



Excerpt From

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

An introductory packet on

Parent and Home Involvement in Schools

This document is a hardcopy version of a resource that can be downloaded at no cost from the Center's website (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>).

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III. Strategic Tools for Schools

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⚙️ **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>

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

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<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

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.

Promising Methods for Teacher Preparation (Chapter 4)

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.

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.

*Another program presented a case in which a parent 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

& teacher had different agendas for a parent-teacher 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.