



*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...\**

An introductory packet on

## **Parent and Home Involvement in Schools**

\*This Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspice of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.  
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The *Center for Mental Health in Schools* operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project at UCLA.\*

The UCLA Center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. In particular, it focuses on comprehensive, multifaceted models and practices to deal with the many external and internal barriers that interfere with development, learning, and teaching. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter marginalization and fragmentation of essential interventions and enhance collaboration between school and community programs. In this respect, a major emphasis is on enhancing the interface between efforts to address barriers to learning and prevailing approaches to school and community reforms.

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# What is the Center's Clearinghouse?

The scope of the Center's Clearinghouse reflects the School Mental Health Project's mission -- to enhance the ability of schools and their surrounding communities to address mental health and psychosocial barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. Those of you working so hard to address these concerns need ready access to resource materials. The Center's Clearinghouse is your link to specialized resources, materials, and information. The staff supplements, compiles, and disseminates resources on topics fundamental to our mission. As we identify what is available across the country, we are building systems to connect you with a wide variety of resources. Whether your focus is on an individual, a family, a classroom, a school, or a school system, we intend to be of service to you. Our evolving catalogue is available on request; and available for searching from our website.

## What kinds of resources, materials, and information are available?

We can provide or direct you to a variety of resources, materials, and information that we have categorized under three areas of concern:

- Specific psychosocial problems
- Programs and processes
- System and policy concerns

Among the various ways we package resources are our *Introductory Packets*, *Resource Aid Packets*, *special reports*, *guidebooks*, and *continuing education units*. These encompass overview discussions of major topics, descriptions of model programs, references to publications, access information to other relevant centers, organizations, advocacy groups, and Internet links, and specific tools that can guide and assist with training activity and student/family interventions (such as outlines, checklists, instruments, and other resources that can be copied and used as information handouts and aids for practice).

## Accessing the Clearinghouse

- E-mail us at **smhp@ucla.edu**
- FAX us at (310) 206-5895
- Phone (310) 825-3634
- Write School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools,  
Dept. of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

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## **UCLA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS\***

Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, our center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs.

**MIS S I O N:** *To improve outcomes for young people by enhancing policies, programs, and practices relevant to mental health in schools.*

Through collaboration, the center will

- # enhance practitioner roles, functions and competence
- # interface with systemic reform movements to strengthen mental health in schools
- # assist localities in building and maintaining their own infrastructure for training, support, and continuing education that fosters integration of mental health in schools

***Consultation Cadre***

***Clearinghouse***

***Newsletter***

***National & Regional Meetings***

***Electronic Networking***

***Guidebooks***

***Policy Analyses***

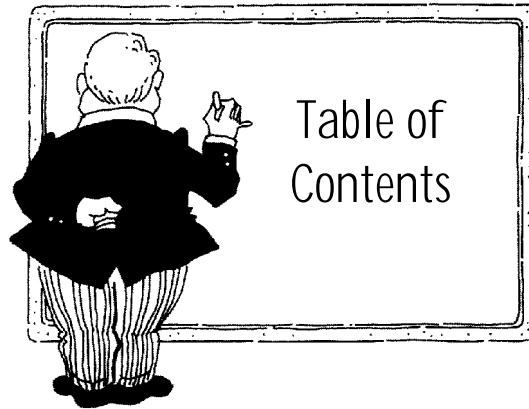
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# *I. Introduction*

In general, research findings over the past 30 years have consistently shown home involvement in schooling has a positive impact on youngster's attitudes, aspirations, and achievement. The tasks ahead include expanding the focus beyond thinking only in terms of parents and expanding the range of ways in which schools connect with those in the home. In particular, more intensive efforts must focus on those in the home who have the greatest influence on a student's well being and with whom it has proven difficult to connect. New approaches must be developed and evaluated to clarify how best to involve such hard-to-reach individuals.

**A.** What is Parent and Home Involvement?

**B.** What Does your School Do to Enhance Home Involvement?

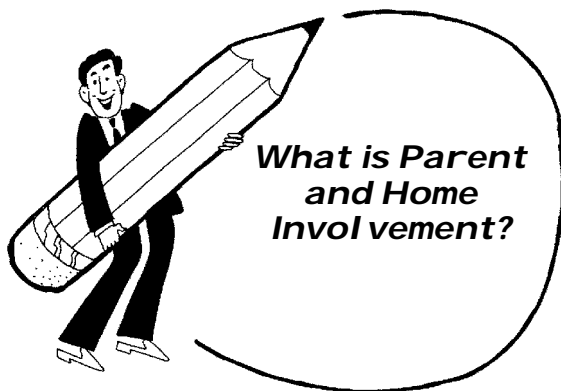
**C.** Parent Involvement in the Education of Their Children

**D. An Article:**

Intervening to Enhance Home Involvement in Schooling

⚙️ **Spotlight:** Partners in Learning:  
How Schools Can Support Family Involvement in Education





*\*adapted from the Summer 98 Issue of Addressing Barriers to Learning, the quarterly newsletter published by the Center for Mental Health in School, UCLA.*

Currently, all school districts are committed to some form of parent involvement. However, we have learned the hard way that the term means different things in different schools and among the various stakeholders at any school. There are two points that seem fundamental to defining such involvement.

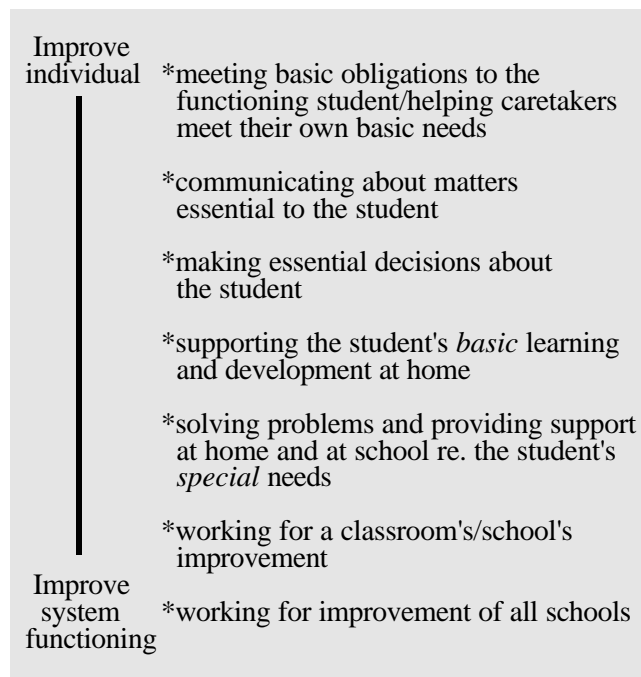
First, most efforts to involve parents seem aimed at those who want and are able to show up at school. It's important to have activities for such parents. It's also important to remember that they represent the smallest percentage of parents at most schools. What about the rest? Especially those whose children are doing poorly at school. Ironically, efforts to involve families whose youngsters are doing poorly often result in parents who are even less motivated to become involved. Typically, a parent of such a youngster is called to school because of the child's problems and leaves with a sense of frustration, anger, and guilt. Not surprisingly, such a parent subsequently tries to avoid the school as much as feasible. If schools really want to involve such families, they must minimize "finger wagging" and move to offer something more than parent education classes.

A second basic point is that in many homes mothers or fathers are not the key to whether a youngster does well at school. Many youngsters do not even live with their parents. Besides those placed in foster care, it is common for children to live with grandparents, aunts, or older siblings. Moreover, even when a youngster is living with one or more parents, an older sibling may have the greatest influence over how seriously the individual takes school. Given these realities, we use the term home involvement and try to design involvement programs for whoever is the key influence in the home.

Home involvement is a basic area for enabling learning. Schools must develop programs to address the many barriers associated with the home and the many barriers in the way of home involvement. Unfortunately, as with other facets of enabling learning, limited finances often mean verbal commitments are not backed up with

adequate resources. Meaningful home involvement requires on-site decision makers to commit fully. This means creating and maintaining effective mechanisms for program development and overcoming barriers related to home involvement.

There are many ways to think about an appropriate range of activities. We find it useful to differentiate whether the focus is on improving the functioning of individuals (students, parent/caretaker), systems (classroom, school, district), or both. And with respect to those individuals with the greatest impact on the youngster, we distinguish between efforts designed mainly to support the school's instructional mission and those intended primarily to provide family assistance (see figure below).







*B. What Does Your School Do To  
Enhance Home Involvement?  
Family & School Partnerships:*

The following pages contains a self-study survey. Filling it out is a good way to understand what parent/home involvement might look like. The emphasis is on enhancing home involvement through programs to address specific parent learning and support needs (e.g., ESL classes, mutual support groups), mobilize parents as problem solvers when their child has problems (e.g., parent education, instruction in helping with schoolwork), elicit help from families in addressing the needs of the community, and so forth. The context for some of this activity may be a parent center (which may be part of the Family/Community Service Center if one has been established at the site). Outcomes include specific measures of parent learning and indices of student progress, as well as a general enhancement of the quality of life in the community.

**Self-study to Enhance Home Involvement in Schooling**



work separately in filling out items, but the real payoff comes from discussing items. In doing so, the group may decide that an existing activity is not a high priority and that the resources should be redeployed to establish a more important program or to embellish an existing effort so that it is more effective. In making such decisions, priorities and timelines are established. The instrument also can be used as a form of program quality review.

This survey is one of a set that a school's stakeholders use to map and analyze programs. Team members might

***Survey (self-study) -- Home Involvement in Schooling***

Please indicate all items that apply

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes but more of this is needed</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no, is this something you want?</u>
<b>A. Which of the following are available to address specific learning and support needs of the adults in the home?</b>				
1. Does the site offer adult classes focused on				
a. English as a Second Language (ESL)?	___	___	___	___
b. citizenship?	___	___	___	___
c. basic literacy skills?	___	___	___	___
d. GED preparation?	___	___	___	___
e. job preparation?	___	___	___	___
f. citizenship preparation?	___	___	___	___
g. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
2. Are there groups for				
a. mutual support?	___	___	___	___
b. discussion?	___	___	___	___
3. Are adults in the home offered assistance in accessing outside help for personal needs?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
<b>B. Which of the following are available to help those in the home meet their basic obligations to the student?</b>				
1. Is help provided for addressing special family needs for				
a. food?	___	___	___	___
b. clothing?	___	___	___	___
c. shelter?	___	___	___	___
d. health and safety?	___	___	___	___
e. school supplies?	___	___	___	___
2. Are education programs offered on				
a. childrearing/parenting?	___	___	___	___
b. creating a supportive home environment for students?	___	___	___	___
c. reducing factors interfering with student learning and performance?	___	___	___	___
3. Are guidelines provided for helping a student deal with homework?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
<b>C. Which of the following are in use to improve communication about matters essential to the student and family?</b>				
1. Are there periodic general announcements and meetings such as				
a. advertising for incoming students?	___	___	___	___
b. orientation for incoming students and families?	___	___	___	___
c. bulletins/newsletters?	___	___	___	___
d. back to school night/open house?	___	___	___	___
e. parent teacher conferences?	___	___	___	___
2. Is there a system to inform the home on a regular basis				
a. about general school matters?	___	___	___	___
b. about opportunities for home involvement?	___	___	___	___
3. To enhance home involvement in the student's program and progress, are interactive communications used, such as				
a. sending notes home regularly?	___	___	___	___
b. a computerized phone line?	___	___	___	___
c. frequent in-person conferences with the family?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

**Survey -- Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes but more of this is needed</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no, is this something you want?</u>
D. Which of the following are used to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community?				
1. Does the school offer orientations and open houses?	___	___	___	___
2. Does the school have special receptions for new families?	___	___	___	___
3. Does the school regularly showcase students to the community through				
a. student performances?	___	___	___	___
b. award ceremonies?	___	___	___	___
4. Does the school offer the community				
a. cultural and sports events?	___	___	___	___
b. topical workshops and discussion groups?	___	___	___	___
c. health fairs?	___	___	___	___
d. family preservation fairs?	___	___	___	___
e. work fairs?	___	___	___	___
f. newsletters?	___	___	___	___
g. community bulletin boards?	___	___	___	___
h. community festivals and celebrations?	___	___	___	___
5. Is there outreach to hard to involve families such as				
a. making home visits?	___	___	___	___
b. offering support networks?	___	___	___	___
6. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
E. Which of the following are used to enhance family participation in decision making essential to the student?				
1. Families are invited to participate through personal				
a. letters	___	___	___	___
b. phone calls	___	___	___	___
2. Families are informed about schooling choices through				
a. letters	___	___	___	___
b. phone calls	___	___	___	___
c. conferences	___	___	___	___
3. Families are taught skills to participate effectively in decision making.	___	___	___	___
4. Staff are specially trained to facilitate family participation in decision making meetings.	___	___	___	___
5. Other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
F. Which of the following are used to enhance home support of student's learning and development?				
1. Are families instructed on how to provide opportunities for students to apply what they are learning?	___	___	___	___
2. Are families instructed on how to use enrichment opportunities to enhance youngsters' social and personal and academic skills and higher order functioning?	___	___	___	___
3. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
G. Which of the following are used to mobilize problem solving at home related to student needs?				
1. Is instruction provided to enhance family problem solving skills(including increased awareness of resources for assistance)?	___	___	___	___
2. Is good problem solving modeled at conferences with the family?	___	___	___	___
H. For with which of the following are those in the home recruited/trained to help meet school/community needs?				
1. Improving schooling for students by assisting				
a. administrators	___	___	___	___
b. teachers	___	___	___	___
c. other staff	___	___	___	___
d. with lessons or tutoring	___	___	___	___
e. on class trips	___	___	___	___
f. in the cafeteria	___	___	___	___
g. in the library	___	___	___	___

**Survey -- Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes but more of this is needed</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>If no, is this something you want?</u>
--	------------	---------------------------------------	-----------	---

- |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| h. in computer labs   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| i. with homework helplines  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| j. in the front office to welcome visitors, new enrollees/families  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| k. with phoning home regarding absences   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| l. outreach to the home   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Improving school operations by assisting with  |     |     |     |     |
| a. school and community up-keep and beautification  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b. improving school-community relations/  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| c. fund raising   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| d. PTA  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| e. enhancing public support by increasing political awareness about the contributions and needs of the school | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| f. school governance  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| g. advocacy for school needs  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| h. advisory councils  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| i. program planning   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. establishing home-community networks to benefit the community  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Other? (specify) _____   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

- I. What programs are used to meet the educational needs of personnel related to this programmatic area?
- |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Is there ongoing training for team members concerned with the area of Home Involvement in Schooling? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Is there ongoing training for staff of specific services/programs?                                   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Other? (specify) _____   | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

- J. Which of the following topics are covered in educating stakeholders?
- |   |     |     |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. designing an inclusionary "Parent Center"                | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. overcoming barriers to home involvement                  | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. developing group-led mutual support groups               | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. available curriculum for parent education                | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. teaching parents to be mentors and leaders at the school | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. other (specify) _____                                    | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

K. Please indicate below any other ways that are used to enhance home involvement in schooling.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

L. Please indicate below other things you want the school to do to enhance home involvement in schooling.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

## **C. PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN**

A critical dimension of effective schooling is parent involvement. Research has shown conclusively, that parent involvement at home in their children's education improves student achievement. Furthermore, when parents are involved at school, their children go farther in school and they go to better schools.



**From research studies to date, we have learned the following important facts:**

- *Families provide the primary educational environment.*
- *Parent involvement in their children's education improves student achievement.*
- *Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting and well-planned.*
- *The benefits of parent involvement are not limited to early childhood or the elementary level; there are continuing positive effects through high school.*
- *Involving parents in supporting their children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the schools.*
- *Children from low-income and culturally and racially diverse families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. The extent of parent involvement in a child's education is more important to student success than family income or education.*
- *We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; families and schools need to collaborate to help children adjust to the world of school. This is particularly critical for children from families with different cultural and language backgrounds.*

Schools that undertake and support strong comprehensive parent involvement efforts, are more likely to produce students who perform better than identical schools that do not involve parents. Schools that have strong linkages with and respond to the needs of the communities they serve, have students that perform better than schools that don't. Children who have parents who help them at home and stay in touch with the school, do better academically than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved. The inescapable fact is that consistent high levels of student success are more likely to occur with long-term comprehensive parent involvement in schools.(1)

The California State Board of Education recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by school and family during the entire period the child spends in school. Although parents come to the schools with diverse cultural backgrounds, primary languages, and needs, they overwhelmingly want their children to be successful in school. School districts and schools, in collaboration with parents, teachers, students and administrators, must establish and develop efforts that enhance parent involvement and reflect the needs of students and families in the communities which they serve.

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To support the mission of California schools to educate all students effectively, schools and parents must work together as knowledgeable partners. All of the grade level reforms, Here They Come: Ready or Not!, It's Elementary, Caught in the Middle, Second to None, and other major initiatives such as Healthy Start (SB620) and School Restructuring (SB 1274), emphasize parent and community involvement in school restructuring. The reform efforts support school based shared decisionmaking at the school site that includes all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, parents and other community members.

The State Board of Education will continue to support, through the California Department of Education, assistance to school districts and schools in developing strong comprehensive parent involvement. Comprehensive means that parents are involved at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The efforts should be designed to:

Help parents develop parenting skills to meet the basic obligations of family life and foster conditions at home which emphasize the importance of education and learning.

Promote two way (school-to-home and home-to-school) communication about school programs and students' progress.

Involve parents, with appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at the school and in other locations that help the school and students reach stated goals, objectives and standards.

Provide parents with strategies and techniques for assisting their children with learning activities at home that support and extend the school's instructional program.

Prepare parents to actively participate in school decision making and develop their leadership skills in governance and advocacy.

Provide parents with skills to access community and support services that strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

These six types of parent involvement roles require a coordinated school-wide effort that has the support of parents, teachers, students and administrators at each school site. Furthermore, research indicates that home -school collaboration is most likely to happen if schools take the initiative to encourage, guide and genuinely welcome parents into the partnership. Professional development for teachers and administrators on how to build such a partnership is essential.

The issue of parent involvement in the education of their children is much larger than improving student achievement. It is central to our democracy that parents and citizens participate in the governing of public institutions. Parent involvement is fundamental to a healthy system of public education.

*Henderson, Anne T. and Nancy Berla, A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement. National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994.  
[http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/policies/parent\\_involvement.html](http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/policies/parent_involvement.html)*

# Intervening to Enhance Home Involvement in Schooling

*Details types of home involvement in schooling and ways to effectively implement this involvement for populations that need systematic outreach and ongoing encouragement*

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**By Howard S. Adelman**

---

Home involvement in schools is a prominent item on the education reform agenda in the 1990s. Such involvement is especially important when students have learning and behavior problems. Of course, home involvement is not a new concern. As Davies (1987) has reminded us, the "questions and conflict about parent and community relationships to schools began in this country when schools began" (p. 147).

Review of the literature indicates widespread endorsement of home involvement. (Besides the citations provided throughout this article, a survey of other work is appended in the section entitled "Bibliography." As Epstein (1987) noted, "research findings accumulated over two decades ... show that ... parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievements, attitudes, and aspirations, even after student ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account (pp. 119-120).

In special education, long-standing views about the importance of home involvement have been translated into law—most recently in the family focus prescribed in P.L. 99-457. Legislated mandates, however, are no guarantee of effective practice (Bailey, Buysse, Edmondson, & Smith, 1992; Dunst, Johanson, Trivette, & Hamby, 1991; Harry, 1992).

Some families are quite receptive to efforts to involve them in schools and schooling. The focus of the following discussion is not on this relatively small group. Our interest is in populations where systematic outreach and ongoing encouragement are essential to establishing and maintaining involvement. Efforts to involve such populations raise all the issues and problems associated with intervening with reluctant individuals.

A review of the home involvement literature provides a foundation for improving intervention. In exploring central concepts, concerns, and strategies the present article builds on this literature and on intervention

research, in which I am involved (Adelman & Taylor, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1993). Specifically discussed are (a) types of home involvement, (b) barriers to involvement, (c) intervention agendas, and (d) a framework outlining sequential intervention phases and tasks (See Note).

## **Types of Involvement**

Various categorizations of home involvement in schooling have been formulated (Anderson, 1983; Conoley, 1987; Davies, 1987; Epstein, 1987, 1988; Jackson & Cooper, 1989; Loven, 1978). For example, Epstein (1988) described five types of parent-school involvement:

1. *Basic obligations of parents to children and school* (e.g., providing food, clothing, shelter; assuring health and safety; providing childrearing and home training; providing school supplies and a place for doing schoolwork; building positive home conditions for learning);

2. *Basic obligations of school to children and family* (e.g., using a vari-

ety of communication methods to inform parents about school schedules, events, policies, children's grades, test scores, and daily performance; treating children justly and- effectively including accounting for differences);

3. Parent involvement at school (e.g., assisting teachers and students with lessons and class trips; assisting administrators, teachers, and staff in cafeteria, library, and computer lab; assisting organized parent groups in fund-raising, community relations, political awareness, and program development; attending student assemblies and sports events; attending workshops, discussion groups, and training sessions);

4. Parent involvement in *student learning at home* (e.g., contributing to development of child's social and personal skills, basic academic skills, and advanced skills by aiding with school-work; providing enrichment opportunities; and monitoring progress and problems); and

5. Parent involvement in governance and advocacy (e.g., participating in decision-making groups; advocating for improved schooling).

Davies (1987) has identified four types of parent-school involvement and extends the nature and scope of home involvement as follows:

1. Coproduction or *partnership* (individual and collective activities in school or at home that contribute to school efforts to teach more effectively, such as tutoring programs, homework hotlines, suggestions as to how to reinforce classroom efforts, parent education about what the school *is* trying to do, home visitor programs, and parent volunteers to assist teachers);

2. Decision making (ranging from parent participation in decisions about the child to involvement in system planning, such as setting policies, assessing schools, and deciding about budgeting, curriculum, and personnel);

3. Citizen advocacy (e.g., case, class, political advocacy; citizen organizations to build public support for schools);

4. Parent *choice* (e.g., involvement in selecting the child's school).

Jackson and Cooper (1989) also extended the conceptualization of types of involvement by adding two categories to Epstein's five. The sixth type, parent decision making (consumer activities), expands Davies' category of "parent choice" to a broader consumer role (e.g., parent awareness of the marketplace of available educational choices to make the best feasible arrangements to ensure their child's success). Their seventh category, *parent community networks*, attempts to cover a variety of involvements related to

using "the unique culture of the local parent community to help all parties concerned" (p. 264). In this category, they include schools as places for parents to congregate and solve problems, activities that improve parents' skills, schooling that builds on parents' cultural traditions, and networking relevant to parent agendas.

Existing categorizations provide a starting point for labeling clusters of activity, and they help highlight differences in the nature of home involvement. Because my colleagues and I approach intervention from a transactional perspective (see Adelman & Taylor, 1993), we think it important to differentiate types of home involvement in terms of whether the focus is on improving the functioning of individuals (student, parent-care taker), the system (classroom, school, district), or both. And, with respect to individual functioning, it seems worth distinguishing home involvement designed mainly to facilitate schooling from involvement intended primarily to help parents-caretakers per se. To these ends, we use a six-category continuum (see Figure 1). At one end, the focus is on using home involvement to improve individual functioning of the student, the caretaker, or both; at the

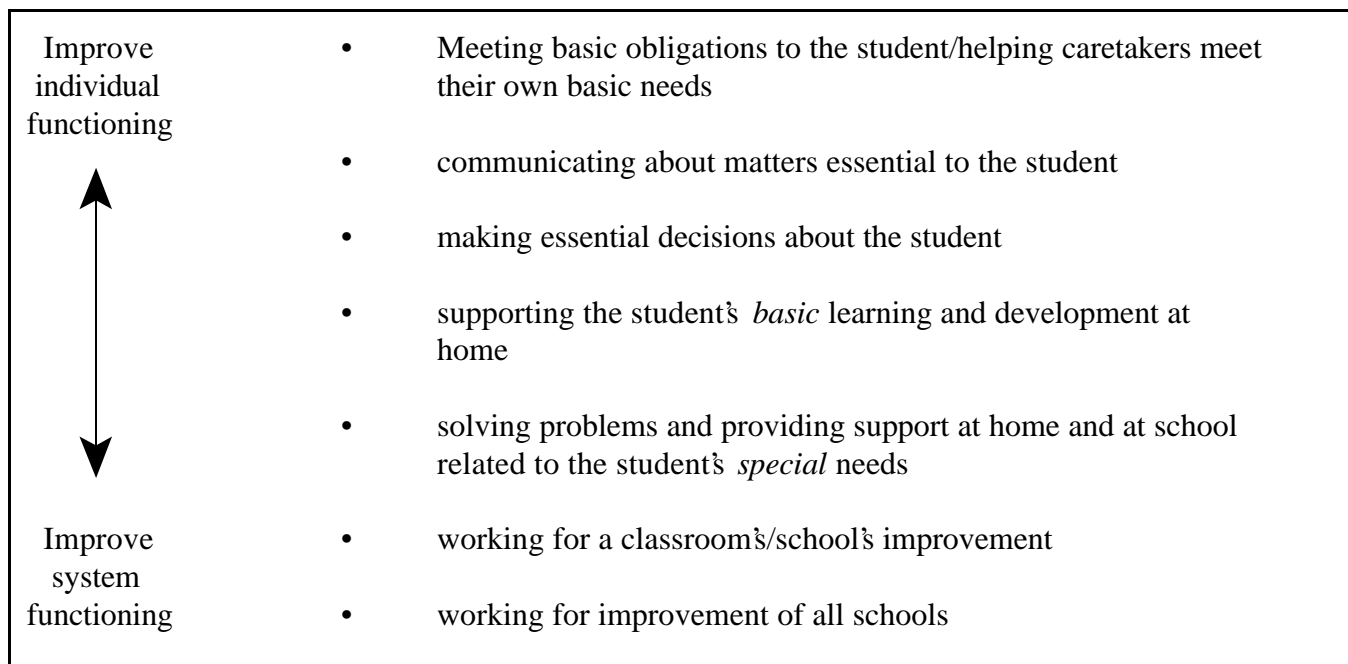


Figure 1. Establishment of specific ways to involve the home.



other end, the aim is to use involvement to improve the system.

Even though the categories are not discrete, the various schemes illustrated in Figure I are an obvious aid in (a) delineating the range of ways homes can be involved and (b) analyzing key differences in the nature of the activity. Thus, these schemes are useful for both research and practice. It is important, however, to remember that categorization of types does not adequately highlight other significant differences. For example, parents who help with homework or who participate in decision making differ in the degree and quality of their involvement; ensuing benefits and costs also differ. In thinking about home involvement, therefore, at least four other dimensions are relevant, namely, frequency, level, quality, and impact (positive and negative) of involvement.

### Barriers to Involvement

In addition to addressing types of involvement, interventions must deal with barriers to involvement. Research on barriers has explored a narrowly conceived set of variables and, in doing so, has focused on the participation of special subgroups such as parents from lower socioeconomic and ethnic minority backgrounds and parents of special education students. The result is that a variety of familial, cultural, racial, job, social class, communication, and school personnel attitude factors have been implicated (e.g., Becker & Epstein, 1982; Chavkin & Williams, 1989, Comer, 1988; Davies, 1988; Epstein, 1986, 1987; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Adelman, Nelson, 1992; Lopez, 1992; Lynch Stein, 1987; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Pennekamp & Freeman, 1988; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal; 1990;

Tangri & Leitch, 19821. However, because the studies are correlational, causal relationships have not been established. Furthermore, within-group variations are rarely explored.

In an effort to broaden the focus, intervention specialists can categorize barriers with respect to type and form. That is, these barriers can be grouped into three types: institutional, personal, and impersonal. In addition, their form can be characterized in terms of negative attitudes, lack of mechanism s/skills, Or practical deterrents-including lack of resources. Figure 2 underscores the interacting nature of types and forms of barriers.

A few words will help clarify the categories. Institutional barriers stem from deficiencies related to resource availability (money, space, time) and administrative use of what is available. Deficient use of resources includes

FORMS OF BARRIERS				
T Y P E S  O F  B A R R I E R S		Negative Attitudes	Lack of Mechanisms/Skills	Practical Deterrents
	Institutional	e.g., school administration is hostile toward increasing home involvement	e.e., insufficient staff assigned to planning and implementing ways to enhance involvement; no more than a token effort to accommodate different languages	e.g.,low priority given to home involvement in allocating resources such a space, time, and money
	Impersonal	e.g., home involvement suffers from benign neglect	e.g., rapid influx of immigrant families overwhelms school's ability to communicate and provide relevant home involvement activities	e.g., schools lack resources; majority in home have problems related to work schedules, childcare, transportation
	Personal	e.g., Specific teachers and parents feel home involvement is not worth the effort or feel threatened by such involvement	e.g., specific teachers and parents lack relevant languages and interpersonal skills	e.g.,specific teachers and parents are too busy or lack resources

Figure 2. General types and forms of barriers to home involvement

failure to establish and maintain formal home involvement mechanisms and related skills. It also encompasses general lack of interest or hostile attitudes toward home involvement among school staff, the administration, or the community. Instances of deficient use of resources occur when there is no policy commitment to facilitating home involvement, when inadequate provisions are made for interacting with parents who don't speak English, or when no resources are devoted to upgrading the skills of staff with respect to involving parents.

Similar barriers occur on a more personal level. Specific school personnel or parents may lack requisite skills or find participation uncomfortable because it demands their time and other resources. Others may lack interest or feel hostile toward home involvement. For instance, any given teacher or parent may feel it is too much of an added burden to meet to discuss student problems. Others may feel threatened because they think they can't make the necessary interpersonal connections due to racial, cultural, and/or language differences. Still others do not perceive available activities as worth their time and effort.

Impersonal barriers to home and staff participation are commonplace and rather obvious. For example, there can be practical problems related to work schedules, transportation, and childcare. There can also be skill deficiencies related to cultural differences and levels of literacy. There may be lack of interest due to insufficient information about the importance of home involvement.

Overcoming barriers, of course, is a primary intervention concern. And, when there are inadequate finances to underwrite ways to overcome barriers, finding the resources becomes the first barrier that must be overcome.

### **Whose Interests Are to Be Served? Agendas for Involving the Home**

As the preceding discussion highlights, understanding types of and barriers to involvement provides a "help" foundation for planning and implementing ways to enhance that involvement. Another essential perspective comes from awareness of contrasting and often conflicting intervention agendas.

Different rationales underlie inter-

ventions for involving the home. Most reflect society's agendas, and these often come into conflict with agendas aimed at helping those with special needs. At the root of the matter are age old social and political concerns related to inevitable conflicts between individual and societal interests.

All intentional interventions are rationally based. That is, underlying such activity there is a rationale whether or not it is explicitly stated. A rationale consists of views derived from philosophical, theoretical, empirical, and legal sources. Or, stated more boldly, underlying rationales consist of biases that guide and shape intervention aims and practices. Because of potential conflicts of interest, it is essential that the biases incorporated into an intervention rationale be clearly articulated and debated.

The problem of conflicting interests is reflected in the extensive concern raised about society's ability to exercise control through agendas for psychological and educational interventions (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 1988; Coles, 1978; Feinberg, 1973; Garbarino, Gaboury, Long, Grandjean, & Asp, 1982; Hobbs, 1975; Mnookin, 1985; Robinson, 1974). At one extreme, it is argued that there are times when society must put its needs ahead of individual citizens' rights by pursuing policies and practices for maintaining itself. This is seen, for example, whenever parents are compelled by school personnel to talk about facets of their family life or to participate in some aspect of their child's schooling. At the other extreme, it is argued that society should never jeopardize individuals' rights (e.g., invade privacy, use coercive procedures). For many persons, however, neither extreme is acceptable, especially given how they define what is in the best interests of individuals in the society.

Without agreeing or disagreeing with either extreme, the importance of the debate can be appreciated. Specifically, it serves to heighten awareness about three basic problems; (a) No society is devoid of coercion in dealing with its members (e.g., no right or liberty is absolute), and coercion is especially likely when interventions are justified as serving a minor's best interests; (b) interventions are used to serve the vested interests of subgroups in a society at the expense of other subgroups (e.g., to place extra burdens on minorities, the poor, women, and legal minors and to deprive them of

freedoms and rights); and (c) informed consent and due process of law are key to protecting individuals when there are conflicting interests (e.g., about whom or what should be blamed for a problem and be expected to carry the brunt of corrective measures). Awareness of these problems is essential to protect individuals and subgroups from abuse by those with power to exercise direct or indirect control over them.

Given the preceding context, different intentions underlying intervention for home involvement in schools and schooling are worth highlighting. Four broad agendas are contrasted here, namely, socialization, economic, political, and helping agendas.

A socialization agenda is seen in messages sent home and in school-based parent training. These are meant to influence parent-caretaker attitudes toward schooling and to socialize parenting practices in ways designed specifically to facilitate schooling. An economic agenda is intended to aid schooling by involving the home as a supplementary resource to compensate for budget limitations. A political agenda focuses on the role the home plays in making decisions about schools and schooling. A helping agenda establishes programs to aid individuals in pursuing their own needs. Clearly, these four agendas are not mutually exclusive, as will be evident in the following brief discussion of each.

### **Socialization Agenda**

Schools are societal institutions with prime responsibilities for socializing the young, ensuring the society's economic survival through provision of an adequately equipped work force, and preserving the political system. In pursuing society's interest in socializing children, schools try to socialize parents, for instance, by influencing parent attitudes and parenting practices. This is seen in the widespread pressure exerted on parents to meet "basic obligations" and in the emphasis on parent "training."

Often, a school's agenda to socialize parents is quite compatible with the interests of parents and their children. For instance, schools and those at home want to minimize children's antisocial behavior and equip them with skills for the future. However, there are times when the school's so-

cialization agenda comes into conflict with the home's agenda with respect to meeting other basic obligations and needs, such as the obligation to avoid causing or exacerbating a problem. The sidebar contains a negative example from the author's work, which is offered to underscore the complexity of this concern (the names have been changed).

The case in the sidebar raises many issues. For example, involvement of the home in cases such as Jose's usually is justified by the school as "in the best interests of the student and the others in the class." However, clearly there are different ways to understand the causes of and appropriate responses to Jose's misbehavior. By way of contrast, another analysis might suggest that the problem lies in ill-conceived instructional practices and, therefore, might prescribe changing instruction rather than strategies focused on the misbehavior per se. Even given an evident need for home involvement, the way the mother was directed to deal with her son raises concerns about whether the processes were coercive. Questions also arise about social class and race. For example, if the family had come from a middle or higher income background, would the same procedures have been used in discussing the problem, exploring alternative ways to solve it, and involving the mother in parent training? In addition, there is concern that overemphasis in parent workshops on strategies for controlling children's behavior leads participants such as Jose's mother to pursue practices that often do not address children's needs and may seriously exacerbate problems.

### **Economic Agenda**

Home involvement is a recognized way of supplementing school resources. The home may be asked to contribute money, labor, knowledge, skills, or talent. Controversy arises about this agenda due to concerns regarding fairness, as well as in connection with professional guild complaints and public funding considerations. For example, inequities among schools may be exacerbated because some schools can draw on the assets of higher income homes. Unions representing teachers and their assistants point to excessive use of parent and other volunteers as a factor affecting job

## **Conflict Between School and Home Agendas**

Jose's family had come to the United States 4 years ago. His father worked as a gardener; his mother worked in the garment district. Neither parent was fluent in English; mother less so than father.

Jose's parents were called to school because of his misbehavior in the classroom. The teacher (who did not speak Spanish) informed them that she was having to use a range of behavioral management strategies to control Jose. However, for the strategies to really work, she said it also was important for the parents to use the same procedures at home. To learn these "parenting skills," the parents both were to attend one of the 6-week evening workshops the school was starting. They were assured that the workshop was free, was available in English or Spanish, and that there would be childcare at the school if they needed it.

After meeting with the teacher, Jose's father, who had reluctantly come to the conference, told his wife she should attend the workshop-but he would not. She understood that he saw it as her role-not his-but she was frightened; they fought about it. They had been fighting about a lot of things recently. In the end, she went, but her resentment toward her husband grew with every evening she had to attend the training sessions.

Over the next few months, the mother attempted to apply what she was told to do at the workshop. She withheld privileges and confined Jose to periods of time-out whenever he didn't toe the line. At the same time, she felt his conduct at home had not been and was not currently that bad-it was just the same spirited behavior his older brothers had shown at his age. Moreover, she knew he was upset by the increasingly frequent arguments she and her husband were having. She would have liked some help to know what to do about his and her own distress, but she didn't know how to get such help.

Instead of improving the situation, the control strategies seemed to make Jose more upset; he acted out more frequently and with escalating force. Soon, his mother found he would not listen to her and would run off when she tried to do what she had been told to do. She complained to her husband. He said it was her fault for pampering Jose. His solution was to beat the youngster.

To make matters worse, the teacher called to say she now felt that Jose should be taken to the doctor to determine whether he was hyperactive and in need of medication. This was too much for Jose's mother. She did not take him to the doctor, and she no longer responded to most calls and letters from the school.

Jose continued to be a problem at school and then at home, and his mother did not know what to do about it or who to turn to for help. When asked, Jose's teacher describes the parents as "hard to reach."

availability and wage negotiations. And, increasing reliance on ad hoc sources of public support is seen as potentially counterproductive to mobilizing citizens and policy makers to provide an appropriate base of funding for public education.

### **Political Agenda**

Another reason for involving parents is related to the politics of school decision making. This agenda is seen in the trend toward parents assuming some form of policy-making "partnership" with the school, such as joining advisory and

decision-making councils. In some cases, the intent apparently is to move parents into an equal partnership with school decision makers; in other instances, the aim appears to be one of giving the illusion that parents have a say or even demonstrating that parents are uninterested or unable to make sound policy.

The case of the Read Start program illustrates politics and policy related to home involvement. As Valentine and

Stark (1979) indicated, parent involvement policy in Head Start developed around three notions: parent education, parent participation, and parent control. "These three constructs signify different dimensions of social change: individual change and institutional, or 'systems/change" (p. 308). Initially, the goal was to use parent involvement to produce institutional change through either parent participation or parent control. Over time, this goal was displaced by individual change: national Head Start policy guidelines [in combination with local and federal initiatives to contain militancy] helped redirect parent involvement away from political organization toward a 'safe' combination of participatory decision-making and parent education" (p. 308).

### Helping Agenda

Prevailing agendas for involving the home emphasize meeting societal and school needs (Clark, 1983; Coleman, 1987; Educational Commission of the States, 1988; Epstein & Becker, 1982). It is not surprising, therefore, that little attention has been paid to schools helping parents and caretakers meet their own needs. Schools do offer some activities, such as parent support groups and classes to teach parents English as a second language, that may help parents and contribute to their well-being (e.g., by improving parenting or literacy skills). However, the rationale for expending resources on these activities usually is that they enhance parents' ability to play a greater role in improving schooling.

It seems reasonable to suggest that another reason for involving parents is to support their efforts to improve the quality of their lives. Included here is the notion of the school providing a social setting for parents and, in the process, fostering a psychological sense of community (Sarason, 1972, 1982; see also Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989). This involves creation of a setting where parents, school staff, and students want to and are able to interact with each other in mutually beneficial ways that lead to a special feeling of connection. It also encompasses finding ways to account for and celebrate cultural and individual diversity in the school community.

To these ends, ways must be found to

minimize transactions that make parents feel incompetent, blamed, or coerced. Concomitantly, procedures and settings must be designed to foster informal encounters, provide information and learning opportunities, enable social interactions, facilitate access to sources of social support (including linkage to local social services), encourage participation in decision making, and so forth.

Examples abound. Parents might be encouraged to drop in, be volunteers, participate in publishing a community newsletter, organize social events such as breakfasts and potluck *dinners for families* of students and staff, plan and attend learning workshops, meet with the teacher to learn more about their child's curriculum and interests, help initiate parent support and mutual aid groups and other social networks, share their heritage and interests, check out books and attend story hours at the school's library, and go on field trips.

It should be reemphasized that the primary intent is to improve the quality of life for the participants—with any impact on schooling seen as a secondary gain. At the same time, moves toward fostering such a climate seem consistent with the effective school literature's focus on the importance of a school's climate, ethos, or culture (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1985; Rutter, 1981).

Approaching the topic from a special education orientation, Dunst et al. (1991) provided a good example of the concern about differing agendas in involving the home. In categorizing family-oriented *intervention policies* and practices, they contrasted those that are family-centered versus those that are not. For instance, they categorized the characteristics of family-oriented interventions in terms of six general emphases. Specifically, characteristics are differentiated with respect to a focus on (a) enhancing a sense of community, that is, "promoting the coming together of people around shared values and common needs in ways that create mutually beneficial interdependencies"; (b) mobilizing resources and supports, that is, "building support systems that enhance the flow of resources in ways that assist families with parenting responsibilities"; (c) sharing responsibility and collaboration, that is, "sharing ideas and skills by parents and professionals in ways that

build and strengthen collaborative arrangements"; (d) protecting family integrity, that is, "respecting the family beliefs and values and protecting the family from intrusion upon its beliefs by outsiders"; (e) strengthening family functioning, that is, "promoting the capabilities and competencies of families necessary to mobilize resources and perform parenting responsibilities in ways that have empowering consequences"; and (f) using proactive human service practices, that is, "adoption of consumer-driven human service-delivery models and practices that support and strengthen family functioning" (all quotes from p. 117). Based on a review of the ideas underlying existing programs, they suggested interventions can be differentiated into four general categories: (a) family centered, (b) family focused, (c) family allied, and (d) professional centered.

Given that interventions to enhance home involvement are a growth industry, the underlying rationales for such involvement warrant articulation and debate. It is hoped that the preceding discussion illustrates the need for extensive exploration of social and political ramifications and clarification of policy and intervention implications. (For related discussions, see Adelman & Taylor, 1988; Feinberg, 1973; Garbarino et al., 1982; Jackson & Cooper, 1989; Lareau, 1989; McLaughlin & Shields, 1987; Mnookin, 1985; Robinson, 1974; Seeley, 1989; Swap, 1990; Valentine & Stark, 1979; Walberg, 1984).

### Intervention Phases and Tasks

Drawing on the preceding perspectives and our ongoing work, my colleagues and I are developing a framework for intervening to enhance home involvement in schools and schooling. We find it useful procedurally to think about such intervention as encompassing sets of sequential phases and tasks.

The concept of sequential phases is meant to capture the idea of starting with the best general practices and moving on to more specialized interventions as needed and as feasible. Thus, our three-phase sequence begins with a broadband focus. This involves general institutional procedures designed to recruit and facilitate participation of all who are ready, willing, and

able. Then, the focus narrows to those who need just a bit more personalized contact (e.g., personal letters, phone invitations, highlighted information, and/or contact and ongoing support from other parents) Or a few more options to make participation more attractive. After this, to the degree feasible, the focus further narrows to parents or caretakers who remain uninvolved or difficult, such as those with an obvious lack of interest or intensely negative attitudes toward the school. The suggested strategies in these cases continue to emphasize personalized contacts, with the addition of as many cost-intensive special procedures as can be afforded.

Four tasks have been conceived to capture the sequence of intervention activity, which ranges from initial institutional organization for enhancing home involvement through ongoing strategies to sustain such involvement. These tasks are conceived as organizing the institution, extending invitations, early facilitation, and maintenance. Each is highlighted below.

### **Institutional Organization for involvement**

Currently, all school districts are committed to some form of home involvement. Unfortunately, limited finances often mean that verbal commitments are not backed up with the resources necessary to underwrite programs. Regardless of district support, if homes are to become significantly involved at a school, research and experience suggest the following: on-site decision makers must (a) be committed to involving those in the home; (b) be clear about specific intent; (c) offer a range of ways for individuals to be involved; (d) be clear about what is required in recruiting, initiating, and maintaining involvement; and (e) establish and institutionalize effective mechanisms dedicated to home involvement.

As a first step, schools must come to grips with why and how they want to enhance home involvement and the implications of doing so. For instance, it is essential to recognize that successful efforts to increase such involvement may trigger a series of changes in power relationships. If the school actually is ready to share power, a developmental process is required that

fosters parent interest and the specific skills needed to assume and maintain a decision-making partnership. If those with current responsibility for school and district governance are not prepared to share their power, then they probably should not describe their intent as that of creating a home-school partnership. The term *partnership* suggests that parents will have a major role to play in decision making, and this is not likely to happen when the school's intent is mainly to have parents rubber-stamp predefined objectives and processes.

On-site decision makers probably should write out their rationale for involving the home and outline a range of initial and future participation options. Such documents would be of value not only to program developers, but also to researchers and those concerned with public policy. These statements can be especially useful if they address such basic questions as the following: Is the intent just to use parents to facilitate school objectives, or will some activities be designed primarily to benefit parents (e.g., personal interest and support groups)? How much power should be ceded to parents? For instance, is the eventual intent to involve interested parents fully in decision-making councils?

Once a rationale and outline of options are clarified, the next crucial step is to establish institutional mechanisms for carrying out plans to enhance home involvement-including ways to overcome institutional barriers. Logically, a major focus is on mechanisms to recruit, train, and maintain a cadre of staff, and perhaps some parents, who have relevant interests and competence. Implied in all this is a lengthy commitment of significant resources.

### **Inviting Involvement**

From the perspective of cognitive affective theories of motivation, a key intervention concern is how those in the home perceive the school (Adelman, 1992; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Three concerns of particular importance with respect to involving the home are whether the general atmosphere at the school is perceived as a welcoming one, whether the school is perceived as specifically inviting involvement, and whether specific contacts are experienced as positive.

It is not uncommon for parents to feel unwelcome at school. The problem can begin with their first contact.

It apparently is a familiar experience to encounter school office staff and student assistants whose demeanor seems unfriendly. The problem may be compounded by language barriers that make communication frustrating.

Beyond contacts with office staff, many parents come to school mainly when they are called in to discuss their child's learning or behavior difficulties. It is hard for even the most determined school personnel to dispel the discomfort of parents during such discussions.

Parents who feel unwelcome or "called on the carpet" cannot be expected to view the school as an inviting setting. Schools that want to facilitate positive involvement must both counter factors that make the setting uninviting and develop ways to make it attractive to parents. We have come to think of this as the welcoming or invitation problem.

From a psychological perspective, the invitation problem is seen as requiring strategies that address the attitudes that school staff, students, and parents hold regarding home involvement. That is, in most cases, involvement probably is best facilitated when attitudes are positive rather than neutral or, worse yet, hostile. And, positive attitudes about home involvement seem most likely when those concerned perceive personal benefits as outweighing potential costs (psychological and tangible).

Addressing the invitation problem begins with efforts to ensure that most communications and interactions between school personnel and home convey a welcoming tone. It is reasonable to assume that a major way that a staff's attitude about home involvement is conveyed is through a school's formal communications with the home and the procedures used to reach out to specific individuals. In addition, informal interactions between personnel and parents can be expected to reinforce or counter the impact of formal contacts.

Based on these assumptions, a primary focus of interventions designed to address the invitation problem should be on establishing formal mechanisms that (a) convey a general sense of welcome to all parents and (b) extend a personalized invitation to those who appear to need something more. A few comments may help clarify the types of strategies that seem warranted.

**General Welcoming.** Schools tend to rely heavily on formal dialogues and written statements in interacting and communicating with parents. As immigrant populations increase, such processes are adapted to account at least for different languages. For example, attempts have been made to supply office staff with resources for communicating with non-English speaking parents. Such resources might include providing welcoming messages and introductory information in various languages through (a) written materials; (b) a cadre of foreign language speakers who can be called upon when needed, such as onsite staff and students or district personnel and community volunteers reachable by phone; and (c) video and computer programs.

Efforts to account for language differences as well as differences in literacy when communicating with parents clearly are essential prerequisites to making the school inviting. At the same time, the specific information communicated needs to be expressed in ways that convey positive attitudes toward parents and toward home involvement with the school. More generally, some school staff may require specific training to appreciate the importance of positive formal and informal interactions with parents and caretakers and how to maintain those interactions.

A special welcoming problem arises around newly enrolled students and their families, especially those students who enroll during the school year. Schools need to delineate steps for greeting new families, giving them essential orientation information, and encouraging involvement in ongoing activities. Such steps might include a Welcome Packet for Newcomers and introductory conferences with the principal, the student's teacher, other staff resources, and parent representatives—with the emphases both on welcoming and involving them.

**Special Invitations.** Invitations to the home come in two forms: (a) general communications such as mass distribution of flyers, newsletters, classroom announcements, and form letters, and (b) special, personalized contacts such as personal notes from the teacher, invitations a student makes and takes home, and interchanges at school, over the

phone, or during a home visit. Parents who fail to respond to repeated general invitations to become involved may not appreciate what is available. Or, there may be obstacles to their involvement. Whatever the reasons, the next logical step is to extend the special invitations and increase personalized contact.

Special invitations can range from simple approaches, such as a note or a call, to cost-intensive processes, such as a home visit. These are directed at designated individuals and are intended to overcome personal attitudinal barriers; they can also be used to elicit information about persisting personal and impersonal barriers. For example, one simple approach is to send a personal request to targeted parents. The request may invite them to a specific event such as a parent-teacher conference, a school performance involving their child, a parenting workshop, or a parent support group. Or it may ask for greater involvement at home to facilitate their child's learning, such as providing enrichment opportunities or basic help with homework. If the parents still are not responsive, the next special invitation might include an RSVP and ask for an indication of any obstacles interfering with involvement.

When those at home indicate obstacles, the problem moves beyond invitations. Overcoming personal and impersonal barriers requires facilitative strategies.

### **Facilitating Early Involvement**

As with the invitation step, the sequence of intervention phases for facilitating early involvement range from general institutional mechanisms to special personalized procedures. The sequence begins with general strategies to inform, encourage, provide support for overcoming barriers, and so forth. For example, most schools recognize the need to send frequent reminders. Another fundamental reality is that working parents have relatively few hours to devote to school involvement. Labor statistics suggest that as few as 7% of school-age children live in a two-parent household where there is only one wage earner. Thus, it is essential to accommodate a variety of parent schedules and to provide for childcare in establishing parent activities.

Beyond addressing barriers, involvement activities must be designed to

account for a wide range of individual differences in interests and capabilities among those in the home and among school personnel. The diversity of knowledge, attitudes, and skills requires options for those in the home, and for school staff, that allow for participation in different ways and at different *levels* and *frequencies*. For example, it seems particularly important to legitimize initial minimal degrees of involvement for certain homes and to support frequent changes in the nature and scope of involvement. In general, to address individual differences, facilitation must (a) ensure that there are a variety of ways to participate, (b) sanction home participation in any option and to the degree feasible, (c) account for cultural and individual diversity, (d) enable participation of those with minimal skills, and (e) provide support to improve participation skills. Parents who already are involved could play a major role in all these facilitative efforts.

At this point, it seems relevant to reemphasize the importance of not thinking of all home involvement as school based. In particular, the primary involvement of parents who work all day may be in helping their child with homework. This may be an especially fruitful area in which to facilitate home-school collaboration through establishing good channels of communication and a supportive working relationship.

For many, the general strategies already described are sufficient. For some, however, additional outreach and support are necessary. In this regard, it may be best to start with individuals who seem somewhat approachable and whose obstacles are not intractable, and then to move on to others as soon as feasible.

Personalized interventions might focus, for example, on a parent's negative attitude toward participating in existing options. A significant number of parents view efforts to involve them at school as not worth the time or effort or view the school as hostile, controlling, or indifferent. Exceptional efforts may be required before an extremely negative parent will perceive the school as supportive and view involvement as personally beneficial.

In cases where a parent's negative attitude stems from skill deficits (e.g., doesn't speak English, lacks skills to help with homework), the option of a

skill group is a relatively easy one to offer. The larger facilitative problem, however, is to do so in a way that minimizes stigma and maximizes intrinsic motivation. Some reluctant parents may be reached, initially, by offering them an activity designed to give them additional personal support, such as a mutual interest group composed of parents with the same cultural background or a mutual support group (e.g., Simoni & Adelman, in press). Such groups might even meet away from the school at a time when working parents can participate. In such cases, the school's role is to help initiate the groups and provide consultation as needed.

### Maintaining Involvement

Available evidence indicates that there is a significant decrease in parent involvement as students get older (Epstein, 1987; Lucas & Lusthaus, 1978). The causes of this decrease have not been established, but it has been associated with a decline in intervention efforts (Epstein, 1984). Thus, as difficult as it is to involve some homes initially, keeping them involved may be even a more difficult matter.

Maintaining involvement can be seen as a problem of sustaining and enhancing intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrapolating from available research on intrinsic motivation, three strategies for maintaining involvement seem basic: (a) continuing to provide and vary a range of valued ways individuals can be involved; (b) facilitating their decision making among available options—including decisions to add or move from one to another; and (c) providing continuous support for learning, growth, and success—including feedback about how involvement is personally benefitting the participant. Beyond specific strategies, however, maintaining involvement may depend on the school's commitment to creating a psychological sense of community at the school and empowering the home.

### Conclusion

Figure 3 offers a graphic summary of the major points discussed above. As the figure underscores, schools determined to enhance home involvement must be clear as to their intent and the types of involvement they want to foster. Although the tasks remain con-

stant, the breadth of intervention focus can vary over three sequential phases: (a) broadband contact s-focused on those who are receptive; (b) personalized contacts-added for those who need a little inducement; and (c) intensive special contacts-added for those who are extremely unreceptive. Then, they must establish and maintain mechanisms to carry out intervention phases and tasks in a sequential manner. And, besides being involved in different types of home involvement, participants differ in the frequency, level, quality, and impact of their involvement.

Intervening to enhance home involvement in schools and schooling is as complex as any other psychological and educational intervention. Clearly, such activity requires considerable time, space, materials, and competence, and these ingredients are purchased with financial resources. Basic staffing must be underwritten. Additional staff may be needed; at the very least, teachers, specialists, and administrators need "released" time. Efforts to accommodate parent schedules by offering workshops and parent-teacher conferences in the evening and during weekends are likely to produce staff demands for compensatory time off or overtime pay. Furthermore, if such interventions are to be planned, implemented, and evaluated effectively, those given the responsibility will require instruction, consultation, and supervision.

The success of programs to enhance home involvement in schools and schooling is, first and foremost in the hands of policymakers. If increased home involvement in schools is to be more than another desired but unachieved aim of educational reformers, policymakers must understand the nature and scope of what is involved. A comprehensive intervention perspective makes it evident that although money alone cannot solve the problem, money is a necessary prerequisite. It is patently unfair to hold school personnel accountable for yet another major reform if they are not given the support necessary for accomplishing it. In an era when new sources of funding are unlikely, it is clear that such programs must be assigned a high priority and funds must be reallocated in keeping with the level of priority. To do less is to guarantee the status quo.

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### Author's Notes

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I, of course, assume full responsibility for the contents of this article but won't take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of participating schools and project staff (especially Jonelle Munn, Mary Beth DiCecco, Linda Rosenblum, Alison McAlpine, Bonnie Klimes-Dougan, Jose Lopez, and Perry Nelson). And although she declined author credit, this work could not have been accomplished without the many contributions of the project's director, my colleague Linda Taylor.

### Note

Terms such as *parent involvement* and even *family involvement* increasingly are recognized as unduly restrictive. Given extended families and the variety of child caretakers, *home involvement* is seen as a more inclusive term.

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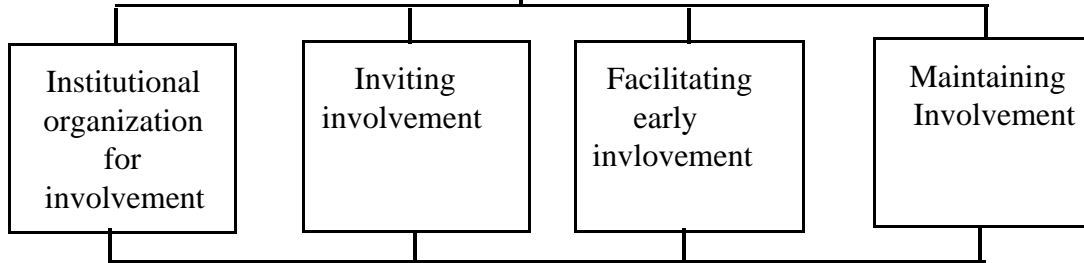
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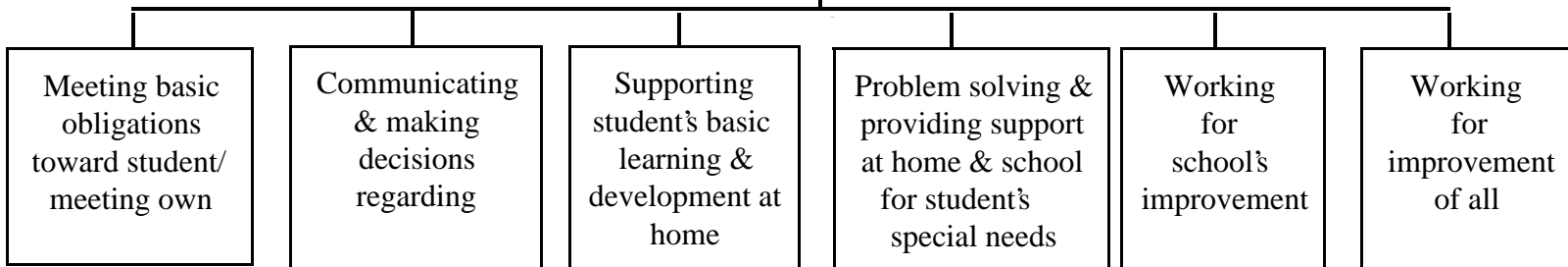
Agendas for  
Involving Homes

- Socialization
- economics
- politics
- helping

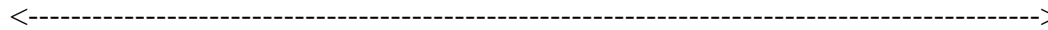
Major Intervention Tasks



Continuum of types of Home Involvement



Improve individual  
functioning



Improve system  
functioning



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## Partners In Learning: How Schools Can Support Family Involvement In Education

### Learn to communicate better

At times, parents feel that educators talk down to them or speak in educational jargon they do not understand. School signs often seem unwelcoming. Schools should make every effort to reach out and communicate with parents in a clear way and listen to what they have to say. To ensure that all parents have access to information, written material should be concise and easily readable. Schools should be parent-friendly. Some school newsletters for parents include a glossary of terms to help parents understand school improvement efforts. Other schools use regularly scheduled telephone calls to stay in contact with families.

### Encourage parental participation in school improvement efforts

When schools develop improvement plans, families ought to be included at every stage of the process to get their input and to give them a sense of shared responsibility. Many schools, supported by the new Goals 2000: Educate America Act, are now developing such plans. They are working to raise academic standards, improve teaching, make schools safer, introduce computers and other learning technologies into the classroom, and to make many other vitally needed changes. The full involvement of parents and other members of the community is instrumental to the success of these efforts.

### Involve parents in decision-making

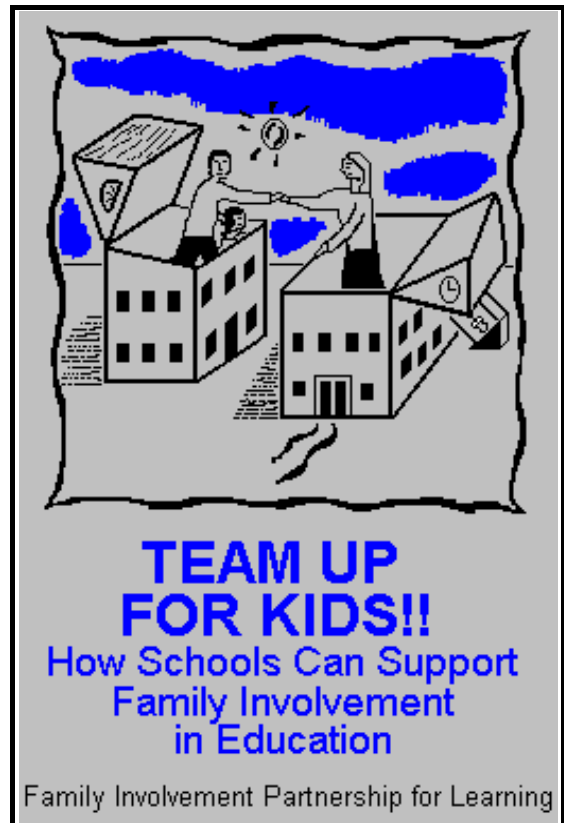
Schools can give parents a more effective voice by opening up the school governance process so that more parents can participate. Many schools hold evening and weekend meetings and conferences to accommodate families' work schedules.

### Give teachers the tools to reach out to families

Staff development can help teachers to understand the benefits of family involvement and show them how to remove barriers to involvement. It can also explain techniques for improving two-way communication between home and schools, and suggest ways to help meet families' overall educational needs.

### Make parents feel welcome

Often the first time a parent comes to school is when a child is in trouble. Schools can help reduce tensions by making initial contacts with parents friendly and respectful. Schools can also reduce distrust by arranging contacts in neutral settings off school grounds. Home visits by family liaison personnel can be particularly helpful. Some programs have used home-school coordinators to run weekly clubs for parents, helping to build parenting skills and trust between families and schools. Schools might also encourage parents, teachers, and students to meet at the beginning of the school year to agree on goals and develop a common understanding.



### **Overcome language barriers**

Reaching families whose first language is not English requires schools to make special accommodations. Translating materials into a parent's first language helps, but written communication alone is not enough. Ideally, a resource person, perhaps another parent, should be available to communicate with parent communicate with parents in their first language. Interactive telephone voice-mail systems that have bilingual recordings for families are also useful. In addition, English-as-a-second- language classes for parents and grandparents may be helpful.

### **Use technology to link parents to the classroom**

Educators can creatively use new technology for voice-mail to homework hotlines to educational CD-ROM programs- to get parents more involved in the learning process. For example, voice mail systems have been installed in several hundred schools across the country. Parents and students can call for taped messages that describe classroom activities and daily homework assignments. Audiotapes and videotapes can also be used to enhance communication with parents. These are especially helpful in reaching family members who do not read. Even with all the new technology, teachers and other school staff can still use the old telephone to connect with parents. Schools can help by providing teachers with classroom phones.

### **Encourage communities to join school-family partnerships**

This can be especially effective in reducing schools safety problems that are connected to problems in surrounding neighborhoods. Parents, community residents, and law enforcement officials can help by joining together in voluntary organizations, friendship networks, and neighborhood watches to solve common problems. Schools and community and religious organizations can help by offering after-school cultural and recreational activities. Community-supported students services have also succeeded when families, schools, and community representatives have made the effort to get involved.

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#### **The Family Involvement National Education Goal**

"We believe that strengthening the connection between families and schools is so important that we have made it one of America's National Education Goals. The Goal declares that by the year 2000, 'Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.'"

-- *Richard W. Riley*  
*U.S. Secretary of Education*

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# When Schools And Families Team Up To Help Children Learn, Everyone Wins!

In Houston, Texas, administrators from Robert E. Lee High School went to their students' homes and sat on stoops with family members to "cut contracts" with parents, enlisting their help in the effort to reduce school violence. The Result: A safer school and steadily rising test scores.

In Murfreesboro, Tenn., schools stay open until 6 p.m. to allow parents to work without worry, knowing their children are involved in constructive activities.

At the Sterne Brunson Elementary School in Benton Harbor, Mich., parents help teachers and administrators by working as classroom aides and office support staff.

And in New York City, teachers link the classroom to the home by operating a telephone homework hotline that students or parents can dial in the evening to get help with assignments.

These are but few examples of the many ways schools are encouraging greater family involvement in education. They're discovering that school-family partnerships are important way to help children learn and a great way for schools and families to help each other.

## **School-family partnerships: Enjoying the benefits, overcoming the barriers**

Despite the many advantages of partnerships, schools and families remain disconnected in too many communities. There are many reasons why schools and families fail to join forces. Sometimes parents say they don't feel welcome at school. Often, work schedules and other time constraints, language barriers, or the sheer drag of daily life get in the way. And sometimes parents who didn't like school when they were students are reluctant to get involved again as adults.

On the other side of the coin, too many schools don't put out the welcome mat for their students' families or simply overlook the great value of getting families involved. Here's what can be done:

- \$ *Schools can encourage and support greater family involvement in education.* Research shows that when families take an active, direct role in their children's education, children get better grades and test scores, graduate from high school at higher rates, have greater enrollment in higher education also has been shown to improve teacher morale and job satisfaction.
- \$ *Schools should be places where families feel welcome and valued.* School programs that encourage greater parental involvement are more important than any other factor in determining whether or not parents actually do get involved. Some schools make a special effort to help low-income families get involved because many of these families wait for the school to approach them.
- \$ *Parents and families can support their schools and play their part at home.* Parental involvement can take many forms, including getting involved in PTA activities; discussing children's progress with teachers on a regular basis; checking homework every night; reading to preschoolers; encouraging students to take the challenging courses.

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"Parent who know their children's  
teachers and help with the homework  
and teach their kids right from wrong --  
these parents can make all the difference."

-- President Bill Clinton  
*State of the Union Address*

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Greater family involvement in education is supported by the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, which includes over 100 education, business, family, community, and religious organizations nationwide. Your school is cordially invited to join the Family Involvement Partnership. For information, call one of the partners, the U.S. Department of Education, at 1-800-USA-LEARN. Or write us at:

Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, 600 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-8173  
When you write, be sure to include your name, title, school or other organizational affiliation, and address.



## *II. Programs*

- A. Parent Education and Support Programs, by Douglas R. Powell
- B. An Example of one Model Program for Fostering Parent and Home Involvement in Schools
- C. National PTA National Standards for Parent/ Family Involvement Programs
- D. A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Interventions Relevant to Home Involvement in Schooling

⚙ **Spotlight:** Effective Parent Involvement: Parents as Partners

## A. Parent Education and Support Programs.

ERIC Digests.  
Powell, Douglas R.

Today there are numerous signs that the task of rearing competent children is becoming increasingly difficult. Dramatic changes in the structure and lifestyles of families and growing societal pressure for children to possess specific knowledge and skills at an early age are just two of the new and challenging conditions of parenthood. Conflicting research information sometimes results in conflicting advice for parents. Parents have always routinely sought the advice and help of relatives, friends and professionals. However, traditional sources of help--especially the extended family and neighborhood--are less available today than they were in the past.

Teachers and other human service professionals have long recognized the need to provide parents with child-rearing information and support. The formation of partnerships between parents and teachers that will foster children's development has been a persistent goal of most early childhood programs and elementary schools. In recent years, this goal has taken on increased importance as diverse segments of American society have recognized the need to help parents deal with the multiple pressures of rearing children in today's complex world. This digest describes current programmatic efforts to inform and support parents, and briefly reviews the research evidence on the effectiveness of parent education and support programs.

### **APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING PARENTS**

The term "parent education" typically evokes the image of an expert lecturing a group of mothers about the ages and stages of child development. Yet a view of parent education and support as a staff-directed, didactic activity is neither a complete nor accurate portrayal of many programs of parent education and support. The concept of the parent education field has broadened considerably in the past two decades. At federal, state, and local levels, there are now a variety of ambitious and diverse initiatives aimed at supporting families with young children.

An important federal effort is the recent Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments (Public Law 99-457), which assist states in offering early intervention services for infants and toddlers and their families. The amendments call for a multidisciplinary team, which includes the parent or guardian, to develop an individualized family service plan that includes a statement of the family's strengths and needs in regards to enhancing the child's development. Services are to be aimed at the family system, not the child alone. This law strengthens the commitment to parent involvement set forth in Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

Another federal effort, Head Start, has been this country's most extensive investment in the education of young children. Head Start has experimented with innovative strategies for involving families in program activities since its beginnings in 1965 (Zigler and Freedman, 1987).

State governments have been active in developing early childhood programs focused on families. One of the oldest state efforts is Minnesota's Early Childhood and Family Education Program. Founded in 1975, the program operates through local school districts to provide parent discussion groups, home visits, child development classes, and other approaches to enhancing and supporting parental competence. State-level initiatives designed to support families with young children have been established in a number of other states.

Local communities throughout the country have fostered the creation of a rapidly growing number of parent-oriented programs. These efforts, many of which have grassroots origins, range from drop-in center formats to peer self-help group methods. The Family Resource Coalition, based in Chicago, was founded in 1981 by many diverse community-based programs as a national organization for promoting the development of family resource programs.

### **THE EFFECTS OF PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT**

Research on the effects of programs aimed at enhancing parents' child-rearing competence points to some promising patterns. Evaluations of intensive parent- or family-oriented early childhood programs serving low-income populations have found positive short-term effects on child competence and maternal behaviors, and long-term effects on such family characteristics as level of education, family size, and financial self-support (Powell, 1989). Other data suggest that the magnitude of program effects is associated with the number of program contacts with a family (Heinicke, Beckwith and Thompson, 1988) and the range of services offered to the family.

Little is known about effects of programs employing modest approaches to parent education and support, such as periodic lectures. Research on working- and middle-class populations is especially sparse.

### **DIMENSIONS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PARENT PROGRAM**

The rapid growth of parent education and support programs leads to questions about what constitutes a high-quality program. Four program dimensions are proposed below on the basis of existing research and theory (see Powell, 1989).

1. It can be argued that high-quality programs are characterized by collaborative, equal relations between parents and program staff in which the intent is to empower parents in their child-rearing roles (Powell, 1988). It is increasingly suggested that program staff serve as facilitators of goals and activities jointly determined by parents and program staff, and not as experts who assume they know what is best for parents (Cochran, 1988). Illustrative of this approach is open-ended discussion of parent-initiated topics as opposed to a largely one-way flow of information from staff to parent. Collaborative parent-staff ties provide a means for ensuring that program methods and content are responsive to parents' needs.

2. Research data suggest that parent programs need to maintain a balanced focus on the needs of both parent and child. The content of parent programs has broadened in recent years to include significant attention to the social context of parenthood. This substantive shift reflects an interest in the interconnectedness of child, family, and community, and assumes that providing parents with social support in the form of helpful interpersonal relationships and material assistance (if needed) will enhance parent functioning and, ultimately, child development. Program efforts toward this end include the strengthening of parents' social networks, social support, and community ties as a buffer against stressful life circumstances and transitions. The term "parent support" is a reflection of the shift. While there are strong justifications for the shift, there is the potential problem that parents' needs and interests may overshadow program attention to the child. The literature on programs serving high-risk populations, for instance, points to the tendency for program workers to become heavily involved in crisis intervention regarding family matters (Halpern and Lerner, 1988).

3. A recent development in parent education and support has resulted in programs being tailored to be responsive to the needs and characteristics of the population being served. The idea that a particular program model can work with almost any parent has given way to an interest in matching parents to different types of programs. This interest is especially evident in efforts to design programs that are responsive to cultural characteristics and values of ethnic populations, and in programs serving parents



living in low-income and high-risk circumstances.

4. In high quality initiatives, a significant amount of program time is devoted to open-ended parent-dominated discussion. Principles of adult education recommend that programs include a strong experiential component. This is critical, because parents are likely to process new information according to existing beliefs about their child and child development. Discussion provides an opportunity for parents to digest new insights in relation to existing ideas.

## **CONCLUSION**

Programs of parent education and support offer promising strategies for facilitating the education and development of young children. It is crucial for educators and policymakers to find ways to alter classroom practices, early childhood programs, and schools to promote the family's contributions to early education and development.

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- Zigler, E.F., & Freedman, J. "Head Start: A Pioneer in Family Support." In S.L. Kagan, D.R. Powell, B. Weissbourd, & E.F. Zigler (Eds.), AMERICA'S FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS: PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS (pp. 57-76). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.

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## B. An Example of One Model Program for Fostering Parent and Home Involvement in Schools

### *School Development Program*

One of the most frequently cited programs for enhancing parent involvement in schools was developed by James Comer and colleagues of the Yale Child Study Center. The model was designed with special attention to child development considerations, relationship and systems theory, and the promotion and enrichment of the relationships among all school stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, staff and administrators). In this respect, a fundamental premise is that, for a parent involvement initiative to succeed, the school's ecology must foster positive, supportive, and communicative relationships among all stakeholders. (Traditional bureaucratic environments -- that is those that do not have a collaborative organizational structure, are viewed as having structural, systemic barriers that interfere with significant parental involvement.)

The program includes three main components:

1. *A School Planning and Management Team:* The purpose of the team is to develop a plan that focuses on the instructional program and school climate. The team is critical to the success of the overall program because it facilitates communication among all stakeholders, establishes a sense of direction and focus for the school, and enhances feelings of ownership on the part of all stakeholders.
2. *A Mental Health Team:* This team meets to address the behavioral and developmental needs of students. The team serves as a mechanism for sharing knowledge about child development and about relationships with classroom teachers and administrators. It ultimately serves to reduce conflict by increasing sensitivity to issues concerning child development and relationships.
3. *A Parent Program:* This is the key parent involvement component, although its success is highly dependent on the existence of the other two components. The distinctive features of the program are: (a) it provides for involvement of parents at a range of levels of responsibility and enables parents to participate comfortably and (b) it "is implemented within the broader context of improved relationships among the significant adults in the lives of the children" (Comer & Haynes, 1991).

See Comer, J.P., & Haynes, N.M. (1991). Parent involvement in schools: An ecological approach. *The Elementary School Journal*, 91, 271-277.

## C. National PTA National Standards for Parent /Family Involvement Programs

Given the research that shows a positive relationship between parent/family involvement in schooling and student achievement, the National PTA, along with professionals with specific expertise in the area, has developed the *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*. Developed in 1997, these standards and related quality indicators are conceived as guidelines for leaders of all institutions with programs serving parents and families. The work is intended as a major resource as policymakers and staff move from discussion to action in developing “dynamic parent involvement programs that are meaningful, well planned and long lasting.” The quality indicators are seen as offering a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of long-term school reform efforts to involve families in their child’s education.

Based on Joyce Epstein’s work, the standards focus on six concerns:

- Communication between home and school
- Parenting skills
- Parental assistance in student learning
- Parents volunteering
- Parents as partners in school decision making and advocacy
- Community collaboration.

In its Standards document, the PTA discusses each standard and outlines “quality indicators,” which reflect an effort to identify important elements of each standard that contribute to effective programs and foster success. Quality indicators are meant as tools for assessing how effectively each standard is represented in parent involvement programs. The document also offers sample applications of each standard in real settings, how to confront challenges that are posed by administrative leadership, systemic support, diversity, and teacher preparation and training, and how to transform these challenges into opportunities.

This document can be downloaded or printed off of the Children First website, which is the website of the National PTA:

[www.pta.org/programs/invstand.htm](http://www.pta.org/programs/invstand.htm)

You can also contact:

**National PTA,**

330 N. Wabash Ave., Suite 2100, Chicago, IL 60611-3690

Phone: (312) 670-6782; Fax: (312) 670-6783

E-mail: [info@pta.org](mailto:info@pta.org)

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## Technical Assistance Sampler

### *A Sampling of Outcome Findings from Interventions Relevant to Addressing Barriers to Learning*



\*The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

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## **E. Home Involvement in Schooling**

The emphasis here is on enhancing home involvement through programs to address specific parent learning and support needs (e.g., ESL classes, mutual support groups), mobilize parents as problem solvers when their child has problems (e.g., parent education, instruction in helping with schoolwork), elicit help from families in addressing the needs of the community, and so forth. The context for some of this activity may be a parent center (which may be part of the Family and Community Service Center Facility if one has been established at the site). Outcomes include specific measures of parent learning and indices of student progress and community enhancement related to home involvement.

Work in this area requires (1) programs to address specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, (2) programs to help those in the home meet basic obligations to the student, (3) systems to improve communication about matters essential to the student and family, (4) programs to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community, (5) interventions to enhance participation in making decision that are essential to the student, (6) programs to enhance home support related to the student's basic learning and development, (7) interventions to mobilize those at home to problem solve related to student needs, (8) intervention to elicit help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs, and (9) relevant education for stakeholders.\*

### **1. Parenting education**

### **2. Adult education/Family Literacy**

### **3. Mobilizing the home to support students' basic needs**

\*The range of activity related to home involvement in schooling is outlined extensively in a set of self-study surveys available from our Center. (See Part VI for information on how to access these instruments.)



## State of the Art for Home Involvement in Schooling

*Parent education classes* vary in the outcomes they hope to achieve. Evaluations indicate the promise of such programs with respect to improving parent attitudes, skills, and problem solving abilities; parent-child communication; and in some instances the child's school achievement. Data also suggest an impact on reducing children's negative behavior. *Adult education* is a proven commodity. The question here is how it impacts on home involvement in schooling and on the behavior and achievement of youngsters in the family. Few studies have focused on this matter and even fewer have focused on family literacy approaches. The adult education studies included here report highly positive outcomes with respect to preschool children, and a summary of findings on family literacy reports highly positive trends into the elementary grades. More broadly, efforts to mobilize those in the home to address students' basic needs show effects on a range of behaviors and academic performance.

In general, research findings over the past 30 years have consistently shown home involvement in schooling has a positive impact on youngster's attitudes, aspirations, and achievement. The tasks ahead include expanding the focus beyond thinking only in terms of parents and expanding the range of ways in which schools connect with those in the home. In particular, more intensive efforts must focus on those in the home who have the greatest influence on a student's well being and with whom it has proven difficult to connect. New approaches must be developed and evaluated to clarify how best to involve such hard-to-reach individuals (e.g., perhaps by starting with strategies that address their needs, as contrasted with trying to make them take greater responsibility for their children's problems).\*



\*Given the pressure to compile outcome findings relevant to addressing barriers to student learning, as a first step we simply have gathered and tabulated information from secondary sources (e.g., reviews, reports). Thus, unlike published literature reviews and meta analyses, we have not yet eliminated evaluations that were conducted in methodologically unsound ways. We will do so when we have time to track down original sources, and future drafts of this document will address the problem as well as including other facets of intervention related to this area. In this respect, we would appreciate any information readers can send us about well-designed evaluations of interventions that should be included and about any of the cited work that should be excluded.

## Appendix A: Home Involvement in Schooling

The following are brief summaries and related information on the home involvement in schooling programs listed in this packet.



# 1. Parenting Education

- a. *Adolescent Transitions Program (ATP)*: ATP provides parents with family management skills and their high-risk teens with skills to self-regulate problem behavior. The parent curriculum teaches skills in: (1) Encouraging positive behaviors; (2) Setting up behavior change contracts; (3) Establishing limits and providing consequences; (4) Communication; and (5) Problem solving. The teen curriculum teaches skills in: (1) Goal setting; (2) Making behavioral change; (3) Selecting and maintaining friends; (4) Communication; and (5) Problem solving. In comparison to control group, one-year follow-up assessment indicated that the program was effective in engaging students and parents, teaching them skills, and improving parent-child relations. Post-treatment assessment indicated short-term effect on teens aggressive and delinquent behaviors. The teen curriculum-only condition was associated with escalated problem behavior, highlighting the importance of the teen and parent components.

*For more information, see:*

Dishion, T.J., Andrews, D.W. (1995). Preventing escalation in problem behaviors with high-risk young adolescents: Immediate and one-year outcomes. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 63, 538-548.

Dishion, T. J., Andrews, D.W., Kavanagh, K., & Soberman, L.H. (1996). Chapter 9, preventive interventions for high-risk youth: The adolescent transitions program. In Peteres, R., & McMahon, R. (Eds.), *Preventing Childhood Disorders, Substance Abuse, and Delinquency*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 184-218.

*For project information, contact:*

Thomas J. Dishion, Ph.D., Oregon Social Learning Center, Inc., 207 East Fifth Ave. , Suite 202, Eugene, OR 97401, (541) 485-2711.

- b. *Iowa Strengthening Families*: A family-based intervention which enhances parents' general child management skills, parent-child affective relationships, and family communication. Based on a developmental model, ISFP seeks to delay the onset of adolescent alcohol and substance use by improving family practices. ISFP is designed for sixth-grade students and their families. Parents are taught to clarify expectations of children's behavior, utilize appropriate discipline techniques, manage strong emotions concerning children, and use effective communication. Children learn similar skills as well as peer resistance/refusal techniques, social interaction skills, and stress management. Post-test evaluations showed parents' improved child management practices, increased parent-child communication, more child involvement in family, and strengthened family affective quality. One- and two-year follow-up analyses revealed that adolescents had lower rates of alcohol initiation and 30-60% relative reductions in alcohol use, using without parents' permission, and being drunk.

*For program information, contact:*

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado, Boulder, Institute of Behavioral Science, Campus Box 442, Boulder, CO 80309-0442, (303)492-8465, email: cspv@colorado.edu, <http://colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/promise/iowa.htm>

- c. *MELD Young Moms* : Uses peer support groups to help strengthen families by reducing the social isolation that can lead to child abuse and neglect. Program activities are designed to increase parents' knowledge of child development; increase parents' ability to solve problems, make decisions, and manage family life; and to nurture parents' personal growth. Support peer groups meet weekly for a period of two years. An outcome study of seven MELD sites found a positive shift in parental attitudes and beliefs about parenting and children. Parents showed more appropriate expectations in line with child's abilities, increased awareness of and better response to child's needs, and reduced value in corporal punishment.

*For more information, see:*

Strengthening America's Families Project, University of Utah, Model Family Strengthening Program Descriptions, [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prevent/parenting/r\\_meld.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/prevent/parenting/r_meld.html)

- d. *Parent Child Development Center Programs*: Designed to foster relationships between parents and children. It targets low-income families and provides multidimensional treatment to help mothers become more effective in child-rearing. Mothers are educated in socioemotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of infant and child development; care-givers' personal development is enhanced through home management training and continuing education classes; and the needs of the entire family are addressed by providing health and social services. A short-term evaluation at 24 months found increases in IQ and cognitive



more positive mother-child interactions. Compared to control groups, evaluations showed increases in children's school achievement at grades 2 and 3, improvements in mothers' positive control techniques (including discipline with discussion and less physical punishment), improvements in mothers' use of affection/praise, and decreases in children's destructive behavior (age 4-7).

*For more information, see:*

Bridgeman, B., Blumental, J.B., & Andrews, S.R. (1981). *Parent Child Development Center: Final Evaluation Report*. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Development Services, Washington, DC 20201.

Johnson, D.L. & Walker, T. (1987). Primary prevention of behavior problems in Mexican-American children. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15, 375-385.

Johnson, D.L. & Breckenridge, J.N. (1982). The Houston Parent-Child Development Center and the primary prevention of behavior problems in young children. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 10, 305-316.

Contact: Dale Johnson, Department of Psychology, University of Houston – University Park Houston, TX 77004 (713) 743-8508

- e. *Parent to Parent*: A video-based program that helps parents deal directly with their children. The program intends to be facilitated by parents for parents. Internal evaluation and long term studies by outside sources showed the following statistics: (a) 89% of participants had a greater understanding of their role in preventing drug and alcohol use by their children as a result of the program; (b) 91% changed the way they communicated with their children; (c) 75% became more involved in community efforts aimed at alcohol or drugs; (d) 91% talk more often with their children about drugs; and, (e) 85% increased contact with parents of their children's friends.

*For more information, see:*

O'Keefe, A. (1998). *Participant Views on the Parent to Parent Program*. Prepared for the Onondaga County Drug and Alcohol Commission; 1-800-487-7743.

*For program information, contact:*

Kathleen Lindsey, Parent to Parent Consultant, Representing Passage Group, Inc., lindseyenterprises@usa.net; Safe Passage, Violence Prevention for Parents, 1-800-487-7743.

- f. *PeaceBuilders*: A school-wide violence prevention program for elementary schools (K - 5) that aims to enhance parent competence, increase rewards and praise for prosocial behavior, improve the school climate, teach peace building and communication skills, and recruit other adults as advisors and positive role models. Core components include common language and stimulus cues; video training kit; action guide and related tools for teachers, administrators, and families; story/workbooks for children; parents' activity training kit; and community media kit. A CDC-funded study is currently underway, and pilot data showed reduction in teachers' estimates of aggressive behavior/social skills, referrals to the principal, suspensions, school transfers, and aggression on the playground.

*For more information, see:*

Embry, D.D., Flannery, D.J., Vazsonyi, A.T., Powell, K.E., & Atha, H. (1996). PeaceBuilders: A theoretically driven, school-based model for early violence prevention. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Youth Violence Prevention: Description and Baseline Data from 13 Evaluation Projects (Supp.)*, 12 (5), 91-100.

Walker, H.M., Colvin, G., Ramsey, E. (1995). *Anti-Social Behavior in Schools: Strategies and Best Practices*. Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole.

*For program information, contact:*

Jane Gulibon, Heartsprings, Inc., P.O. Box 15258, Tuscon, AZ 85732, (520) 322-9977.

- g. *Preparing for the Drug Free Years*: For parents of children in grades 4 through 8, regardless of ethnicity and socioeconomic status, and is designed to help parents reduce the risk that their children will develop problems with drugs and alcohol in adolescence. The program teaches parents how to increase their children's opportunities for involvement in the family, how to teach skills needed by children and adolescents, and how to provide reinforcement for desired behavior and appropriate consequences for undesired behavior. Preliminary results from a large-scale NIDA-funded study (currently underway) show positive effects on parenting behavior. Parents showed greater understanding about the situations in which adolescents are offered drugs, greater appreciation for the importance of bonding and providing adolescents

with meaningful roles in the family, and significant changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. For example, parents reported having held family meetings to set family policy and to teach refusal skills.

*For more information, see:*

Spoth, R., Redmond, C., Haggerty, K., & Ward, T. (1995). A controlled parenting skills outcome study examining individual differences and attendance effects. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57: 449.

Spoth, R., Redmond, C., Hockaday, C., & Yoo, S. (1996). Protective factors and young adolescent tendency to abstain from alcohol use: A model using two waves of intervention study data. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 24 (6): 749-770.

*For program information, contact:*

Karl Hill, Ph.D., Project Director, Social Development Research Group, 146 North Canal St., Suite 211, Seattle, WA 98103-8652; (206) 685-1997. *To order materials, contact:* Barbara McCarthy, Developmental Research and Programs, 130 Nickerson, Suite 107, Seattle, WA 98109; (800) 736-2630

- h. Syracuse Family Development Research Program:* Bolsters child and family functioning through home visitations, parent training, and individualized daycare. The program targets economically disadvantaged families in order to improve children's cognitive and emotional functioning, foster children's positive outlooks, and decrease juvenile delinquency. Mothers receive individualized training and support in order to create developmentally appropriate interactive games for their children, foster mothers' involvement in children's educational attainment, and model appropriate interactions. The most dramatic effects of the program were found during a ten-year follow-up with control group evaluation, which demonstrated reduced juvenile delinquency and improved school functioning (for girls), including the following results: (a) Only 6% of FDRP children, compared to 22% of controls, had official delinquent records; (b) Control delinquents had more serious offenses; (c) FDRP girls showed better grades and school attendance (grades 7-8); (d) FDRP girls showed higher teacher ratings of self-esteem and school achievement; (e) FDRP children rated themselves more positively and had higher educational goals; (f) FDRP parents were more proud of their children and rated their families as more unified.

*For more information, see:*

Lally, J.R., Mangione, P.L., & Honig, A.S. (1988). The Syracuse University Family Development Research Program: Long-range impact on an early intervention with low-income children and their families. In D.R. Powell and Irving E. Sigel (eds.), *Parent Education as Early Childhood Intervention: Emerging Direction in Theory, Research, and Practice. Annual Advances in Applied Developmental Psychology, Volume 3*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp.

Lally, J.R., Mangione, P.L., Honig, A.S., & Wittner, D.S. (1988). More pride, less delinquency: Findings from the ten-year follow-up study of the Syracuse University Family Development Research Program. *Zero to Three*, April, 13-18.

## 2. Adult Education

a. *Family Literacy Research Summary (including Even Start)*: The National Center on Family Literacy reports the following. "Integrated family literacy programming is more effective than traditional approaches to adult education, early childhood education, or stand-alone parent programs for our most vulnerable adults and children. From the beginning of the Kenan program in 1989, NCFL has utilized standardized and teacher-made tests, case studies, anecdotal records, parent surveys and interviews, and staff observations to evaluate all aspects of the program. The early findings indicated that both adults and their children made important gains as a result of attending family literacy programs:

>Parents who made a commitment to attend regularly made significant improvements in academic performance, in their relationships with their children and with other adults, and in their view of themselves. Even though the average reading and math scores were between the 6th and 7th grade level, 30% of adult students either received GED certification during the program year, passed parts of the exam, or had scheduled the exam at the end of the program year.

>By the end of the program year, more than 90% of formerly "at-risk" children were judged by their teacher as ready for entry into kindergarten with no expected academic or social difficulties. These children demonstrated significant growth in behavior, use of language, and development of pre-academic skills. *Breaking the Cycle of Illiteracy: The Kenan Family Literacy Model Program* (NCFL, 1989).

The Kenan model was expanded nationally in 1991 with the Toyota Families for Learning Program (TFLP). The findings produced from 15 cities (sample size: n = 500) demonstrated the need to approach these problems from the comprehensive family perspective of the Kenan model:

>Adults participating in family literacy programs showed greater gains in literacy than adults in adult-focused programs.

>Participants in family literacy programs were less likely to drop out of the program than were participants in adult focused programs.

>Children participating in family literacy programs demonstrated greater gains than children in child-focused programs.

>More educationally supportive home environments were reported by parents in family literacy programs than when they entered the program. *The Power of Family Literacy* (NCFL, 1996).

Parental involvement is perhaps the most important indicator of the success of family literacy programs. Ideally, adults and children both improve in literacy ability, and lifestyle changes should be occurring in parent/child interactions so that learning gains can be maintained and extended independently by families. Mikulecky and Lloyd, in a study of NCFL programs in Atlanta, Rochester, Fort Wayne, Nashville, and Richmond (n = 133) demonstrated through comparisons made at time of entry and time of exit that:

1) Parents provided a wider range of reading and writing materials at home for their children:

Parents took their children to the library twice as often, about every 3 weeks. Parents bought or borrowed books for their children 40% more often, every one to two weeks.

2) Parents engaged in a wider range of reading and writing activities with their children at home, drawing and writing with their children and using educational materials and games:

Parents read or looked at books with their children 40% more often, almost every day. Children asked parents to read to them 20% more often, almost every day. Children's book and magazine reading increased by nearly 40%, to more than once a day.

3) Parent-child talk about manners and hygiene involved more explaining and less direct instruction.

4) Parents and children played together with toys or games about 30% more often.

5) Parents displayed children's drawings and writings at home 20% more often, every 4 to 5 days.

6) Children saw their parents engage in a wider range of reading and writing activities at home.

7) Parents became increasingly aware that children can learn through play and do not need to be taught or controlled by adults.

>Parents thought that children learned to read and write well in school because their parents spent quality time with them rather than because of the child's ability or effort.

Parents believed taking children to the library or educational programs would help children learn to read and write better. Mikulecky and Lloyd. (1995). *Evaluating Parent/Child Interactions in Family Literacy Programs*.

The NCFL Parent Survey shows practically and statistically significant gains ( $p < .003$ ,  $n = 1100$ ) in the frequency that parents: (a) talk to their school-age children's teacher, (b) talk to their children about their day, (c) read or look at books with children, (d) are seen reading or writing by their children, (e) take their children to the library, (f) volunteer at school help children with homework, and (g) attend school activities (analysis of NCFL primary database, 1997)

In NCFL's first follow-up study, 53 adults & 98 children were evaluated after leaving the Kenan program:

- >One year after leaving the program, 66% of adults were either enrolled or had definite plans for enrolling in some form of higher or continuing education program or were employed.
- >35% were employed, while fewer than 10% were employed at the time they enrolled in the program.
- >After two years, none of the children had been held back in school.
- >Over three-fourths of these children were rated by their current kindergarten or grade-school teacher as average or above average on academic performance, motivation to learn, support from parents, relations with other students, attendance, classroom behavior, self confidence, and probable success in school. *Follow-up Study of Impact of the Kenan Trust Model for Family Literacy* (NCFL, 1991).

In follow-up studies of 200 representative families in four states (KY, NC, HI, and NY) one to six years after attending family literacy programs, NCFL has documented these enduring effects:

- >51% of the adult students have received a high school equivalency certificate;
- >43% are employed, compared to 14% before enrolling;
- >13% have enrolled in higher education or training programs and another 11% are continuing in Adult Education programs working toward GED certification;
- >Dependence on public assistance has been reduced by 50%
- >The present primary teachers rate almost 80% of former family literacy children at or above the class average on such factors as attendance, classroom behavior, relations with other children, motivation to learn, family support for education, and probability of success in school.

A follow-up study ( $n = 23$ ) of former family literacy children in Rochester, NY showed that while only 11% scored above the 20th and none scored above the 50th percentile rank on the PPVT as 3 and 4-year-olds in the family literacy program, 87% scored above the 20th percentile rank and 39% scored above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on a standardized reading test (CAT) as first and second graders. (Analysis of NCFL follow-up database, 1996).

NCFL documented the results of high quality, federally-funded Even Start programs to show what can be expected of programs when implemented according to the Even Start mandate. Data was collected from 30 sites across the country in 1997. Adults made significant changes in their lives:

- >54% seeking educational credentials received the GED or its equivalent.
- >45% of those on public assistance reduced the amount received or ceased to receive aid altogether.
- >40% were enrolled in some higher education or training program.
- >50% of those not currently enrolled in an education or training program are employed.

The percentage of children in the Even Start program rated "average or above" by their current classroom teacher (grades K-5): (a) 67% on overall academic performance, (b) 78% on motivation to learn, (c) 83% on support from parents, (d) 89% on relations with other students, (e) 91% on attendance, (f) 84% on classroom behavior, (g) 73% on self-confidence, (h) 75% on probable success in school, (i) 80% on all factors by their teachers, and (j) 90% showed satisfactory grades in reading, language and mathematics (*Even Start: An Effective Literacy Program Helps Families Grow Toward Independence*, NCFL, 1997).

*For more information, see:*

National Center for Family Literacy website: [www.familit.org/research/research.html](http://www.familit.org/research/research.html)

- b. *Family Intergenerational-Interaction Literacy Model (FILM)*: Works with all family members to improve basic literacy, employment, and parenting skills in order to increase the educational level of disadvantaged preschool children and their families. Provides literacy services and parenting/life skills education to parents and early childhood education to children. Post-test outcome data indicate that: (1) FILM compares favorably with other adult education programs in promoting academic achievement and GED acquisition; (2) FILM preschoolers scored higher on school readiness indicators than a comparison group; (3) FILM preschool graduates were ranked by teachers as higher in academic performance and social skills than their peers; and, (4) Improved teacher reports of parent involvement in their children's education.

*For program information, contact:*

Dean Hiser, Orange County Department of Education, 200 Kalmus Drive, P.O. Box 9050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050; Phone: (714) 966-4145; Fax: (714) 966-4124; [www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11a.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11a.html)

- c. *Mother-Child Home Program (MCHP) of the Verbal Interaction Project, Inc.:* A non-didactic, home-based program to prevent educational disadvantage in two- to four-year old children of parents with low income and limited education, and to foster parents' literacy and self-esteem, by enhancing parent-child verbal interaction. Guided by the theory that cognitive and social-emotional growth results from the playful exchange between parent and child, "Toy Demonstrators" model for the parent a curriculum of verbal and other positive interaction with their children. Specific outcomes include: (1) Children at risk for educational disadvantage at age two were no longer so after two years of the program, and (2) Program graduates met national achievement test norms in elementary school and graduated from high school at a normal rate.

*For program information, contact:*

Dr. Phyllis Levenstein, Director, National Center for Mother-Child Home Program, 3268 Island Road, Wantagh, NY 11793. (516) 785-7077. (Affiliated with the State University of New York at Stony Brook.)

- d. *Parents as Teachers:* An early parenting program that provides comprehensive services to families from the third trimester of pregnancy until the children are three years of age. Aimed at helping parents give their children a solid foundation for school success and at forming a closer working relationship between home and school. Services include regularly scheduled personal visits in the home, parent group meetings, periodic screening and monitoring of educational and sensory development, and access to a parent resource center. Outcomes indicate: (1) Children of parents in the program score significantly higher at age three on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children and the Zimmerman Preschool Language Scale than the comparison and nationally normed groups; (b) Children of parents in the program score significantly higher at the end of grade one on standardized tests of reading and mathematics than the comparison and nationally normed groups; (c) Parents in the program for three years demonstrate significantly more knowledge and child-rearing practices, are more likely to regard their school district as responsive to a child's needs, and are more likely to have children's hearing professionally tested than the comparison parents; and, (d) Parents who were in the program were found to be significantly more involved in their children's school experience at the end of grade one than were comparison group parents.

*For more information, contact:*

Mildred Winter, Director, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., 9374 Olive Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132; Phone: (314) 432-4330 or Sharon Rhodes, Program Development, Director.  
[www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11h.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11h.html) [www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11h.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11h.html)

### 3. Mobilizing the Home to address Students' Basic Needs

- a. *Child Development Project (CDP)*: A multi-year, comprehensive school-change program that aims to help elementary school children feel more attached to the school community, internalize the community's norms and values, exhibit behavior consistent with norms and values, and reduce their involvement in drug-use and other problem behaviors. The program involves parent involvement activities, staff training, school-wide community building activities, and a cross-grade buddy program. Program outcomes include an 11% drop in alcohol use (compared to a 2% increase in comparison schools); a 2% drop in marijuana use (compared to a 2% increase in comparison schools); an 8% drop in cigarette use (compared to a 3% decline in comparison schools); increase in pro-social behaviors among students in grades K-4; and decreased delinquency in schools with the highest level of implementation.

*For more information, see:*

Battistich, V., Schaps, E., Watson, M., & Solomon, D. (1996). Prevention effects of the Child Development Project: Early findings from an ongoing multisite demonstration trial. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 11, 12-35.

Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Kim, D., Watson, M., & Schaps, E. (1995). Schools as communities, poverty levels of student populations, and student' attitudes, motives, and performance: A multilevel analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 627-658.

*For project information, contact:*

Sylvia Kendzior, Developmental Studies Center, 200 Embarcadero, Suite 305, Oakland, CA 94606-5300, (510) 533-0213. To order materials, call (800) 666-7270.

- b. *Families and Schools Together (FAST)*: A collaborative, multi-family program that aims to prevent school failure, enhance family functioning, prevent familial substance abuse, and reduce stress. FAST targets children (ages 4 to 9) who have high rates of aggression, noncompliance, and behavior problems. The program seeks to empower parents to be their own child's primary prevention agent, and involves 2 years of multiple family meetings that are designed to increase social bonds of the at-risk child. Pre-post program comparisons indicate the following mental health gains: (1) Increased child attention spans and self-esteem; (2) Decreased child problem behaviors; (3) Stronger parent-child relationships; (4) Increased parental school involvement; (5) Enhanced overall family functioning; (6) Greater family networking; (7) Greater family comfort level in dealings with school/community. Three-year follow-up showed: (1) 16% of parents went into alcohol treatment; (2) 27% went into counseling; (3) 40% went on to further education; (4) 16% obtained full-time jobs; (5) 32% became involved in Parent Teacher Organizations; (6) 35% became more involved in community centers.

*For more information, see:*

McDonald, L., Billingham, S., Dibble, N., Rice, C., & Coe-Braddish, D. (January, 1991). Families and Schools Together: An innovative substance abuse prevention program. *Social Work in Education: A Journal of Social Workers in School*, 13 (2): 118-128.

*For program information, contact:*

FAST: Families and Schools Together, Family Service America, 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53224-3099; (800) 221-3726. <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/opre/fastr.htm>

- c. *Seattle Social Development Project*: A universal, multidimensional intervention that aims to decrease juveniles' problem behaviors by working with parents, teachers, and children. It intervenes early in children's development to increase prosocial bonds, strengthen attachment and commitment to schools, and decrease delinquency. The Project's success lies in its combination of parent and teacher training. Teachers receive instruction that emphasizes proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, and cooperative learning. Parents receive family management training that helps parents to monitor children, provide appropriate and consistent discipline, improve communication between themselves, teachers, and students, help their children develop reading and math skills, and create family positions on drugs and encourage children's resistance skills. Evaluations show improved school performance, family relationships, and student drug/alcohol involvement at various grades. Please see detailed review of this program in Section D.4.

*For more information, see:*

Hawkins, J. David, Catalano, Richard F., Morrison, Diane, O'Donnell, Julie, Abbott, Robert, & Day, Edward (1992). The Seattle Social Development Project: Effects of the first four years on protective factors and problem behaviors. In Joan McCord & Richard E. Tremblay (eds.), *Preventing Antisocial Behavior: Interventions from Birth through Adolescence*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Hawkins, J. David, Von Cleve, Elizabeth, & Catalano, Richard F. (1991). Reducing early childhood aggression: Results of a primary prevention program. *Journal American Academy Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30, 208-217.

O'Donnell, Julie, Hawkins, J. David, Catalano, Richard F., Abbot, Robert D., & Day, Edward (1995). Preventing school failure, drug use, and delinquency among low-income children: Long-term intervention in elementary schools. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 65, 87-100.

*For program information, contact:*

J. David Hawkins, Social Development Research Group (SDRG), University of Washington – School of Social Work, 130 Nickerson, Suite 107, Seattle, WA 98109, (206) 286-1805, E-mail: sdrgrg@u.washington.edu, URL: <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~sdrgrg>

- d. **Project ACHIEVE:** A school wide prevention and early intervention program, that targets students who are academically and socially at risk. Students learn social skills, problem-solving methods, and anger-reduction techniques. Since 1990, the program has reduced aggression and violence in Project ACHIEVE schools. Disciplinary referrals decreased by 67%, Specifically, referrals for disobedient behavior dropped by 86%, fighting by 72% and disruptive behavior by 88%. Referrals for at-risk students for special education testing decreased 75% while the number of effective academic and behavioral interventions in the regular classroom significantly increased. Suspensions dropped to one-third of what they had been three years before. Grade retention, achievement test scores, and academic performance have improved similarly, and, during the past four years, no student has been placed in the county's alternative education program. The project's success has led to the adoption of the Project ACHIEVE model in over 20 additional sites across the United States.

*For more information, see:*

Knoff, H.M. & Batsche, G. M. (1995). Project ACHIEVE: Analyzing a school reform process for at-risk and underachieving students. *School Psychology Review*, 24, 579-603.

Knoff, H.M. & Batsche, G. M. Project ACHIEVE: A collaborative, school-based school reform process improving the academic and social progress of at-risk and underachieving students. In: R. Talley & G. Walz (Eds.), *Safe Schools, Safe Students*. National Education Goals Panel and National Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations. Produced in collaboration with ERIC Counseling and Student Services Clearinghouse.

Quinn, M. M., Osher, D., Hoffman, C. C., & Hanley, T. V. (1998). *Safe, drug-free, and effective schools for ALL students: What works!* Washington, DC: Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institutes for Research.

- e. **Early Intervention for School Success (EISS):** Provides teachers, support staff, and parents with basic knowledge of child growth/development and basic strategies for the kindergarten classroom. There are 4 training components: organization and planning, assessment, strategies, and curriculum. Outcomes for kindergarten students after 1 year include: (1) EISS students scored significantly better in receptive language, visual motor integration and achievement than comparison groups; (2) they showed fewer grade retentions than comparison groups; and, (3) In a follow-up of a comparison study of at-risk (first quartile) students, EISS students maintained reading score gains through grade three testing.

*For more information, contact:*

Dean Hiser, Orange County Department of Education, 200 Kalmus Drive, P.O. Box 9050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050; Phone: (714) 966-4145; Fax: (714) 966-4124; [www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11a.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11a.html)

- f. **Effective Black Parenting Program (EBPP):** Aims to foster family communication and combat juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and other negative outcomes. It is a cognitive-behavioral program specifically created for African-American parents that seeks to foster effective family communication, healthy identity, extended family values, child growth and development, self-esteem. Black educators and mental health professionals teach basic child management skill using culturally appropriate methods; interactive groups address topics such as discipline, pride, coping with racism. Pre-post changes were compared with 109 treatment and 64 control families. Outcomes include a significant reduction of parental

rejection, and improvements in family quality, reductions in rejection and problem behaviors.

*For project information, contact:*

Kerby T. Alvy, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for the Improvement of Child Caring, 11331 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 103, Studio City, CA 91604-3147; Tel: (818) 980-0903

- g. *Enriching a Child's Literacy Environment (ECLE)*: A program of classroom and home instruction for teaching parents, teachers, and other care providers to develop oral language, thinking abilities, and motor skills in young children (ages 6 months to 3 years). Targeted areas include children's large and small muscle coordination, oral language through sensory stimulation, print and number awareness, appreciation of literature, sensitivity to music and rhythm, and basic concepts. Outcomes on Pre/Post Treatment measures comparisons: (1) Statistically significant gains among ECLE children over a comparison group on both the Mental Development Index (MDI) and the Psychomotor Development Index (PDI) of the Bayley Scales of Infant Development; (b) On average, for every one month in the program, ECLE children showed more than two months of growth relative to the normative group.

*For more information, contact:*

Dr. Ethna Reid, Reid Foundation, 3310 South 2700 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84109; Phone: (801) 486-5083; Fax: (801) 485-0561; [www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11b.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11b.html)

- h. *Perry Preschool Program* : Provides high-quality early childhood education to disadvantaged children (ages 3 and 4) and their families in order to improve their later school and life performance. The intervention combats the relationship between childhood poverty and school failure by promoting young children's intellectual, social, and physical development. The intervention includes weekly home visitation by teachers, and includes a developmentally appropriate curriculum, small classrooms, frequent parental communication, and sensitivity to noneducational needs of disadvantaged children and their families. Fifteen-year follow-up indicated that, compared to controls, Perry children showed less delinquency (including fewer arrests, and less gang fights and police contact) at age 19. By age 15, Perry children showed less antisocial behavior and higher academic achievement, including higher scores on standardized tests of intellectual ability and higher high school grades. Finally, by age 19, Perry children showed less school dropouts (33% vs. 51%).

*For more information, see:*

Berrueta-Clement, J. R., Schweinhart, L. J., Barnett, W. S., Epstein, A. S., Weikart, D. P. (1984). *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

Epstein, Ann S. (1993). *Training for Quality: Improving Early Childhood Programs through Systematic Inservice Training*. Ypsilanti, MI: The High/Scope Press.

*For project information, contact:*

David Weikart, High Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 N River Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898

- i. *Family Advocacy Network (FAN Club)*: Directly involves parents of youth (ages 13 to 15) participating in Boys & Girls Clubs of America's SMART Moves program. The FAN Club strengthens families and promotes family bonding, thereby increasing the resistance of youth to drug use. The program can be implemented in community-based youth organizations, recreation centers, and schools in collaboration with a local Boys & Girls Club. FAN Club provides basic support to help families deal with stress and to encourage family activities; regularly scheduled group social activities; educational activities; and parental leadership activities. Outcome data indicate a statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) decrease in substance use over time relative to comparison schools, as well as greater ability to refuse substances and increased knowledge of health consequences of substance use.

*For project information, contact:*

Tena L. St. Pierre, Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University, Institute for Policy Research and Evaluation, In collaboration with Boys & Girls Clubs of America; Ms Mylo Carbia-Puig, 1230 West Peachtree Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30309-3447; (404) 487-5766 or (877) 773-8546 toll-free; fax (404) 487-5789; E-mail: [mcpuig@bgca.org](mailto:mcpuig@bgca.org); Web: [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

- j. *Los Ninos Bien Educados*: Targets newly immigrated Latino parents and kindergarten children to enable parents to assist children with the challenges of growing up in the U.S. Provides a wide range of basic child-rearing skills, along with skills compatible with Latino culture. The initial field testing of the program in the 1980's indicated that participating parents perceived their relationships with their children as being either better or much better, whereas parents who did not attend the classes saw their relationships with their children as being the same or getting worse over a compatible time period. Children's behavior



improvements were reported by parents and confirmed by teachers' reports.

*For project information, contact:*

Kirby T. Alvy, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for the Improvement of Child Caring, 11331 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 103, Studio City, CA 91604-0903; Tel (800) 325-CICC

- k. *Project P.I.A.G.E.T. (Promoting intellectual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming):* A program to develop English language and cognitive competencies in bilingual preschool children whose native language is Spanish using a school-home setting. There are three components: (1) Classrooms taught by one bilingual teacher and one aide trained in Piagetian-derived teaching strategies; (2) Aide helps Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents develop educational home program; and, (3) Academic assessment of children and parents' skills. Outcomes include: (1) Limited English Speaking children in Project P.I.A.G.E.T. for one year achieve significantly higher gains than a comparison group on tests of receptive language and reading readiness; and, (2) P.I.A.G.E.T. children achieve greater than the norm in NCEs in English language reading, language, and mathematics by fourth grade, and these gains are sustained through grade 6.

*For more information, contact:*

Iris Cintron, Bethlehem Area School District, 1516 Sycamore Street, Bethlehem, PA 18017; Phone: (215) 861-0500 or Dr. Thomas Yawkey, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 159 Chambers Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; Phone: (814) 863-2937.  
[www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11i.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11i.html)

- l. *First Step to Success:* An early intervention program for grades K-3 that takes a collaborative home and school approach to diverting at-risk children from a path leading to adjustment problems, school failure and drop-out, social juvenile delinquency in adolescence, and gang membership and interpersonal violence. The program specifically aims to identify and remediate disruptive and aggressive behaviors. The program uses a joint home and school intervention that (1) identifies each child's antisocial behavior problems; (2) teaches an adaptive, prosocial pattern of school behavior; and (3) teaches parents key skills for supporting and improving their child's school adjustment and performance. Outcomes included sustained behavior changes in the following areas: adaptive behavior, aggressive behavior, maladaptive behavior, and the amount of time spent appropriately engaged in teacher-assigned tasks. Follow-up studies show that intervention effects persist up to two years.

*For more information, see:*

Walker, H.M. (1998). First step to success: Preventing antisocial behavior among at-risk kindergartners. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 30(4), 16-19.

Walker, H.M., Severson, H.H., Feil, E.G., Stiller, B., & Golly, A., (1997). *First step to success: Intervening at the point of school entry to prevent antisocial behavior patterns*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Contact: Jeff Sprague & Hill Walker, Co-Directors. Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, 1265 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. (541) 346-3591.

- m. *Parent-Teacher Intervention Project (P-TIP):* Involves providing consultation services to parents and teachers of Head Start children who are experiencing either social withdrawal or conduct problems. Treatment consists of a comprehensive video-based program for parents and teachers that cover: play, praise and rewards, effective limit setting, and handling misbehavior. Results of the first two years of the project indicated that parents rated the experimental children's social skills as having increased from pretest to posttest, although there was not a significant difference compared to the control children. Moreover, parents rated the experimental and control children's problem behaviors as having decreased, but there was no significant difference between the groups. Finally, parents and teachers indicated that treatment acceptability and effectiveness of treatment was rated very highly.

*For more information, see:*

[http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/Project\\_Descriptions/Teacher\\_Parent\\_Intervent.html](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/Project_Descriptions/Teacher_Parent_Intervent.html)

- n. *Preventive Treatment Program:* The program is designed to prevent antisocial behavior of boys who display early, problem behavior. The Preventive Treatment Program combines parent training with individual social skills training. Parents receive an average of 17 sessions that focus on monitoring their children's behavior, giving positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior, using punishment effectively, and

managing family crises. The boys receive 19 sessions aimed at improving prosocial skills and self-control. The training utilizes coaching, peer modeling, self-instruction, reinforcement contingency, and role playing to build skills. Program evaluations have demonstrated both short and long-term gains. At age 12, three years after the intervention: treated boys were less likely to report the following offenses: trespassing, taking objects worth less than \$10, taking objects worth more than \$10, and stealing bicycles. Treated boys were rated by teachers as fighting less than untreated boys. 29% of the treated boys were rated as well-adjusted in school, compared to 19% of the untreated boys. 22% of the treated boys, compared to 44% of the untreated boys, displayed less serious difficulties in school. 23.3% of the treated boys, compared to 43% of the untreated boys, were held back in school or placed in special education classes. At age 15, those receiving the intervention were less likely than untreated boys to report: gang involvement; having been drunk or taking drugs in the past 12 months; committing delinquent acts (stealing, vandalism, drug use); and having friends arrested by the police.

*For more information, see:*

Tremblay, Richard E., Masse, Louise, Pangani, Linda & Vitaro, Frank (1996). From childhood physical aggression to adolescent maladjustment: The Montreal Prevention Experiment. In R. D. Peters & R. J. McMahon (eds.), *Preventing childhood Disorders, Substance Abuse, and Delinquency*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Tremblay, Richard E., Vitaro, Frank, Bertrand, Lucie, LeBlanc, Marc, Beauchesne, Helene, Bioleau, Helene, & David, Lucille (1992). Parent and child training to prevent early onset of delinquency: The Montreal longitudinal Experimental Study. In Joan McCord & Richard Tremblay (eds.), *Preventing Antisocial Behavior: Interventions from Birth through Adolescence*. New York: The Guildford Press.

*For project information, contact:* Richard E. Tremblay, University of Montreal, School of Psycho-Education, 750, boul. Gouin Est, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2C 1A6, (514)385-2525.

- o. Strengthening Families Program (SFP):* Designed to reduce family environment risk factors and improve protective factors with the ultimate goal of increasing the resiliency of youth ages 6 to 10 who are at risk for substance abuse. Intervention lasts 2 to 3 hours weekly for 14 weeks, and includes parent, child, and family skills training. Positive results were maintained at 5-year follow-up and include reductions in family conflict, improvement in family communication and organization, and reductions in youth conduct disorders, aggressiveness, and substance abuse.

*For more information, see:*

Aktan, B.B., Kumpfer, K.L., & Turner, C. (1996). The Safe Haven Program: Effectiveness of a family skills training program for substance abuse prevention with inner city African-American families. *Journal of Drugs in Society*.

Harrison, R.S. (1994). *Final Evaluation of the Utah Community Youth Activity Project*. Submitted to Utah States Division of Substance Abuse. Salt Lake City, UT: Social Research Institute, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah, 1994.

*For program information, contact:*

Dr. Karol Kumpfer, Department of Health Education, HPER N-215, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, (810)581-7718.

- p. Webster Groves Even Start Program:* Links parenting education, adult basic education, and early childhood education (ages 0 to 7) through a single site family learning center and home-based instruction. Targets families experiencing difficulties including teen pregnancy, single-parents, poverty, low literacy skill, high school drop-outs, abusive relationships, and low self esteem. Adult activities include basic education, GED studies and computer skills, parenting or life skills and pre-employability instruction. Educational activities for children are designed to develop pre-literacy skills, such as social interaction and language development. Outcomes include: (1) parents in the program showed significant increases in passing the GED and parenting knowledge skills; (2) parents in the program took more responsibility for their child's growth and development and achieved their personal goals; and, (3) Children in the program significantly increased their receptive vocabulary and were equal to other children in preschool skills when they entered kindergarten.

*For project information, contact:*

Diane Givens, Coordinator, 9153 (R) Manchester, Rock Hill, MO 63119; Phone: (314) 968-5354; Fax: (314) 963-6411. [www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11j.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptw11/eptw11j.html)

## Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>1. Parenting Education</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project*</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>a. Adolescent Transitions Program (ATP)</i>	Pre- & post-test with one year follow-up	High-risk teens	Student, Family, Staff, School, School District	Effective in engaging students & parents; teaching skills; and improving parent-teen relations. Parent component lowered aggressive & delinquent teen behavior; teen component increased problem behavior.	None cited
<i>b. Iowa Strengthening Families</i>	Post-test; 1 & 2 year follow-ups	Sixth grade and families	Students, Family	Parental improvement in child management; increased parent-child communication; more child involvement in family; lower rates of alcohol initiation; 60% reduction in alcohol use.	None cited
<i>c. MELD Young Moms</i>	Post-test study of 7 sites	Young children and their mothers	Students, Family	Positive shift in parental attitudes about parenting and children; parents showed more appropriate expectations; increased awareness of child's needs; reduce corporal punishment.	None cited
<i>d. Parent Child Development Center Programs</i>	2 year follow-up	Low income families with young children and infants	Students, Family	Compared to controls: more positive mother-child interactions; improved mothers' positive control techniques; improved mothers' use of affection and praise; decreased destructive behavior	Compared to controls: increased IQ and cognitive ability; increased school achievement

Home Involvement in Schooling

1. Parenting Education, cont.					
Title of Program/Project*	Length of Intervention Evaluated	Target Population	Focus of Change	Outcomes	Nature of Academic Improvement
<i>e. Parent to Parent</i>	Post-test and follow-ups	Parents	Students, Family	89% showed greater understanding of role in preventing children's substance use; 91% changed way they communicated with children; 75% community involvement in prevention; 91% talk more with children about drugs	None cited
<i>f. PeaceBuilders</i>	Three year study (currently underway). Pilot data results reported.	Elementary children (K - 5) & parents	Students, Family, Staff	Pilot data indicate reduction in teachers' estimates of aggressive behavior/social skills; referrals to principal; school transfers; playground aggression; suspensions; and fights.	None cited
<i>g. Preparing for the Drug Free Years</i>	Ongoing pre- and post-intervention study. Preliminary results reported.	Parents of children grades 4-8; Low income; Multi-ethnic	Students, Family	Positive effects on parenting behavior; increased parental appreciation for parent-child bonding and providing child with meaningful family role; greater parental understanding about adolescent drug social context; more parents had family meetings.	None cited
<i>h. Syracuse Family Development Research Program</i>	10 year follow-up	Young children and parents	Students, Family	Relative to controls: (1) 6% of FDRP children compared to 22% of controls had official delinquent records; (2) Fewer serious offenses; (3) FDRP girls showed higher self-esteem; (4) FDRP parents were more proud of children; (5) Higher educational goals.	Relative to controls, girls showed better grades and had higher teacher ratings of school achievement

## Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>2. Adult Education</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project*</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>a. Family Literacy Research Summary (including Even Start)</i>	Multi program, Multi year, follow-up	Families	Family; Student	Adults show greater gains in literacy thru adults in adult education program & are less likely to dropout. Child participants demonstrate greater gains than those in child-focused programs.	Children were rated by teachers as “average or above” on overall academic performance.
<i>b. Family Intergenerational-Interaction Literacy Model (FILM)</i>	Pre- & pos-t intervention	Preschool children and families	Students, Family	Improved teacher reports of parent involvement in their children's education; Scored higher on school readiness indicators than comparisons.	Ranked by teachers as better academically.
<i>c. Mother-Child Home Program (MCHP) of the Verbal Interaction Project, Inc.</i>	2 years; high school graduation follow-up	Ages 2 to 4 and parents	Students, Family	Children at risk for educational disadvantage were no longer so.	Met national achievement test norms in elementary & graduated from high school at normal rate.
<i>d. Parents as Teachers</i>	First year evaluation & 3 year follow-up	Parents of children below age 3	Student, Family	Parents showed more knowledge & better child-rearing practices; were more likely to regard school district as responsive; were more involved in children’s school; and were more likely to have children's hearing tested.	Scored higher than comparison on Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children, Zimmerman Preschool Language Scale, standardized reading/mathematics.

## Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>3. Mobilizing the Home to Address Students' Basic Needs</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>a. Child Development Project (CDP)</i>	Multi-year; Assessment conducted each Spring	Grades 3 to 6, families, & school staff; urban, suburban, & rural	Student, Family, Staff	11% drop in alcohol use; 2% drop in marijuana use; 8% drop in cigarette use (compared to increases in the comparison school). Pro-social behaviors increased and delinquency decreased.	None cited
<i>b. Families and Schools Together (FAST)</i>	Pre- & post-program & 3 year follow-up	Parents of children at risk for substance abuse & other problems; Multilingual groups	Student, Family	Improved: parent-child relationships; family functioning; parental school involvement; family networking; child attention span & self-esteem; Decreased child behavior problems. Follow-up showed increased: parental counseling/alcohol treatment; employment/school enrollment; & community/school involvement.	None cited
<i>c. Seattle Social Development Project</i>	Evaluations at grade 2, 5, 6 & 11.	Grade school and middle school, with parent training component	Student, Family, Staff	Lower levels of aggression and antisocial behaviors, self-destructive behaviors; less alcohol and delinquency initiation; increases in family management practices, communication, and attachment to family; more attachment and commitment to school; less involvement with antisocial peers; reduced involvement in violent delinquency, sexual activity, being drunk and drinking and driving.	None cited

Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>3. Mobilizing the Home to Address Students' Basic Needs (Cont.)</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>d. Project ACHIEVE</i>	3 year program; Since 1990	Pre-K to Middle School	Student, Family	Academic improvements for those students whose parents were trained in the Parent Drop-In Center; improvement in teachers' perception of school climate; 28% decline in total disciplinary referrals; decline in suspensions from 9% to 3%	75% decrease in referrals to special ed; 67% decrease in special ed placements; reduced student grade retentions; increase in students scoring above 50th percentile in achievement tests.
<i>e. Early Intervention for School Success (EISS)</i>	First year evaluation and 3 year follow-up	Kindergarten	Student	Gains in: receptive language; visual motor integration; & achievement after 1 year.	Maintained reading gains through grade 3 & fewer grade retentions.
<i>f. Effective Black Parenting (EBPP)</i>	Pre- & post-evaluation	African-American children ages 2 to 12	Student, Family	Compared to controls, showed: reduction of parental rejection; improved family quality; improved child behaviors	None cited
<i>g. Enriching a Child's Literacy Environment (ECLE)</i>	Pre- & post-intervention	Ages 6 months to 3 years	Student, Family	Improvements on Mental Development Index & Psychomotor Development Index (Bayley Scales of Infant Development).	For every month in program, showed 2 months of growth relative to the normative group.

Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>3. Mobilizing the Home to Address Students' Basic Needs (Cont.)</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>h. Perry Preschool Program</i>	Pre- & 15 year follow-up	Ages 3 and 4	Student, Family	Compared to controls: showed less delinquency; fewer arrests at age 19; less gang fights and police contact; less antisocial behavior through age 15; less school dropouts (33% vs 51%); more high school graduations	Compared to controls, showed higher scores on intellectual ability and high school grades
<i>i. Family Advocacy Network (FAN Club)</i>	Pre- & post-evaluation	Parents of children ages 10 to 12	Student, Family	Greater ability to refuse alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes; increased knowledge of health consequences of substances	None cited
<i>j. Los Ninos Bien Educados</i>	Initial field test in 1980's	Newly immigrated Latino kindergarten children & parents	Student, Family	Compared to controls, program parents perceived relationship with children as better or much better; teacher & parent rated child behavior improvements	None cited
<i>k. Project P.I.A.G.E.T.</i>	First year evaluation and 2 year follow-up	Preschool and kindergarten children & parents (Limited English Speaking)	Student	After 1 year, higher than comparison on receptive language & reading readiness.	Sustained gains for 2 years on NCEs in English language reading, language, and mathematics.



Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>3. Mobilizing the Home to Address Students' Basic Needs (Cont.)</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>l. First Step to Success</i>	Pre- & post-intervention & 2 year follow-up	Grades K to 3	Student, family	Sustained changes in: adaptive behavior; aggressive behavior; maladaptive behavior; and time spent engaged in assignments.	None cited
<i>m. Parent-Teacher Intervention Project (P-TIP)</i>	Pre- & post-intervention & 2 year follow-up	Preschool children with social withdrawal or conduct problems	Student, parents	Parents rated experimental children's social skills as improved (although not a significant difference); parents rated both experimental children and controls with decreased problem behaviors (but no significant difference between the groups)	None cited.
<i>n. Preventive Treatment Program</i>	Post-intervention; 3 & 5 year follow-ups	7-9 year old boys who display problem behavior	Student, Family	Treated boys: were less likely to trespass, steal, and fight; were better adjusted in school; showed less serious difficulties in school. At age 15, they were less likely to report: gang involvement; having been drunk or taken drugs in the past 12 months; committing delinquent acts; and having friends arrested by the police.	Treated boys were less likely to be held back in school or placed in special education classes compared to controls.
<i>o. Strengthening Families Program (SFP)</i>	Pre- & post-intervention; 5 year follow-up	Ages 6 to 10; Substance-abusing families	Student, Family	Reduction in family conflict; improvement in family communication and organization	None cited

Home Involvement in Schooling

<b>3.Mobilizing the Home to Address Students' Basic Needs (Cont.)</b>					
<b>Title of Program/Project</b>	<b>Length of Intervention Evaluated</b>	<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Focus of Change</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of Academic Improvement</b>
<i>p. Webster Groves Even Start Program</i>	Pre- & post-intervention	Families with children ages 0-7	Student, Family	Parents showed significant increases in passing GED & parenting knowledge skills; took more responsibility for child's growth and development; and achieved personal goals.	Children showed increased receptive vocabulary; were equal to other children in preschool skills by kindergarten.

☼ **Spotlight on:**

*Parent News for September 1995*  
***Effective Parent Involvement: Parents as Partners***  
*Washington, DC*

*Effective parent involvement programs demonstrate real commitment to helping low-income parents support their children's success in school and treat parents as true collaborators rather than clients. Also, effective programs bridge the gap between school and home by building on the community's values, cultures, and languages. Most importantly, these programs recognize that all parents have something to contribute to schools.*



► ***New Directions in Parent Involvement*** is a three-part report written by Norm Fruchter, Anne Galletta, and J. Lynne White of the Academy for Educational Development. The report describes 18 parent involvement programs in 3 categories.

*First reviewed are programs which help prepare preschoolers for school. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) gives parents of 4- and 5-year-olds a two-year curriculum, lesson plans, and materials to teach their children the skills they'll need in kindergarten.*

*Second, programs for parents of school-aged children are outlined. Schools using the TransParent School Model provide recorded messages about homework and classroom events for parents, and parents can record their responses. The Megaskills Program teaches parents how to help their children develop responsibility, motivation, and other skills that lead to school success.*

*The third section describes general school improvement programs that have parent components, such as James Comer's School Development Program, Henry Levin's Accelerated Schools Project, and Don Davies' The League of Schools Reaching Out. Finally, the authors describe programs in Kentucky, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dade County that have given parents larger roles in governance. New Directions in Parent Involvement is 125 pages, \$12.95 prepaid from:*

*Academy for Educational Development  
Publications  
1255 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037*

*From the North Central Regional Education Laboratory's Clipboard, Issue 34, Summer 1995, p. 28.  
<http://npin.org/pnews/pnew995/pnew995e.html>*

### *III. Strategic Tools for Schools*

- A. Two Major Organizational Resources
- B. Effective Tools for Promoting Family-School Partnerships
- C. Planning Strategically for Parental Involvement in Education.
- D. Strategic Recommendations for Family-School Partnerships that Enable Parental Involvement in Schools
- E. Strategies for State and Local Educational Agencies
- F. New Strategies in Policy to Improve Parent and Home Involvement in Schools
- G. Strategies to Strengthen the Capacity of Teachers & Administrators to Work With Families of Diverse Backgrounds to Increase Family-School Partnerships.
- H. New Skills for New Schools: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement

⚙️ **Spotlight:** An ERIC Digest: Involving At-Risk Families in Their Children's Education



## A. Two Major Organizational Resources



### *National Network of Partnership Schools*

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/index.htm>

The National Network of Partnership Schools was established by researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Partnership Schools brings together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships.

Epstein's framework of **six types of involvement** and the **action team** approach are essential for a comprehensive program of partnership. Planning and evaluating partnership practices helps schools reach their goals for improvement and student success. District and state leadership can facilitate the work of Action Teams by conducting workshops and end-of-year celebrations, by assisting with budgets and funding, and in many other ways. Now, using **ten steps**, all schools can design and conduct school, home, and community connections in ways that improve schools, strengthen families, and increase student success.

Check out the new **NNPS Partnership Planner**, a twelve-month guide for planning, implementing, evaluating, and facilitating partnership programs.



### **Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships**

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>

Joyce L. Epstein, Director  
Mavis G. Sanders, Assistant Director  
Johns Hopkins University

The mission of this Center is to conduct and disseminate research, development, and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help families, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.

Research is needed to understand all children and all families, not just those who are economically and educationally advantaged or already connected to school and community resources. The Center's projects aim to increase an understanding of practices of partnership that help all children succeed in elementary, middle, and high schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Current projects include the development of and research on the Center's National Network of Partnership Schools. This Network guides school, district, and state leaders, and teams of educators, parents, and others to improve school, family, and community partnerships. Studies will be conducted on the structures and processes used to "scale up" programs of partnership to all schools in a district or state, and the results of these programs.

Research is conducted in collaboration with the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR) at Johns Hopkins University. Studies focus on the effects of school, family, and community partnerships, and on the development of preservice, inservice, and advanced courses in partnerships for teachers and administrators.

The Center also organizes an International Network of Scholars including researchers from the U. S. and over 40 nations who are working on topics of school, family, and community partnerships. International roundtables, conferences, and opportunities for visiting scholars are supported by the Center.

The Center began its work in 1990 as the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, supported by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). More than twenty researchers conducted projects on school-family-community connections from birth through high school. Over 50 reports, guidebooks, classroom materials, videos, surveys, and other products by Center researchers are available from the Center's Publications Office. The Center maintains an active dissemination program to assist researchers, educators, families, and others with research, policy, and practice.

For a listing of documents available for order from the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, please see our Publications Lists <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/listsab.htm>

## B. Effective Tools for Promoting Family-School Partnerships

State legislation (Assembly Bill 1334, Chapter 485, Statutes of 1995) required the California Department of Education (CDE) to promote the use of and provide information about family-school compacts to school districts and county offices of education. As required by statute, the State Board of Education approved model compacts that can be used by schools and districts to develop their own local versions of the compacts. These compacts, which were adopted for use at elementary, middle and high schools, are an effective tool for promoting family-school partnerships. Federal law, Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), requires schools that receive Title I funds to adopt a family-school compact. The U.S. Department of Education has published a new guidebook titled: [A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School Community Partnerships](#) that is designed to assist schools in building effective, workable family-school compacts that can help increase student achievement. Copies may be obtained by calling 1800 USA LEARN. The CDE has developed a guide, titled Family-School Compacts, that answers basic questions about the purpose, design and adoption of compacts at a school site. The guide, available from CDE Press also contains supplemental materials, including a bibliography of relevant research and samples of compacts, to aid in the implementation of compacts.

### **Compacts as a Tool to Help Students Succeed**

Research shows that students do best in school when families are involved in advocating for and supporting their children's education, both at home and at school. Likewise, student performance improves when schools reach out to families to establish partnerships and assist families with ideas and avenues for supporting their children's education at home and at school. A family-school compact is a tool that schools and districts can use to encourage collaboration with families. Compacts are voluntary agreements between the home and school that describe specific activities that teachers, families, administrators, and students will undertake to support the student's learning. Compacts are most effective if they have been developed jointly with families. Compacts may describe home activities such as talking daily about school and everyday events, monitoring the amount and quality of TV viewing, and supervision of homework. Participation by families in school-centered events such as parent-teacher conferences, Open House, Back-to-School Night, student co-curricular activities, and school decision-making teams, are examples of ways family can directly support student achievement in school.

### **Joint Development of Compacts with Families**

The success of compacts depends on the extent to which many school staff and families believe in the concept and use compacts to establish shared responsibilities for students' education. Many alternative schools, such as charter, magnet and specialized program schools, successfully use compacts as a concrete way to engage families, welcome them as partners, and formalize the important role that families play in the education of their children by requiring families to spend a specified number of hours participating in their children's education.

Also, families overwhelmingly want to be involved but often do not know how to help. Family-school compacts can be an effective tool and opportunity for schools to demonstrate a concrete commitment to family-school partnerships.

California Department of Education  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/fc/family/compacts.hbni>

## C. Planning Strategically for Parental Involvement in Education

**The following are examples of goals schools, teachers, parents, families, communities, and administrators can establish in order to increase Parental Involvement in Education.**

- ! Citizens should recognize and support family-school involvement as an integral part of every school system.
- ! Each school district should develop a written framework and provide support for family-school involvement through grade twelve.
- ! Schools will design parent involvement programs that influence the successful growth and development of children.
- ! Teachers and administrators will reach out to families of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to increase family-school partnerships.
- ! Schools will maximize opportunities for parents and other community members to participate in and support children's education at the elementary school, middle school, and high school levels.
- ! School districts will establish incentive programs in schools to encourage teachers to extend the school curriculum to the home.
- ! Parents will have access to the resources and training needed to strengthen the learning environment of their young children during the preschool years.
- ! School districts will use available resources and pursue funding and support from public and private sources to meet the goals, strategies, and activities in the *California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education*.

*Excerpted from  
the California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education,  
California Department of Education, 1992.*



## D. Strategic Recommendations for Family-School Partnerships That Enable Parental Involvement In Schools

The California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education (1992) recommends ways that all levels of the education system in the state can work together to meet the needs of students in schools through partnerships with families. Both the State Board policy and the strategic plan recommend that districts and schools initiate partnerships that support six effective roles for families and educators.

Provide learning opportunities for educators to meet their basic obligation to work effectively with families and for families to meet their basic parenting obligations.

Ensure systematic two-way communication (school to home and home to school) about the school, school programs, and students' progress.

Provide learning opportunities for educators and families to work together so that both can fulfill a wide range of support and resource roles for students and the school.

Provide educators and families with strategies and techniques for connecting children and learning activities at home and in the community with learning at school.

Prepare educators and families to actively participate in school decision making and to exercise their leadership and advocacy skills.

Provide educators and families with the skills to access community and support services that strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Major state and federal education reform efforts emphasize the importance of family and community involvement to increase student achievement and strengthen public schools. The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) requires the adoption of site-level family involvement policies to support students in attaining high standards, and family-school compacts which express the shared responsibilities of schools and parents as partners in student success. As required by state law, the State Board recently approved model compacts, and the California Department of Education published a **guide, Family-School Compacts**, to assist school districts and schools in developing and using the compacts to encourage a closer working partnership between the home and the school.

Excerpted from the California Department of Education Fact Sheet on Parent/Family Involvement. See <http://www.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/lsp/f-pfact.htm>

## E. Strategies for State and Local Educational Agencies

The strategic planning process focuses on many strategies that can be used to build partnerships between families and schools. The most compelling strategies for transforming the mission and goals into action plans for implementation are those designed to:

**Build public awareness and support for family involvement in education.** Endorsements for family involvement must come from school districts, schools, businesses, and community organizations; for example, churches and social groups.

**Establish comprehensive districtwide parent involvement policies and plans.** School districts must develop policies for parent involvement and plans for implementation that will underscore the importance of family-school partnerships.

**Implement high quality, comprehensive, and sequential school and communitybased programs that promote meaningful parent involvement across all grades.** Schools must design parent involvement programs that support the research-based types of parent involvement identified in the State Board's policy on parent involvement and described previously.

**Strengthen the capacity of teachers and administrators to work with families of diverse backgrounds.** Preservice and inservice training programs must focus on attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable educators to improve relationships with parents and involve parents in children's learning.

**Strengthen the capacity of families and other community members to become involved in the education of children at all levels of the educational system.** Schools must develop family involvement programs that train and support parents in multiple roles throughout a child's education.

**Provide teachers with incentives to develop innovative ideas that help to link parent involvement to classroom learning.** Schools must facilitate and support teachers' efforts to build relationships with parents and provide increased opportunities for parent involvement at school and at home.

**Promote early intervention programs designed to strengthen and reinforce the role of families in children's growth and development.** Programs must be established to link families to education, health, and social services agencies during a child's preschool years.

**Use all available resources to implement and evaluate.** School districts must maximize existing state, federal, and local resources and form partnerships with public and private sources.

Excerpt from the California Strategic Plan For Parent Involvement In Education: Recommendations for Transforming Schools Through Family-Community-School Partnerships. California DOE, 1992.

## F. New Strategies In Policy To Improve Parent and Home Involvement in Schools

### **What is the Family-School Partnership Act?"**

The Family-School Partnership Act is a California law that State Board allows parents, grandparents, and guardians to take time off from work to participate in their children's school or child care activities. Authored by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin when she was serving in the state assembly, the law (Labor Code Section 230.8) first took effect in 1995. Its provisions were expanded in 1997 to add licensed child day care facilities to the kindergarten-through-twelfth- grade levels included in the original legislation.

### **What opportunities am I offered under this law?**

If the following criteria are met, you may take off up to 40 hours each year (up to eight hours in any calendar month) to participate in activities at your child's school or day care facility: You are a parent, guardian, or grandparent who has custody of a child enrolled in a California public or private school, kindergarten through grade twelve, or licensed child day care facility.

You work for a business that has 25 or more employees at the same location.

**How should I account for my time off work?** The law allows you to use vacation time, personal leave, or compensatory time off to account for the time you use participating in your child's school or child care activities. You may also use time off without pay if permitted by your employer. The employee, not the employer, chooses from the options that are available.

### **How can I take advantage of these opportunities?**

Let your employer know in advance that you would like to take time off to participate in activities at your child's school or child care facility. Although the law does not say how far in advance you should inform your employer, it is likely that rules are in place at your work site about reasonable notice for planned absences. And, if your employer requests, you are required to provide written proof of having participated at your child's school or child care facility.

### **If both parents of a child are employed by the same employer at the same work site, does the law allow them to talk time off together for the same school or child care activity?**

The parent who first gives notice to the employer has priority for the planned absence, although the other parent may also participate if the employer approves.

### **Does the law apply to parents who work the night shift or only to those working the day shift? What about part-time employees?**

All parents working full time, regardless of the shift they work, are allowed up to 40 hours per year. Because a night worker normally sleeps during the day when school is in session, that employee might ask for approval of an absence during the night shift in order to rest adequately for participating in activities at his or her child's school or child care facility. Part-time workers are allowed a proportionate number of hours. For example, half-time workers may take up to 20 hours a year. Teachers, even though they might work only ten months out of the year, are considered full-time

employees and may take up to 40 hours per year.

**What kinds of school or child care activities may I participate in with my child?**

Under the law any activity that is sponsored, supervised, or approved by the school, school board, or child care facility is acceptable. Examples might be volunteering in your child's classroom; participating in parent-teacher conferences, Back-to-School Night, Open House, field trips, or extracurricular sporting events sponsored by the school, school board, or child care facility; and assisting in community service learning activities.

**I am a teacher. Is my employer required to pay for a substitute teacher during my absence?**

Because teachers generally get neither vacation nor compensatory time off during the school year, their only options under this law are time off without pay and possibly personal leave, unless their collective bargaining agreement provides for other alternatives. The school district would cover the cost of a substitute teacher through the salary savings gained from the classroom teacher's time off without pay. Check with your personnel director.

**Does my employer have the right to refuse my request for time off to participate in activities at my child's school or child care facility?**

Not if your employer has 25 or more employees at the same location. All such employers must comply with the law and allow you to take off up to 40 hours a year to participate in your child's school or child care activities. At least one of the options--using vacation, personal leave, compensatory time off, or time off without pay--must be provided.

**My employer has an incentive bonus program for employees who take no unpaid leaves of absence. If I take time off to participate in activities at my child's school or child care facility, will my doing so count against me?**

Although the statute contains no clear answer to this question, it seems reasonable that an employer would apply an incentive bonus program equally to all unpaid leaves of absence, regardless of the reason for the leave. Such a neutral application of the policy probably would not be considered discriminatory or retaliatory, particularly if employees account for their time off through vacation, personal leave, and so forth.

**What should I do if I feel that my employer has discriminated against me for taking time off to participate in my child's school or child care activities?**

Your employer may not fire you, demote you, take away your benefits, deny you a promotion, or in any other way discriminate against you because you have chosen to participate in activities at your child's school or child care facility. The law provides for civil penalties and compensation to the parents if such discrimination occurs. The law does not, however, give enforcement powers to a specific governmental agency. If you feel you have suffered discrimination, contact your local labor commissioner or consult an attorney.

Excerpts from California Family-School Partnerships or Child Care Activities, May 22, 2000  
Copyright California Department of Education  
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/fc/family/fcparbro.html>

## **G. Strategies to Strengthen the capacity of teachers and administrators to work with families of diverse backgrounds to increase family-school partnerships.**

To achieve this goal a department might consider:

### **I. Providing preservice training and resources to help prospective teachers develop skills in working with families and in encouraging and increasing parent involvement.**

Activities of the California Department of Education will support the California Department of Education and University of California Joint Subcommittee on Parent Involvement by:

- ▶ Publishing a brochure for teachers to show them how to involve parents in the education of their children at home
- ▶ Coordinating a parent involvement conference for teacher educators and prospective teachers that focuses on designing and implementing home-learning practices and activities
- ▶ Continuing to publish a semiannual newsletter for teacher educators, prospective teachers, and school district personnel on a variety of topics for parent involvement

### **II. Train school teachers and administrators on strategies for family-school partnerships.**

One way to facilitating this process is to incorporate workshop topics, modules and materials that address the cultural diversity of families and ways that school administrators and teachers can build partnerships with families, are as follows:

- ▶ Families as Home-Learning Environments
- ▶ School System Policies and Supports
- ▶ School Practices that Foster Home Learning
- ▶ Teachers' Practices to Engage and Assist Parents

*Developed by the California Department of Education in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, these materials and workshop modules have been pilot-tested in selected California school districts.*

The Parenting and Community Education Office staff might considering providing or identifying others who will provide, on request, in-service training on parent involvement for district level and site-level administrators. Other activities might include:

- ▶ Producing training videos and materials to convey the importance of family involvement and focus on guidelines, strategies for change, and effective practices for enhancing parents' involvement in home learning and in volunteering and decision making at school
- ▶ Identifying experts at the national, state, and local levels and in higher education to provide technical assistance and training to school administrators and teachers on building relationships with families and on designing and implementing site-level parent involvement programs.
- ▶ Developing a booklet for school administrators on strategies to involve parents effectively in school operations

### *Activities in Local Educational Agencies*

School districts and county agencies will build support from teachers and administrators for family involvement by:

- I. Organizing conferences and training seminars that focus on:
  - a. Building collaboration with families on how to implement the six types of parent involvement emphasized in the California State Board of Education's policies
  - b. Developing parent and community support for schools
  - c. Developing skills for working with parents of diverse cultural backgrounds
  - d. Improving communication between schools and families (For example, *Communicating with Parents*, a source book of ideas and strategies for building effective communication with families, is available from the San Diego County Office of Education.)
- II. Using cable and satellite television networks to provide training on understanding diverse cultural and family backgrounds and helping families to become partners with school staffs (For example, the Educational Telecommunications Network [ETN], a service of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, provides staff development and parent education programs throughout California.)
- III. Networking with institutions of higher learning to involve prospective teachers in school and district levels with training and projects for parent, involvement.

Excerpted from the California Strategic Plan For Parental Involvement In Education: Recommendations for Transforming School Through Family-Community-School Partnerships. Sacramento, 1992.

# New Skills for New Schools: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement

Angela M. Shartrand, Heather B. Weiss, Holly M. Kreider, M. Elena Lopez  
1997

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT  
Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Cambridge, MA

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NewSkills/> (complete report)

Prepared under contract 43-31HA-7-40108 for the U.S. Department of Education

The views expressed in this report, developed with contractual support from the U.S. Department of Education, do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

<http://middleweb.com/TeachFam.html>  
(from the U.S. Department of Education news service)

**PARENT PARTICIPATION** in children's schooling is so important that it was established in 1994 as a National Education Goal. Yet "Teacher preparation in family involvement lags far behind school efforts to promote family involvement," according to a 65-page report, "New Skills for New Schools," released by the U.S. Department of Education in November 1997.

The report examines reasons for -- and the status of -- teacher preparation in family involvement. It also provides a \*framework\* that illustrates various kinds of teacher training for family involvement. Unlike other family involvement typologies, this framework focuses not on actual family involvement activities carried out in schools, but on the attitudes, skills & knowledge teachers need to work effectively with parents.

Below are the framework & an excerpt from Chapter 4. The chapter, "Promising Methods for Teacher Preparation." You can read the full text of the report at the Education Department website.

# "New Skills for New Schools: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement," 1997, Harvard Family Research Project

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NOTE: This framework begins with general knowledge about family contributions to child development & school achievement, & then builds toward specialized knowledge such as ways in which schools can support families & families can support schools.

## Family Involvement Framework for Teacher Training

### ***General Family Involvement***

Goals: To provide general information on the goals of, benefits of, & barriers to family involvement. To promote knowledge of, skills in, & positive attitudes toward involving parents.

### ***General Family Knowledge***

Goals: To promote knowledge of different families' cultural beliefs, childrearing practices, structures, & living environments. To promote an awareness of & respect for different backgrounds & lifestyles.

### ***Home-School Communication***

Goals: To provide various techniques & strategies to improve two-way communication between home & school (and/or parent & teacher).

### ***Family Involvement in Learning Activities***

Goals: To provide information on how to involve parents in their children's learning outside of the classroom.

### ***Families Supporting Schools***

Goals: To provide information on ways to involve parents in helping the school, both within & outside the classroom.

### ***Schools Supporting Families***

Goals: To examine how schools can support families' social, educational, & social service needs through parent education programs, parent centers, & referrals to other community or social services.

### ***Families as Change Agents***

To introduce ways to support & involve parents & families in decision making, action research, child advocacy, parent & teacher training, & development of policy, programs, & curriculum.

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## Promising Methods for Teacher Preparation (Chapter 4)

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The nine programs featured in this report shared common innovative practices. These practices focused on developing prospective teachers' problem-solving skills by exposing them to challenging situations which required them to negotiate sensitive issues. The programs also provided them with opportunities to work in schools & communities -- often under the guidance of experienced professionals -- where they were able to gain valuable communication & interpersonal skills, especially when dealing with families with very different backgrounds from their own. These community experiences also gave them the opportunity to develop collaborative skills with professionals from other disciplines. In addition, the

programs emphasized the application of research skills to develop a better understanding of families & communities. They encouraged the use of information about families to develop family involvement activities & to create supplemental materials for classroom use.

These programs utilized guest speakers, role play, the case method, community experiences, research with families & communities, self-reflection, & interprofessional education.



**GUEST SPEAKERS.** Attending guest lectures & discussions led by parents, practicing teachers, experts from other disciplines, or co-instructors in teacher education courses provides prospective teachers opportunities to learn from & interact with key players in children's education. Program faculty & researchers alike attested to the benefits of drawing upon the expertise of parents, school personnel, & faculty in other disciplines to enrich teacher preparation.

### Examples of Guest Speakers

- \* Program graduates, who researched family involvement during their own teacher preparation programs, talked about what they had learned from their projects & how they had applied that knowledge to their first weeks of teaching.
- \* A parent-school coordinator, parents with special needs children, social work faculty, & special educators described how Individual Family Service Plans are developed with families. A home-school coordinator spoke to prospective teachers about her work & discussed ways in which teachers could promote family involvement.
- \* A human development counseling specialist presented a parent effectiveness training model & discussed skills to use in parent-teacher conferences.

**ROLE PLAY.** Role play requires students to act out situations that they might face when working with parents. Role play gives prospective teachers simulated experience in communicating, handling difficult or threatening situations, & resolving conflict. By dramatizing situations, prospective teachers become emotionally engaged & learn in a "hands-on" manner about the situations that they will face in their classrooms.

Because role play usually takes place in the university classroom, teacher educators can analyze their students' reactions & responses, & peers can give feedback. By alternately playing the roles of teacher & parent, prospective teachers can gain a better understanding of each perspective.

- \* Another program presented a case in which a parent

### Examples of Role Play Scenarios

- \* Negotiating differences of opinion with a parent
- \* Communicating with a parent about his or her child's poor performance or behavior
- \* Conducting a parent-teacher conference
- \* Discussing a student portfolio with a parent
- \* Explaining a new curriculum to a parent
- \* Talking with a parent who is angry or upset

**CASE METHOD.** In the case method, prospective teachers read about dilemmas or ambiguous situations that could arise in working with parents. After reading the cases, these students analyze & discuss them, referring to their own relevant experiences & to the theories & principles covered in class.

Because the case method approach encourages prospective teachers to examine many possible responses to a particular situation, & to evaluate the merits & drawbacks of each of these responses, they are able to understand the complexities of home-school relationships. Students' analyses of these situations help them develop crucial problem-solving skills. The case method also offers students the opportunity to integrate their beliefs with known theories as they respond to complex & problematic, real-life situations (Hochberg, 1993).

### Examples of the Case Method

- \* One program used a case study example in which a young girl in a program for migrant workers had difficulty being understood because she always held her hand over her mouth when she spoke. A month into the program, the girl's teacher met the mother & discovered that she also spoke with her hand in front of her mouth, to hide the fact that she had no teeth. This case demonstrated that the child's communication problems were the result of her modeling her mother's behavior. The class looked at this case from multiple perspectives. The goal was for students to avoid jumping to conclusions or making assumptions about children or families.

- & teacher had different agendas for a parent-teacher

conference. To analyze the case, students wrote a 15-page response to the parent, drawing from 1 of the developmental frameworks presented in class. Responses were read aloud to classmates acting in the role of the parent, who then gave feedback from that perspective.

**CULTURAL IMMERSION.** One way to learn about children from diverse ethnic backgrounds is to live as they do. Cultural immersion is especially helpful when the teaching force & student body come from different cultural and/or economic backgrounds.

### **Examples of Cultural Immersion**

- \* In a former program at Clark Atlanta University, prospective teachers, along with social work students, had the option of living in housing projects with the children & families whom they would one day serve.
- \* At Northern Arizona University, prospective teachers in special education can live & student teach on a Navajo reservation.

**COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES.** During placement in community settings, such as human service agencies, children's homes, & community centers, prospective teachers can learn about services in the community & form relationships with family & community members in a nonschool context.

In programs that prepare teachers to work in urban schools or in communities with linguistic & cultural diversity, community experiences tend to be emphasized. These experiences allow prospective teachers to see children in a variety of settings, become more visible in the community, & understand children's sociocultural contexts.

### **Examples of Community Experience**

- \* At UTEP, the community experience component was designed by parents who were asked what they thought teachers should know about their children's community. The experience began with a tour of major service agencies in the community, including libraries, urban leagues, & community centers with educational components.
- \* Community experiences can also include helping

families & communities. Working in a neighborhood center, teaching ESL to parents, & providing weekend respite care for a family with a disabled child are some of the numerous ways in which prospective teachers are able to assist families & communities.

- \* The "Parent Buddy Project" arranges for prospective teachers to visit a family's home several times a semester. Sometimes "buddies" will offer to babysit so that parents can go to PTA meetings. In this way, the project not only helps prospective teachers learn about family life, it also helps parents become more involved with their children's education.

### **RESEARCH WITH FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES.**

Research with families & communities can range from parent surveys to in-depth ethnographic interviews with families. This method offers teachers the opportunity to understand issues from the perspective of families & communities & to utilize their expertise & insight. Teachers can learn from & interact with families of different cultural & economic backgrounds as they conduct their research.

According to one program respondent, this method sends the message: "I want to get to know you," rather than "I'm here to teach you something."

### **Examples of Research Projects with Families & Communities**

Prospective teachers have:

- \* developed a parent questionnaire or entrance inventory after working with at least 5 parents of children with special needs & written a summary of findings.
- \* interviewed their own parents about their respective childhood experiences.
- \* interviewed families who had a child with special needs. The prospective teachers then reflected on what they had learned from the family & on the implications for working with children.
- \* conducted ethnographic interviews in children's homes to gather & document household knowledge. The information collected was then used to develop lesson plans.
- \* "shadowed" a child to gather information about the child's health, physical education, & social

development & asked parents & family & community members for information.

\* produced a book of research abstracts based on the prospective teachers' research with parents.

**SELF-REFLECTION.** Self-reflection techniques include journal writing & other assignments that ask teachers to think about their own family backgrounds, their assumptions about other families, & their attitudes toward working with families. The goal is for prospective teachers to consider how their own perspectives will influence their work with families, especially those very different from their own.

Self-reflection can be combined with other methods used to teach family involvement. It helps teachers process what they are learning & make the experiences personally meaningful. Self-reflection is also useful for addressing cultural differences. Finally, this method helps prospective teachers uncover any negative feelings & assumptions that they might have which may inhibit them from building positive relationships between home & school.

### **Assignments for Self-Reflection**

\* When discussing social development, prospective teachers in one program reflect on their own social development & on the ways in which their teachers influenced them. This introspection helps prospective teachers examine their own beliefs & learn how these beliefs might influence their future work with families.

\* One faculty member teaches about issues of power in society (gender & minority status, for example) by asking students to analyze their own cultural perspectives (such as their cultural history, language, & literacy).

\* In one program, prospective teachers are asked to look at their own cultural experiences & history, think

about the match between their family community culture & their school culture, & then discuss ways in which some children's home & school cultures differ.

### **INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.**

Interprofessional education is a new trend in preparing human service professionals. Schools of nursing, social work, & other disciplines join with schools of education to prepare teachers & other professionals working with children & families. The purpose of this strategy is to train a range of human service professionals to work more closely with one another, to work in an increasingly collaborative environment, & to deliver services more effectively to families by placing them at the center of the human service system.

### **Examples of Interprofessional Education**

\* One program unites a school of education & an anthropology department to find new ways of working with families.

\* Another program brings teachers, administrators, & counselors together in an intensive family involvement training experience.

Comprehensive interprofessional training programs have the potential to prepare teachers & other human service professionals to work effectively with families. For example, teachers involved in such training programs will be better prepared to identify children's & families' nonacademic support needs & refer them to appropriate outside agencies & personnel. Promising models are currently being developed at Ohio State University, the University of Washington in Seattle, & Miami University in Ohio.

## ✿ **Spotlight on:**

# Involving At-Risk Families in Their Children's Education.

*ERIC Digest Series Number EA 58.*

*Liontos, Lynn Balster*

"I never see the parents I need to see," more than one teacher has complained. These are the parents of children at risk--at risk of failing, of dropping out, of having what in today's world accounts to no future at all.

The benefits to children whose parents are involved in the educational process are well-known: substantial research links family involvement to both academic and social success of children at school. Of all youth, at-risk children, whose numbers are increasing, have the most to gain from parent involvement. Consequently, schools need to find ways to reach at-risk families.

### WHO IS AT RISK?

Most children are "at risk" at some time or another. James Comer states that "given increasing divorce rates, the growing numbers of single parent families and families in which both parents work, and the general complexity of modern life, even children of well-educated, middle-class parents can come to school unprepared because of the stress their families are undergoing." (quoted by Lynn Olson 1990)

Certain children, however, are in critical need of social intervention. These are generally the children who have traditionally been termed "at-risk." They are usually poor minorities often from other cultural backgrounds.

### WHY IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT SO IMPORTANT FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN?

The main reason parental involvement with the schools is so important for at-risk children is that their home and school worlds are so different. "The predictable consequence in such situations is that children usually embrace the familiar home culture and reject the unfamiliar school culture, including its academic components and goals," says Muriel Hamilton-Lee (1988).

Suzanne Ziegler (1987) suggests it may be particularly important for teachers to develop communication with parents of at-risk children so that both understand the others' settings and expectations which may alter both settings. That is, school can become more home-like and home can have a school component. Or, as Joyce Epstein (1987) points out, family-like schools make students feel part of a "school family," where they receive individual attention which improves motivation.

### WHY HAVEN'T SCHOOLS BEEN REACHING AT-RISK PARENTS?

Traditional methods of parental involvement do not work with at-risk parents. In addition, the history of relationships between poor and minority parents and schools has been very different than those of the middle class. Barriers and misperceptions that exist for both parents and schools include:

Parents At-risk parents may have feelings of inadequacy, failure, and poor self-worth, as well as negative experience with schools. Other cultures, as well as many low-income parents in general, see schools as institutionalized authority and, therefore, leave it to the teachers to educate their children. Additionally, there are economic, emotional, and time constraints (some families are struggling just to survive) and logistical problems such as lack of child care, transportation, and scheduling conflicts. In cultural minority families, involving parents can be further complicated by language barriers.

Teachers and Schools. Teacher attitudes play a large part in the academic success of at-risk children. Teachers who have low expectations for at-risk children, or who believe that at-risk parents don't care about their children and don't want to be involved in their education may contribute to children's failure. Teachers also may feel uncertain about how to maintain their role as experts while still involving parents.

According to Diana T. Slaughter and Valerie Shahariw Kuehne (1988), schools tend to see the parental role as traditional and perhaps passive and home-based, whereas many parents are interested in more active roles. Schools are often guilty of not taking the initiative to ask parents for help, and of not welcoming their participation. Finally, schools often organize events for their own convenience and pay little attention to the needs of at-risk parents.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THESE OBSTACLES?

Schools should consider adopting new beliefs and premises, based largely on the work of Rhoda Becher (Ziegler), Don Davies (1989), and Jean Krasnow (1990):

1. Successful at-risk programs begin with the premise that it's not any single person's or group's fault that a child or group of children is not learning; nor is it the school's fault. We are all responsible and dependent on each other.
  2. All families have strengths. Successful programs emphasize them and let parents know these strengths are valued. This also means it isn't helpful to view at-risk families as deficient or as failures.
3. Most parents really care about their children. Successful programs acknowledge and express this. Studies of poor and minority parents in Maryland, New England, and the Southwest, for instance, have found that parents care deeply about their children's education but may not know how to help. (M. Sandra Reeves 1988)
  4. Parents can learn new techniques. Successful programs help parents identify what they're capable of doing and how to overcome obstacles. One way to do this is by teaching them new skills and behaviors, such as helping their children through home learning.
5. Cultural differences are both valid and valuable. Successful programs learn about other cultures and respect their beliefs. They find ways of building on the loyalty and obedience, for example, that Hispanic parents instill in their children.
  6. Many family forms exist and are legitimate. Successful programs involve stepparents or even grandparents, and provide family support where resources are limited.
7. All individuals and families need to feel empowered, especially at-risk families who often feel powerless and out of control. Successful programs ask parents what they'd be interested in doing and work with their agendas first. Some also train at-risk parents to be part of their school's decision-making groups.
  8. Partnership with at-risk families is impossible without collaboration with other community agencies. Schools cannot provide all the services that at-risk families need, such as parenting education, counseling, health care, and housing. The school staff also needs to function in a collaborative way with each other for real change to occur.

## HOW DO I BEGIN A PROGRAM FOR WORKING WITH AT-RISK FAMILIES?

The Hispanic Policy Development Project's publication (Siobhan Nicolau and Carmen Lydia Ramos 1990) offers guidelines, based on successful projects, that are useful for most at-risk groups:

- ▶ Be sure you're totally committed; half-hearted attempts do not accomplish much. There must be active support by the principal and staff. All the Hispanic projects that lacked the support of teachers and principals failed to increase parent involvement.
- ▶ Assign a project coordinator-someone who understands the culture and background of the parents and is sincerely dedicated. Give the coordinator time to do the job. Nicolau and Ramos found that leadership was the single most important element in launching a successful program with Hispanic parents.
  - ▶ Be prepared to be innovative and flexible. The Hispanic projects that failed were those where new techniques were not tried, or where things were done "the way we have always done it."
- ▶ Use strong, personal outreach. "The personal approach," say Nicolau and Ramos, "which means talking face to face with the parents, in their primary language, at their homes, or at the school...was the strategy deemed most effective by 98 percent of the project coordinators." Home visits are a must.
  - ▶ Make your first event fun. Start with something social as an icebreaker. Not every event can be a party, and Nicolau and Ramos offer suggestions for how to sustain involvement once you've gotten it started.
- ▶ Do not hold your first activity at school. Events may be more successful on neutral turf such as neighborhood homes or community places.

- ▶ Pay attention to environment and format. Informal settings are less intimidating to low-income parents. Make them as participatory as possible. A warm, nonjudgmental atmosphere is mandatory.
- ▶ Prepare staff with in-service workshops so that everyone understands the community being served. Include everyone; you don't want a less than welcoming secretary to spoil all the work you've done.
- ▶ Do not view child care, transportation, interpreters, and meals as frills. Providing them will make a big difference for at-risk parents.
- ▶ Choose different times to schedule events. Do it with consideration for the parents' availability.
- ▶ Do not give up if the initial response isn't overwhelming. Under the best circumstances, it takes time.

"Keep up the effort," Nicolau and Ramos conclude, "and one day you will find that you can't keep the parents away."

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