
Administered by the West Virginia Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, Starting Points Centers operate with grant funding and additional financial support from the State of West Virginia, the Benedum Foundation, and the AT&T Foundation. The cabinet is authorized to negotiate interagency agreements, waive state regulations that present barriers to collaboration, and transfer funds within and between state agency budgets to accomplish its objectives. West Virginia's partnership with the federal government and the Department of Health and Human Services allows state, federal, and private dollars to be reallocated for partnership purposes. This creative financing strategy supports local planning and evaluation efforts that, in turn, lead to

improvements in service delivery. The ability to co-utilize funding also provides a way for agencies to work together and provide services they might not normally be able to afford individually—a full-day childcare program might combine services by "wrapping around" a part-day Head Start program, for instance—for more effective use of existing resources.

For information about Starting Points Centers, contact:
West Virginia's Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families
Building 5, Room 218
Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305
304-558-0600
www.citynet.net/wvfamilies/points.htm

About Partnerships for Early Childhood Education

Supporting the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of tomorrow's children so that they can reach their full potential means addressing a number of developmental domains, including health, physical development, emotional well-being, social competence, approaches to learning, cognition, and general knowledge. Some of the reasons for establishing partnerships and other collaborative efforts targeting young children include facilitating a child's readiness for school or the school's readiness for the child and preventing problems associated with poverty, language differences, health, and disability.



Did You Know...?

- ❑ Comprehensive services for young children can improve their health, learning ability, and achievement later in life.
- ❑ Collaborative partnerships are essential for meeting the multifaceted needs of today's families.
- ❑ Many federal programs have requirements for collaboration and partnerships.
- ❑ Schools can be a "home base" for a variety of early childhood partnerships.

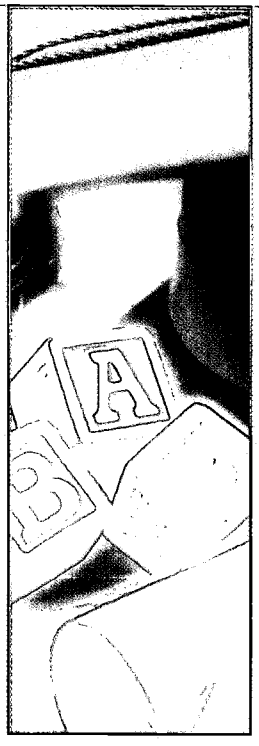
Needs Met by Partnerships

Most partnerships that focus on the needs of young children operate from a proactive, prevention position. Assessing needs and providing services early in a child's life are far more cost effective than crisis intervention, treatment, or remediation in later years. Partnerships aimed at infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children address the developmental needs of these children, the quality of services provided, the transition to kindergarten, the needs of working parents, and the importance of the family, while ensuring that family members receive services provided by the partnership and encouraging the family to become an active participant in those services. (See: Partnership Foci and Related Services in this section.)

Child Development

An understanding of child development and the ability to assess and intervene with developmentally appropriate practices and services is a fundamental aspect of many partnerships that serve young children. Recent brain research has shown that there are periods when children are most receptive to specific types of learning and stimuli. Partnerships choosing to address child development may, for example, focus on catalyzing experiences during such peak learning times, ensuring that materials and experiences are appropriate for a child's developmental level, or providing evaluations of developmental progress and appropriate interventions or referral.

Childcare Quality



Attention to the quality of childcare is important for several reasons. Approximately 60 percent of children in the United States who are five years old or younger are in non-parental care on a regular basis. As children get older, the likelihood of being in non-parental care at least 30 hours a week increases—from 44 percent for infants under one year to 84 percent for four- to five-year-olds (NCES, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1996, 1999). The quality of childcare can be directly correlated to a child's intellectual, verbal, cognitive, and socioemotional development. As a result, positive childcare experiences contribute to long-term improvements such as increased cognitive abilities, positive classroom learning behaviors, school success, and the increased likelihood of long-term self-sufficiency, both social and economic. To provide guidance for establishing, maintaining, and improving the quality of early childhood care and education, the National Association for the Education of Young Children has published guidelines and established a national, voluntary, professional accreditation system for childcare facilities.

Children with Special Needs

Partnerships may form to provide or enhance services to children with physical, emotional, developmental, or other special needs. The Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, established by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act Amendments of 1986 (P. L. 99-457, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]), recognized the need for coordination of services across childcare, educational, health, and social services disciplines when it mandated that each preschool child receive Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP). Parents can participate in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of IFSPs, which outline the need for such basics as food, shelter, and clothing; family enrichment, support, or counseling; and other services that will be provided to children and their families through the comprehensive efforts of multiple disciplines and agencies. IFSPs, which specify a lead service provider and support services, complement family strengths and resources and attend to a family's priorities and concerns by providing services from a variety of organizations and agencies. They have established a precedent for collaboration between local school systems and other early childhood programs such as Head Start.

Transition to Kindergarten

A young child's transition from home or preschool to kindergarten is one of the most significant events in his/her life. For some children, moving from an early childhood setting to school is often abrupt, with little continuity between the two environments. If the two are similar or compatible, children experience smoother transitions. For example, if the rules and expectations in the first setting are similar to the kindergarten classroom, children have less trouble adjusting. This is especially true for children with disabilities who may be receiving specialized services through an Individualized Education Plan. Providing continuity for children as they enter school is not easy. Partnerships between schools and early childhood programs, parents, health and social-services agencies, and other specialized service providers who work with preschool-age children attempt to establish good communication between the adults who will help children make the transition. These partnerships also develop policies and practices that increase continuity between early childhood settings and kindergarten. Community partnerships often develop a "transition plan" that spells out how partners will work together to make the transition to kindergarten easier for children and their families. Partnership activities that support continuity might include arranging for kindergarten teachers to visit childcare classrooms where they can talk with teachers and meet parents, arranging field trips for four-year-old children to the school they will be attending, making sure a child's preschool records are forwarded to the school, and setting up joint staff-development opportunities so there is consistency between the curriculum activities in each setting. These efforts are designed to help prepare children and families for the transition and to make their early experiences in kindergarten as comfortable as possible.

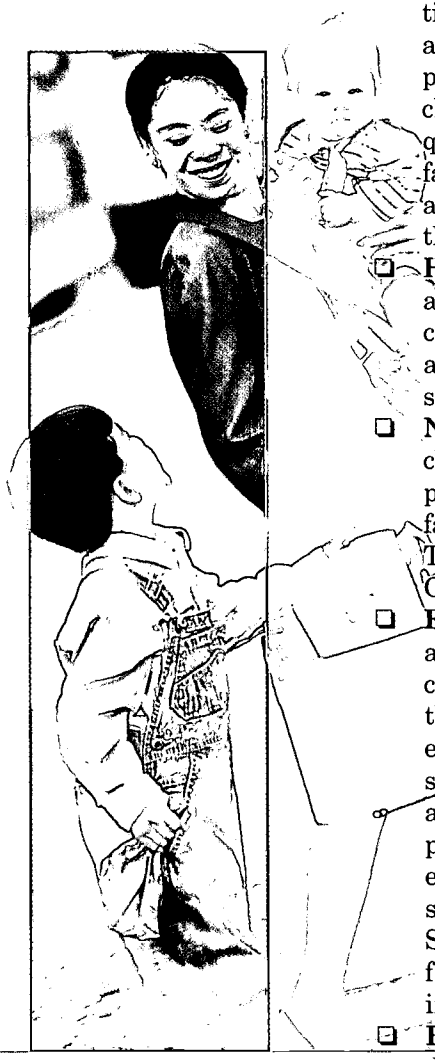
Childcare for Children of Parents Who Work

A climbing divorce rate, teen pregnancy, single parenthood, dual-income families, and an increase in family mobility have all contributed to the demand for quality early childhood care and education—a demand that now greatly exceeds the supply. Nationally, more than 55 percent of mothers with children under age six have joined the work force. The current emphasis on welfare reform encourages even more parents of young children to seek employment or attend job-training programs in order to qualify for welfare benefits. This means that these parents can no longer stay home with their young children and must find alternate care during the hours they are at work or in training. These changes in welfare-reform policies, coupled with high maternal employment rates among non-welfare families, have resulted in a tremendous increase in the number of families who need non-parental care for their children.

In addition, within today's mobile society, families frequently relocate far from their extended family, eliminating the possibility of childcare from this source. Many parents with young children work non-standard schedules that require them to find childcare facilities that are available early in the morning, in the evenings, or on weekends when these facilities have traditionally been closed. Collaborative efforts to help these families are essential.

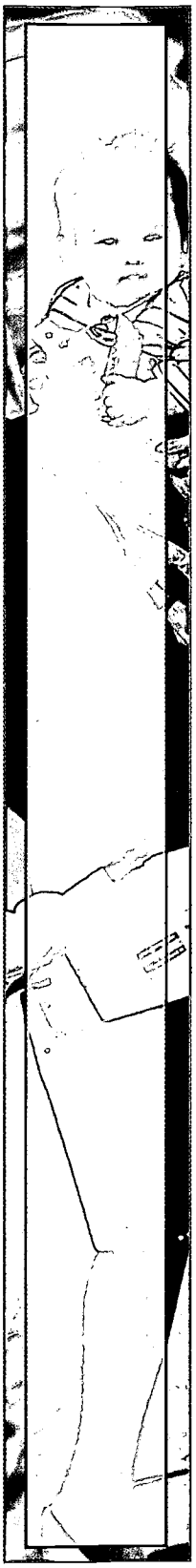
Key Players

The absence of a single recognized system of early childhood care and education makes linkages among various agencies complex and challenging. Care coordination services are often provided by early childhood specialists working from their individual agencies (e.g., school, childcare center, Head Start) as they link programs and services in response to the child's and family's particular needs and priorities. Many collaborative efforts that serve young children include the following types of partners:



- **The Early Childhood System** (e.g., childcare center, Head Start program) contributes knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices, as well as direct services to children. Early childhood agencies are a "hub" for services to young children and are often the lead provider in a partnership. They provide core services (dependable and consistent childcare, reliability while parents are working, regular contact), frequently initiate collaborative efforts, and are often "home base" for families. Some agencies such as Head Start provide counseling, mental and physical health attention, and additional services for children within the early-care-and-education setting.
- **Health Care Agencies** provide immunizations, well-baby checkups, and preschool physicals in addition to assessing a child's physical and cognitive development and monitoring any special needs in these areas. Other services may include mental health or substance abuse support and counseling and family health care.
- **Nutrition Education Programs** contribute to the prevention of childhood illnesses. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), in partnership with cooperating organizations, provides children and needy families with access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education. The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is often linked with early childhood programs.
- **Elementary Schools** can smooth the transition to school from home and other early-care-and-education settings by working with the community to develop transition plans and underscoring the premise that learning begins at birth and occurs in all settings. Schools with effective transition plans help parents become familiar with the school by planning home visits or open houses before classes start and working to provide continuity between school and the child's preschool setting. In addition to transition planning, schools might employ other school-familiarization strategies, such as opening the school for community meetings or locating services such as Head Start on the school grounds. These services would be available to all families in the community, whether or not they have children enrolled in the school.
- **Businesses and Other Employers** may offer free or partially subsidized childcare and/or flexible work schedules for working parents. They may train new childcare providers, provide resource and referral services, and teach parents how to choose appropriate childcare facilities. Businesses also contribute funds, services, and supplies to help maintain childcare center resources, and many offer paid release time for employees to volunteer at the centers.

- **Social Service Agencies** provide intake, assessment, and coordination services that link families to appropriate resources providing clothing, food, housing, job training, counseling, domestic violence prevention assistance, and other elements of child and adult welfare.
- **Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies** serve as mediating structures for the coordination of multiple services. They broker information about various services, providing linkages to a variety of childcare centers and registered childcare homes, and providing training for childcare providers.



Partnership Foci and Related Services

Partnership Focus: Child Development
Examples of Services Provided:

- Child development/childcare services
- Parent education provided at home, childcare center, school, or other involved agency, including elements such as
  - Basic parenting knowledge and skills
  - Child development
  - Nutrition
  - Discipline
  - Learning at home
  - Children's literature
- Psychological/emotional support services such as informal family counseling, stress management training, and family support groups
- Health, dental, and developmental screenings
- Opportunities for parents to meet other parents and learn from shared experiences
- Coordination of referrals for other services
- Involvement of parent(s) in development of Individual Family Service Plans

Partnership Focus: Childcare Quality
Examples of Services Provided:

- Periodic evaluation of the quality of care at early childhood care and education facilities, including elements such as:
  - Staff-child ratios
  - Staff training and compensation
  - Variety, quality, and accessibility of children's materials
  - Staff-child interactions
  - Developmentally appropriate programming
  - Safe and child-sized furnishings
- Training opportunities (and paid release time) for staff
- Providing appropriate, stimulating materials
- Providing safe and appropriate opportunities for outdoor recreation
- Volunteering in the center

Partnership Focus: Children with Special Needs
Examples of Services Provided:

- ❑ Special programs such as Head Start and Smart Start
- ❑ Child Find (99-457) services
- ❑ Developmental evaluations
- ❑ Coordination of special services and social services
- ❑ Inclusive classrooms
- ❑ Classroom volunteers (parents, tutors, older students, retirees, etc.)
- ❑ Development of Individual Family Service Plans and IEPs (for older children)
- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Parent education/training
- ❑ Private provision of specialized therapies
- ❑ Developmental or Specialized Programs

Partnership Focus: Transition to Kindergarten
Examples of Services Provided:

- ❑ Discussions with parents regarding placement and other transition issues
- ❑ Preparing child and family for the change
- ❑ Helping child and family adjust to the new setting
- ❑ Transmitting information from the early childhood setting to the receiving school
- ❑ Providing joint staff training for preschool and kindergarten staff

Partnership Focus: Childcare for Children of Parents Who Work
Examples of Services Provided:

- ❑ Parent education/training on issues surrounding quality childcare
- ❑ Expanded hours of operation—early morning, evening, and weekend hours
- ❑ Transportation for children
- ❑ Health, dental, and developmental screenings
- ❑ On-site resource center with material check-out available
- ❑ Supervised, safe, and stimulating environment for the child

Whether the focus is on providing high-quality childcare and education, alleviating risks associated with school failure, or providing affordable childcare for working parents, the major purpose of partnerships for early childhood education is to align needed services so that developmentally appropriate learning and growth experiences can take place.

Teacher Development in Special Education

Meet Michael

As a third-grader, Michael was struggling to achieve in reading comprehension and writing. He is a bright child who had trouble sitting still in class and often interrupted the teacher. Michael's disruptive tendencies earned him the nickname "class clown," and the teacher often had problems keeping Michael on task because of his constant daydreaming. A sociable student with great charisma, Michael enjoyed sports and was captain of a local soccer team, but at times he became angry and frustrated in class because of his reading and writing difficulties. For this reason, his third-grade teacher advised Michael's parents to have him tested. He was diagnosed with a learning disability and Attention-Deficit Disorder.

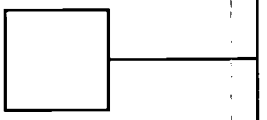
Michael's parents learned about The Hill Center from a friend and decided that the program there would be highly beneficial to their son. He has attended The Hill Center for one year. As a half-day academic program for students with learning disabilities and/or Attention-Deficit Disorder, The Hill Center's direct instruction in small groups and use of multi-sensory teaching approaches have helped Michael improve his reading skills and self-esteem. Over the course of one year, The Hill Center has taught Michael coping skills and learning strategies that will benefit him throughout his lifetime. Michael went from being "class clown" to a student capable of maintaining a good academic career.

The Hill Center

"Because of this partnership, we are having a positive impact on so many more students, their teachers, and their learning environments." —*Jean Neville, Director of Outreach, The Hill Center*

The Hill Center Services

- ❑ Direct intensive remediation services for children
- ❑ Tutoring and student enrichment courses
- ❑ Consultative services/interpretation of test results
- ❑ Teacher training workshops and week-long institutes for special educators
- ❑ School consultations
- ❑ Summer institutes for general education teachers and administrators
- ❑ The Hill Methodology Kit
- ❑ Parent workshops



Did You Know...?

- ❑ Up to 15 percent of students are affected by learning disabilities, and as many as five percent of school-aged children have Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder.

The Hill Center is approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as an "alternative" school for children with learning disabilities. Its mission is to provide specialized multi-sensory instruction in a caring environment, enabling students with learning disabilities and/or Attention-Deficit Disorder to become successful, independent learners and to achieve their full potential. Originating in 1977 as an adjunct program of Durham Academy, a K–12 independent school, The Hill Center is now a separate non-profit organization that provides half-day intensive academic remediation programs for students who are enrolled in nearby schools and who have learning disabilities or Attention-Deficit Disorder. The program is designed to develop students' positive self-concepts by preparing them to be independent learners, assisting them in setting realistic goals, and fostering an understanding of their individual learning styles.

Since its inception, The Hill Center has provided high-quality services to schools and families in its geographical area. In 1998, the Glaxo-Wellcome Foundation awarded The Hill Center a five-year grant, enabling the Center to disperse its unique, high-quality instructional methodology to teachers across a broad

geographic region and, thus, have a strong impact on school improvement throughout North Carolina. The partnership focuses most intensely on nine sites; however, teachers and administrators from other areas can also benefit from its annual teacher training institutes, regional resource center, and additional outreach via technology and expansion of professional development opportunities.

Governance

The Hill Center is an independent school accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The North Carolina Glaxo Smith Kline Foundation—instrumental in the initial formation of The Hill Center partnership—provides financial support. And partners such as SERVE, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and University of North Carolina General Administration and School of Education staff help The Hill Center develop outreach efforts that adapt its teaching methods to other school sites.

For information about The Hill Center, contact:
The Hill Center
3200 Pickett Road
Durham, NC 27705
919-489-7464
www.hillcenter.org

About Partnerships for Teacher Development in Special Education

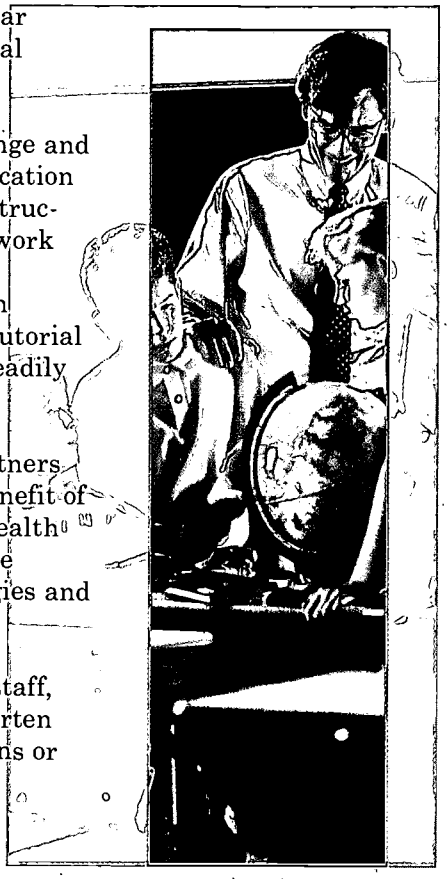
In spite of federal legislation requiring inclusion of students with disabilities to the maximum extent possible with their non-disabled peers (e.g., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Regular Education Initiative, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act), effective inclusion is often problematic. One component of this problem is the lack of training for general education teachers who will be working with such children.

Needs Met by Partnerships

Including students with disabilities in classrooms with non-disabled peers means that these students will be taught, either primarily or in collaboration with special educators, by general education teachers. Research tells us that these educators frequently do not have the instructional skills and educational backgrounds necessary to effectively teach such students (Monahan & Marino, 1996; Fossey & Hosie, 1995). Traditionally, teachers and administrators have been content to leave special education to the specialists; most have not felt the need to become knowledgeable in the areas of special education law or practice. Although the majority of states require some special education coursework for initial certification, few require special education coursework for teacher re-certification. With the pressing movement toward inclusion, most educators are faced with the need to improve or develop their skills in this area.

Research also tells us that many educators and administrators believe inclusion will not work because general education teachers often resist having children with special needs in their classes (Monahan & Marino, 1996). Thus, partnerships have been developed to reshape attitudes, improve skills, and develop the collaborative abilities of those who work with these special-needs students.

Such partnerships help teachers and other school staff by delivering specialized information about children and youth who have disabilities and by teaching education providers how to work together, support each other, and engage in joint problem-solving and decision-making. In addition to skills acquisition, these partnerships also show educators, administrators, and others how to become more accepting and motivated to work with students who have disabilities. By participating in partnership activities, regular educators learn diagnostic skills, add to their repertoire of instructional methods, and increase their abilities as effective classroom managers.



Collaborative teacher development efforts provide an impetus for change and growth throughout the school. By actively participating in special education law, technique, and theory training classes, school administrative, instructional, and support personnel are better prepared to understand and work with disabled students. Parents, too, are important members of their children's service planning and delivery teams through involvement in activities such as Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and tutorial assistance. Parents can also receive training enabling them to more readily identify early signs of learning and behavioral difficulties.

Models of collaborations that increase the knowledge and skills of partners for the benefit of students with disabilities can be expanded for the benefit of children of minority ethnic or social status, children with particular health needs (e.g., AIDS, diabetes), and other children with special needs. The classroom-based collaboration model helps teachers generalize strategies and can serve as a springboard for partnerships with other disciplines.

In addition, these partnerships provide regular educators and school staff, particularly in elementary schools and schools that have pre-kindergarten programs, with the knowledge necessary to identify early warning signs or indicators of possible developmental, learning, or behavior disorders.

Key Players

Meeting the educational needs of children who have disabilities requires the coordinated efforts of everyone involved. These partnership efforts frequently include school staff, parents, community agencies, teacher educators, and local businesses in order to include children with disabilities in an educational system designed primarily for children without disabilities.

Teachers, both regular and special educators, are the main partners in collaborations for teacher development, and their disciplines must be interdependent, overlapping, and cohesive in order to provide the necessary services. In bridging the gap between generalists and specialists, instructional support teams (pre-referral intervention groups) link all school resources so as to best meet the needs

of special learners. General educators contribute content knowledge to the partnership while special educators contribute specialized assessment and adaptation techniques. Through collaboration, each student is provided with appropriate assignments and challenging expectations while receiving the accommodations necessary for his or her learning or behavioral styles.

Teacher educators in colleges and universities provide needed pre-service training to teachers. Through cross-disciplinary pre-service experiences such as content-based instructional courses, internships, and seminars that focus on social work, family and child development, counseling, sociology, educational leadership, and, of course, general and special education, teachers are trained for the increasingly diverse populations with whom they will work. Schools provide opportunities for both student teachers and teachers receiving post-graduate training to work with children who have special needs.

Community organizations, such as the local chapters of Lions Clubs International or Rotary, as well as community rehabilitation centers, may provide transportation, speech/language therapy, occupational or physical therapy, counseling, medical services, specialized equipment such as wheelchairs or communication devices, or other targeted services for children. Those organizations designed to provide specialized levels of support for people with disabilities may also offer training facilities for teacher education or post-graduate work. Community organization partnerships are especially important for schools with limited resources for children with disabilities. A rural school system, for instance, might rely on community providers because it does not have the number of students necessary to support full-time staff to provide specialized services. Even a large school system in which the number of students with disabilities has outgrown the available internal resources (staff, equipment, etc.) might supplement its own services with those from community providers. Naturally, parents are invaluable resources when it comes to the needs of their own children. Educators can more fully understand a child's need for special-service delivery by listening carefully as parents relate personal experiences.

School administrative and support personnel play key supportive and leadership roles in partnerships focusing on students with disabilities. As a team within the school setting, school principals, counselors, social workers, administrative staff, and other personnel are responsible for the social, emotional, behavioral, and physical growth and well-being of these students. Because student interactions with adults other than teachers will occur in a school setting, it is important that all school staff have a solid foundation that prepares them to work with children who have disabilities. A team of adults who share a common understanding of the particular needs of such students can promote continuity and consistency for their charges as well as for teachers who hold the primary responsibility for student learning.

Businesses and foundations have traditionally become involved in partnerships for teacher development by providing grants and in-kind donations of training materials or supplies. While certainly important, monetary and material gifts are not the only contributions these groups make. Business

leadership supports efforts that strengthen teacher education programs by encouraging university officials to invest in their schools of education. Businesses also help by offering personnel training experts to schools to cover topics such as group dynamics, decision-making, and problem-solving—skills important in the development of collaborations between regular and special educators. Funding from businesses or foundations can support release time for teachers to participate in teacher development activities or for site visits to other schools where teachers can learn new techniques. Funding can also be provided for grants and awards dedicated to excellence in teaching.

Only a few decades ago, children with disabilities were kept apart from the general education system. They were home-schooled or placed in public or private facilities with other children who had similar disabilities. Today's child benefits from changes in federal legislation that ensure every child's right to a free and appropriate education. These changes have provided momentum for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education classroom. The partnerships that have evolved to support this process facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream classroom in a way that makes it possible for all students to receive a better education. As a result of these processes, tomorrow's child will be able to experience an educational opportunity system that successfully and smoothly addresses the needs of all learners including those who are differently-abled.

Education of Migrant Children and Youth

A migrant student is any child between three and 22 years of age who has moved within the preceding 36 months from one school district to another because they have relocated with their parents to seek work in agriculture, fishing, dairy, timber, or another related qualifying processing activity. —*U. S. Department of Education, 1999*

Meet the Nunez Family

Gloria Nunez wants desperately to go back to school, but she has a four-year-old daughter, Elsa. Gloria completed two years of secondary education in Mexico but had to quit school because her family needed her to work in the fields. Through some friends in the neighborhood, she found out about the McMillan Center and was able to enroll in the Center's school. Now her day is filled with activities. She and Elsa take the bus to school. They say a quick goodbye as Elsa enters her preschool classroom and Gloria heads for her GED class. Later in the morning, Gloria attends a computer class, spends an hour volunteering in Elsa's classroom, and attends her parenting group session. After lunch with Elsa and the other children and their mothers, she finishes the day in English class and arrives home in time for her part-time job—taking care of school-aged children until their parents come to get them after work. Gloria has found the perfect balance of education and family time. She is comfortable with the teachers and has built a strong support system, both with her fellow students and through the social services offered at the McMillan Center.

The McMillan Community Learning Center

If you change a mama, you change a family." —*C. Wayne Odom, Director, Title I Programs, Escambia County, Florida.*

The McMillan Community Learning Center, whose aim is "helping schools and families succeed," is part of a full service school that houses a vast array of co-located services for economically and educationally disadvantaged children and families, including migrant families. McMillan Center provides a coordinated approach to child care and education, adult literacy, parenting education, health and nutrition services, social services, and transportation.

The Center originated in 1985 with six Title I-funded pre-kindergarten classes. The scope of the Center expanded to include pre-kindergarten early intervention services when Florida initiated that program in 1987. Subsequently, Head Start and Even Start programs were also established. The Center now houses these programs in addition to the migrant program, neighborhood learning centers, and Family Resource Activities Model for Early Education (FRAME). These programs provide a broad array of services and resources to those in need. The unifying goal of the Center is to increase the capacity for parental involvement in a child's education and development. Increasing family literacy has been identified as the best way to achieve that goal.

Partner AmSouth Bank provides refreshments for parent events and activities, helps raise funds for projects, provides emergency services for families, and sponsors a children's field day. Ten employees of the Florida Department of Revenue mentor children at the Center for 30 minutes each week, engaging the children in reading, conversation, games, puzzles, etc. Navy members volunteer their time for building and grounds beautification. The Catholic school provided a Halloween party. These partners and the Center's families work together to implement four primary programs at a single site:

- Family Intergenerational Literacy Model (FILM) Even Start Family Literacy Program is an Escambia County School District public-school, family-education program that teaches parents skills that can effectively promote their children's development.
- Florida First Start is designed to give children with disabilities and those three years old or younger who are at risk of future school failure a good start in life by supporting parents in their role as the child's first teacher.
- Family Resource Activities Model for Early Education (FRAME) provides Escambia School District Title I program services.
- The Migrant Education program offers pre-kindergarten classes, social services, translation and interpretation, and other services to ensure continuity of education for migrant children.

The McMillan Community Learning Center Services

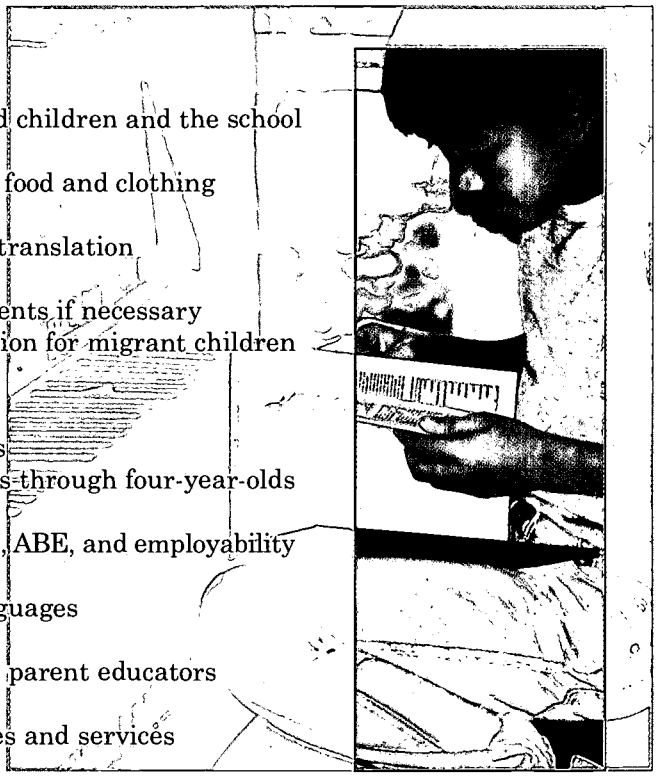
Florida First Start

- Weekly or monthly home visits by a trained parent educator
- Information on child growth and development
- Guidance in selecting developmentally appropriate toys and activities
- Training in parenting, discipline, home safety, and nutrition

- ❑ Vision, hearing, and language screenings
- ❑ Parent meetings
- ❑ Parent resource library
- ❑ Toy lending library

FRAME

- ❑ Health screening
- ❑ Social worker consultation
- ❑ Bi-weekly home visits by a trained parent educator
- ❑ Play groups
- ❑ Monthly parent programs
- ❑ Family fun nights and field trips
- ❑ Family Resource Center loaning books, videos, computers, and games
- ❑ Family Activities Bus (a mobile mini-classroom with books, educational toys, and creative materials)



Migrant Education

- ❑ Pre-kindergarten classes
- ❑ Counselors who mediate between school-aged children and the school system and community
- ❑ Assistance with meeting basic needs such as food and clothing
- ❑ Social services
- ❑ Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation and translation
- ❑ Referrals to local social service programs
- ❑ Accompanying migrant families to appointments if necessary
- ❑ Other services to ensure continuity of education for migrant children

FILM

- ❑ Transportation to and from the Center
- ❑ Breakfast and lunch for children and parents
- ❑ Early Childhood Education Center for infants through four-year-olds
- ❑ Parenting classes
- ❑ Adult Interaction Education Curriculum: GED, ABE, and employability skills classes for parents
- ❑ English instruction for speakers of other languages
- ❑ U. S. citizenship classes
- ❑ Monthly instructional home visits by trained parent educators
- ❑ Referrals to job skills training
- ❑ Referrals to community-based family agencies and services
- ❑ Life-skills parent workshops
- ❑ On-site registered nurse
- ❑ On-site family counselor
- ❑ Parent Resource Center on-site loans of books, toys, games, videos, parenting journals, etc.
- ❑ WIC check distribution, certification, and nutrition classes
- ❑ Immunizations for children
- ❑ Mobile health unit from a local hospital for children's and parent's physicals/health checks
- ❑ Computer lab with Internet access
- ❑ Monthly family night activities for parents, preschool children, and school-aged children
- ❑ Activities to establish positive relationships between parents and the elementary school

Governance

As a full-service school, the McMillan Center is headed by the Director of Title I Programs for Escambia County. In addition to federal funding for Title I, Pre-K intervention, Head Start, and Even Start, the Center receives human resources and material resources support from AmSouth Bank, the Florida Department of Revenue, the U.S. Navy, and a local Catholic school. The administrative offices for the Migrant Education program are also housed at the Center. What began as a program serving the children of poor families has evolved into a group of programs serving essentially the same population but unified under one roof with one administrative team.

For information about the McMillan Community Learning Center, contact:
The McMillan Community Learning Center
1403 W. St. Joseph Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32501
FILM Even Start: 850-595-6932
First Start: 850-595-6913
FRAME Title I: 850-595-6915
Escambia County Migrant Program: 850-595-6915
www.escambia.k12.fl.US/schscnts/mcpk

Featured Program: Anchor School Project

Meet the Gonzalez Family

Traveling throughout Florida and North Carolina can take its toll on a family. Laura Gonzalez worries that her son, Federico, will fall behind in school because of the constant traveling. This year it seems especially difficult to ask the children to move once more. Federico really loves his class. His teacher, Mrs. Wright, has been able to spend a lot of individual time with him, and his grades are reflecting that extra effort. Fortunately, the Gonzalez family has been offered an opportunity to participate in the Anchor School Project. A home visitor is teaching the entire family how to use a laptop computer, and she has assured Laura that a computer will be available to travel with them. Now Federico can stay in touch with Mrs. Wright and keep up to date with class activities, Laura will be able to stay in contact with all of Federico's schools as the family moves around, Mr. Gonzalez can continue studying for his GED diploma, and Carmen, the youngest, will be able to practice her computer skills, too.

Mrs. Wright, Federico's teacher, is excited to hear that the Gonzalez family is receiving a computer. She has already been in contact with Federico's teachers in North Florida who run the after-school program in the migrant-housing development. The grower has loaned Anchor Schools the space to run its program, and Mrs. Wright knows that the after-school teachers can give Federico the individual help he needs. She decides to take a few minutes and type up some notes in Federico's electronic portfolio so that his teachers will understand his strengths and needs.

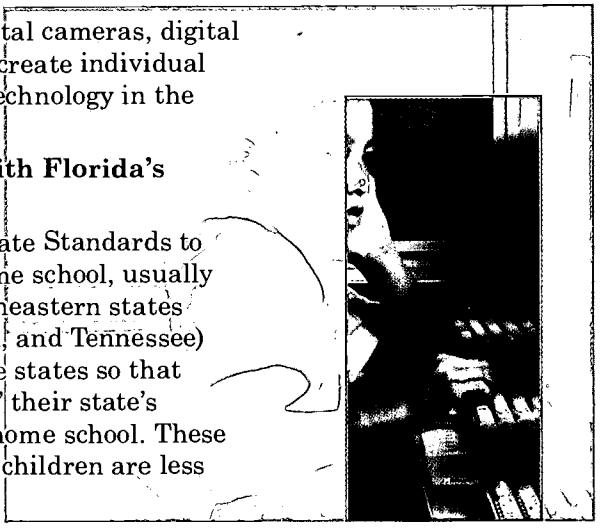
Anchor School Project

"I can see how excited the children get when they spend time with their computers. The parents are wonderful, too. At first they are so nervous about touching the laptops, worried that they will explode or self-destruct. But after a few minutes and some coaxing, they begin to understand the computer a little better and can settle down for the instruction." —*Katie Dufford-Melendez, Education Specialist with the Anchor School Project*

The Anchor School Project is one of five federally funded technology grants awarded to partnerships throughout the United States. Originally funded in 1997, the Anchor School Project has sought to provide a technological lifeline to migrant farm worker families as they move from southwest Florida to other parts of the United States in search of agricultural work. This lifeline provides much-needed continuity between home, school, and community for migrant families, and its success is the result of six core components:

Technology used in new and innovative ways

- Children are provided with laptop computers, digital cameras, digital camcorders, and plenty of software with which to create individual and class projects. Anchor Schools' goal is to put technology in the hands of children.



Curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with Florida's Sunshine State Standards

- Tasks and activities are aligned with Sunshine State Standards to supplement the educational efforts of a child's home school, usually located in Florida. A team of teachers in five Southeastern states (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) has worked to align the state standards for all five states so that teachers along the migrant stream can "translate" their state's standards in accordance with those of the child's home school. These efforts provide continuity between schools so that children are less likely to loose credits as they migrate.

Collaboration among partners dedicated to migrant education

- The Anchor School Project is a collaboration of many partners including Collier County (FL) Public Schools; ESCORT (a migrant service organization); the Departments of Education in Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina; Gargiulo, Inc.; Lee County (FL) Public Schools; NASA's Tri-State Education Initiative; SERVE; and the University of South Florida. Each partner provides services to families, and partners meet regularly to discuss the project and to find new ways of making technology available to migrant children.

Professional development for teachers at both sending and receiving sites

- Year-round training is provided for staff at the home schools. As families begin to move northward during the summer months, staff in key receiving sites are trained how to use the technology provided by the Project, how to incorporate the technology into their classrooms, and ways to best serve migrant children.

Parental-involvement training and family support

- Parents, as well as children, are trained to use the computers. It is believed that the equipment will not be used unless parents have a firm understanding of the application and importance of technology in their lives as well as in the lives of their children.

An Instruction Support Team follows many of the families as they travel between sites

- Traveling teachers and AmeriCorps Volunteers migrate with families as they move to receiving sites. All are thoroughly trained on the equipment, curriculum, and the migrant culture, and then sent to receiving sites to assist families with their educational and support-services needs.

As migrant families move throughout the Southeast, the Anchor School Project links quality programming, flexibility, and dedicated collaborative efforts to provide a lifeline connecting these families to their homes, schools, and communities.

For information about the Anchor School Project, contact:
Jean Williams, Project Director
Post Office Box 5367
Greensboro, North Carolina 27435
800-755-3277
www.anchorschool.org

About Partnerships for Migrant Children, Youth, and their Families

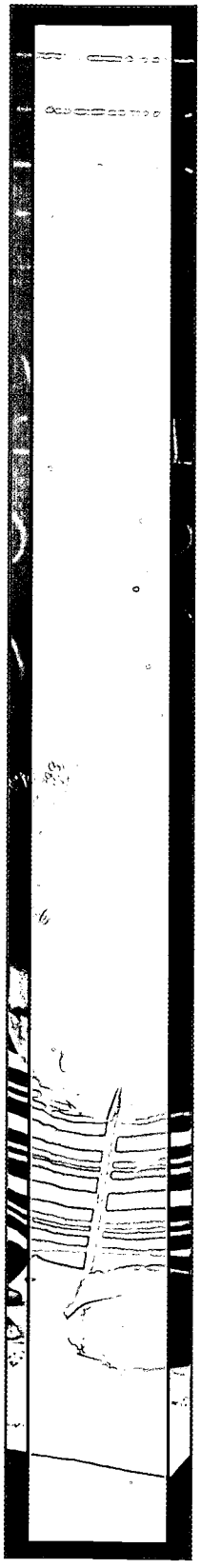
Children in today's migrant families are among the most educationally disadvantaged youngsters in America. They frequently attend several schools in a single academic year due to the transient nature of their parents' work. Because most migrant families are immigrants, these children often grow up speaking a language other than English in their homes and in their migrant communities. Facilitating optimum development of a frequently mobile child for whom English is a second language and whose parents may not read, write, or even speak English is a challenge.

Public Law 89-750, an amendment to Title I that established the 1966 Migrant Education Program, provides that migrant children and youth have legal rights to a public education. Although federal funding is available for supplemental educational support services, such as bilingual school counselors, ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers, sensitized school personnel, and bilingual educational assessors, many existing needs can be met successfully only through partnership efforts.

Did You Know...?

- Migrant families are primarily foreign-born Mexicans and other Latinos (67 percent). Eighteen percent are U.S.-born Caucasians, and two percent are U.S.-born African-Americans (NAWS 94-95).
- There are approximately 750,000 migrant children and youth in the United States.

- Migrant families have 25 percent higher infant mortality rates, ten times the incidence of malnutrition, 59 times the incidence of parasitic infections, and high levels of active tuberculosis compared to American epidemiological rates.
- Annual family income for farm workers averages $7,500 to $10,000.
- Migrant students have a school dropout rate of up to 90 percent. Prior to dropping out of school, it is typical for migrant children to be below grade level by the second grade.



Needs Met by Partnerships

Family-school-community-business partnerships that are developed to meet the needs of migrant children and youth are responding to one of the most educationally disadvantaged groups of youngsters in the United States. Partnerships seek to address the significant health, educational, and systemic needs of migrant families.

Ownership

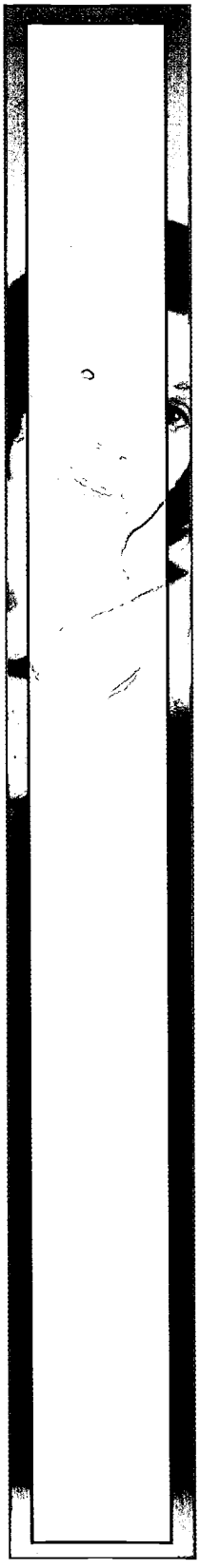
Partnerships for migrant children strive to instill a common sense of responsibility among school, community, and agency personnel for issues facing migrant families. With the likelihood that these families will soon move away, teachers and other service providers are less likely to invest their time and energies to help migrant children, and, as a result, personnel training and development centering on cultural and situational sensitivity and competence become important partnership aspects.

Often, after time and effort are invested, families move across district and state lines before any results can be seen, and communication between widely separated programs is usually not adequate. With each move, the process of screening and assessing needs begins again, perpetuating the cycle and leaving the child without continuity or needed assistance.

Communication

In contacts with migrant families and children, the need to break down language barriers is vital. Translating written materials, delivering spoken messages and information about services in the families' primary language, and making sure ESL teachers are available in schools are all critical components of partnerships that support migrant children and their families. Depending on the part of the country and the industry employing the migrant workers, the native language of these workers could be Hispanic, Creole, or any of a number of Eastern Asian languages or dialects.

Migrant families need to know that they have somewhere they can go to ask questions or easily find appropriate programs for their children's well-being. ESCORT, the National Migrant Education Hotline, provides a single phone number (800-234-8848) that can connect families across the U.S. with the center for migrant-education programs in a caller's state.



Continuity of Records

Some services that many of us take for granted, such as continuity of health and education records, often pose challenging problems for families who are highly mobile. General medical and immunization records can often be difficult to track when a family has lived in several communities in a single year. To solve this problem and to provide educational continuity and a sense of community for migrant families, partnerships have developed technical solutions. Electronic medical portfolios provide a single place where a family's medical history can be recorded and important papers retained. Electronically connecting migrant families with a consistent mentor, providing some continuity of programming as a student moves from one school to another, and notifying the receiving school of a student's status and individual learning plan are other solutions. Electronic portfolios of a student's work and educational plans enable receiving schools to more accurately assess the type and quality of work that has been done in the past. Programs such as the Anchor School Project, in which SERVE partners with growers and schools, not only support electronic portfolios and other technological solutions but also provide staff training on-site at the receiving schools to facilitate transition of both the child and the family.

Home Visitations

Home visitations are necessary to the success of partnerships for migrant children and youth. Usually, parents are without transportation, cannot afford to pay for childcare in their absence, and feel uneasy visiting institutions that offer beneficial services. In addition, many migrant parents have little formal education and defer to the expertise of the schools when it comes to academic issues. This deference is not viewed as indifference by partnership agencies that meet with families in their homes or churches. By meeting and providing information and assistance on neutral ground, collaborating professionals are better able to gain the trust necessary for developing helpful and constructive relationships.

Remediation

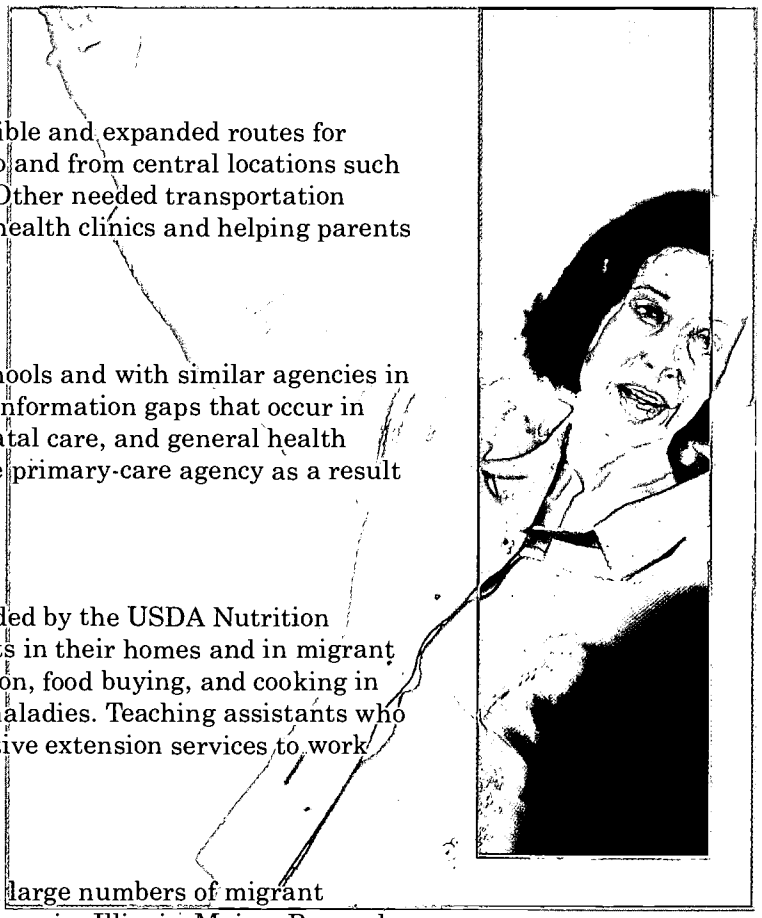
Remedial tutorial assistance is an important component of migrant partnerships because of the strikingly high percentage (80 percent) of migrant children performing below grade level. Often, a special education designation might seem warranted, but the process for identification and placement in special education carries the risk of misdiagnosis. Specifically, a child's language differences and environmental factors, as opposed to a disability, may contribute to school difficulties.

Key Players

Decreasing the impact of continuous changes in school placement, facilitating access to health care and social services, working toward higher standards of educational achievement and economic status, and fostering communities of racial and cultural tolerance for migrant children and their families requires active participation from a number of individuals and organizations.

Employers

Employers are critical links between migrant families and service providers. Migrant workers who are not legal residents of the United States are particularly distrustful of anyone with a possible relationship to the Immigration and Naturalization Service but typically form a trusting relationship with those who need their labor and who pay their salaries. Therefore, service providers may only be able to access migrant families when these families have been assured by their employers that service-providers' intentions are of a helpful and non-threatening nature. Also, growers, contractors, and crew leaders can help provide information to agency personnel about workers' particular needs and schedules, thus assisting agency staff in planning the best times, days, and places to meet with the families.



Transportation Services

Partner transportation services provide flexible and expanded routes for shuttling children in widespread localities to and from central locations such as school or Migrant Head Start programs. Other needed transportation services include driving family members to health clinics and helping parents reach housing or immigration offices.

Health Service Agencies

Health care providers communicate with schools and with similar agencies in other geographical areas to help bridge the information gaps that occur in records of immunizations, dental care, prenatal care, and general health screenings when a family has more than one primary-care agency as a result of frequent moves.

Nutrition Education

Bilingual nutrition-education services provided by the USDA Nutrition Education and Training Center teach parents in their homes and in migrant camps about the basics of nutrition, sanitation, food buying, and cooking in order to reduce the number of diet-related maladies. Teaching assistants who are also migrants can be trained by cooperative extension services to work with others.

Childcare Agencies

Migrant Head Start programs in states with large numbers of migrant families (e.g., Oregon, California, Texas, Wisconsin, Illinois, Maine, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Florida) maintain flexible communication styles, involvement options, and hours of operation to meet the needs of workers in the labor-intensive business of agriculture.

Businesses

Businesses support migrant children and youth through donations of material resources, money, and human resources to schools. Technological support plays a strong role in connecting school-age children to distance education programs, providing Internet access for research and communication, and keeping students connected via e-mail or websites to assigned instructors or mentors who monitor the children's school activities and performance from location to location. Volunteers with paid release time from work might serve as tutors or mentors. Some businesses offer space and/or time for staff to attend on-site adult education classes. Others offer space for after-school or tutoring programs for the children of their employees.

Universities

Universities are involved in partnerships at many levels. Teacher training programs provide interns who tutor children and serve as English-speaking adult contacts. Faculty and student associations are valuable sources of volunteers, tutors, and mentors. Faculty and student research may ultimately affect policy and improve conditions for migrant families. For instance, the publication *Research on Migrant Farmworkers in New York State*, which is based on health-record data collected and analyzed by Cornell University faculty, resulted in specific recommendations to policymakers that would improve access to health care for migrant families.

Informal Supports

Religious organizations, literacy program volunteers, civic organizations, and other community-based groups fill in gaps left by federal, state, and local program options. These informal yet valuable supports can provide social, spiritual, emotional, educational, recreational, and financial support as necessary. They may emphasize migrant children and family services, or they may take a more global approach and, subsequently, include migrant families in their broader range of community services.

As a result of the lessons learned and the cooperative efforts of schools, families, communities, and businesses today, the migrant child or youth of tomorrow will have a more continuous education, more coherent health care, and greater likelihood of completing high school.

Did You Know...?

A number of programs have evolved to support the continued education of migrant youth:

- **The Portable Assisted Study Sequence**, coordinated by Parlier High School in California, allows migrant students to earn credit toward high school graduation through a self-paced, correspondence course with individual subject packets and toll-free question/answer service.
- **The Secondary Credit Exchange Program** encourages student enrollment in late afternoon and evening classes, coordinates validation and transfer of credits between home and exchange schools, and assists with program implementation and evaluation.

- **The Migrant Dropout Reconnection Program** in Geneseo, New York, is a clearinghouse/counseling and referral network that identifies migrant youth who have dropped out of school, reconnects them with schools, and supports them after re-enrollment.
- **The High School Equivalency Program** assists young migrant adults, who are legal residents of the U.S., in earning a high school equivalency certificate and then gaining employment or continuing on to higher education.

Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Meet Demitri

Demitri Watson's family was homeless for almost two years. Demitri, his two sisters, and his mother left their apartment in a public housing complex after being evicted and lived for two weeks in the family car. Then they relocated to the Salvation Army shelter for a month. After living with his mother's sister for a short period, they moved to a motel near his mother's new job. Unable to afford the rent, the family returned to his mother's sister's house while on the waiting list for an apartment in a transitional housing program. Things didn't work out at the transitional housing complex, and they returned once again to his mother's sister's home. His mother was able to find employment nearby, and the family stayed there for six more months. Finally, Demitri's mother saved enough money to afford an apartment.

Moving from one place to another is disruptive for adults and children alike. Many families become entrapped in an interminable cycle of poverty that forces them to make decisions based on expediency and survival, rather than on long-term benefit. Homelessness is especially devastating for school-age children, who in most cases have to change schools with each move. Research shows that a child loses six months of instruction every time he or she changes schools. Consequently, most children in persistently transient families perform poorly in school. This could have been the case for Demitri and his sisters.

However, when the Watsons initially moved in with Demitri's mother's sister, the school social worker contacted A Child's Place. Because A Child's Place is linked with two magnet schools, the program provides transportation for children throughout the district. Demitri was able to remain in his school of origin throughout the period of his family's homelessness. As a result, he was able to keep up with his class and to see his friends every day.

For the two years that Demitri was in the program, he received many needed services, including dental checkups and procedures, academic testing, transportation to and from school, a "lunch buddy" volunteer, and a scholarship opportunity to participate in an after-school program.

Because the welfare of the child is so inextricably connected with that of the family, A Child's Place works closely with the family as well. The social worker met with Demitri's mother to identify her needs and connect her to mental health services. This same social worker maintained contact with the family throughout the two years of homelessness, providing support to help Demitri and his family get back on their feet.

The Watson family has lived in the same apartment for a year and a half now. Demitri is doing well in school and his sisters are enrolled in a preschool program. His mother has held the same job for more than a year, and she is stabilized and happy with her life. A Child's Place was the calming "eye of the storm" amidst the Watson family's turbulent period of transience.

A Child's Place

"While A Child's Place is best known for its services to homeless families, the prevention aspect is equally important. In a world of reaction, it is imperative to provide prevention for something as traumatic as homelessness." —*Dearsley Vernon, Program Director, A Child's Place*

A Child's Place Services

Mainstream Opportunities for Students in Transition (MOST) & Firm Foundations

- ❑ Mainstream classroom environment
- ❑ Liaisons for support
- ❑ Assessments/curriculum for special needs
- ❑ Mentoring and tutoring
- ❑ Medical/dental/counseling
- ❑ Breakfast and lunch
- ❑ Clothing, hygiene, school supplies
- ❑ After-school enrichment program
- ❑ Summer program placements

Family and Community Advocacy

- ❑ Referrals for vocational, educational, emergency assistance, housing, advocacy needs
- ❑ Counseling
- ❑ Family assistance funds
- ❑ "Housewarming" kits
- ❑ Family enrichment and sponsorship opportunities
- ❑ Workshops and consultation for other schools
- ❑ Participation in the Homeless Services Network and Kids Count Coalition
- ❑ Speaking and media opportunities
- ❑ Advocacy for change and services within the school system and broader community

A Child's Place is a Charlotte, North Carolina, community organization that provides an extensive array of advocacy, education, and support services for children and their families who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Providing these services involves collaboration between the public school system, medical and dental professionals, counselors, volunteer mentors and tutors, social service agencies, and preschools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

A Child's Place began in 1989 with an ad-hoc group of citizens, working with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system and other agencies, who were concerned with addressing the educational needs of school-age homeless children. It has subsequently expanded to include family and community

advocacy, preventive and early intervention services (Firm Foundations), school-based group counseling services, and transportation services to two elementary schools for students who are unable to attend their school of origin (Mainstream Opportunities for Students in Transition—MOST). During the 1998–99 school year, A Child's Place served children and families at nine school sites and reached approximately 1,000 students.

Governance

A Child's Place exists as the result of a collaborative effort. It is governed by a Board of Directors and counseled by a Board of Advisors. Board members are volunteers from the community and are nominated on the basis of their experience and expertise. Volunteer medical, dental, and counseling professionals are recruited for pro-bono work with the children and families. A particularly strong relationship exists between A Child's Place staff and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system. With funding originating primarily in the private sector, A Child's Place operates with a great deal of financial flexibility, allowing the partnership to address the needs of a multitude of clients with diverse histories, without the spending restrictions frequently associated with state and federal monies.

About Partnerships for Homeless Children and Youth

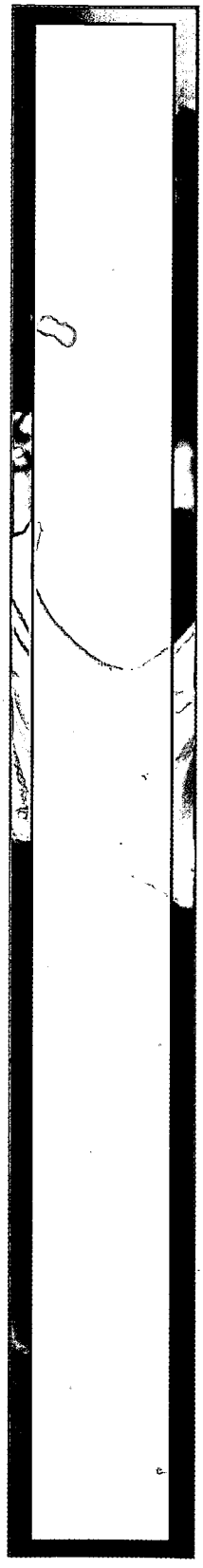
Today's child can be homeless as a result of a number of significant factors such as insufficient affordable housing, unemployment or inadequate employment, and cuts in federal social-support programs. Other causal factors include personal and family difficulties such as substance abuse; mental health problems; general health related problems; physical, mental, and sexual abuse; or other sources of conflict. Uncontrollable events, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires, can suddenly leave entire communities homeless.

School-age children in homeless families and independent homeless youth represent the fastest-growing population of homeless individuals in the United States. Although accurate figures are not available due to differences in the definition of homelessness and difficulties contacting families for census purposes, the number of homeless children is estimated to range from 220,000 to more than 500,000.

The vast majority of homeless education programs emerged after the 1987 Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. In theory, the development of school-linked programs for homeless children runs parallel to the establishment of services for children who have other special education needs. However, several characteristics of the homeless population combine to challenge programming efforts.

Needs Met by Partnerships

Unlike children with disabilities or even children whose families are migrant, children who are homeless are sometimes less likely to evoke a sympathetic reaction from individuals, businesses, and agencies in a position to provide services. When compared to children with disabilities who are in need of special education services, homeless children have fewer legislative connections and advocates.



Parents and homeless youth faced with the need to secure basic shelter and food may not be able to place a high priority on education. Beyond the issue of upheaval, experiences with prostitution, drug trafficking, substance abuse, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), premature pregnancy and parenthood, and suicide are all-too-common consequences of homelessness for adolescents who are struggling to survive. Therefore, home-school-community-business partnerships might first look toward providing such basic needs as proper food, a secure place to sleep, and health care, followed by interventions for educational needs.

Outreach

Partnerships serving homeless children develop strong outreach programs, going into the streets and homeless shelters to increase awareness of available resources. Without these efforts, few homeless adolescents will seek educational services; few homeless parents will know of the funded sources for counseling and parent education/training; and few homeless children will be able to take advantage of their rights to an education and transportation to school. Frequently, as a result of the underlying reason for being homeless, a student's daily life seems chaotic, and convincing such a child that education is relevant can be, at times, a major challenge.

Investment

Partnerships addressing homelessness help school staff and service providers develop and promote a psychological investment in the lives of homeless children and youth. Important aspects of this work include dispelling myths and stereotypes about people who are homeless; creating inviting classrooms and instructing teachers how to integrate children who might feel left out when entering a class after other children have established friendships and group norms or "social cliques" (teachers can ease new children into a classroom and help break down these barriers to acceptance by encouraging all children to play with lots of different friends, assigning children to different groups for different projects, demonstrating acceptance of the new child, teaching basic social skills such as kindness, and prohibiting negative behaviors such as teasing); and encouraging a willingness to invest time and energy in a student who is likely to move on within 90 days.

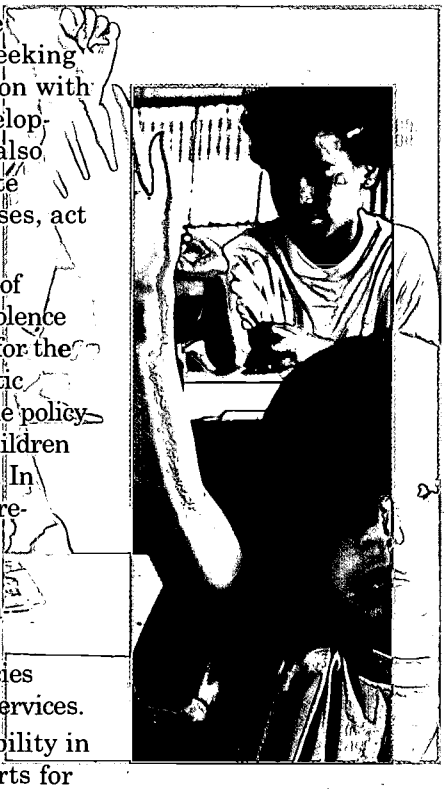
Removing Barriers

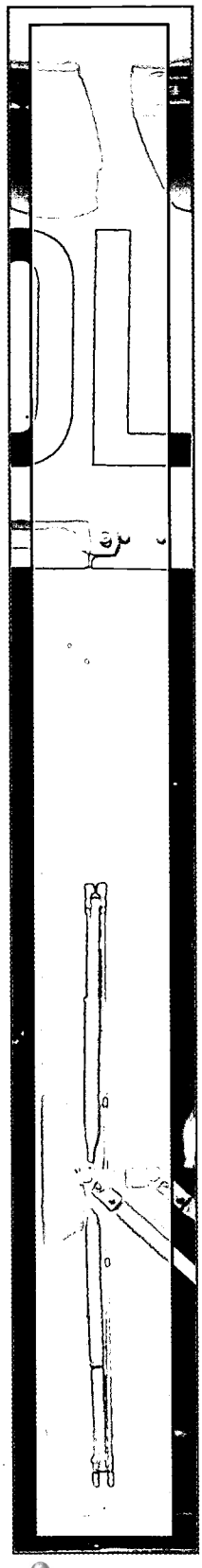
Legal barriers such as residency and guardianship issues and the logistics of locating and transferring school and health records are especially problematic when records from previous schools do not accompany the child. Barriers to school success need to be addressed by providing academic support and appropriate placement in special or regular education classes, promoting parent involvement, sponsoring parent education programs, providing stability and continuity in education, and coordinating special services.

Key Players

Schools are mandated by the 1990 McKinney Amendments to coordinate interagency support for homeless children and youth. As a result, they must play a fundamental role in developing and implementing integrative services. Because schools are a universal part of children's and families' lives, using schools as the hub of the service network can be less stigmatizing than offering services at other institutions. Partnerships must, however, continually remember that until a child's basic needs for shelter, safety, and survival have been met, little energy is available for education. In consideration of those needs, other important partners that provide services to homeless children, youth, and their families include the following:

- **Homeless shelters:** In addition to providing food and a place to sleep, shelters coordinate parent support groups, provide case-management services, offer social services, and provide on-site childcare, including before- and after-school care for parents seeking employment or enrolled in job-training programs. In conjunction with other community agencies, shelters provide children with developmentally appropriate recreation programs. Shelter personnel also procure materials, set up locations where children can complete homework assignments and work with tutors, and, in some cases, act as liaisons between the shelter and the school.
- **Domestic violence shelters:** By offering a safe place for victims of domestic violence who have fled the abusive situation, domestic violence shelters can be an important part of a collaborative support effort for the homeless. Although some states do not consider children in domestic violence shelters as homeless, others, such as New York, have made policy decisions that do make that distinction and subsequently afford children in domestic violence shelters the rights of other homeless children. In addition to providing shelter and food, domestic violence shelters frequently provide counseling specific to abuse issues.
- **Social service agencies:** Homelessness often separates families, and children must sometimes stay temporarily with friends or relatives. In the absence of a parent or guardian, social workers are authorized to enroll a student in public school. Social service agencies are also important providers of brokerage and case-management services.
- **Childcare agencies:** Young homeless children have little stability in their lives and often lack nurture, nutrition, and health supports for optimum development. Early intervention for language, cognitive, and behavioral problems can be provided in an early childhood care and education center. Childcare for infants and young children as well as before- and after-school care for school-age children can allow parents the necessary time for job training, employment, seeking housing, and other basic needs, as well as respite from the persistent daily stress of survival on the street. Some childcare centers reserve slots for homeless children. Programs such as Head Start and Smart Start may choose to give homeless children priority for services. Federal, state, and local funding is used to subsidize the cost of care so fees for services are not a barrier keeping homeless families from enrolling their children.





- **Health service agencies:** Children enrolled in school receive attention for immediate health problems and appropriate immunizations from health service agencies. These agencies also work through homeless shelters to provide screening clinics and health education programs.
- **Mental health:** Government-subsidized mental health agencies and private health care providers offering pro-bono services provide counseling for the social/emotional needs of homeless individuals, including treatment for mental illness and substance abuse.
- **Employment and training agencies:** While the sites for delivering training or job counseling may vary (e.g., shelters, separate facilities, community colleges) the provision of these services is critical for most homeless adults and many homeless adolescents, particularly those who have run away from home and dropped out of school.
- **Businesses:** Business involvement in partnerships for homeless children and youth ranges from school-specific interventions to team building at the community level. Businesses may encourage employees to become tutors or mentors for children and youth, either at the school or in homeless shelters. They may work in collaboration with schools to arrange summer job internships, experiences, or work/study programs, or to provide lab equipment, books, computer technology, and software to extend learning opportunities for children. In partnership with schools and other agencies, businesses often provide grants for innovative programs that meet the needs of identified youth.
- **Transportation services:** More than any other school-access support service, homeless students need transportation. Although the McKinney amendments require schools to provide transportation for homeless students, often children and youth staying in shelters not on regular school bus routes are unable to get to school unless the school district transportation system, shelter staff, or parents can arrange other forms of transportation. Most homeless families do not reside in shelters and, therefore, face even greater difficulties. They may be temporarily staying with relatives or friends or in campgrounds, motels, and other places not on existing bus routes. While the intent of the McKinney legislation is to allow children to stay enrolled in their school of origin, transportation to and from out-of-district temporary shelter and school sites is expensive and logistically difficult. Policies, if they exist at all, are often unclear about which district is responsible for providing transportation. Partnerships that effectively address transportation obstacles must focus on clear communication, supportive legislation, homeless-education liaison personnel who are available to work on individual cases, and an array of transportation modes that are safe and reliable.

Today's homeless child faces a multitude of problems that must be addressed to free his or her energy and attention for learning. As more new partnerships address the needs of these children, systems and policies will be put in place to ensure that tomorrow's homeless child will have improved access to education.

Did You Know...?

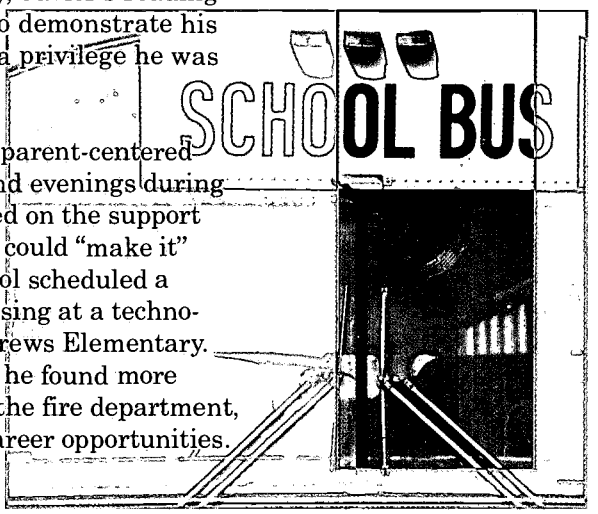
- Up to 31 percent of homeless children do not attend school.

Education of Children of Promise

Meet the Perez Family

Maria and Jose Perez have two children enrolled in Andrews Elementary School: Anna, age six, and Javier, age nine. While in first grade, Anna was a very shy child who kept to herself. Javier, on the other hand, seemed to be constantly at odds with his teacher and always in trouble for some misbehavior. Anna's teacher knew that she had the potential to blossom, so she paired Anna with Ms. Talley, a volunteer from a local church, who visited Anna at home and helped her at school with reading assignments. Anna thrived on the extra attention she received from Ms. Talley on a weekly basis. Gradually, she began to talk more in her classroom, to smile more often, and even seemed to enjoy coming to school.

Javier's teacher also recognized that extra attention might make a difference and paired him with Mr. Smith, a parent volunteer. Three or four times each week, Mr. Smith helped Javier with his reading assignments, and the two of them talked about Javier's interest in athletics. Gradually, Javier's reading and classroom behavior improved. He was even selected to demonstrate his gymnastics skills for the younger children at the school—a privilege he was very proud of.



Maria and Jose also benefited from Andrews Elementary's parent-centered focus. Maria attended parenting programs on Saturdays and evenings during the school year. When she told the staff how much she relied on the support and informational meetings and did not know whether she could "make it" through the summer break without the programs, the school scheduled a summer parenting session. Jose learned about word processing at a technology class sponsored by a local business affiliated with Andrews Elementary. He enthusiastically attended the school's career day where he found more than 50 community volunteers—including personnel from the fire department, Coast Guard, and EMS—offering information about new career opportunities.

Andrews Elementary School

Andrews Elementary School, in Andrews, South Carolina, is a pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade school that serves 970 students from a largely lower socioeconomic population in a basically rural area. Within the city of Andrews and in the surrounding area, more than 20 percent of the residents live in poverty, and five percent of all housing units lack even such basic amenities as plumbing. Of the 970 students enrolled in the school, 71 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Despite these obstacles, Andrews was the first school in Georgetown County to earn deregulated status, and its students have earned the state's School Incentive Reward 11 times since 1985.

The school is a hub for this small community of 3,000 residents. Building partnerships is the engine that drives the school's vision for a high-performing learning community where parents, teachers, businesses, church groups, civic organizations, and others contribute time, funds, and other resources to meet the social, emotional, physical, and educational needs of all students.

Andrews Elementary is a community-based partnership in the truest sense. The school recruits volunteers and community organizations to help with its many projects, and it focuses particularly on parents as partners. Staff and teachers undergo training that helps them build peer groups and relationships between parents and include parents in every aspect of school life. Parents' needs are assessed along with those of students, and the school sets high expectations for parent involvement, noting, "Parents should never feel like they have to apologize for coming to school."

As a result of attending parenting seminars, parents have greater confidence in their child's school, in themselves as parents, in their ability to help their children learn at home, and in their ability to advance their own schooling at continuing education classes. Andrews Elementary has found that when parents make a child's school part of their lives, students have a more positive attitude toward school and their own behavior, as well as higher test scores and grades, better attendance, better relationships with their parents, and higher self-esteem.

Making the community an extension of the classroom—and the school the center of community activities—is a vision shared by everyone at Andrews Elementary. This vision is being realized through partnerships that are designed to improve student learning by providing support for the school, its children, and its families through the following projects:

- **Parenting Program:** Andrews Elementary recognizes that schools must have the support of parents to help children achieve their full potential. To better equip parents for this important role in their children's education, Andrews sponsors parent programs—held on Saturdays and evenings, five times a year—that provide information as well as opportunities for parents to discuss parenting issues with each other. Representatives from agencies such as the local drug- and alcohol-abuse program, hospice, mental health providers, and law enforcement, as well as Andrews' own staff, present topics ranging from child discipline to preparing for teacher-parent conferences. Community presenters see the sessions as opportunities to build bridges between themselves and school families, making it easier and more comfortable for parents to come to the agencies for services. Says one Andrews staff member, "It's much easier to make referrals for families when you know the person who is answering the phone on the other end of the line and you know that the family has at least met that person."
- **Math and Reading Nights:** Parents are important partners in the school's efforts to improve students' reading and math skills. At Math and Reading Nights, teachers demonstrate instructional techniques used in the classroom so that parents can learn how to help children improve their math and reading skills at home. To make the program fun as well as educational, children present a program—such as a song they learned at school—and school staff dress up like storybook characters or do other "out of the ordinary" things. Attendance at these Math and Reading Nights has been tremendous, with one event attracting 1,200 people (a tremendous turnout for any school but especially in a town of only 3,000 residents!).

- **Technology Nights:** Modeled after the successful Math and Reading Nights, Technology Nights are also learning opportunities for the community. Students and staff demonstrate their computer skills and teach parents how to use a computer. International Paper Company and other local businesses provide funding for presentations, and Andrews Elementary has received considerable support from SEIR◆TEC, a federally funded program that supports technology improvements in schools by providing technical assistance and scholarships for faculty to attend training conferences.
- **Extended Day/Year Program:** Approximately 270 children participate in Andrews' extended day/year program, which provides extra learning opportunities three afternoons a week and during the summer. Funded by the South Carolina State Department of Education and Title 1 funds, the extended-learning program is an integral part of the school's efforts to help all children succeed in school.
- **Volunteers Program:** Volunteers from local churches, businesses, public agencies, civic groups, and individuals support the school by providing one-on-one tutoring for students, acting as mentors, helping parents and students who speak English as their second language to improve communication skills, assisting custodial staff with building and grounds upkeep, and speaking at Career Days or during parent programs. Many volunteer community groups—including Rocking Chair Grannies, retirees connected with a local church—read to children at school. Andrews sees volunteerism as a two-way street: In the spirit of giving back to the community, students recently raised approximately $9,000 for the March of Dimes, staff from the school regularly make presentations to community groups, and the school building is available for community meetings.
- **School-based Community Services:** Andrews Elementary is able to provide a number of on-site services for children through partnerships with local services providers. For instance, through collaboration with the Department of Health and Environmental Control, a nurse can provide screenings and assist with other health care services during regular visits to the school, and a counselor from the local mental health department is on site four days each week. These types of partnerships allow the school to provide services that students otherwise might not receive.
- **Transitions into Kindergarten:** Andrews has established collaborative partnerships with the local Head Start program and childcare providers to help smooth a child's transition from an early childhood setting to public school. Guidance counselors and child-development teachers meet periodically with Head Start staff to share curriculum updates and other information with parents and staff in these programs. Head Start children and teachers are invited to visit and observe the school so that they know what to expect in the school setting. School staff members also visit Head Start classrooms to gain a better understanding of children's early childhood experiences before they start school.

- **McDonald's Partnership:** The Andrews' McDonald's is an outstanding example of business support for the school. In addition to donating food coupons as incentives for children who attend regularly and do well in school, McDonald's provides financial support for programs, and the school reciprocates. Each month teachers from one grade level volunteer at McDonald's for four hours—cooking French fries, greeting customers, etc.—and in return, McDonald's donates 20 percent of the sales revenue generated during that period. Children help decorate the restaurant for Christmas and other special events. Both partners "win," with the school receiving cash and in-kind donations and McDonald's benefiting from community goodwill and increased patronage by families with school children.

Community involvement on all levels—parents, individuals living in the community, and organizations—is at the heart of this school's vision and philosophy of education. The school realizes that, alone, it cannot meet the needs of children, and it relies on a variety of partnerships with parents and others within the community to provide the best services possible.

Governance

The School Leadership Committee—a group of community volunteers, parents, and school staff who collectively represent the school's PTA, School Improvement Council, and Title I advisory group—is Andrews Elementary's overarching governance structure. The Leadership Committee, with the help of other groups, is charged with the task of completing a needs assessment, developing plans for additional activities, and supporting the school as plans are implemented.

Funds to support the school's partnerships and programs come from a variety of sources. Andrews Elementary is a schoolwide Title 1 school and uses Title 1 funds to support both regular and extended-day programs. Funds from the state's accountability program also support the extended-day program. Local funds are used to provide a half-day, pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds. The school has partnered with the state's early childhood program, First Steps, to apply for funding that will support additional pre-kindergarten services. McDonald's and other local businesses contribute both cash and in-kind donations. Civic groups, such as the Rotary Club, provide monies for special projects.

Well-trained and caring staff members are at the core of this school's innovative partnership programs. Teachers and administrators are committed to the school's mission and believe wholeheartedly that involving the community is the way to further improvements within the school. The staff's openness to collaboration and willingness to support the programs—by volunteering at McDonald's, dressing up for Math and Reading Nights, making presentations in the community, and welcoming parents into their classrooms—are the keys to success at Andrews Elementary. The community, in turn, has embraced its school. These two-way, truly collaborative partnerships form a solid basis for providing Andrews' children with a quality education. In the words of Gwen McNeil, guidance counselor at Andrews Elementary, "Our children have great needs. It's to our advantage as community members—and our responsibility—to work together and help them meet those needs."

For information about Andrews Elementary School, contact:
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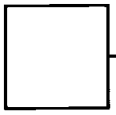


Did You Know...?

- The Title I effort is the largest single program of federal aid to elementary and secondary students in the United States, reaching more than six million children.

Meet Lonnie

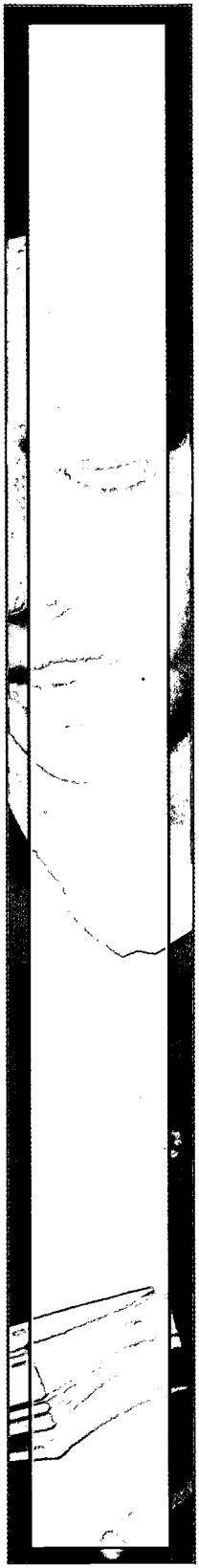
(Profile of an America Reads Tutor and Tutee)

Lonnie is a second-grader who has changed schools several times a year since kindergarten. His parents moved frequently, unable to find steady work, but now they are both working. Lonnie has two younger sisters, both preschoolers, and his parents devote the little free time they have to the girls who are more demanding. Although Lonnie has an above-average IQ, he has had difficulty learning to read because each school he attended used a different reading program, and he was out of school for long periods of time between his frequent moves.

After assessing Lonnie at the beginning of the school year, his second-grade teacher determined that he was reading at a pre-primer level and that he would benefit from an America Reads tutor, so she assigned Rick, a local college sophomore in business, to work with Lonnie. Rick came from a large family and enjoyed working with children. After receiving tutor training, Rick met with Lonnie several times a week for the remainder of the school year. Each tutoring session followed the same structure. Rick and Lonnie read a high-interest book at Lonnie's reading level. Lonnie answered questions about the story and completed vocabulary activities, extended his sight-word vocabulary, and did a writing activity. Then Rick assigned Lonnie a book to read at home. Between activities, they discussed their favorite activities—fishing and baseball.

Rick and Lonnie established a good tutoring relationship, and Lonnie looked forward to Rick's visits. Fortunately, Lonnie's family stayed in the same community for the entire school year, affording Lonnie some continuity. His reading level was reassessed several times, and at the end of the school year, it was determined that Lonnie was reading on grade level, a real breakthrough! In another turn of events, Rick later changed his major from business to child development, primarily because of his work with Lonnie. Rick realized that the tutoring sessions with Lonnie were more than an avocation. They were a calling.

America Reads is just one of many partnership components addressing the needs of children who are at risk for school failure. The following is a sketch of one partnership that is improving educational opportunities for children such as Lonnie and making a difference for Today's Child.



Albany Reads

"Teaching and research are obviously important, but the true measure of a public university is its commitment to serving the citizens of its community."
—*Albany State University, Georgia*

The Southwest Georgia Regional Tutoring and Mentoring Training Center (Albany Reads) is an organized and comprehensive effort designed to improve reading skills for children in an impoverished 22-county area. All counties in this region are economically and socially depressed, and some of the highest poverty rates in the state are found here. Economic hardship is common in this rural area where the average per capita income is $13,897, far below national and state averages. For the 1997–1998 school year, 80 percent of preK–5 children were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

The economic base of this area is heavily dependent on domestic services as well as agricultural and manufacturing industries. Some of the area's largest employers include a converted paper and paperboard manufacturer, a national beverage manufacturer, and a hospital. All of these employers are located in Dougherty County, the center of the target area and the location of Albany State University. With this in mind, educators at Albany State University established partnerships with human service, government, and community organizations to upgrade educational opportunities for school children. Partners include the following:

- Albany-Dougherty Partnership for Community Education, a collaboration comprised of key community stakeholders whose goal is to improve the educational process in the area by focusing on school success, early childhood development, and improving the environment
- Andrew College, a two-year private college
- Darton College, a two-year institution
- Bainbridge College, a two-year institution
- Twenty-two local school systems

These organizations work jointly to enable institutions of higher learning to implement two broadly based projects: the Post-secondary Readiness Program (PREP), which helps middle-school students and their families make timely and informed decisions about higher education and career goals, and Learn and Serve 2000, an initiative that engages college students to participate in activities that enhance their civic and social responsibilities through community service projects such as tutoring, mentoring, and conducting enrichment programs and school-success workshops for K–12 students. The Southwest Georgia Regional Tutoring and Mentoring Training Center is a Learn and Serve 2000 program.

The Center was created in 1998 when educators from Albany State University applied for and received a $50,000 grant from the U. S. Department of Education. The grant funded the expansion of an America Reads Challenge

tutoring program, and the Center's goal was to train community volunteers and 300 or more work-study students from five universities and colleges and then to contract with them to provide tutoring and mentoring services to primary students in 60 schools during the 1998–1999 school year. Tutors learned about the fundamentals of training young children in literacy, schools' reading curriculum, challenges and solutions, and tutoring strategies, including the use of resource materials and computer programs and the best ways to read to children and to help them read aloud. Because the 22 counties cover a wide, rural area and because there is a lack of public transportation, getting tutors to and from their assigned schools proved to be one of the main challenges. One of the rewards, however, was developing a successful literacy model that can be replicated by partnerships in other communities.

Governance

The Southwest Georgia Regional Tutoring and Mentoring Training Center is an ongoing partnership between the region's 22 school systems, three colleges, and the Albany-Dougherty Partnership for Community Education. Although a $50,000 grant from the U. S. Department of Education provided the initial funding, Albany State University provides continued funding and leadership for the project.

For information about the Southwest Georgia Regional Training Project, contact:
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504 College Drive
Albany, Georgia 31705
Director: Dr. Carolyn Williams
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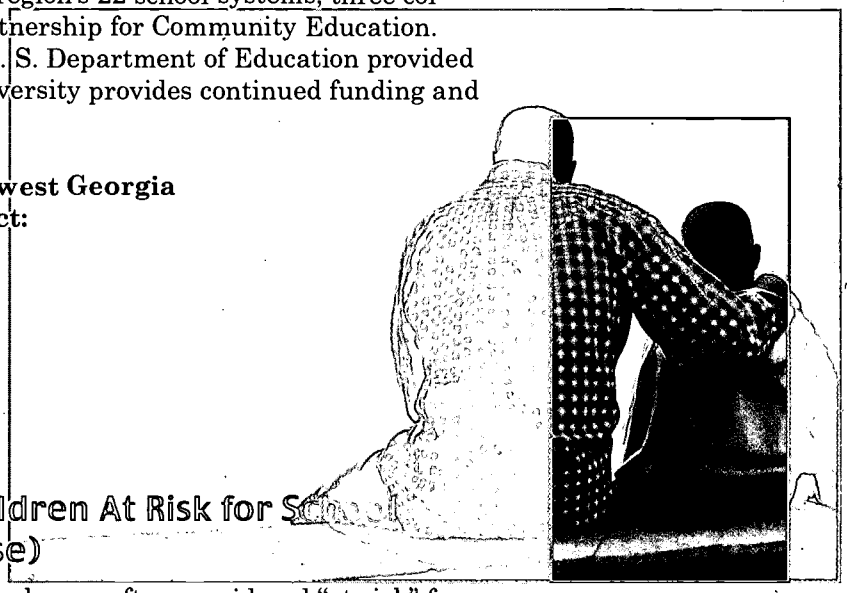


About Partnerships for Children At Risk for School Failure (Children of Promise)

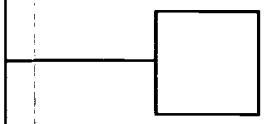
Today's children of promise are those who are often considered "at risk" for school failure. They cannot be clearly separated from children who are homeless, migrant, disabled, preschool age but not enrolled in preschool, or members of other populations that do not have such distinctions. However, we can make a characterization: Children of promise are those with one or more (usually more) risk factors that have been identified as associated with poor school performance. These risk factors include economic impoverishment, limited parental education, stressful home situation, and cultural discontinuities between home and school.

There is a very distinct achievement gap between these disadvantaged youngsters and their advantaged peers. Furthermore, families of disadvantaged children are less likely to become involved in their children's education because of their historical disenfranchisement from the educational system. Children and youth with risk factors such as those listed above are less likely to meet with academic success. Risk factors will not always translate into disadvantages for a child, but when they do, the results are clear. According to the latest

data from the *Kids Count Data Book*, published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ten percent of all 16- to 19-year-olds are high school dropouts, and nine percent of all 16- to 19-year-olds are not attending school and not working. The potential for these children to encounter academic difficulties is high.

Did You Know...?

- ❑ Twenty-seven percent of children live with parents who do not have full-time, year-round employment.
- ❑ Twenty-one percent of children live in poverty, and nine percent live in extreme poverty (with incomes less than half of the poverty level).
- ❑ Twenty-seven percent of families with children are headed by a single parent.
- ❑ Nearly 40 percent of fourth-grade students currently score below the basic mathematics and reading levels for their grade.



Research indicates that children do best when their families do well. And when communities lack access to economic opportunity, positive social networks, and high-quality public education, families are likely to be weak. When families are weak, children are likely to experience problems. According to Douglas Nelson, president of the Casey Foundation, one of the keys to reversing this downward spiral is to rebuild opportunities, initiatives, and values that support families in the communities where they are faring the worst—typically those in the inner city.

Needs Met by Partnerships

The drive to close the achievement gap while improving educational experiences for all children has been spearheaded and strengthened by important federal legislation (specifically IASA/ESEA, Title I, Title X, and Title XIII). When combined, Title I (Helping Disadvantaged Children Meet High Standards) and Title X (21st Century Community Learning Center Programs), supported by Title XIII (Support and Assistance Programs to Improve Education), have the potential to provide high-quality educational experiences for tomorrow's child by addressing such seemingly diverse domains as the following:

- ❑ Improving school programming
- ❑ Increasing assessment and accountability
- ❑ Providing opportunities for teachers and school administration to deepen their understanding of both the process and the content of education
- ❑ Stimulating schoolwide and school-managed improvement in low-income communities to close the achievement gap
- ❑ Providing financial support for schools in the poorest communities and poorest-performing districts
- ❑ Creating opportunities for students to learn outside the typical school day (before and after school, evenings, weekends, and during other students' summer vacation)
- ❑ Strengthening the family in which the student is nurtured.

High expectation for students' school performance is a cornerstone of collaborative efforts for students at risk of school failure. The myth that underprivileged and/or minority students are not capable of high achievement is being debunked by collaborations that promote academic achievement by raising expectations. Research findings indicate that all children can benefit from a range of learning activities, including tasks that focus on problem-solving skills, and that there is an association between consistent higher-order classroom instruction and greater student achievement. Partnerships focusing on educational excellence for all are promoting higher performance standards and higher-order thinking as opposed to drill-and-rote learning.

Partnerships for academic excellence have concurrent foci on schoolwide programs and auxiliary programs. Because programs that are designed to increase the capacity of the entire school contribute to the academic success of all students, federal law allows high-poverty schools to use Title I funding to support comprehensive school reform through schoolwide programs. Until recently, the dominant method of providing Title I services has been pull-out programs that deliver supplementary instruction to eligible, low-achieving students during the time they would have spent in their regular classes. Supplementary instruction and other auxiliary services, such as extended learning time, one-on-one tutoring, homework help sessions, etc., still exist but are now being offered in concurrence with in-class instructional approaches and schoolwide improvement programs. Since the 1994 reauthorization of Title I, the use of in-class instructional approaches has increased from 58 percent of Title I schools in 1991–92 to 83 percent in 1997–98.

Auxiliary programs, such as those offered through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program, are often offered outside the traditional school day and are housed not only in schools but also in non-profit youth organizations, churches, or other faith-based organizations. Successful partnerships for educational excellence for all children promote careful collaborative planning and design, links between the auxiliary and regular academic program, a clear focus on using extended time effectively, and a well-defined organization and management structure.

Key Players

Schools are the hub of change for children at risk for school failure, and, as such, they are responsible for developing programs to enhance the basic skills and higher-order thinking skills of these children. They are also central players in the establishment of community learning centers that forge stronger relationships among children, family members, schools, and the community. To fulfill their responsibilities, schools must enlist the help of a variety of professional specialists who are school-based. School psychologists, counselors, social workers, and nurses are in a position to intervene with children at risk for school failure. Title I teachers, whose jobs are specifically funded by Title I, and regular-education teachers must collaborate for effective and inclusive instruction of disadvantaged youth. In conjunction with school administrators, these personnel provide links to families and the community, and along with other partnership members, foster educational excellence for all children.

Parents and Families

When parents support the early-educational process, a child's cognitive development is enhanced and school performance improves. By volunteering in the classroom, attending school events, helping with homework, reading to their children, joining parent-teacher associations, and participating in any number of other activities, parents play important roles in promoting educational excellence. Research (e.g., Chavkin & Williams, 1993; Dauber & Epstein, 1993) indicates that ethnic-minority parents who have low-income levels and limited formal education and/or who are single place no less value on education than other parents. The difference, however, is that these parents are more likely to believe that it is the school's responsibility to take the lead in collaboration. As a result, parents of at-risk students may not respond to attempts to involve them in their child's educational process. However, with a strategic plan and culturally sensitive efforts, professionals can, and do, enlist the support and participation of these parents.

Did You Know...?

- Regional Comprehensive Centers work to help schools across the U.S. realize the goal of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994—that all children achieve to high standards.
- The Region IV Comprehensive Center is a partnership of trainers and technical assistance providers who have expertise in migrant and bilingual education, federal programs legislation, Indian education, comprehensive school reform, literacy, and parental involvement. The Center, led by partner AEL, Inc., serves education stakeholders in Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
- The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program was established by Congress to enable rural and inner-city schools to plan, implement, or expand projects that benefit the health, social services, cultural, and recreational needs of the community.
- These school-based learning centers can provide safe, drug-free, supervised, and cost-effective after-school, weekend, or summer havens for children, youth, and their families.
- Approximately 1,500 Community Learning Centers have been established through this program.

21st Century Community Learning Center website: www.ed.gov/21stcclc

School Support Teams

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 requires a system of school support teams to provide information and assistance to schoolwide programs and to help provide an opportunity for all students to meet the state's student-performance standards. The teams are composed of teachers, pupil-services personnel, consultants familiar with successful schoolwide projects or comprehensive school reform, representatives of institutions of higher education, regional educational laboratories or research centers, and outside consultant groups knowledgeable about teaching and learning research and practice, particularly with regard to low-achieving students. These teams provide assistance to schools as they plan, implement, and improve their schoolwide programs and may be supported by Regional Comprehensive Centers authorized by Title XIII. Each team works cooperatively with a school, makes recommendations as the school develops and implements its school improvement plan, and periodically reviews the progress of the school toward enabling children to meet the state's student-performance standards.

Businesses and Foundations

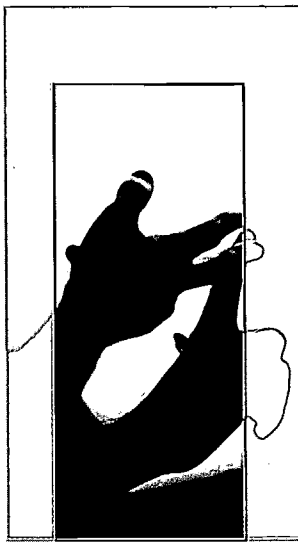
Businesses have much to offer when working with schools that have large populations of students at risk for school failure. They can provide tutors, mentors, and guest speakers for the students. They can also provide expertise to school personnel or to the interagency collaborating team on aspects of organization and management, research and development, and public relations and marketing. Other contributions may include sponsoring or presenting teacher-development workshops, internships for teachers, work/study programs, or summer job opportunities for students, and arranging parent-training programs at the place of employment. Contributions of funds (for school supplies, teaching materials, scholarships, incentives, etc.) and material resources (such as lab equipment, computers, and software) from businesses and foundations fill a need not fully met by federal, state, or local dollars.

Community Members

Community members involved in collaboration with schools working with disadvantaged children might include ministers advocating the importance of school involvement, police officers discouraging truancy, and librarians helping children and parents discover the joy of literature.

Today's educators share a vision: Tomorrow's child who comes from an economically or otherwise disadvantaged family will be able to meet the same academic standards as any other child, and all will have a high-quality education. Making this vision a reality will include simultaneously increasing the quality of education in all schools throughout the country, particularly those classified as low-performing, so that the achievement gap can be eliminated and each child can be part of a viable learning community. Partnerships are vital resources in the effort to achieve this vision, as they emphasize high expectations, integration of auxiliary with traditional school programs, and improving educational experiences for all children.

The Facilitators of Change



Interagency collaboration requires a tremendous effort on the part of all stakeholders, including state and federal legislators, to create a stable and effective program. This effort involves a commitment of energy, time, money, and vision if we are to move away from the isolated, discipline-oriented approaches that have become so much a part of our culture and way of thinking. With all stakeholders establishing joint "ownership" of the problem, however, it is quite possible that strong leadership, staff-training, and appropriate funding can support these reforms. Education is an essential component of the new collaboratives, and, therefore, leaders in the field of education must be at the forefront of this paradigm shift. Future service-provider systems will consist of interwoven disciplines working together to provide solutions for the needs of children and families. And these systems will be organized around a broad perspective rather than a single-discipline orientation. Corrigan and Udas (1996) describe a "new cadre of leaders" who "possess vision and can manage cooperation...[and] professionals who realize that collaboration in education, health, and human services today is not an option—it is a necessity and an obligation of leadership."

The critical components of successful partnerships can be categorized into three groups: client-access facilitators, delivery-system facilitators, and government facilitators.

Client-Access Facilitators

Placement near or in a school is one way to make services accessible, as is designating only one point of entry into the system as opposed to a multitude of forms, evaluations, and intake interviews. Additionally, clients and service-delivery staff must develop trust, respect, and an understanding of each other's roles if collaboration is to work. Successful collaborative systems also aim for client "buy in" or feelings of ownership and empowerment. These and other client-access facilitators are imperative, since systems of education or care cannot work if clients are deterred from taking advantage of service offerings.

Delivery-System Facilitators

Critical components of successful partnerships can also be found at the system level of organizational collaboration. Policies and practices that sustain collaboration between family-service providers create an infrastructure to support partnership services. Component strategies at this level include systematic staff development, time for professionals from different disciplines to work together, shared vision and philosophy, interagency agreements with clarification of roles and responsibilities, and strong leadership. A planning council or interagency board is recommended for ease in development and implementation of the new model.

Governance Facilitators

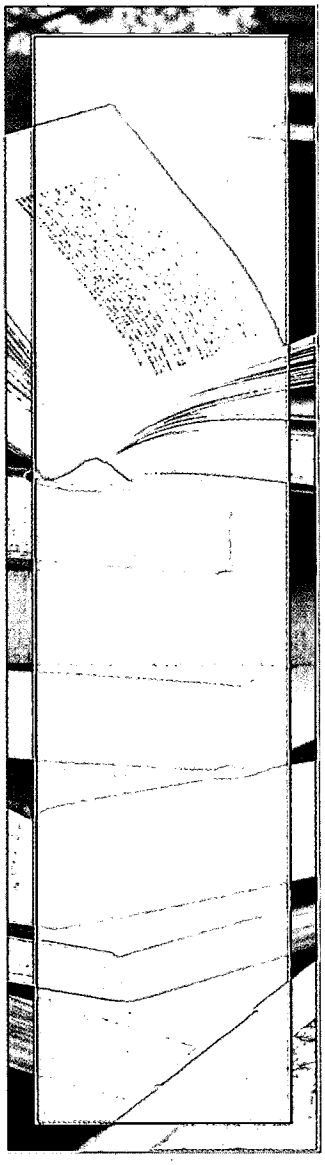
Facilitators for effective collaboration must often come from state and federal initiatives. Also important, cooperative funding allows agencies to access funds despite formerly restrictive rules on eligibility—because good intentions alone will not bring about service-delivery reform if funds are not made available for a changed system. Collaborative efforts that override narrow and fragmented eligibility and need categories are able to establish more effective practices when funding is designed for broad and seamless services. Additionally, national and state initiatives that coordinate unaligned services are strong facilitators for creating and running collaborative service-delivery models.

Critical to initial success and essential for continued effective practices, the components described in this publication have been found in a wide range of family-school-community-business partnerships. Certainly there are factors that make collaboration difficult, and, just as certainly, there are collaborative efforts underway that are struggling to fulfill their missions. However, as partnerships grow and improve, the reform movement in American education will become increasingly better able to address the symptoms and underlying weaknesses of a fragmented system that is not functioning effectively. Step by step, reform is working, because the motivating force behind that reform is a fervent desire to meet the needs of all children and families and to provide the best possible education for tomorrow's child.

Resources

The following is a partial listing of outstanding publications that address family-school-community-business partnerships:

- *A Guide to Developing Educational Partnerships* (1993, U.S. Department of Education)
- *Becoming Partners: A Guide to Starting and Sustaining Successful Partnerships Between Education and Business* (1992, Apple Computer)
- *Business/School Partnerships: A Path to Effective School Restructuring* (1991, Council for Aid to Education)
- *The Corporate Imperative: A Business Guide for Implementing Strategic Education Partnerships* (1999, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education)
- *Getting Ready to Provide School-Linked Services: What Schools Must Do* (1995, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory)
- *Investing in Partnerships for Student Success: A Basic Tool for Community Stakeholders to Guide Educational Partnership Development and Management* (1999, Partnership for Family Involvement in Education)
- *Learning Together: The Developing Field of School-Community Initiatives* (1998, Charles Mott Stewart Foundation)
- *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-Linked Strategies for Children and Families* (1996, U.S. Department of Education)
- *Ramping Up Reform: Aligning Education Rhetoric, Resolve, and Results. Lessons from North Carolina* (1999, the Regional Educational Laboratory at SERVE)
- *Together We Can: A Guide for Crafting a Pro-Family System of Education and Human Services* (1993, U.S. Department of Education)



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