



Involvement

Schools

Parents

&

You

**A Training
Manual
For Parent
Involvement**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks to:

Robert Scott, Commissioner of Education, Texas Education Agency

Cory Green, Senior Director of NCLB Program Coordination, TEA

Terri Stafford, Coordinator, Title I Statewide School Support/Parental Involvement Initiative, Region 16 Education Service Center

Victor Forsyth, Education Specialist, Region 16 Education Service Center

Chris Ferguson, TXCC/SEDL

Marion Baldwin, TXCC/SEDL

Darren Grissom, Texas PTA

Texas Education Agency

1701 N. Congress Avenue

Austin, Texas 78701

(512) 463-9374

www.tea.state.tx.us

Title I Statewide School Support/Parental Involvement Initiative

Region 16 Education Service Center

5800 Bell Street

Amarillo, Texas 79109

(806) 677-5126

www.esc16.net



PREFACE

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has placed great emphasis on the importance of parent and family involvement in public education. The agency has established the Title I Statewide School Support/Parental Involvement Initiative to address the need for improved parental involvement training and participation in our schools. This training manual includes references to PTA and PTO resources; however, it is by no means limited to PTA/PTO participation. The materials may be adapted and used by any independent school district, charter school, education service center or community-based organization in Texas that is striving to increase the involvement of parents and families in schools.

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INTRODUCTION

USE OF THE “I-S-P-Y” MANUAL

This manual contains an introduction, seven training sections, and an appendix with supplemental materials:

- I. The Benefits of Parent Involvement
- II. The Key Stakeholders in Parent Involvement, Collaboration Partnerships
- III. Parents and Teachers, Partners for Student Success
- IV. The Legislative Requirements for Parent Involvement
- V. The Parental Involvement Policy and School-Parent Compact
- VI. A Family Friendly School
- VII. School-Parent Organizations
- VIII. Appendix: Bullying, Suicide Prevention, Parent-Teacher Conference

A large portion of the manual is comprised of resource information, including parent involvement information from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Each section begins with trainer notes that introduce the topic and a proposed 45-minute agenda. Although some methods for using the materials have been offered, each trainer is encouraged to use the resource information in the way that best fits his/her personal training style and meets the needs of the audience.

Handouts are included within each of the training sections. A trainer will need to select the training suggestions, visual materials, and handouts in a way that best suits the purpose of the meeting. As long as the key points are covered, the training will have served its intended purpose.

Any of the materials in this manual may be reproduced for use with parent involvement training for educators or parent education workshops and programs according to the TEA copyright notice (p. i:3).

Trainer:

The material can be used one training section at a time, each approximately 45 minutes long. Or, the material can be used in a workshop format presenting multiple sections consecutively. Additionally, selected portions of the material could be used in meetings with limited time. The trainer must choose a format that best suits the audience and the intended purpose of the meeting.

Trainer:

Please note the supplemental materials in the appendix: Bullying, Suicide Prevention and Parent-Teacher Conference.

This manual can be used in several ways:

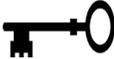
- I.** For training parents and families in a variety of group settings about their children's school and their responsibility in the education of their children:
 - PTAs/PTOs
 - Title I Parent Groups and Parent Advisory Committees
 - Site-Based Decision-Making Committees
 - Teacher Associations and Professional Development for Educators
 - Professional Educational Associations
 - School Mentors/Adopters
 - School Volunteers
 - Capacity-Building Workshops

- II.** For training educators and all school staff in various group settings about the benefits of parent involvement and their role in building connections with parents and families:
 - Site-Based Decision-Making Committees
 - Professional Development Trainings
 - New Teacher Orientation
 - School Staff Meetings
 - "Building Capacity" Training

- III.** For various trainings, such as:
 - District or campus staff training about parent involvement either during a professional development day or during a staff meeting.
 - A PTA/PTO training parents about parent involvement.
 - A parent night or Title I meeting to provide specific information to parents and the community.
 - A principal or parental involvement coordinator/liaison training parent volunteers.
 - "Self-help" for school personnel or parents to better understand the context for parent involvement in Texas.
 - ESC training of educators or modeling training to parents.
 - Professional development and course work developed and offered by institutions of higher learning.

IV. For parents and families at various meeting places other than the school, such as:

- Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, and other faith-based organizations
- Community Centers and Civic Group Facilities
- YMCAs or YWCAs (The “Y”)
- Boys Clubs / Girls Clubs
- Literacy Centers and Public Libraries
- Head Start Centers
- Businesses
- Social Agency Facilities

Key Point 

- Whenever you see the key, this is a key point in the lesson. Please emphasize, highlight, or in some manner reinforce this idea.

TRAINER NOTES

GETTING THE WORD OUT – ADVERTISING

Suggestions for advertising your parent involvement training. Use all of the ideas that are appropriate for your audience.



A. Personal Invitation

1. **Principal**...on colored paper to draw attention
2. **Teachers**...a smiley face notice, provided by the PTA/PTO
3. **Parents**...each active parent invites another parent
4. **Students**...make reminder notes to be mailed to parents, offer parents play money for their child to redeem at the school store or for discounts to school activities
5. **Community leaders**...ask leaders to talk about the program in their newsletters

B. Telephone Calls

1. Reminder 24 hours prior to meeting
 - a. Create a telephone tree
 - b. Utilize key community people
2. Voice mail on school phones

C. Block Walks

Invite parents, school staff, and key community leaders to walk targeted neighborhoods and to distribute information about the school and parent involvement opportunities.

D. Banners or fliers

1. School signs
 - a. "Give Your Child a Gift That Lasts....Your Involvement"
 - b. "Better Schools Begin With You"
 - c. "School Is What WE Make It"
2. Neighborhood businesses (many are willing to provide space)
 - a. Convenience stores
 - b. Discount and grocery stores
 - c. Washaterias/Laundromats
3. Community gathering places
 - a. Churches, synagogues, mosques or other faith-based organizations
 - b. Parks and recreation areas
 - c. Community centers
 - d. Shopping malls
 - e. Adult or senior centers; seniors provide influence in the lives of their family members. They also provide a caring and nurturing element for children who don't have parents or other adults who are active in their daily lives.

E. Electronic Media

1. Post on school web sites
2. Email
3. Twitter reminder and other social media networks (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)
4. Podcast

TRAINER NOTES

GETTING THE WORD ACROSS – ATMOSPHERE

Suggestions for starting a meeting and maintaining a positive climate.

How you begin can “make or break” your training session. You may find yourself in a community where you are not known. You might have a different background from those with whom you have been asked to work. Trust is a critical component of this process. In order for the participants to be able to share their feelings and ideas about their school, their children and involvement in their children’s education, they have to feel good about the person asking them some hard questions...
you!

MAKE YOUR AUDIENCE COMFORTABLE... MAKE CONNECTIONS

Having impressive credentials (college degrees, officer in the PTA, etc.) is wonderful but may create barriers with your audience. You want them to know that you are, in many ways, like them. So...

- Tell them about your family...not just who and how many, but also a short story about the time your youngest child had to stay after school or when your child’s teacher made you a little uncomfortable, or when your school principal really extended his or her hand to you.
- Share with them what you found to be “scary” about going to school, both as a child and as an adult.
- Let them know that you have feelings as well as experiences in common.

Remember that your audience will pick up on any “for me” and “because I say so” attitude. This can be a turn off, and you may not be able to regain their trust.

RULES FOR REACHING OUT TO PARENTS

- Be positive.
- Focus on the child.
- Emphasize their child’s strengths.
- Be sincere.
- Don’t talk down to parents.
- Don’t talk over their heads...watch the jargon.
- Don’t criticize their parenting skills.
- Avoid touching or being overly familiar with parents who don’t know you.
- Never assume parents don’t care about their children.
- Be aware of cultural stereotype statements, such as:
 - “you people”
 - “you’re different from other _____ people”
 - “many of my friends are _____”
- Don’t blame or point out their weaknesses.

TRAINER NOTES

GETTING THE WORD AROUND – OBSTACLES

Descriptions of possible roadblocks and detours.



Certain issues come up consistently when local groups are working to improve parent involvement. It is helpful to be aware of these issues in advance, plan for them and thus, create detours instead of roadblocks.

Roadblocks!	Detours!
Time	Detour #1 —Be flexible when scheduling meetings and events. Try a mix of mornings, evenings, and weekends to allow every parent the opportunity to attend at least some of the time. Consider potluck dinners and brown bag lunches to meet the needs of working parents. Take care not to schedule anything during religious holidays and national observances.
Child Care	Detour #2 —Find available space in the school for childcare. Either take turns volunteering as childcare providers or locate appropriate childcare professionals in the community that charge a nominal fee to pay for their services, if school funds are not available.
Language Barrier/ Special Needs	Detour #3 —Make printed materials available in an understandable format, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parent can understand. Provide translators for meetings and events. Be sure that homeless parents are offered opportunities for participation. Provide someone to interpret for hearing-impaired parents and be sure that there are no physical barriers that prohibit parents with disabilities from attending.
Cliques	Detour #4 —Make sure that all parents are welcomed as they arrive and are actively included in meetings and events. Arrange for a welcoming committee.
Transportation	Detour #5 —Plan events in convenient locations. Rural schools may want to encourage ride-sharing to school events.

I. THE BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT



Training I includes introductory information explaining the purpose and benefits of parent involvement.

I. THE BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Through effective communication with parents, teachers can have the greatest impact on their day-to-day success with students. With parents on their side, teachers can more effectively manage most academic and behavioral issues that arise. When the most important adults in a child's life are working together, students benefit enormously.

**Lee and Marlene Canter,
Parents on Your Side, 2001**

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

**Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp,
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002**

I. THE BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PROPOSED TOPIC: Introduce the purpose and benefits of parent involvement and family engagement.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time.
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate.
- Warmly welcome the attendees.
- Introduce herself/himself.
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical.
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants.
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting.
- Conclude the meeting on time.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- Parents are the first and most influential teacher in a child’s life.
- Parent involvement is about a home/school partnership working together for student success.
- Parent involvement has many benefits for students, the school, and the community.
- Parents and families need to be involved in their child’s learning.

I. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: Quotes included on next page

Directions: Present one or both quotes. You may want to use the prompts as discussion triggers.

“Through effective communication with parents, teachers can have the greatest impact on their day-to-day success with students. With parents on their side, teachers can more effectively manage most academic and behavioral issues that arise. When the most important adults in a child’s life are working together, students benefit enormously.”

*Lee and Marlene Canter
Parents on Your Side, 2001*

- What form of communication works best for you – telephone? email? note/letter? face-to-face? other?
- What kinds of information do you most want to receive from the school?
- What might the school do differently to improve communication between school and home?
- What might you do differently to improve communication between home and school?

“When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

*Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002*

- What are the strengths of your school and community?
- In what ways are your school, family, and community working together effectively?
- What are the possible benefits when schools, parents/families, and community groups work together?
- What might schools, parents/families, and the community do differently to work together more successfully?

QUOTES

Through effective communication with parents, teachers can have the greatest impact on their day-to-day success with students. With parents on their side, teachers can more effectively manage most academic and behavioral issues that arise. When the most important adults in a child's life are working together, students benefit enormously.

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**Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp,
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- What might schools, parents/families, and the community do differently to work together more successfully?

II. Benefits of Parent Involvement (10 minutes)

*HANDOUTS: A more complete list of benefits is included on the next two pages.
Be familiar with this information in advance of the training.*

Directions: Ask your audience, “What are the benefits of parent involvement in your opinion?”
Accept all answers. Keep it moving. Keep it brief.

Summarize the benefits highlighting key points from the handouts.

For students:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance
- Greater enrollment in postsecondary education

For teachers and administrators:

- Higher morale
- Increased teacher effectiveness
- Greater job satisfaction

For parents and community:

- Improved communication with teachers
- Improved attitude toward school and school personnel
- Bridges built among families with diverse backgrounds

BENEFITS OF PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

HIGHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.
- Students have higher test grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- Students have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.
- Student achievement for disadvantaged students improves dramatically.



STUDENT BEHAVIOR

- Students exhibit attitudes and behaviors that are more positive.
- Students have more self-confidence and feel school is more important.
- Student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and other antisocial behaviors decrease.

CULTURE

- Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals work together to bridge the cultural gap between home and school.
- The school's practices to inform and involve parents are stronger factors in whether parents will be involved in their children's education than are parent education, family size, and marital status.
- Successful schools engage families from diverse backgrounds, build trust and collaboration, recognize and respect and address family needs, and develop a partnership where power and responsibility is shared.
- For low-income families, programs offered in the community or at a faith-based organization or through home visits are more successful than programs requiring parents to come to the school.

AGE

- Parent involvement clearly benefits students in the early years, but continued parental involvement shows significant gains at all ages and all grade levels.
- Middle school and high school students make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for the future.

SCHOOL QUALITY

- Schools with parent-teacher organizations have higher student achievement.
- Improved teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents.
- When schools are held accountable, school districts make positive changes in policy and practice, improve school leadership and staffing, secure resources and funding to improve the curriculum and provide after school and family support programs.
- Schools have more support from families and more respect in the community.
- Schools make greater gains on state tests.

(National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, National PTA, 2004 - based upon the empirical research provided by Karen Henderson and Anne Mapp)



III. Definitions (15 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Definition from Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (ESEA) is included on next page.

Directions: Develop a definition for "parent involvement." If your attendance is ten or less do this as a group activity but if your attendance is greater than ten break into small groups with 5-7 people and instruct each group to write their responses on index cards that the trainer will gather and read aloud or on chart paper that can be posted and shared.

- Ask the group to briefly discuss the following questions:
 1. What do you think was the most successful parent involvement activity at your school this year?
 2. What might be the evidence of an effective family engagement program?
 3. How would you define or describe meaningful parent involvement?

- Present the Title I, Part A definitions for parent involvement. It is important to emphasize: (These are key points!)
 - 1. Regular, two-way, meaningful communication.
 - 2. The focus is on academic learning and student success.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT – TITLE I, PART A

The Texas Education Agency, under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), includes parental involvement in federally-funded programs. The statute defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning;
- that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school;
- that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

(U.S. Department of Education, Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance, 2004)



Texas’ Senate Bill 1 (74th Texas State Legislature) contains a number of parental involvement requirements. Among these mandates is a chapter in the law on parental rights and responsibilities, Texas Education Code Section 26.



IV. Summary (10 minutes)

HANDOUTS: next two pages

- *“A Letter to Parents: School Is What You Make It”*
- *“Parent Involvement: Thoughts to Consider”*

Directions: Use one or both of these handouts to provide parents with specific and practical ways to enhance family engagement. Highlight some key ideas in the handouts. Allow them to read the handout and ask questions.

Briefly review the key points from Training I – The Benefits of Parent Involvement

- An introduction to the concept that parents are the first and most important teachers in the educational development and success of their children.
- Effective parent involvement has many benefits to students, schools, and community.
- Definitions of parent involvement from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have been presented emphasizing two-way communication and achievement.
- Parents need to be partnered with teachers and involved in their child’s learning from elementary through middle school AND high school, until the child graduates.

A LETTER TO PARENTS: SCHOOL IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

You are the biggest influence in your child's life and education. Teachers and your child's classmates are important, but you are much more important. You are the ones who have seen your child through the years. You have fed and clothed your child. You have loved and tried to teach your child right from wrong.

The difference between a good school and a great school is the involvement of its parents. It is true that students whose parents are involved do better in school. Children learn to place importance on the things that are important to their parents.

Maybe you feel you do not have much time to become involved or maybe you are not sure how to begin. It does not take a great deal of time to make a big difference in your child's education. Fifteen minutes of uninterrupted time spent with your child each day can improve study skills, build self-esteem, and go a long way toward a successful school experience.

Communication with the teacher and other campus staff can help too. Simple, short notes to the teacher to keep him/her aware of any changes in your child's daily schedule or to thank the teacher for lessons your child has enjoyed are always good. Some parents feel it is important to give the teacher lots of "treats" on special occasions. While it is a nice gesture, a better gift is your time and attention given on a regular basis to your child's school work and education needs.

In order to be an advocate for your child and all children, learn about your child's school and what you can expect from your child's school.

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

**Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp,
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002**

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

When thinking about becoming involved in school, ask yourself these questions:

1. How did I feel about school as a student?
2. Were my parents involved in my education?
3. Were other parents involved in their children's education when I was a student?
4. What was the difference in the students with and without involved parents?
5. Where is a good place to study in our home?
6. Do I send my child to school clean, well-rested, well-fed, and ready to learn?
7. How does it feel to be a parent at my child's school? Have I shared that feeling with the school staff?

Then, think about these questions:

1. What condition is the school in? Could I help with a clean-up/fix-up campaign to improve the school building or grounds?
2. Could the principal, teacher(s), librarian or other staff use some preparation help that I could do at home or at the school?
3. Are there students in my neighborhood who need after-school care or tutoring? Could I help to arrange something for our neighborhood?
4. What is my favorite thing to do for fun? Is there a way to share my skills with the children?

These thoughts and questions are just a few to start you on the road to a beneficial, positive relationship with your child's school.

.....

Think about following the U.S. Department of Education's Seven Good Practices for Families (*Achieving the Goals: Goal 8 – Parental Involvement and Participation*):

1. Find the time to **learn together** with your children.
2. Commit yourself and your children to **challenging standards**--help children reach their **full potential**.
3. **Limit TV** viewing and media use to no more than two hours on school nights.
4. **Read together**. It's the starting point of all learning.
5. Encourage your children to **take the more challenging courses** at school and **check their homework** every day.
6. Make sure your children **go to school every day** and support community efforts to keep children **safe and off the streets late at night**.
7. **Set a good example** for your children, and talk directly to them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the values you want them to have.

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II. THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT, COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



Training II includes introductory information that focuses on key stakeholders for parent involvement and their roles and responsibilities.

II. THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT, COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The success of each learner can be achieved only through a whole child approach as teachers, schools, and communities forge a new compact based on shared responsibility for the effective education and healthy development of children. The Commission's report, *The Learning Compact Redefined (ASCD, 2007)*, calls on communities to provide:

- **Family support and involvement;**
- **Government, civic, and business support and resources;**
- **Volunteers and advocates; and**
- **Support for their districts' coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures.**

**Price
Mobilizing the Community
to Help Students Succeed, 2008**

Effective programs to engage families and community embrace a philosophy of partnership. The responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members...a comprehensive approach to improve student achievement is key.

**Henderson & Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002**

II. THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT, COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

PROPOSED TOPIC: *Identify the key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities in an effective parent involvement/family engagement program.*

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
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- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time.
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate.
- Warmly welcome the attendees.
- Introduce herself/himself.
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical.
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants.
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting.
- Conclude the meeting on time.

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section I: The Benefits of Parent Involvement.
 1. When home, school, and community work together students tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and enjoy school more.
 2. Effective parent involvement is built upon a foundation of regular, on-going, two-way communication where parents are partners in student success.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- Parents have a wide range of choices for ways to become involved in their child’s schools, but first you need to know “Who’s Who in Your Child’s Education.”
- Committed key stakeholders are essential to the success of the school’s parent involvement effort.
- Parents and teachers are part of the whole school community and everyone in the community should be involved to help the students to receive the best possible education.

I. Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

HANDOUT: Quotes included on the next two pages.

Directions: Present one or both quotes. You may want to use the prompts below as discussion triggers.

*“The success of each learner can be achieved only through a whole child approach as teachers, schools, and communities forge a new compact based on shared responsibility for the effective education and healthy development of children. The Commission’s report, *The Learning Compact Redefined* (ASCD, 2007), calls on communities to provide:*

- *Family support and involvement;*
- *Government, civic, and business support and resources;*
- *Volunteers and advocates; and*
- *Support for their districts’ coordinated school health councils or other collaborative structures.”*

*Price
Mobilizing the Community
to Help Students Succeed, 2008*

“Effective programs to engage families and community embrace a philosophy of partnership. The responsibility for children’s educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members...a comprehensive approach to improve student achievement is key.”

*Henderson & Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002*

Prompts for either one or both quotes...

- With what community and/or faith-based organizations are you or your children involved?
- What are these organizations currently doing to develop a partnership with a local school?
- Use your imagination, other than finance, what kind of assistance might a community or faith-based organization provide to your school?

QUOTES

The success of each learner can be achieved only through a whole child approach as teachers, schools, and communities forge a new compact based on shared responsibility for the effective education and healthy development of children. The Commission's report, *The Learning Compact Redefined (ASCD, 2007)*, calls on communities to provide:

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II. Who's Who? (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Who's Who in Your Child's Education" is included on next two pages.

Directions: Ask participants to identify their school board members, superintendent, principal, site-based decision-making team, counselor, nurse and PTA/PTO leaders using the "Who's Who in Your Child's Education."

- Allow participants three minutes to complete handout.
- Provide participants with the information to fill in the blanks that they may not know.
- Ask participants if the handout was difficult to complete? Do the participants believe this information is useful? How do they suggest this information be provided to parents?

Examples of when this information might be provided: at student registration; in student handbook; on school web site; at parent-teacher conference; at beginning of school year "open house/back to school night;" at PTA/PTO meetings; on refrigerator magnets; etc...



WHO'S WHO IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Parents sometimes do not realize that they are able to contact the people in charge of providing education for their children. School officials are in their jobs to provide the best education for all the students. It is helpful to those officials when parents and other citizens share ideas, concerns and questions about the school. Sometimes it is difficult to find the correct person to contact. Following are some key officials and helpful organizations. When the list is complete users will have helpful contact information.

The State Board of Education, made up of elected officials, is the governing body responsible for development of public education policy in Texas.

Local School Board	
<i>School board members are elected by the public. Find out who your school board members are, how they are elected and where they stand on important issues. School board members bring an interest in education, a concern for children, a knowledge of their community, a sense of fairness and a great deal of common sense to their positions. The local school board approves the school budget, oversees operations of the school district, and hires and terminates the superintendent. Call the school district administration office or the superintendent's office to obtain the names of your school board members and their contact information to reach them with your questions and comments.</i>	
Local Board Members Names	

School Superintendent	
<i>The superintendent oversees all schools in the district and has responsibility for local decisions relating to curriculum, transportation, testing, school schedule and personnel.</i>	
Superintendent's Name	Telephone Number

Principal	
<i>The principal is responsible for a campus. He/She works with the site-based decision-making committee or team to decide the management direction of the school. While the committee makes recommendations, the principal makes the final decisions based upon his/her legal requirements as administrator of the school.</i>	
Principal's Name	Telephone Number

Assistant Principal

In larger schools, the principal may have one or more assistant principals. If this is the case in your school, please use the following lines for information about the assistant principal.

Assistant Principal's Name	Telephone Number

Teacher

Teacher's Name	Telephone Number

Site-Based Decision-Making Committee/Team

Parent Representative Name	Telephone Number

School Counselor

The school counselor helps students with personal as well as educational problems and can sometimes be the first contact for families in need of counseling or social services. (NOTE: In Texas, many schools must share school counselors and nurses. Be sure to ask about the hours that those staff are present in your school.)

School Counselor's Name	Telephone Number

Nurse

The school nurse looks after the health needs of the children. He/She can provide valuable health information and can also act as a first contact for families in need of counseling or social services. (NOTE: In Texas, many schools must share school counselors and nurses. Be sure to ask about the hours that those staff are present in your school.)

Nurse's Name	Telephone Number

PTA/PTO

President/Secretary	Telephone Number

III. Key Stakeholders (10 minutes)

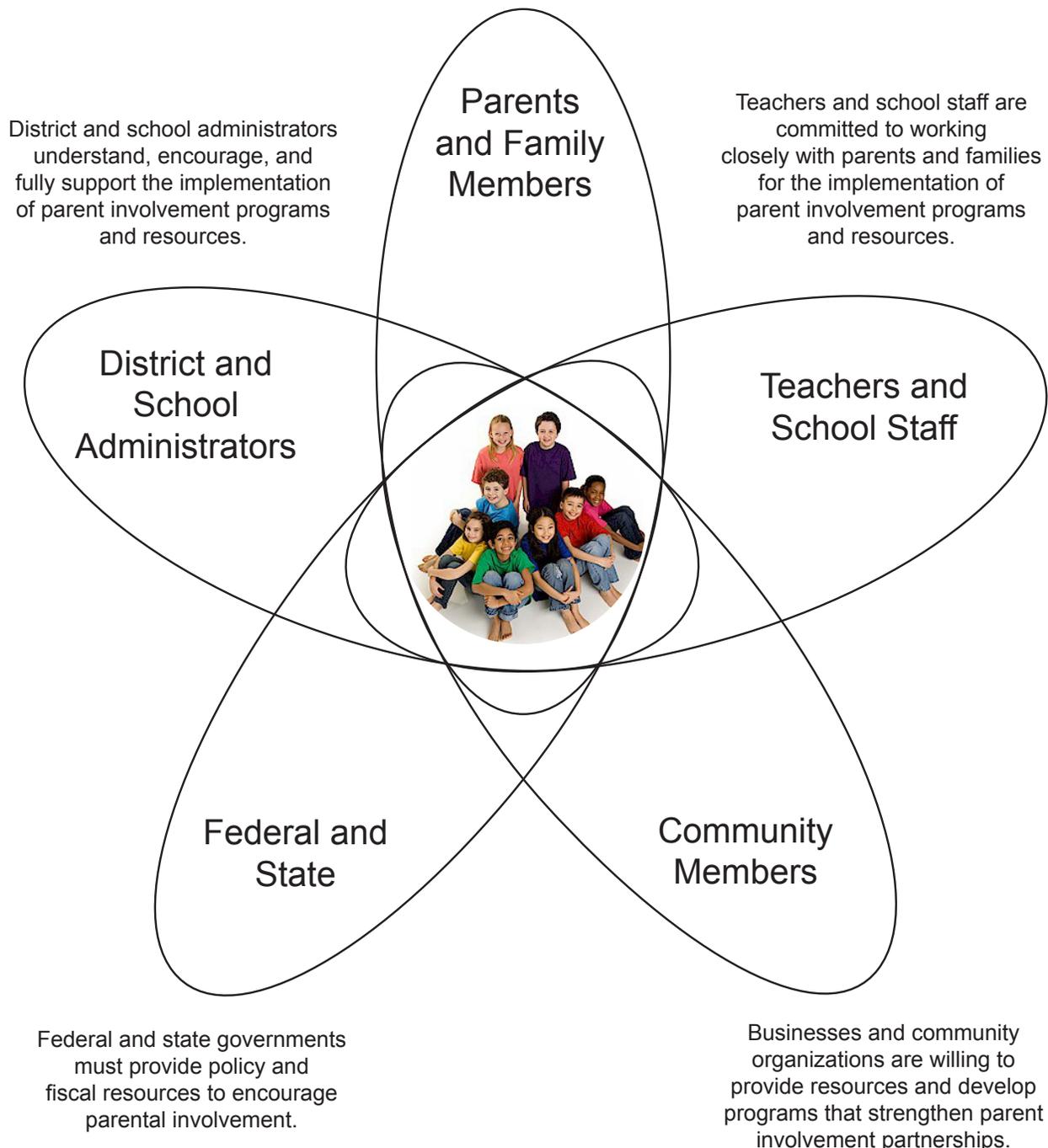
HANDOUT: "Collaborative Partnerships" is included on next page.

Directions: Divide the audience into four small groups. Assign the first group the role of "district and school administrators," the second group the role of "teachers and school staff," the third group the role of "community members," and the fourth group the role of "parents and family members."

- Ask each group to list five or more (at least five) roles and responsibilities they expect of the assigned stakeholder. (Allow three to five minutes)
- Write their responses on index cards that the trainer will gather and read aloud or on chart paper that can be posted and shared. Share responses. (Three to five minutes)
- Show (or print and distribute) the diagram of "Collaborative Partnerships"

Collaborative Partnerships

Parents and family members understand their influence and contribute actively to their child's education.



IV. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities (15 minutes)

HANDOUTS: included on following pages.

- “Key Stakeholders in a Successful Parent Involvement Program”
 - “Key Stakeholders: District and School Administrators”
 - “Key Stakeholders: Teachers and School Staff”
 - “Key Stakeholders: Parents and Family Members”
 - “Key Stakeholders: Community Members”
-
- The trainer might briefly highlight the responses from “Key Stakeholders” (p. II:10) to more fully describe the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder and allow time for questions and comments.
 - The trainer might divide the audience into four groups. Assign each group a stakeholder using the handouts. Ask each group to read the tasks for the stakeholder. Then, ask each group to identify the three most important tasks for that stakeholder and why. A spokesperson will share their group’s ideas.
 - The trainer should emphasize: (These are key points!)
 - 1. Collaborative partnerships are relationships that support one another.
 - 2. These partnerships should be mutually beneficial with a common focus upon student success.
 - 3. Strategies that arise from these partnerships need to be well planned, inclusive, and comprehensive.
 - 4. Two-way, ongoing communication facilitates and strengthens these partnerships.
 - 5. Communication builds trust, and trust leads to cooperation and teamwork that enhances student learning.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN A SUCCESSFUL PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

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

- **District and School Administrators** who understand, encourage and fully support the implementation of parent involvement programs and resources.
- **Teachers and School Staff** who are committed to working closely with parents and families for the implementation of parent involvement programs and resources.
- **Parents and Family Members** who understand their influence and are ready to contribute actively to their children's education.
- **Community Members** (including businesses and community organizations) who are willing to provide resources and develop programs that strengthen parent involvement/ family engagement partnerships.

From: Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement, Karen Wikelund, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, September 1990, pp. 10, 15-25.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS: DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

“Principals (and administrators) must build strong relationships with parents and the community. They must make school councils into capacity-building entities for mobilizing parents and the community, instead of stagnant structures... In all this, good relationships, nurtured carefully and developed patiently, through innumerable conversations and interactions, are essential.”

Hargreaves and Fullan

The principal's leadership sets the tone, the climate, of the school. The principal, through policies and actions, must embody the image the school wants to put forth to the community about children and their ability to learn, and about the vital role of families in the learning process.

The principal:

Builds Positive Relationships

- Takes time to get to know the communities served by the campus - the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-rearing practices, concerns, and aspirations.
- Encourages opportunities for staff, parents, and other community members to get to know each other.
- Establishes mechanisms for open, two-way communication between the school and the community, and encourages their use.
- Acknowledges and rewards outstanding efforts by teachers, coordinators and outreach workers, parents, community members and children.
- Communicates regularly with all other key players, actively soliciting their input (both formally and informally).

Leadership

- Provides educational leadership for all of the other key players - school personnel, students, parents and families, and other community members.
- Sets the tone for the school climate as positive, friendly, open to the community, and serving all children equally.
- Overtly recognizes and affirms the fundamental premises of parent involvement (all children can learn, parent involvement is a valuable resource, all parents/families can have an impact, etc.).
- Provides for and facilitates staff training in parent involvement.
- Designates staff or a volunteer to coordinate the school's parent involvement efforts.
- Facilitates the provision of parent training in school involvement and other topics of interest to parents and family members.
- Monitors the program and encourages the team to evaluate progress and revise program activities as necessary using multiple indicators of program success, such as:
 - Student achievement, attendance, attitudes and behavior
 - Teacher morale and quality of instruction
 - Amount and nature of communication between parents and school, level of parent participation
 - Amount of community support

Teambuilding

- Assesses school and community perceptions of needs and available resources.
- Leads a team of staff, parents, and community members who together can design and develop your school's effective parent involvement program.
- Requires and encourages staff members to make use of parent involvement as a resource.
- Provides opportunities for parents to have a voice in school management decisions.

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

In addition to school administrators, local school boards have a critical role to play in encouraging parental involvement. School boards have the responsibility to plan and establish well-designed, clear policies about the role of parents in the schools. Local boards need to include parents in that planning. They should also provide adequate budgetary support for their policies and publicly demonstrate their support of parent involvement.

They should conduct periodic reviews (at a minimum, annually) of local policy and its implementation.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS: TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

“Caring teachers and parents alone cannot be expected to create the most supportive learning environments at school or in the home unless they unite their efforts.”

Harmon and Dickens

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

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

The teacher:

Builds Positive Relationships

- Takes time to get to know the community represented by the children they teach - the history of their interactions with the school, their values and customs, local heroes, favorite pastimes, child-rearing practices, concerns, and aspirations.
- Treats all children and their families with respect.
- Welcomes every family into their classroom and makes them feel comfortable in the school.
- Establishes and maintains open, two-way communication with parents and other family members:
 - Contacts the parents of all children regularly for positive as well as negative information
 - Establishes regular times when parents can contact the teacher
- Views individual or group differences (e.g., languages, ethnicity) as a resource and teaches children to respect them.
- Participates in school activities designed to help staff and families get to know each other.

Expectations For Learning

- Maintains high expectations for every child to learn and achieve.
- Provides a variety of options for parents to collaborate in the teaching of the children (including homework activities, class projects, volunteer work in the classroom and on field trips, fund raising, etc.).
- Never gives up on any child and never leaves any child behind.

Professionalism

- Examines their own assumptions about student ability and interest, based on behavior, nonstandard English or lack of English, physical appearance or family background, and remains alert to negative stereotypes.
- Participates in staff training about parent involvement.
- Identifies and uses ways to validate children's experiences outside of school and incorporate them into instructional activities.
- Collaborates with other professionals and parents to address particular children's learning or emotional problems.
- Takes stock of parent involvement activities regularly with input from other key stakeholders and revises them as necessary.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS: PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

“Parents are their children’s first and most influential teachers. Parents often replace spending time with their children with spending money on their children. It is important to remember, children need your presence, not your presents.”

National PTA

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

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

Clearly, not every parent can volunteer in the classroom, go on field trips or attend evening meetings. However, parents can be involved and have a strong influence in a wide variety of ways, from the simple practice of asking their children daily about school activities and homework to belonging to a parent advisory committee and having direct input on school decisions.

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

At home

- Send your child to school every day, well rested and fed, with a positive comment about him/her.
- Take an active interest in your child's schooling and let your child know how much you care about learning. Find out what happened at school each day and how your child felt about it.
- Learn as much as you can about being an effective parent.
- Try not to let any negative experiences keep you from supporting and encouraging your child's education.
- Try to provide a variety of interesting reading materials in your home and spend time reading and writing with your child.
- Take your child to the local library and encourage reading for fun.
- Provide an area in your home where your child can keep her/his school things and, if possible, where she/he can do school work without continual interruption. Find ways to involve the family in homework or similar activities and remain supportive of the child's need to do homework.
- Show pride in your child's work and display it in special places in your home.
- Establish regular blocks of time when you expect your child to do school work.
- Follow up with your child and monitor homework and be consistent in your expectations.
- As appropriate, work with your child on school-related projects on a regular basis.
- Include your child in daily household tasks and make the connection between learning in school and application in daily life.

At school

- Establish a positive relationship with your child's teacher early in the school year and maintain it by:
 - Meeting with the teacher and other school personnel regularly.
 - Calling, writing notes or sending emails.
 - Never missing a parent-teacher conference and using the opportunity to share information with the teacher.
- Make sure that communication flows two ways, both from school to home and from home to school:
 - Exercise your right and responsibility to voice your questions and concerns in constructive ways.
 - Recognize and acknowledge how difficult teachers' jobs can be.
 - Take every opportunity to let school personnel know when they are doing a good job.
- Ask for ways you can work with your child at home to reinforce what the teacher has done in class.
- Volunteer to help on school projects, events, field trips, etc., if possible.
- Volunteer to help in the classroom, if possible.
- Become active in your child's school.
- Participate in school planning by serving on the school's Parent Advisory Committee.

In the community

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



KEY STAKEHOLDERS: COMMUNITY MEMBERS

“Schools with strong community partnerships show some common patterns that have led to increased test scores through a type of beneficial chain reaction.”

Thomas Hatch

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

A concerned, involved community member:

- Supports their local school
- Participates in school events
- Volunteers for school committees
- Helps with fundraisers
- Contacts local organizations to help publicize school activities
- Donates in-kind services (food for parent meetings, other merchandise for incentives/rewards, etc.)
- Adopts a school in which to concentrate efforts to increase parent involvement
- Supports and facilitates employees' involvement in their children's schooling:
 - Allows parent groups to meet in their building during lunch, after work or in the evenings
 - Provides parent education seminars/workshops
 - As an employer, staggers schedules as necessary so parents can attend important school events, parent/teacher conferences, etc.

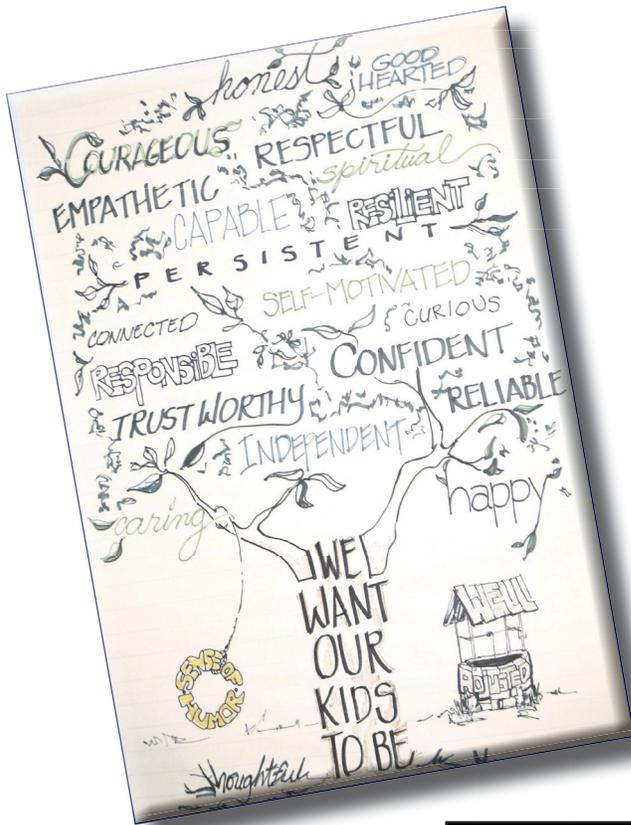


V. Summary (5 minutes)

- It is important to get committed participation from key stakeholders.
- Each stakeholder has an important contribution to student success.
- Collaborative partnerships benefit all stakeholders, and in an effective parental involvement program, students reap the greatest rewards.

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III. PARENTS AND TEACHERS, PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



Training III includes information that focuses on parents and teachers working together with two-way communication.

III. PARENTS AND TEACHERS, PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Our educational system will need to move to a new kind of teacher-parent relationship if we are to reach all of our students. In this new relationship, teachers will develop a dialogue with parents that allows both parties to learn from each other.

**Lezotte & Pepperl
Positive Home-School Relations, 2001**

Educators are better able to meet the needs of students if they have parents on their side. Therefore, teachers have to do everything possible to engage the parents as active participants in their children's education.

**Silver
Drumming to the Beat of Different
Marchers, 2005**

III. PARENTS AND TEACHERS, PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

PROPOSED TOPIC: *Provide information about a variety of ways parents and families can support their child’s learning, and describe ways home and school can work together more effectively.*

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate
- Warmly welcome the attendees
- Introduce herself/himself
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting
- Conclude the meeting on time

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section II: The Key Stakeholders in Parent Involvement.
 1. To develop an effective parent involvement program that positively impacts student learning there needs to be collaboration.
 2. When district and school administrators, teachers and school staff, parents and family members, and community members work together student success increases.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- Parents and teachers each have important roles in advancing a child’s success.
- Parents and teachers must initiate positive communication at the beginning of the school year and maintain two-way communication throughout the school year.

I. Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

HANDOUTS: Quotes are included on next page.

Directions: Present the Lezotte & Pepperl and/or Silver quote. You may want to use the prompts below as discussion triggers.

“Our educational system will need to move to a new kind of teacher-parent relationship if we are to reach all of our students. In this new relationship, teachers will develop a dialogue with parents that allow both parties to learn from each other.”

*Lezotte & Pepperl
Positive Home-School Relations, 2001*

“Educators are better able to meet the needs of students if they have parents on their side. Therefore, teachers have to do everything possible to engage the parents as active participants in their children’s education.”

*Silver
Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers, 2005*

You may want to use the following prompts as discussion triggers...

- Do you know the name(s) of your child’s teacher(s)?
- Do you know the best way and time to contact your child’s teacher(s)?
- Does your child’s teacher know the best way to contact you?
- What are three things you would like to know from the teacher so you can better help your child?
- What are three things you would like for the teacher to know about your child so he/she can better help your child?

QUOTES

Our educational system will need to move to a new kind of teacher-parent relationship if we are to reach all of our students. In this new relationship, teachers will develop a dialogue with parents that allows both parties to learn from each other.

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**Silver
Drumming to the Beat of Different
Marchers, 2005**

- Do you know the name(s) of your child's teacher(s)?
- Do you know the best way and time to contact your child's teacher(s)?
- Does your child's teacher know the best way to contact you?
- What are three things you would like to know from the teacher so you can better help your child?
- What are three things you would like for the teacher to know about your child so he/she can better help your child?

II. Parents and Teachers Working Together, Activity A (10 minutes)

HANDOUTS are included on the next two pages.

- “Ten Things Parents Wish Teachers Would Do”
- “Ten Things Teachers Wish Parents Would Do”

Directions: Divide into groups with about five people.

- Assign some groups to respond to this statement: “Things parents wish teachers would do;” assign other groups to respond to this statement: “Things teachers wish parents would do”.
- Write their responses on index cards that the trainer will gather and read aloud or on chart paper that can be posted and shared.
- Try to identify the “wishes” and expectations that are similar for both parents and teachers. This is common ground upon which to initiate dialogue and build trust.
- Provide the two handouts, “Ten Things Parents Wish Teachers Would Do” and “Ten Things Teachers Wish Parents Would Do.”

TEN THINGS PARENTS WISH TEACHERS WOULD DO



1. **Build students' self-esteem** by using praise generously and avoiding ridicule and negative public criticism.
2. **Get to know each child's needs**, interests and special talents, as well as the way each child learns best.
3. **Communicate often and openly with parents**, contacting them early about academic or behavioral problems, being candid rather than defensive when discussing these problems.
4. **Regularly assign homework that helps children learn**, and advise parents how they can work with their children on their homework.
5. **Set high academic standards**, expecting all students to learn and helping them to do so.
6. **Care about children**, since children learn best when taught by warm, friendly, caring and enthusiastic teachers.
7. **Treat all children fairly** and do not play favorites.
8. **Enforce a positive discipline code** based on clear and fair rules that are established and fully explained at the beginning of the school year -- reinforce positive behavior as well as punish negative behavior.
9. **Be aware of students' different learning styles** and vary teaching methods to help each child achieve success.
10. **Encourage parent participation** by reaching out to involve parents in their children's education. Show parents how they can help their children at home. Understand that parents want to work with teachers to help their children be successful.

TEN THINGS TEACHERS WISH PARENTS WOULD DO

1. **Be involved in their children's education.** Parent involvement helps students learn, improves schools and makes teachers' jobs easier.
2. **Provide resources at home for reading and learning.** Parents should have books and magazines for their children and read with their children each day.
3. **Set a good example.** Parents should show their children that they believe reading is enjoyable and useful.
4. **Encourage children to do their best in school.** Parents should encourage children to do their best, and children should be helped to set obtainable goals.
5. **Academics should be a primary concern,** followed by their children's preparation for the world of work and involvement in athletics and activities.
6. **Support school rules and goals.** Parents should take care not to undermine school rules, discipline or goals.
7. **Use pressure positively.** Parents should gently urge their children to attempt new activities but they should not apply too much pressure by involving them in too many activities.
8. **Call teachers as soon as a problem becomes apparent** so that prompt action can be taken.
9. **Exercise parental responsibility** and do not expect the school and teachers to take over this job. For example, teaching basic discipline is a parental rather than a school responsibility.
10. **Understand that alcohol, tobacco, bullying, and violence are problems as serious as drug abuse.** All these can impact a student's health and classroom performance.



II. Parents and Teachers Working Together, Activity B (10 minutes)

HANDOUTS: "Action Verbs" are included on the next page.

Directions: Divide into groups with about five people.

- Ask each group to review the list of action verbs.
- Ask each group to use the action verbs to write action statements that describe the roles and tasks for parents and for teachers. Write at least three action statements for teachers and three action statements for parents.
- Take a few minutes for the groups to report their action statements. Be sure to identify or highlight recurring ideas.

Action Verbs

Action verbs help clarify explanations and expectations.

The following list of sample verbs may be useful when trying to describe the roles of parents and teachers.

Additional action verbs could be included with this list.

<i>Access</i>	<i>Improve</i>
<i>Acquaint</i>	<i>Individualize</i>
<i>Communicate</i>	<i>Inform</i>
<i>Conduct</i>	<i>Initiate</i>
<i>Coordinate</i>	<i>Involve</i>
<i>Develop</i>	<i>Organize</i>
<i>Encourage</i>	<i>Prepare</i>
<i>Establish</i>	<i>Respect</i>
<i>Identify</i>	<i>Trust</i>
<i>Implement</i>	<i>Stimulate</i>

Sample action statements:

- Parents should encourage their child to do their best in every class.
- Teachers should inform parents in a timely manner about student difficulty.

Action Verbs

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The following list of sample verbs may be useful when trying to describe the roles of parents and teachers.

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<i>Conduct</i>	<i>Initiate</i>
<i>Coordinate</i>	<i>Involve</i>
<i>Develop</i>	<i>Organize</i>
<i>Encourage</i>	<i>Prepare</i>
<i>Establish</i>	<i>Respect</i>
<i>Identify</i>	<i>Trust</i>
<i>Implement</i>	<i>Stimulate</i>

Directions: Ask each group to use the action verbs to write action statements that describe the roles and tasks for parents and for teachers. Write at least three action statements for teachers and three action statements for parents.

Sample action statements:

- Parents should encourage their child to do their best in every class.
- Teachers should inform parents in a timely manner about student difficulty.

III. Parents and Teachers Initiating Communication (10 minutes)

HANDOUTS provided on the next two pages

- “Checklist for Parents”
- “Checklist for Teachers”

Trainer Narrative: It is important to start the school year with positive communication. Home and school need to start the year on the “same page,” and then maintain regular, two-way communication.

The “Checklist for Parents” and “Checklist for Teachers” identifies critical information parents and families need to know. Therefore parents need the opportunity to dialogue with teachers, ask questions, and provide input so they can work together more effectively. This conversation should be initiated before classroom instruction begins.

- • The checklist implies that the school is responsible to provide information to parents in a timely manner and in a language and format they can understand.
- • Parents also should take the initiative to contact the teacher, ask questions, and receive relevant information that will help them help their child.

Allow the participants time to review the checklists and to ask questions about the checklists. Encourage the participants to offer suggestions about items to be added (or edited) in the checklist.

CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS



Things I need to know about the school and my child's classroom:

1. I have asked for a handbook and information on school procedures such as:

- time the school day begins and ends
- the earliest time my child may arrive at school
- notification about absences by school and by parent
- whether my child may go home or off campus for lunch
- permission for riding a bike to school
- availability of after-school activities
- yearly school schedule (year-round school or traditional schedule)
- school policies regarding such activities as visiting the classroom, disaster preparedness plan, discipline, grading

2. I have contacted my child's teacher to introduce myself, supplied needed information about our family, and set up a way for us to communicate on a regular basis. I did this by:

- telephone
- writing a note or e-mail
- in person

3. I made an appointment to ask the teacher about:

- the amount of homework to be expected
- being kept informed daily or weekly about my child's progress
- what I can do to assist my child's progress
- how and when to contact the teacher by telephone
- notification of tests and how results are used
- how I could be of help to the teacher

4. I have signed up to support my child's school by volunteering for activities as my time allows.

- yes
- no

5. I have asked for information about the school's site-based decision-making committee or the school's parent advisory committee, including who serves on the team, when it meets and how parents are able to participate or have issues placed on its agenda.

- yes
- no

CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

Things the student, parents and family need to know about the school and my classroom:

1. I have contacted the student's parents and family to introduce myself, supplied needed information about my classroom, and set up a way for us to communicate on a regular basis.

I did this by:

- telephone
- e-mail
- writing a note
- in person

2. I have:

- sent a welcome letter and/or letter of introduction to the student, parents and family before the school year begins
- provided a copy of my classroom discipline plan and procedures
- provided a copy of my homework policy and objectives
- provided a description of the curriculum and assessments for the semester or school year

3. I informed the student's parents and family about:

- the amount of homework to be expected
- the way the child's progress will be reported
- timely notification of projects, tests and how results are used
- how they could be of help to the child in completing assignments

4. I have communicated with the child's parents and family about volunteering in the school or classroom as their time allows.

- yes no

5. I have provided information about the school's site-based decision making committee or the school's parent advisory committee.

- yes no



IV. Summary (5 minutes)

- Parents and teachers each have important roles in advancing a child's success.
- Parents and teachers have different perspectives, but as they work together, the chances for student success increase.
- Parents and teachers must begin the school year with positive communication and maintain two-way communication throughout the school year.

IV. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT



Training IV includes information about the ESEA and TEA requirements for parent involvement in schools.

IV. THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Successful parent involvement programs require shared commitment around a foundation of shared educational values... When adults in the school community come together to discuss and decide on the values they can support, a spirit of community emerges. When parents feel a sense of belonging and importance in the school community, their involvement increases.

**Lezotte & Pepperl
Positive Home-School Relations, 2001**

Student engagement in school is predicated upon five forces for engagement: desires, attitudes, motivation, behaviors, and actions. Schools can promote the engagement of students by encouraging the involvement of families in the educational lives of students and by supporting program offerings of both instructional and non-instructional natures.

**Constantino
Engaging All Families, 2005**

IV. THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

PROPOSED TOPIC: Provide information about the ESEA and TEA requirements for parent involvement in schools.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate
- Warmly welcome the attendees
- Introduce herself/himself
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting
- Conclude the meeting on time

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section III: Parents and Teachers, Partners for Student Success.
 1. Parents and teachers each have important roles and when they work together the child benefits.
 2. Parents and teachers must start the school year with positive communication and maintain two-way communication throughout the school year.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- Educational and advocacy organizations share a belief in the importance of parent/family involvement. Other resources for information are available to parents including United States Department of Education, the Texas Education Agency, and Education Service Centers. Each has a web site and contacts for parent involvement.

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides resources and requirements that can assist schools to close the achievement gap and be more successful at meeting the state assessment standards.
- Texas Senate Bill 1 creates opportunities for parents to be more involved in the school decision making process. Schools are expected to be more parent and family friendly and to include parents as partners in student achievement.
- There are many ways in which parents can be kept informed and involved. Parents have rights and responsibilities regarding their role in their child's school and learning.
- Implementation of the "Building Capacity" requirements will equip parents to be more involved in parent activities and better able to assist their child.

I. Ice Breaker - Acronyms (5 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Acronyms" are included on the next two pages.

Directions: Many educational and parental involvement organizations use acronyms or the initials of their program for identification. Display 10-15 acronyms. Ask participants to identify the acronym. Allow them to make up answers for the acronyms. Have fun with this activity. Then show the correct answer.

AEIS	Academic Excellence Indicator System
AEP	Alternative Education Program
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CCRS	College and Career Readiness Standards
COE	Certificate of Eligibility
ELL	English Language Learner
EOC	End of Course
ESC	Education Service Center
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
HQ	Highly Qualified (teachers and paraprofessionals)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
ISD	Independent School District
LEA	Local Education Agency (a school district)
LEP	Limited English Proficient
MEP	Migrant Education Program
PAC	Parent Advisory Council
PBM	Performance Based Monitoring
PTA/PTO	Parent-Teacher Association/Parent-Teacher Organization
SBDM	Site-Based Decision Making
SDFSC	Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
SHAC	School Health Advisory Committee
SIP	School Improvement Program
STAAR	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
TAKS	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEC	Texas Education Code
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
TELPAS	Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System
USDE	United States Department of Education

The business of education has its own unique jargon and acronyms. Educators need to be careful not to use jargon with parents, and parents need to ask educators to explain jargon and acronyms they do not understand.

ACRONYMS

AEIS	MEP
AEP	PAC
AYP	PBM
CCRS	PTA/PTO
COE	SBDM
ELL	SDFSC
EOC	SHAC
ESC	SIP
ESEA	STAAR
HQ	TAKS
IDEA	TEA
IEP	TEC
ISD	TEKS
LEA	TELPAS
LEP	USDE

ACRONYMS

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TELPAS	Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System
USDE	United States Department of Education

II. Parents' Rights and Responsibilities (15 minutes)

See Trainer Notes: ESEA Parental Involvement Requirements - Title I Schools

Trainer Notes: are provided on pages SEC: IV-17, 18, 19

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- "What Is TEA"
- "Texas Education Agency Mission and Philosophy"

HANDOUTS are provided on the next two pages.

- "Parent Notifications and Parent Consultation"
 - "Parental Involvement Requirements - Texas Senate Bill 1"
- ESEA provides accountability, funding, help for children, mandates high-quality teachers, and empowers parental involvement. It supports learning across all grade levels; provides parent information about their children's progress; alerts parents to the performance of their children's school; gives children and parents a lifeline; informs parents of teacher quality; gives more resources to schools; allows more flexibility; and focuses on what works.
 - The Texas Education Agency also emphasizes the importance of parent involvement. The specific rights and responsibilities of parents are described in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 26. The TEA values the role of parents as partners in student success.
 - Parents have a right to know. There are a variety of notifications that need to be provided to parents as well as opportunities when parent input is sought and consultation with parents is required.

Directions: Provide the Parent Notification and Parent Consultation handout. Highlight some of the critical points. Allow some time for participants to review and ask questions.

Provide the "Parental Rights Requirements - Texas Senate Bill 1" handout. Again, highlight some of the key points. Allow some time for participants to review and ask questions.

PARENT NOTIFICATIONS – ESEA (Federal)

School districts and campuses are required to notify parents about a number of matters relating to the school and student achievement. (This is required by Title I statute.) Important notifications include:

- Parents have the right to receive information in a uniform format and to the extent practicable in a language they understand.
- Parents have the right to know teacher and paraprofessional qualifications.
- Parents have the right to know if teachers are not highly qualified.
- Parents have the right to know the district and campus Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) review and the LEA annual report card.
- Parents have the right to know student achievement on state assessment and to receive frequent reports about student progress.
- Parents have the right to know school status regarding school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
- Parents must be provided the parental involvement policy and the school-parent compact.
- Parents must be notified when a school is identified as a “persistently dangerous school.”

PARENT CONSULTATION – ESEA (Federal)

- Parents must be included in developing the parental involvement policy and school-parent compact.
- Parents must be asked to evaluate the parental involvement policy.
- Parents of students attending an elementary school must be invited to the campus for an annual parent-teacher conference, or more frequently as needed.
- Parents must be included in the development of the district and campus improvement plans; for Title I schools, the schoolwide plan; for Title I Part C schools, the Migrant Education Plan; and for schools not meeting AYP for two or more consecutive years, the school improvement plan.
- Parents must be informed about the rights of homeless children.
- Parents must be invited to annual Title I meetings.
- Parents must be consulted when completing the Consolidated Application for federal funding.
- Parents must be consulted about their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for involvement at a Title I school.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT REQUIREMENTS – TEXAS SENATE BILL 1



The 74th Texas State Legislature added parental involvement requirements to the Texas Education Code with Senate Bill 1.

Parents are to be involved by:

- Receiving training in school restructuring in order to improve student achievement.
- Being part of the district and campus-level planning and decision-making process as well as to be asked for input into the process.
- Being a member of a local health education advisory council to ensure that local values and health issues are reflected in the district's human sexuality instruction.
- Receiving written notice of student's performance in each class once every 12 weeks.
- Being notified about eligibility for and information about special education programs and services, bilingual education, migrant education, compensatory education, services for the deaf and services for children with visual impairments.
- Being notified when student has violated the student code of conduct and attend scheduled hearings for removal from a classroom or campus or admitted to a School-Community Guidance Center.
- Notification of public hearings about the district and campuses accountability report as well as receiving appropriate information about student performance at the campus.

In addition, parents are given the right to:

- Petition the board, designating which school in the district the child will attend;
- Request a class change for the student;
- Request the addition of a specific academic class if there is sufficient interest;
- Request their child attend a class above the child's grade level;
- Request that a child who completes all required courses may graduate early and participate in graduation ceremonies;
- Access ten different types of student records;
- Review each test administered to the child (after it has been administered);
- Review all teaching materials and to have full information regarding school activities;
- Access any meeting of the board of trustees (except an officially closed meeting or executive session, as allowed by law);
- Disallow certain activities without parental consent, such as tape recording or videotaping a student (except for purposes of safety, co-curricular/extracurricular activities, or regular classroom instruction); and
- Remove a child from a class that conflicts with the family's religious or moral beliefs.

Texas Education Code, Chapter 26. Parental Rights and Responsibilities

For a complete text of Senate Bill 1, parents may contact their local school district office or go to www.tea.state.tx.us.

III. Other Resources (10 minutes)

- HANDOUTS are provided on the next three pages.*
- “Texas Education Service Centers”
 - “Map of Texas Education Service Centers”
 - “Parent Involvement Organizations”

It is said that knowledge is power. We need actively involved and “empowered” parents to develop effective parent involvement programs. The parents’ first source of information is the local school, talking with the teachers and staff and campus principal. The second source of information is the Local Education Agency office, gathering information from the administrative staff. But some parents have more complex inquiries or desire additional opportunity for professional development. Acquaint your parents with the regional Education Service Center(ESC). The ESC provides professional development and technical assistance to schools and LEAs. Many parents have access to the internet, provide to them a list of web sites that might prove helpful to those parents that want more information and new strategies.



TEXAS EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS

There are 20 regional Education Service Centers. The purpose of the Education Service Center (ESC) is to assist the schools in its region. That means that the ESC will have teacher resources, training workshops, parent education information, and other resources and materials that will assist staff and volunteers who work with the school. To find your region, look for the location that is closest to your town. In some cases, there may be more than one center located nearby. ESC staff will be available to assist you. Following are the ESC addresses and telephone numbers:

<p>Region I 1900 W Schunior Edinburg, TX 78541-2234 956/984-6000 www.esc1.net</p>	<p>Region VIII PO Box 1894 Mount Pleasant, TX 75456-1894 Location: 2230 N Edwards 75455 903/572-8551 www.reg8.net</p>	<p>Region XV PO Box 5199 San Angelo, TX 76902-5199 Location: 612 S Irene Street 76903 325/658-6571 www.netxv.net</p>
<p>Region II 209 N Water Street Corpus Christi, TX 78401-2599 361/561-8400 www.esc2.net</p>	<p>Region IX 301 Loop 11 Wichita Falls, TX 76306-3706 940/322-6928 www.esc9.net</p>	<p>Region XVI 5800 Bell Street Amarillo, TX 79109-6230 806/677-5000 www.esc16.net</p>
<p>Region III 1905 Leary Lane Victoria, TX 77901-2899 361/573-0731 www.esc3.net</p>	<p>Region X PO Box 831300 Richardson, TX 75083-1300 Location: 400 E Spring Valley Road 972/348-1700 www.ednet10.net</p>	<p>Region XVII 1111 West Loop 289 Lubbock, TX 79416-5029 806/792-4000 www.esc17.net</p>
<p>Region IV 7145 W Tidwell Houston, TX 77092-2096 713/462-7708 www.esc4.net</p>	<p>Region XI 3001 North Freeway Fort Worth, TX 76106-6596 817/740-3600 www.esc11.net</p>	<p>Region XVIII PO Box 60580 Midland, TX 79711-0580 Location: 2811 LaForce Boulevard 432/563-2380 www.esc18.net</p>
<p>Region V 2295 Delaware Street Beaumont, TX 77703-4299 409/838-5555 www.esc5.net</p>	<p>Region XII PO Box 23409 Waco, TX 76702-3409 Location: 2101 W Loop 340 254/297-1212 www.esc12.net</p>	<p>Region XIX PO Box 971127 El Paso, TX 79997-1127 Location: 6611 Boeing Drive 915/ 780-1919 www.esc19.net</p>
<p>Region VI 3332 Montgomery Road Huntsville, TX 77340-6499 936/435-8400 www.esc6.net</p>	<p>Region XIII 5701 Springdale Road Austin, TX 78723-3675 512/919-5313 www.esc13.net</p>	<p>Region XX 1314 Hines Avenue San Antonio, TX 78208-1899 210/370-5200 www.esc20.net</p>
<p>Region VII 1909 N Longview Street Kilgore, TX 75662-6827 903/988-6700 www.esc7.net</p>	<p>Region XIV 1850 Highway 351 Abilene, TX 79601-4750 325/675-8600 www.esc14.net</p>	

MAP OF TEXAS EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS



EDUCATIONAL AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

ORGANIZATION	WEB ADDRESS
U.S. Department of Education	www.ed.gov/
Texas Education Agency – No Child Left Behind	www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/
Boys Town Press	www.girlsandboystown.org
The Center for Divorce Education (877) 874-1365	www.divorce-education.com
Communities in Schools	www.cisnet.org/intro.html
Dana Center	www.utdanacenter.org/
Family Frameworks	www.parentalinvolvementnetwork.org
The Grandparent Foundation	www.grandparenting.org
Harvard Family Research Project	www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/
HIPPY	www.hippyusa.org
Hispanic Family Learning Institute	www.familit.org
"I CARE" Positive Parenting Curriculum	www.icarenow.com
Love and Logic	www.loveandlogic.com
Mega Skills – Dr. Dorothy Rich	www.megaskillshsi.org
National Center for Fathering	www.unt.edu/cpe/
National Center for Family/Community Involvement (SEDL)	www.sedl.org/connections/
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education	www.ncpie.org/
National Fatherhood Initiative	www.fatherhood.org
National Parent Information Network	www.npin.org/
National Parent Teacher Association	www.pta.org/
National Partnership for Women and Families	www.nationalpartnership.org
Parent Institute	www.par-inst.com
Parents for Public Schools	www.parents4publicschools.com/
Practical Parent Education	www.practicalparent.org
Project Appleseed	www.projectappleseed.org
School, Family, and Community Partnerships – Dr. Joyce Epstein	www.westviewpress.com
Search Institute	www.search-institute.org

USDE Develops Spanish-Language Web Site

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a Spanish-language web site to help Spanish-speaking customers obtain useful information. The site, which is titled "Recursos en Español (Resources in Spanish)," is available online at <http://www.ed.gov/espanol/bienvenidos/es/index.html>. Of particular interest is a link entitled Publicaciones y Materiales, which contains information on all of USDE's publications that are available in Spanish through the Education Publications Center at <http://www.ed.gov/espanol/publicaciones/es/index.html>. The site also offers links to web sites and provides toll-free numbers where more information on each topic may be obtained.

IV. Building Capacity for Involvement (10 minutes)

The value of building capacity is to ensure the effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement. The building capacity requirements are not exceptional but foundational; they are not the ceiling but the ground floor. This starting point must be established to equip parents to be effective advocates for their child and partners with educators. As schools implement these requirements and parents avail themselves to these opportunities, students become the true winners.

Fully explain that school districts and schools will...

- • Assist parents in understanding state standards, district and state assessments, and how to monitor a child's progress.
- • Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children, such as literacy training and using technology.
- • Educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff in the value and utility of the contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school.
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies with other programs.
- • Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Provide reasonable support for parental involvement activities.

Although these six items are best practices, they are also statutory requirements. Each of the building capacity requirements is important. Some schools and districts are providing excellent services to fulfill these requirements. When these building capacity requirements are implemented in a way that meets the needs of the parents and families, trust and respect expand, and student performance improves.

V. Summary (5 Minutes)

Following are key points from Training IV – Rights and Responsibilities for Parent Involvement

- Educational and advocacy organizations share a belief in the importance of parent/family involvement. Other resources for information are available to parents including United States Department of Education, the Texas Education Agency, and Education Service Centers. Each has web sites and contacts for parent involvement.
- ESEA provides resources and requirements that can assist a school district, campus, and students to be more successful at meeting and exceeding the rigorous state assessment standards.
- Texas Senate Bill 1 (Chapter 26) creates opportunities for parents to be more involved in the school decision making process. Schools are expected to be more parent-friendly and to include parents as partners in student achievement.
- Officials from the State Board of Education all the way to the local campus are responsible for providing the best education possible, and parents have a right to take a role in decisions and information related to students' academic achievement. There are many ways in which parents can be kept informed and involved.
- Implementation of the “Building Capacity” requirements will equip parents to be more involved in parent activities and better able to assist their child.

TRAINER NOTES

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)

Parental Involvement Requirements – Title I Schools

Title I is the largest federally funded education program for elementary and secondary schools. Once known as "Title 1" of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, it was renamed "Chapter 1" in 1981. The Elementary and Secondary Education reauthorization (Improving America's Schools Act) of 1994 reverted "Chapter 1" back to "Title I." It was reauthorized again on January 8, 2002, as part of the No Child Left Behind amendment (NCLB) to ESEA.

Title I legislation provides federal funds to school districts in the United States based on how many low-income children they serve. Each school district that receives Title I funds must use them to pay for supplemental educational services for children who need additional instruction in school. The purpose of Title I is to help the lowest achieving students succeed and learn important academic skills. Title I funds provide opportunities for children served to acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the state content standards and to meet the state performance standards.

Districts then target the schools with the highest concentrations of low-income students. Approximately 75% of all public elementary schools, 50% of all public middle schools and 25% of all public high schools receive Title I funds. After the district's Title I funds are allocated to the highest poverty schools in the district, students are served based on educational rather than financial need. There are two types of Title I schools: Targeted Assisted and Schoolwide. Targeted Assisted Schools serve only identified students in need of academic assistance with a designated Title I teacher. Schoolwide Programs serve all students on that campus, and all teachers are considered to be Title I teachers.

Parents must be involved in designing and developing the Title I program at their child's school, including how Title I funds are allocated for parent involvement activities. Parents with a child attending a Title I campus must be notified about certain things in an easy to read format, and in a language the parents can understand, including their child's teachers' qualifications, and if their child has been taught four weeks or longer by a teacher who is not highly qualified. Parents must be notified if either the district or their children's school has been identified for school improvement, and the options available within that program for school choice and/or supplemental educational services. Parents at Title I schools must be given information about annual school report cards, individual student assessment reports, progress reviews of their child, and parent involvement policies. Every Title I campus must have an annual meeting and a flexible number of other meetings. Other Title I requirements impacting parents: funds must be reserved from the Title I budget for parent involvement activities; districts and Title I campuses must have parent involvement policies; Title I campuses must have School-Parent Compacts; and the Title I program must be coordinated with other programs on campus.

TRAINER NOTES

WHAT IS TEA?

Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the branch of state government that administers Texas' public elementary and secondary schools as well as adult education system. By working in partnership with local schools, the Agency is dedicated to the improvement of instruction and the educational environment in Texas schools. TEA seeks to achieve excellence in student performance so that all students in the state's public schools are properly prepared to meet the challenges they will face as adults.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) is the agency's governing body. Its 15 members are elected from 15 SBOE districts throughout the state. The board adopts rules and establishes policies for the state's public education system. The commissioner of education is appointed by the governor.

Since 1984, Texas has been a leader in public school reform. Beginning in January 2002, No Child Left Behind (NCLB)/Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has allowed more flexibility for local school districts, increased accountability, focused on what works, and provided greater choices for parents and students. This approach at both the state and federal levels is responsible for the local school district to become more active in efforts to improve education. Innovations, such as site-based decision making and school choice, give communities the ability to have more of an effect on the achievement of their students.

TEA has twenty regional education service centers (ESCs) that are located throughout the state to assist school districts called Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in serving students. A list of those service centers is included as a handout.

TEA has decentralized some of its services including the Title I Statewide School Support/Parental Involvement Initiative which is served through Region 16 ESC. It is the goal of the Title I Statewide Initiative to increase collaboration between TEA, the ESCs, and LEAs to impact student achievement. The Title I Statewide Initiative desires to provide ESC contacts networking opportunities for all parental involvement stakeholders in the state. Additionally, the Title I Statewide Initiative provides multiple professional development opportunities annually for educators regarding relevant parental involvement issues including an annual three-day parental involvement conference in the fall and a two-day family and community engagement seminar in the spring for educators and parents.

TRAINER NOTES

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Mission of the TEA

The mission of the TEA is to provide leadership, guidance, and resources to help schools meet the educational needs of all students.

The mission will be achieved by fulfilling two primary goals:

- 1) providing education system leadership; and
- 2) creating a system of operational excellence.

These two goals establish the framework for objectives and the strategies that make up TEA's budget structure.

Philosophy of the TEA

A general diffusion of knowledge and skills is essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of citizens. The TEA mission is fully grounded in this constitutional principle. TEA is committed to carrying out this mission through a clear and consistent focus on implementing policy to meet customer and stakeholder needs. Through educational system leadership and operational excellence, TEA works to maximize its value to the public education system.

The agency carries out its mission in a complex and interdependent web of relationships between multiple types of partners, customers, and stakeholders, by seeking to create a whole system of public education that is greater than the sum of its parts. TEA's philosophy is to lead the system, which includes students, educators, independent school districts (ISDs), charter schools, communities, families, universities and colleges, the State Board of Education (SBOE), regional Education Service Centers (ESCs), and TEA itself, in one synergistic direction to best achieve state, local and student education goals. This philosophy respects the primacy of local control so that the most important decisions are made as close as possible to students, schools, and communities. It is based on the idea that all parties, as well as every TEA employee, must work together efficiently and effectively to support and improve Texas public schools.

Finally, the TEA puts its philosophy into action with a consistent focus on results, fact-based decision-making and value-added analysis. TEA takes a "good, better, best" approach to achieving its goals of education system leadership and operational excellence. Key to the TEA's philosophy is the belief that every employee's job, and every business process, is tied to achieving the agency mission.

Texas Education Agency Strategic Plan, 2007-2011

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V. THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY AND SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT



Training V includes information that focuses on two key documents, the Parental Involvement Policy and the School-Parent Compact.

V. THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY AND SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.

**Henderson and Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002**

Parental approval is a powerful motivator for students... An involved parent can provide the directed practice a child needs for mastering certain skills, as well as encouragement for a lifetime of success. Never forget that parents are the most important, influential people in a child's life. Teachers cannot do their jobs effectively without them.

**Silver
Drumming to the Beat of
Different Marchers, 2005**

V. THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY AND SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

PROPOSED TOPIC: Introduce the parental involvement policy and school-parent compact – the content of the documents and the way they are developed, distributed, used, and evaluated.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate
- Warmly welcome the attendees
- Introduce herself/himself
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting
- Conclude the meeting on time

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section IV: Rights and Responsibilities for Parent Involvement.
 1. Both the federal government (U.S. Department of Education) and state government (Texas Education Agency) value parental involvement.
 2. Both the federal and state governments address specific rights and responsibilities for parent participation and information at their child’s school.
 3. Building the capacity for parent involvement strengthens the parent program and enhances the potential for student success.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

These documents, the Parental Involvement Policy and School-Parent Compact, focus on student achievement.

- All districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are required to have a district parental involvement policy and a campus parental involvement policy.
- All schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are required to have a school-parent compact.
- These documents are developed jointly with parents.
- These documents are distributed to parents.
- These documents along with the parental involvement program are evaluated annually with parent input.
- These documents focus on student achievement.



I. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

HANDOUTS: Quotes are included on next page.

Directions: Ask the audience to respond to the question, “What factors do you think most contribute to student achievement?” (Try to do this “popcorn” - that is quick-paced, brief answers, no discussions. Listen, gather ideas, and affirm the ideas suggested by the participants.)

Although many factors can impact student learning, (opportunity to learn, sufficient time to comprehend content and master skills, monitoring progress, encouragement to achieve, safe and positive school climate, and school leadership), family engagement is one of the most important factors contributing to student success.

Directions: Present one or both quotes. You may want to use the prompts as discussion triggers.

“Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.”

*Henderson and Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002*

“Parental approval is a powerful motivator for students... An involved parent can provide the directed practice a child needs for mastering certain skills, as well as encouragement for a lifetime of success. Never forget that parents are the most important, influential people in a child’s life. Teachers cannot do their jobs effectively without them.”

*Silver
Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers, 2005*

Prompts for the quotes...

- What would you say is the focus or expected outcome of parental involvement activities at your school or district?
- What do you think have been the most successful family engagement activities at your school or district?
- Athletic events have rules; driving a car has road rules and safety limits; what expectations do you value for contributing to a successful parent involvement and family engagement program?

QUOTES

Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.

**Henderson and Mapp
A New Wave of Evidence, 2002**

Parental approval is a powerful motivator for students... An involved parent can provide the directed practice a child needs for mastering certain skills, as well as encouragement for a lifetime of success. Never forget that parents are the most important, influential people in a child's life. Teachers cannot do their jobs effectively without them.

**Silver
Drumming to the Beat of
Different Marchers, 2005**

- What would you say is the focus or expected outcome of parental involvement activities at your school or district?
- What do you think have been the most successful family engagement activities at your school or district?
- Athletic events have rules; driving a car has road rules and safety limits; what expectations do you value for contributing to a successful parent involvement and family engagement program?

II. Parental Involvement Policy (10 minutes)

Directions: The trainer should provide a sample Parental Involvement Policy, either a district policy or a school policy. Either show the audience where the required information is addressed in the policy, or allow them time to find the information. Whatever you do, do not lecture, do not talk at the audience, help them discover the value and content of the policy.

- The intent of the parental involvement policy is to emphasize and enhance student achievement.
- It shall be developed jointly with parents and agreed upon with parents.
 - It shall be distributed to parents.
 - It shall be evaluated annually.
 - It shall address...
 - planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance.
 - building the schools' and parents' capacity for parental involvement.
 - coordinating and integrating parental involvement strategies with other programs such as Head Start, Reading First, and other early childhood programs.
 - involving parents in school activities.
 - providing information in a timely manner in a format and language parents can understand and encouraging two-way communication.
 - describing curriculum, means of assessment, and proficiency levels.
 - funding for the parental involvement program.

III. School-Parent Compact (10 minutes)

Directions: The trainer should provide a sample School-Parent Compact. Either show the audience where the required information is addressed in the compact, or allow them time to find the information. Whatever you do, do not lecture, do not talk at the audience, help them discover the value and content of the compact.

- • The intent of the school-parent compact is to emphasize and enhance student achievement.
- • It shall be developed jointly with parents and agreed upon with parents.
 - It shall be distributed to parents.
 - It shall be evaluated annually.
 - It shall address...
 - sharing responsibility (teachers, parents, and students) for improved student academic achievement.
 - developing a partnership between home and school.
 - describing the school's responsibility to provide high quality curriculum and instruction.
 - describing the parent's responsibility to support their children's learning.
 - stressing the importance of ongoing two-way communication through teacher-parent conferences, frequent reports to parents, and reasonable access to staff.
 - a parent-teacher conference is required in the elementary schools.

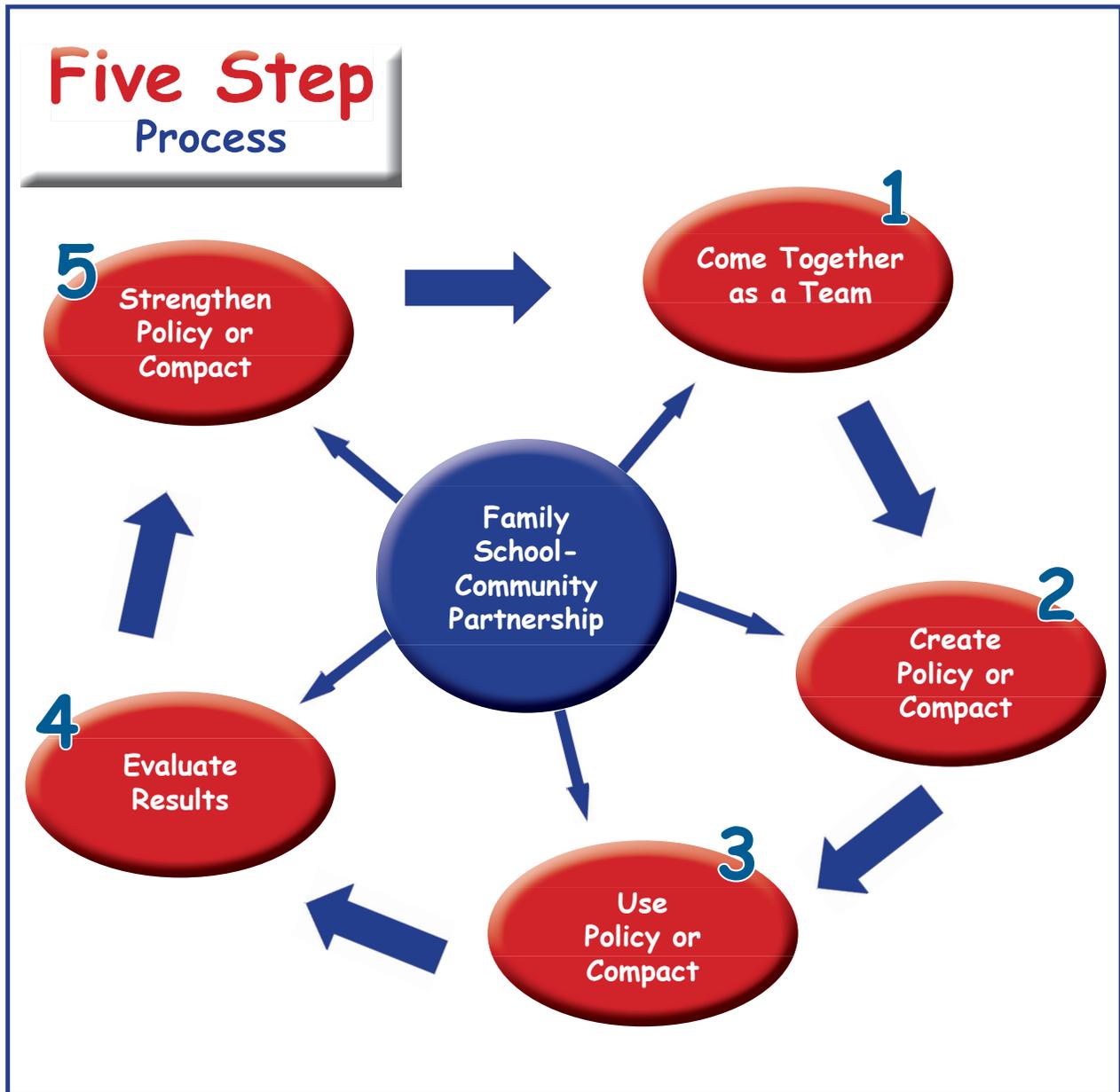
IV. Developing These Documents (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: A diagram of the Five-Step Process is provided on the next page.

Although there is no absolute or required procedure to develop these documents the following five step process seems to work well...

- **Develop a team** that includes school staff and parents. The parent participants should represent the student population. The team will review data collected through the comprehensive needs assessment. The data will enable the team to identify strengths, available resources, and deficiencies.
- **The team will create** or revise the policy and/or compact. The policy and/or compact will address the required information in the context of the school needs and academic goals and objectives. An emphasis will be placed on building relationships for shared responsibility. Collaboration for student success is paramount.
- **The team will distribute** the policy and/or compact and **encourage their use**. The policy and/or compact will be made available to school staff, parents and the community. The policy and/or compact should be addressed and used at parent nights, parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, PTA/PTO gatherings, and similar events. The policy and compact should be dynamic documents not shelf documents.
- **The team shall evaluate** the effectiveness of the policy and/or compact and the overall parental involvement program with input from parents, school staff, students, and the community. As the team reviews various responses they should look for trends and focus on the big issues. With current data new strategies can be proposed.
- **The team will strengthen and revise** the policy and/or compact. The team understands this is not a one-time event but an ongoing process.

FIVE STEP PROCESS



NOTE: This process can be used for BOTH the school-parent compact and the parental involvement policy.

V. Summary (5 minutes)

- **These documents focus on student achievement.**
- All districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are required to have a district parental involvement policy and a campus parental involvement policy.
- All schools receiving Title I, Part A funds are required to have a school-parent compact.
- These documents are developed jointly with parents.
- These documents are distributed to parents.
- These documents along with the parental involvement program are evaluated annually with parent input.

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VI. A FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOL



Training VI includes information that focuses on characteristics frequently evidenced in a family friendly school.

VI. A FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

The school must nurture relationships with all families and then give them tools to participate in their children's education. These family/school relationships are the foundation for real family engagement... The first step in building lasting and effective family engagement processes in your school or district starts with one simple word: relationships. Without them, there is no engagement.

**Constantino
101 Ways to Create Real
Family Engagement, 2008**

VI. A FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

PROPOSED TOPIC: Identify some of the characteristics most frequently evidenced in a family friendly school.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate
- Warmly welcome the attendees
- Introduce herself/himself
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting
- Conclude the meeting on time

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section V: The Parental Involvement Policy and School-Parent Compact.
 1. The primary focus and purpose of the policy and compact is to emphasize and advance student achievement.
 2. All districts receiving Title I Part A funds are required to develop with parent participation a district parental involvement policy.
 3. All schools receiving Title I Part A funds are required to develop with parent participation a school parental involvement policy and a school-parent compact.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- There are some myths commonly associated with parent involvement and family engagement and these need to be erased.
- There are some characteristics frequently evidenced at family friendly schools.
- Family friendly schools value relationships with parents, families, and the community; people are more important than program.

I. Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

HANDOUT: Quote is included on next page

Directions: Present the quote. You may want to use the prompts as discussion starters. If you have a large audience you may want to discuss these question in groups of about 5-7 people and then solicit feedback.

“The school must nurture relationships with all families and then give them tools to participate in their children’s education. These family/school relationships are the foundation for real family engagement... The first step in building lasting and effective family engagement processes in your school or district starts with one simple word: relationships. Without them, there is no engagement.”

Constantino

101 Ways to Create Real Family Engagement, 2008

For parents – do you know the name of your child’s teacher(s)? coach(es)? principal and assistant-principal? counselor? secretary or receptionist at the school office? school nurse? bus driver? Have you had the opportunity to meet these people face to face and briefly speak to them?

For educators – do you know your students’ parents/guardians? Are they being nurtured primarily by their natural parents? step-parents? grandparents? other? Have you had the opportunity to meet the primary caregivers face to face and briefly speak to them?

For all – what is your school doing to establish connections and build relationships with families and the community? What are you doing to make connections with school staff?

QUOTE

The school must nurture relationships with all families and then give them tools to participate in their children's education. These family/school relationships are the foundation for real family engagement... The first step in building lasting and effective family engagement processes in your school or district starts with one simple word: relationships. Without them, there is no engagement.

**Constantino
101 Ways to Create Real
Family Engagement, 2008**

For parents – do you know the name of your child's teacher(s)? coach(es)? principal and assistant-principal? counselor? secretary or receptionist at the school office? school nurse? bus driver? Have you had the opportunity to meet these people face to face and briefly speak to them?

For educators – do you know your students' parents/guardians? Are they being nurtured primarily by their natural parents? step-parents? grandparents? other? Have you had the opportunity to meet the primary caregivers face to face and briefly speak to them?

For all – what is your school doing to establish connections and build relationships with families and the community? What are you doing to make connections with school staff?

II. Myths About Parent Involvement (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Myths About Parental Involvement" is included on page VI-8.

Directions: Although there could be a lengthy list of myths about parent involvement and family engagement, let's address four at this time. As the trainer presents each myth the trainer may want the audience to share why they think the statement is true or false.

- Listen to respondents then briefly explain why each statement is a myth or false perception.

Myth 1: Parents and families living in socio-economically deprived circumstances are less interested and less able to support their children's learning.

True False

- Although families from socio-economically deprived situations may not possess the "social capital" for networking and may lack experience in the school system, and they may not have any college training, do not underestimate their desire for their child to be academically successful. Typically these families want their children to experience a better life as adults and they understand a successful educational experience is critical. Provide to these families practical ideas so they can more effectively help their children.

Myth 2: The best way for parents and families to be involved in the life of the school is through the local PTA or PTO.

True False

- The local PTA and PTO are organizations that can greatly benefit the school. They often provide training to parents and can be a very good place for parents to be involved. But, the key is engagement that leads to making an impact on the child's learning. Schools should provide meaningful opportunities for parents and families to be involved at home and at school so they are better equipped to assist their child.

Myth 3: Schools and teachers exhibit the greatest influence on children's learning.

True False

- Schools and teachers care for children 6-8 hours per day and do have a significant influence upon the child. Nevertheless, the parent continues to be the child's first and most important teacher. The parents and family establish the values, provide moral guidance, and herald educational expectations that outweigh the school's efforts. Even for secondary students, parents' interest and active ongoing support has an enormous influence upon the child's behavior and study habits and future achievements.

Myth 4: Parent involvement and family engagement are expectations that add time and effort to overstretched staff with little or no benefit.

True False

- Building relationships and meaningful partnerships does take some time, but the rewards are tremendous. When parents and families are actively engaged to promote and assist student learning the attendance rate increases, the graduation rate increases, discipline problems decrease, homework completion increases, and school morale improves. It is a win-win that is worth the time and effort invested by educators and families.

Myths About Parental Involvement

Myth 1: Parents and families living in socio-economically deprived circumstances are less interested and less able to support their children's learning.

True

False

Myth 2: The best way for parents and families to be involved in the life of the school is through the local PTA or PTO.

True

False

Myth 3: Schools and teachers exhibit the greatest influence on children's learning.

True

False

Myth 4: Parent involvement and family engagement are expectations that add time and effort to overstretched staff with little or no benefit.

True

False

III. Family Friendly Schools (15 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Is Your School a Family Friendly School" is included on the page VI-12.

Directions: The trainer will likely want to select certain questions to discuss and highlight. There are too many questions to review in 15 minutes, but the handout has all the questions. Participants should be encouraged to use this as an internal or informal evaluation of their school.

➔ Many schools think they are family friendly. A family friendly school is inviting, inclusive, and caring. People are more important than programs. Building relationships of trust and respect is more important than maintaining the status quo. Student success and safety is paramount. This type of school is developed by intention and design year after year. You can use the handout to check yourself.

The following list of questions are used by permission, Steven Constantino, "Engaging All Families."

Does Your School Say Welcome?

The school's physical appearance is important when establishing partnerships with families and community.

1. Do your school entrances welcome all families?
2. Are entrances clearly marked and understandable by all?
3. Are your faculty, student, and community parking well marked and understandable by all?
4. Is handicapped parking clearly marked?
5. Are handicapped entrances accessible and clearly marked?
6. Are the parking lots and entrances well lit?
7. If you experience graffiti at your school, is it promptly removed?
8. Is the interior of your school clean and well kept?
9. Do families perceive your school as being safe?
10. Does your school have a standing school beautification committee and does your budget include funds for such?
11. Does your school building contain understandable directional signs?
12. Is there a comfortable reception area for families?
13. Does your school have a parent or family center?
14. Is your school administration approachable by all families?
15. Does your school provide translation services for families who do not speak English?
16. Does your school minimize the use of educational jargon?
17. What family education programs does your school provide?
18. Do staff members treat families courteously?

Mission and Governance

1. In what kinds of initiatives does your school engage to promote family engagement? Be specific.
2. Does your school have a written policy or goal regarding family engagement?
3. Is family engagement incorporated into the mission of your school?
4. Are families aware of the mission and vision of your school? How have they been made aware?
5. Are family members included in staff professional development programs?
6. Are families part of the school governing council?
7. How are family members selected to be on the school governing council?
8. Are all demographic areas represented on your school council?
9. Does your school train families to participate in school governance?

Availability and Time

1. Are nonschool hours used for family conferences with staff?
2. Are school/family activities held in places other than the school (i.e., closer to certain communities)?
3. Do you promote family visitations during the school day?
4. Does your school offer families help with transportation or babysitting for scheduled events?

Two-Way Communication with All Families

1. How are families provided contact information for all staff members? Is the information accessible by **all** families?
2. Do families have telephone numbers, e-mail, and web site addresses for the school and its faculty?
3. What is the school policy for teacher communication with all families?
4. Is there a policy for family communication with teachers?
5. Do all teachers communicate regularly with families?
6. How does the school assist families with understanding educational objectives?
7. How often are grade and assignment information made available to families?
8. Is curriculum information provided to all families in an easily understood, jargon-free format?
9. Does your school communicate in multiple languages?
10. Are school policies and regulations easily accessible?
11. How often does your school send a newsletter?
12. Does your school publish a calendar?
13. Are your security measures well publicized?
14. Do you provide a written profile of your school to share with students, parents, and guests?

Opportunities for Interaction

1. Does your school require conferences with all families of students?
2. Does your school require family approval of student course selections?
3. Do families have input on all program and policy changes at your school?
4. Does your school maintain an active parent/teacher/student organization?
5. Does your school encourage an active, well-defined volunteer program?

Community Outreach

Family engagement and community involvement often go hand in hand.

1. Is your school a community school?
2. Are your school facilities available for community use?
3. What types of extended-day programs exist at your school?
4. Is your school equipped to become a community learning center?
5. Does your school act as a polling place on Election Day?
6. Does your school have a web site that is current and updated?
7. Are your school planning and curriculum documents available to the community?
8. How many different ways does your school publish telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses for the benefit of the community?
9. Does your school have a marketing plan?
10. How many and what kinds of events are held each year that involve families and community members?
11. Have you mapped the assets available in your community?
12. Does your school have an organized public relations program?
13. How many established business and community partnerships is your school involved in?

Engaging Families with Students

Research clearly indicates that students who are not engaged in their school and their learning do not achieve at the highest possible levels. Family engagement promotes student engagement.

1. How often do you provide families information about their children's academic progress?
2. How do you provide cocurricular and athletic activities information to all families?
3. How do you promote high interest in your school by all families?
4. How do you encourage family involvement with creating enhanced home learning environments and activities?
5. How does your school promote community service activities?
6. How are your important events promoted to families and the larger community?

Is Your School a Family Friendly School?

Does Your School Say Welcome?

The school's physical appearance is important when establishing partnerships with families and community.

Yes No

		1. Do your school entrances welcome all families?
		2. Are entrances clearly marked and understandable by all?
		3. Are your faculty, student, and community parking well marked and understandable by all?
		4. Is handicapped parking clearly marked?
		5. Are handicapped entrances accessible and clearly marked?
		6. Are the parking lots and entrances well lit
		7. If you experience graffiti at your school, is it promptly removed?
		8. Is the interior of your school clean and well kept?
		9. Do families perceive your school as being safe?
		10. Does your school have a standing school beautification committee and does your budget include funds for such?
		11. Does your school building contain understandable directional signs?
		12. Is there a comfortable reception area for families?
		13. Does your school have a parent or family center?
		14. Is your school administration approachable by all families?
		15. Does your school provide translation services for families who do not speak English?
		16. Does your school minimize the use of educational jargon?
		17. What family education programs does your school provide?
		18. Do staff members treat families courteously?

Mission and Governance

Yes No

		1. In what kinds of initiatives does your school engage to promote family engagement? Be specific.
		2. Does your school have a written policy or goal regarding family engagement?
		3. Is family engagement incorporated into the mission of your school?
		4. Are families aware of the mission and vision of your school? How have they been made aware?
		5. Are family members included in staff professional development programs?
		6. Are families part of the school governing council?
		7. How are family members selected to be on the school governing council?
		8. Are all demographic areas represented on your school council?
		9. Does your school train families to participate in school governance?

Availability and Time

Yes No

		1. Are nonschool hours used for family conferences with staff?
		2. Are school/family activities held in places other than the school (i.e., closer to certain communities)?
		3. Do you promote family visitations during the school day?
		4. Does your school offer families help with transportation or babysitting for scheduled events?

Two-Way Communication with All Families

Yes No

		1. How are families provided contact information for all staff members? Is the information accessible by <i>all</i> families?
		2. Do families have telephone numbers, e-mail, and web site addresses for the school and its faculty?
		3. What is the school policy for teacher communication with all families?
		4. Is there a policy for family communication with teachers?
		5. Do all teachers communicate regularly with families?
		6. How does the school assist families with understanding educational objectives?
		7. How often are grade and assignment information made available to families?
		8. Is curriculum information provided to all families in an easily understood, jargon-free format?
		9. Does your school communicate in multiple languages?
		10. Are school policies and regulations easily accessible?
		11. How often does your school send a newsletter?
		12. Does your school publish a calendar?
		13. Are your security measures well publicized?
		14. Do you provide a written profile of your school to share with students, parents, and guests?

Opportunities for Interaction

Yes No

		1. Does your school require conferences with all families of students?
		2. Does your school require family approval of student course selections?
		3. Do families have input on all program and policy changes at your school?
		4. Does your school maintain an active parent/teacher/student organization?
		5. Does your school encourage an active, well-defined volunteer program?

Community Outreach

Family engagement and community involvement often go hand in hand.

Yes No

		1. Is your school a community school?
		2. Are your school facilities available for community use?
		3. What types of extended-day programs exist at your school?
		4. Is your school equipped to become a community learning center?
		5. Does your school act as a polling place on Election Day?
		6. Does your school have a web site that is current and updated?
		7. Are your school planning and curriculum documents available to the community?
		8. How many different ways does your school publish telephone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses for the benefit of the community?
		9. Does your school have a marketing plan?
		10. How many and what kinds of events are held each year that involve families and community members?
		11. Have you mapped the assets available in your community?
		12. Does your school have an organized public relations program?
		13. How many established business and community partnerships is your school involved in?

Engaging Families with Students

Research clearly indicates that students who are not engaged in their school and their learning do not achieve at the highest possible levels. Family engagement promotes student engagement.

Yes No

		1. How often do you provide families information about their children's academic progress?
		2. How do you provide cocurricular and athletic activities information to all families?
		3. How do you promote high interest in your school by all families?
		4. How do you encourage family involvement with creating enhanced home learning environments and activities?
		5. How does your school promote community service activities?
		6. How are your important events promoted to families and the larger community?

IV. Building Relationships (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Building Relationships" is included on next page.

- ➔ The key to parent involvement and family engagement is building relationships. There needs to be mutual respect and trust between home and school. Schools need to genuinely care about the well-being and success of the child, and parents need to know and believe that schools and teachers care. The oft-used expression is still true, "parents don't care how much the school knows until they know that the school cares."

Directions: Give to each person or group the handout "Building Relationships." The sections are labeled "Information and Notification" (this is mostly one-way communication); "Consultation" (this is two-way communication); "Training and Team-Building" (this is developing relationships and working together on agreed-upon projects). Ask each person or group to list the items the school does that fits within each heading or group.

Most likely there will be a lot of writing under "Information and Notification" and some under "Consultation," but "Training and Team-Building" will be lacking. Ask participants to share what they have written under "Training and Team-Building." Allow participants to glean ideas from one another and briefly share success stories.

If time allows, ask the audience what they think their school might do differently to increase the number of items under "Consultation" and "Training and Team-Building."

Building Relationships

Information and Notification

Consultation

Training and Team-Building

V. Summary (5 minutes)

- There are some myths commonly associated with parent involvement and family engagement and these need to be erased.
- There are some characteristics frequently evidenced at family friendly schools.
- Family friendly schools value relationships with parents, families, and the community; people are more important than programs.



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VII. SCHOOL-PARENT ORGANIZATIONS



Training VII includes information that focuses on the way parents can be involved through the school-parent organizations.

VII. School-Parent Organizations

The Importance of Parents

We cannot look at the school and the home as being isolated from one another. We must see how the school, community, and the home are interconnected with each other and with the world at large. Successful parent involvement programs will share several fundamental beliefs about parents:

- **Parents want what is best for their children.**
- **Parents, regardless of their background or circumstances, can be a key resource in their children's education.**
- **All children can learn, and the focus of educators' efforts needs to be on children's success.**
- **Together, educators, families, and communities can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.**

To reflect and embrace these beliefs, educators need to recognize that parents must be involved in all aspects of their children's education. It is not enough for them to be involved only at home; they must be involved at all levels in the school - including its governance and decision-making.

National PTA, Building Successful Partnerships, 2000

VII. School-Parent Organizations

PROPOSED TOPIC: Describe the way parents can be involved through school-parent organizations.

PRIOR TO THE MEETING

The trainer should review:

- “Getting the Word Out – Advertising” p. i:9
- “Getting the Word Across – Atmosphere” p. i:10
- “Getting the Word Around – Obstacles” p. i:11

The trainer should review the material for this presentation:

- Are you prepared to present this material?
- Do you have handouts printed, if needed?
- Do you have audio-video equipment or computer/LCD projector or chart paper & pens or other visual aids, if needed?

The trainer should:

- Start on time
- Organize to provide a light snack, if appropriate
- Warmly welcome the attendees
- Introduce herself/himself
- Present the material in a manner that is positive, relevant, and practical
- Welcome questions and comments from the participants
- Thank all the attendees for their input and inform them of the next meeting
- Conclude the meeting on time

If training is presented as a series:

- Share a 1-2 minute review of Section VI: A Family Friendly School.
 1. Family friendly schools are welcoming, inclusive, maintain two-way communication, encourage families to be involved, and reach out to the community.
 2. Family friendly schools emphasize building relationships; people are more important than program.

MAIN POINTS TO BE COMMUNICATED

- Parents have a wide range of choices for ways to become involved in their child’s schools.
- Parents are part of the whole school community and their active participation helps the students to receive the best possible education.

I. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

HANDOUT: Quote is included on next page

Directions: Present the quote. You may want to use the prompts as discussion triggers. If you have a large audience, you may want to discuss these questions in groups of about 5-7 people and then solicit feedback.

The Importance of Parents

We cannot look at the school and the home as being isolated from one another. We must see how the school, community, and the home are interconnected with each other and with the world at large. Successful parent involvement programs will share several fundamental beliefs about parents:

- *Parents want what is best for their children.*
- *Parents, regardless of their background or circumstances, can be a key resource in their children's education.*
- *All children can learn, and the focus of educators' efforts needs to be on children's success.*
- *Together, educators, families, and communities can succeed in educating children and preparing them to lead healthy, happy, and productive lives.*

To reflect and embrace these beliefs, educators need to recognize that parents must be involved in all aspects of their children's education. It is not enough for them to be involved only at home; they must be involved at all levels in the school - including its governance and decision-making.
National PTA, Building Successful Partnerships, 2000

- In what ways do parents support and encourage student learning?
- In what ways are parents involved at your school or district?
- Why do you think parent involvement/family engagement is important?
- Describe any partnerships your school or district have with local businesses or community organizations including faith-based groups.
- What do you think have been some of the most successful activities of the local school-parent organization during the past year?
- If your local school-parent organization was to do one thing differently this year, what would you like that to be?

QUOTE

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II. Keys to Successful Partnerships: Six Types of Involvement (15 minutes)

HANDOUT: "Keys to Successful Partnerships" is included on next page.

"Six types of involvement are now widely accepted as reflecting the many different ways in which families and schools can collaborate. These six types of involvement also provide a framework upon which to build or strengthen a local school-parent organization.

1. Parenting: basic parenting skills and supporting children as students;
2. Communicating: regular two-way communication;
3. Volunteering: family involvement at school;
4. Learning at home: family involvement with children on academic activities;
5. Decision making: family participation in school decisions and leadership; and
6. Collaborating with the community: coordinate resources and services from the community."

Epstein, 2006

Directions: Briefly explain each "key" and allow time for questions and clarifications.

➔ The trainer should stress that this is neither a required program nor a one size fits all. Rather, consistent implementation of these six types of parent involvement reaps results for parent and family participation and student success. Each type of involvement needs to be developed in a way that best suits the context of the families, school, and community.

- Ask the attendees, which of these types of parent participation do you find most satisfying and why? The participants may be more comfortable talking about the preferred level or comfort of participation in small groups of three to five.
- Ask the participants about which of these types of parent participation they would like more information or training? Try to be specific. For example, Parenting: discipline? Kid's use of media? Learning at home? Technology for learning? Helping with homework?, etc. You may want them to write their ideas on 3x5 cards which the trainer can collect. The trainer should share these replies with the group and seek further clarification.

Keys to Successful Partnerships: Six Types of Involvement

	Parenting Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students. Also, assist schools to better understand families.
	Communicating Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student progress.
	Volunteering Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times.
	Learning at Home Involve families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.
	Decision Making Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.
	Collaborating with the Community Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community.

Epstein, et. al. 2002. School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

III. What's Next? (15 minutes)

The trainer should briefly review and highlight the key point in each of the previous sections. If the I S-P-Y manual has been presented consecutively, this is the last of seven sections. The previous six sections addressed...

- The Benefits of Parent Involvement: students tend to do better in school and enjoy school more when parents are engaged with the school and actively encourage their child's learning.
- The Key Stakeholders in Parent Involvement, Collaborative Partnership: student success depends upon the cooperative efforts of many individuals – school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, and community members – positive teamwork produces the best results.
- Parents and Teachers, Partners for Student Success: other than parents teachers spend a lot of time with the child daily; therefore there needs to be consistent two-way communication between home and school to best serve the needs of the child.
- Rights and Responsibilities for Parent Involvement: the statute at both the federal and state levels affirms the importance of parent involvement and has identified specific requirements for schools to maintain and opportunities for parents to be fully engaged in their child's education.
- The Parental Involvement Policy and School Parent Compact: the policy describes the parent involvement program at the district and campus levels while the compact reinforces meaningful two-way communication focused upon student performance.
- A Family Friendly School: a positive school climate is very important when welcoming parents and encouraging their active participation; it is all about building relationships of trust and respect.

HANDOUTS : are provided on the next two pages.

- *What's Next Questions*
- *What's Next Survey*

Directions: Ask the following questions. It would be good to have each question discussed in small groups of about five people. You may want to record the answers on chart paper or on 3X5 cards that can be given to the trainer. Report out and share the ideas that were proposed.

From your perspective,

1. What additional information or resources would you like to receive? (Try to be specific)
2. What additional training would you like to receive? (Try to be specific)
3. If you were involved in developing a parent involvement program what would be your top three goals for the current school year or next school year?
4. How would you build enthusiasm for parent involvement in your school and community?

The next steps to success are up to you...

What's Next Questions

From your perspective,

1. What additional information or resources would you like to receive? (Try to be specific)
2. What additional training would you like to receive? (Try to be specific)
3. If you were involved in developing a parent involvement program what would be your top three goals for the current school year or next school year?
4. How would you build enthusiasm for parent involvement in your school and community?

What's Next Survey

Yes No

		(Educator) I will talk to the parents. I will communicate with the parents and family on a regular basis in a manner that is convenient for them.
		(Parent) I will talk to the teacher. I will communicate with the teacher on a regular basis in a manner that is convenient for him/her.
		I will read and try to follow the parental involvement policy.
		I will read and try to follow the school-parent compact.
		(Parent) I will volunteer at my child's school as my time allows.
		(Teacher) I will provide timely information to parents about student projects and major tests.
		(Parent) I will talk to my child daily about school events, student friendships, and classroom activities.
		I will attend other relevant trainings to improve my understanding and skills that apply to parent involvement and family engagement.
		I will invite my colleagues and my friends to join me in future relevant trainings that apply to parent involvement and family engagement.
		I will talk to the school principal or parental involvement liaison/coordinator about ideas for future relevant trainings that apply to parent involvement and family engagement.

IV. Summary (5 minutes)

- There are many ways for parents to become involved in their children's education.
- Parents and families are an important part of the whole school community and their active participation helps children grow and thrive.

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VIII. APPENDIX



Appendix includes:

- **Bullying**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Parent-Teacher Conference**

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Bullying



What is Bullying?

Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not "just messing around," and it is not something to grow out of. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.

Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:

- Imbalance of Power: people who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves
- Intent to Cause Harm: actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm
- Repetition: incidents of bullying happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms. Examples include:

- Verbal: name-calling, teasing
- Social: spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships
- Physical: hitting, punching, shoving
- [Cyberbullying](#): using the Internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to harm others

An act of bullying may fit into more than one of these groups.

Test Your Bullying Knowledge

How much do you really know? Check out these facts and myths about bullying.

FACT: People who bully have power over those they bully.

People who bully others usually pick on those who have less social power (peer status), psychological power (know how to harm others), or physical power (size, strength). However, some people who bully also have been bullied by others. People who both bully and are bullied by others are at the highest risk for problems (such as depression and anxiety) and are more likely to become involved in risky or delinquent behavior.

FACT: Spreading rumors is a form of bullying.

Spreading rumors, name-calling, excluding others, and embarrassing them are all forms of social bullying that can cause serious and lasting harm.

MYTH: Only boys bully.

People think that physical bullying by boys is the most common form of bullying. However, verbal, social, and physical bullying happens among both boys and girls, especially as they grow older.

MYTH: People who bully are insecure and have low self-esteem.

Many people who bully are popular and have average or better-than-average self-esteem. They often take pride in their aggressive behavior and control over the people they bully. People who bully may be part of a group that thinks bullying is okay. Some people who bully may also have poor social skills and experience anxiety or depression. For them, bullying can be a way to gain social status.

MYTH: Bullying usually occurs when there are no other students around.

Students see about four out of every five bullying incidents at school. In fact, when they witness bullying, they give the student who is bullying positive attention or even join in about three-quarters of the time. Although 9 out of 10 students say there is bullying in their schools, adults rarely see bullying, even if they are looking for it.

MYTH: Bullying often resolves itself when you ignore it.

Bullying reflects an imbalance of power that happens again and again. Ignoring the bullying teaches students who bully that they can bully others without consequences. Adults and other students need to stand up for children who are bullied, and to ensure they are protected and safe.

MYTH: All children will outgrow bullying.

For some, bullying continues as they become older. Unless someone intervenes, the bullying will likely continue and, in some cases, grow into violence and other serious problems. Children who consistently bully others often continue their aggressive behavior through adolescence and into adulthood.

MYTH: Reporting bullying will make the situation worse.

Research shows that children who report bullying to an adult are less likely to experience bullying in the future. Adults should encourage children to help keep their school safe and to tell an adult when they see bullying.

MYTH: Teachers often intervene to stop bullying.

Adults often do not witness bullying despite their good intentions. Teachers intervene in only 14 percent of classroom bullying episodes and in 4 percent of bullying incidents that happen outside the classroom.

MYTH: Nothing can be done at schools to reduce bullying.

School initiatives to prevent and stop bullying have reduced bullying by 15 to 50 percent. The most successful initiatives involve the entire school community of teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members.

MYTH: Parents are usually aware that their children are bullying others.

Parents play a critical role in bullying prevention, but they often do not know if their children bully or are bullied by others. To help prevent bullying, parents need to talk with their children about what is happening at school and in the community.

Know the Risk Factors Before Bullying Begins

There is no one single cause of bullying. Rather, individual, family, peer, school, and community factors can place someone at risk for being bullied or for bullying others. Even if a child has one or more of the risk factors, it does not mean that they will bully or will become bullied.

Who is At Risk for Being Bullied?

Generally, children, teens and young adults who are bullied:

- Do not get along well with others
- Are less popular than others
- Have few to no friends
- Do not conform to gender norms
- Have low self esteem
- Are depressed or anxious

Who is At Risk for Bullying Others?

Some people at risk for bullying others are well-connected to their peers, have social power, and at least one of the following:

- Are overly concerned about their popularity
- Like to dominate or be in charge of others

Others at risk for bullying others are more isolated from their peers and may exhibit any of the following behaviors:

- Depression or anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Less involved in school
- Easily pressured by peers
- Do not identify with the emotions or feelings of others

Other risk factors for bullying others include:

- Being aggressive
- Having less parent involvement
- Thinking badly of others
- Being impulsive
- Being hot-headed and easily frustrated
- Having difficulty following rules
- Viewing violence in a positive way

What Does Not Increase Risk:

- Location. There are no differences in rates of bullying for urban, suburban, or rural communities. Bullying happens everywhere.
- School Size. The overall percentage of students being bullied does not vary based on school size, although bullying does happen more often in larger schools.
- Gender. Boys and girls are just as likely to be involved in bullying. Forms of bullying may vary by gender; for instance, some research has found that girls are more likely to bully others socially.

http://www.stopbullying.gov/topics/risk_factors/index.html

Recognizing the Warning Signs

There are many warning signs that could indicate that someone is involved in bullying, either by bullying others or by being bullied. However, these warning signs may indicate other issues or problems, as well. If you are a parent or educator, learn more about talking to someone about bullying.

Being Bullied

- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Is very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames themselves for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Avoids certain places
- Acts differently than usual

Bullying Others

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be best at everything

http://www.stopbullying.gov/topics/warning_signs/index.html

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, instead of happening face-to-face, happens through the use of technology such as computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. Cyberbullying peaks around the end of middle school and the beginning of high school.

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Sending hurtful, rude, or mean text messages to others
- Spreading rumors or lies about others by e-mail or on social networks
- Creating web sites, videos or social media profiles that embarrass, humiliate, or make fun of others

Bullying online is very different from face-to-face bullying because messages and images can be:

- Sent 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Shared with a very wide audience
- Sent anonymously

Effects of Cyberbullying

Research on cyberbullying has found that students involved are more likely to:

- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problems

Cyberbullying can have particular affects on those who are targeted. Research has found that young people who have been cyberbullied are significantly more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school
- Experience in-person bullying or victimization

What to Do When Bullying Continues or Gets Worse

How Do I Get Help?

If the bullying gets worse and you need additional help, consider the following if:

Instance	Action
Someone is at immediate risk of harm because of bullying	Call the police 911
Your child is feeling suicidal because of bullying	Contact the suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Your child's teacher is not keeping your child safe from being bullied	Contact local school administrator (principal or superintendent)
Your school is not keeping your child safe from being bullied	Contact the State School Department
Your child is sick, stressed, not sleeping, or is having other problems because of bullying	Contact your counselor or other health professional
Your child is bullied because of their race, ethnicity, or disability and local help is not working to solve the problem	Contact the U.S. Department of Education's Office on Civil Rights

http://www.stopbullying.gov/topics/get_help/index.html

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Suicide Prevention



Teen Suicide

What is suicidal behavior?

Suicidal behavior is defined as a preoccupation or act that is focused on causing one's own death voluntarily. An intent to cause one's death is essential in the definition. Suicidal ideation refers to thoughts of suicide or wanting to take one's own life. Suicidal behavior refers to actions taken by one who is considering or preparing to cause his/her own death. Suicide attempt usually refers to an act focused on causing one's own death that is unsuccessful in causing death. Suicide refers to having intentionally caused one's own death.

What causes adolescents to attempt suicide?

Adolescence is a stressful developmental period filled with major changes - body changes, changes in thoughts, and changes in feelings. Strong feelings of stress, confusion, fear, and uncertainty, as well as pressure to succeed, and the ability to think about things in new ways influence a teenager's problem solving and decision making abilities.

For some teenagers, normal developmental changes, when compounded by other events or changes in their families such as divorce or moving to a new community, changes in friendships, difficulties in school, or other losses can be very upsetting and can become overwhelming. Problems may appear too difficult or embarrassing to overcome. For some, suicide may seem like a solution.

As many as 12 to 25 percent of older children and adolescents experience some form of thoughts about suicide (suicidal ideation) at one time or another. When feelings or thoughts become more persistent, are accompanied by changes in behavior or specific plans for suicide, the risk of a suicide attempt increases.

What is known about teen suicide?

Suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15 to 24 year olds, and the third leading cause of death in 10 to 14 year olds. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), reliable scientific research has found the following:

- There are as many as 8 to 25 attempted suicides to one completed suicide with the ratio even higher in youth.
- The strongest risk factors for attempted suicide in youth are depression, substance abuse, and aggressive or disruptive behaviors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports the following:

- Males are 4 times more likely to die from suicide than females.
- Females are more likely to attempt suicide than males.
- Firearms are used in over half of youth suicides.

What are the risk factors for suicide?

Suicide risk factors vary with age, gender, and cultural and social influences and may change over time. Risk factors for suicide frequently occur in combination with each other. The following are some suicide risk factors that may be present:

- one or more diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorders
- impulsive behaviors
- undesirable life events or recent losses (i.e., death, parental divorce)
- family history of mental or substance abuse disorder
- family history of suicide
- family violence, including physical, sexual, or verbal/emotional abuse
- prior suicide attempt
- firearm in the home
- incarceration
- exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, including family, peers, in the news, or in fiction stories

Warning signs of suicidal feelings, thoughts, or behavior

Many of the warning signs of possible suicidal feelings are also symptoms of depression. Observations of the following behaviors by parents and caregivers may be helpful in identifying adolescents who may be at risk of attempting suicide:

- changes in eating and sleep habits
- loss of interest in usual activities
- withdrawal from friends and family members
- acting out behaviors and running away
- alcohol and drug use
- neglect of personal appearance
- unnecessary risk taking
- preoccupation with death and dying
- increased physical complaints frequently associated with emotional distress such as stomachaches, headaches, and fatigue
- loss of interest in school or schoolwork
- feelings of boredom
- difficulty concentrating
- feelings of wanting to die
- lack of response to praise
- indicates plans or efforts toward plans to commit suicide, including the following:
 - verbalizes "I want to kill myself," or "I'm going to commit suicide."
 - gives verbal hints such as "I won't be a problem much longer," or "If anything happens to me, I want you to know"
 - gives away favorite possessions; throws away important belongings
 - becomes suddenly cheerful after a period of depression
 - may express bizarre thoughts
 - writes one or more suicide notes

Threats of suicide exhibit desperation and a cry for help. Always take statements of suicidal feelings, thoughts, behaviors, or plans very seriously. Any child or adolescent who expresses thoughts of suicide should be evaluated immediately.

The warning signs of suicidal feelings, thoughts, or behaviors may resemble other medical conditions or psychiatric problems. Always consult your child's physician for a diagnosis.

Treatment for suicidal feelings and behaviors

Specific treatment for suicidal feelings and behaviors will be determined by your teen's physician based on:

- your teen's age, overall health, and medical history
- extent of your teen's symptoms
- seriousness of the attempt
- your teen's tolerance for specific medications, procedures, or therapies
- expectations regarding future suicide risk
- your opinion or preference

Any adolescent who has attempted suicide requires an initial physical evaluation and treatment until he/she is physically stable. Mental health treatment for suicidal feelings, thoughts, or behaviors begins with detailed evaluation of events in the adolescent's life during the two to three days preceding the suicidal behaviors. A comprehensive evaluation of the adolescent and family contributes to decisions regarding treatment needs. Treatment recommendations may include individual therapy for the adolescent, family therapy, and, when necessary, hospitalization to provide the adolescent a supervised and safe environment. Parents play a vital supportive role in any treatment process.

Prevention of suicide

Recognition and early intervention of mental and substance abuse disorders is the most effective way to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior. Studies have shown that suicide prevention programs most likely to succeed are those focused on identification and treatment of mental illness and substance abuse, coping with stress, and controlling aggressive behaviors.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), it is important to learn the warning signs of teenage suicide in order to prevent an attempt. Maintaining open communication with your teenager and their friends provides an opportunity for help as needed. If a teen is talking about suicide, he or she must receive an immediate evaluation.

- Warning signs for teen depression:
 - feelings of sadness or hopelessness
 - declining school performance
 - loss of pleasure/interest in social and sports activities
 - sleeping too little or too much
 - changes in weight or appetite
 - nervousness, agitation or irritability
 - substance abuse
- Steps parents can take:
 - Keep medications and firearms away from children.
 - Get your child help (medical or mental health professional).
 - Support your child (listen, avoid undue criticism, remain connected).
 - Become informed (library, local support group, Internet)
- Steps teens can take:
 - Take your friend's behavior and discussion of suicide seriously.
 - Encourage your friend to seek professional help, accompany if necessary.
 - Talk to an adult you trust. Don't be alone in helping your friend.

http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/healthcare_services/mental_health/mental_health_about/children/suicide/Pages/index.aspx

Myths about Suicide

Many myths have developed about suicide and those who engage in suicidal behaviors. The following are the most common myths and are NOT TRUE:

1. People who talk about suicide usually don't go through with it.
FALSE. Many people who die by suicide have given definite warnings to family and friends of their intentions. Always take any comment about suicide seriously.
2. Suicidal people are fully intent on dying.
FALSE. Most suicidal people are undecided about living or dying. This is called "suicidal ambivalence." While a part of them wants to live, death seems like the only way out of their pain and suffering. They sometimes "gamble with death," leaving it up to others to save them.
3. Sometimes a bad event can push a person to complete suicide.
FALSE. Normally, suicide results from serious psychiatric disorders rather than from any single event.
4. Thinking about suicide is rare.
FALSE. According to a recent study, one in five high school students considered ending his or her life in the past year.
5. Everyone who dies by suicide is depressed.
FALSE. Although depression is often associated with suicidal feelings, not all individuals who kill themselves are depressed. Many want to escape their situation seeing no other options. Adolescents, in particular, are very impulsive, and fail to think through alternative solutions to their life's problems.
6. You have to be "crazy" to commit suicide.
FALSE. The majority of individuals who commit suicide do not have a diagnosable mental illness. They are people just like you and I, who at a particular time are feeling isolated, desperately unhappy and alone. Suicidal thoughts and actions may be the result of not being able to cope with life's stresses and losses.
7. You can't stop someone who really wants to die by suicide.
FALSE. Know the warning signs. If you see these signs, be willing to talk about suicide with the person in danger. Ask questions in a non-threatening way. Let the person know you hear what they are saying, and make it clear that you intend to be there for them. Try to stall them. Say if they've made up their mind, they can always do it later. Get help. Love and instinct may not be enough.
8. Most people who attempt suicide have gotten it out of their systems and won't try it again.
FALSE. If a person attempts suicide once, it is likely that they will try again. Any attempt is regarded as an indicator of further attempts. It is likely that the level of danger will increase with each attempt. If their situation does not change, the pain is still there and they will most likely try again.
9. Talking to someone about suicide will put the idea into his/her head.
FALSE. If a person is not suicidal, they will reject the idea. If a person has been thinking about suicide and you ask, most will welcome the chance to talk about their feelings. Talking to teens about suicide will NOT put the idea in their head. For too many students, suicide is already something they've considered. Bringing up the subject and discussing it openly is one of the most important things you can do.

.....
If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be at risk for suicide, we strongly encourage you to do one or more of the following:

- * Contact a mental health provider on your campus or in your community
- * Call 1-800-273-8255(TALK), the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, for a referral
- * Call your school or school district emergency number
- * Call 911

.....
<http://www.ulifeline.org/main/page/57/MythsaboutSuicide>

Tips for School Personnel or Crisis Team Members

Children and youth exposed to extreme trauma like the terrorist attacks on the United States or a school shooting can be at increased risk of suicide, particularly youngsters who have experienced a personal loss, abuse, or previous traumatic event or who suffer from depression or other mental illness. School personnel will need to be more vigilant the weeks following a large-scale crisis, identify students who may be at greater risk, and watch for warning signs. The following information is a companion piece to **After A National Tragedy: Preventing Suicide in Troubled Children and Youth, Part I**, which outlines warning signs and tips for parents and teachers, available from the National Association of School Psychologists online at www.nasponline.org. (See also “Save a Friend: Tips for Teens to Prevent Suicide,” also on the NASP website.)

1. **Collaborate with colleagues.** Having support and consultation from an administrator and one other staff member (perhaps the school nurse, counselor, or social worker) is both reassuring and prudent.

2. **Assign a “designated reporter.”** Schools should identify one or more individuals to receive and act upon all reports from teachers, other staff and students about students who may be suicidal. This individual is frequently the school psychologist, counselor, nurse or social worker.

3. **Supervise the student.** It is best to always inform the student what you are going to do every step of the way. Solicit the student’s assistance where appropriate. Under no circumstances should the student be allowed to leave school or be alone (even in the restroom). Reassure and supervise the student until a parent, mental health professional or law enforcement representative can assume responsibility.

4. **Mobilize a support system.** Assessment of the student's support system will contribute to evaluating the student’s risk. It is often sensible to just ask the student, “who do you want or who do you think will be there for you now?” and assist the student achieving that support. It is important for students to feel some control over their fate.

5. **No-Suicide Contracts.** No-suicide contracts have been shown to be effective in preventing youth suicide. In cases where the suicide risk is judged to be low enough not to require an immediate treatment (e.g., there is only ideation and no suicide plan), a no-suicide contract is still recommended to provide the student with alternatives should their suicide risk level increase in the future. Such a contract is a personal agreement to postpone suicidal behaviors until help can be obtained. The contract can also serve as an effective assessment tool. If a student refuses to sign, they cannot guarantee they will not hurt themselves.

The assessment immediately rises to high risk and the student should be supervised until parents can assume responsibility in taking the student for immediate psychiatric evaluation.

6. **Suicide-proof the environment.** Whether a child is in imminent danger or not, it is recommended both the home and school be suicide-proofed. Before the child returns home and thereafter, all guns, poisons, medications, and sharp objects must be removed or made inaccessible.

7. **Call police.** All school crisis teams should have a representative from local law enforcement. If a student resists, becomes combative or attempts to flee, law enforcement can be of invaluable assistance. In some cases they can assume responsibility for securing a “72-hour hold” which will place the youth in protective custody up to three days for psychiatric observation.

8. **Documentation.** Every school district should develop a documentation form for support personnel and crisis team members to record their actions in responding to a referral of a suicidal student.

A Suicide Intervention Model

1. Assessment.

Designated reporters are often asked to make critical risk assessments under extraordinary time constraints. Thus, it is important for a risk assessment protocol to have a specific set of questions that will quickly and reliably obtain needed information. Questions often used address the following:

- What warning signs(s) initiated the referral?
- Has the student thought about suicide (thoughts or threats alone, whether direct or indirect, may indicate low risk)?
- Has the student tried to hurt himself before (previous attempts may indicate moderate risk)?
- Does the student have a plan to harm herself now?
- What method is the student planning to use and does he have access to the means (these questions would indicate high risk)?
- What is the support system that surrounds this child (including the parent in the risk assessment is critical to determining the adequacy of the student’s support system)?

2. Duty to Warn Parents.

There is no question that parents must be notified. In addressing this aspect of suicide intervention, four critical questions need to be addressed.

First, is the parent available?

Second, is the parent cooperative?

Third, what information does the parent have that might contribute to the assessment of risk?

Fourth, what mental health insurance, if any, does the family possess?

If the parent is available and cooperative and the student is judged high risk, the psychologist or social worker must provide parent(s) with community referral resources specific to where the family resides and based on health insurance status. With parental permission, the school psychologist should contact the agency, provide pertinent referral information and follow up to insure the family’s arrival at the agency. If necessary, assist the parent in transporting the student to the agency. The psychologist should obtain a parent signature on a release of information form and assist school staff in working with parents to develop a school support plan. All actions must be documented.

If a parent is unavailable and the student is judged high risk, then, at the discretion of the school site administrator, two members of the crisis team should escort the child to the nearest emergency mental health facility and coordinate efforts with the agency's Social Services to contact parent. Alternatively, school law enforcement, local police or a mobile psychiatric response team may be asked to assist in transporting the suicidal youth.

Some parents are reluctant to follow through on crisis team recommendations to secure outside counseling for the suicidal child and may simplify or minimize warning signals (e.g., "she's just doing this for attention"). Cultural and language issues are frequent. Give the parents appropriate opportunity and encouragement to follow through before collaborating with crisis team members on when to proceed to the next step. The school crisis team must decide when it is appropriate to report a parent to child protective services if their reluctance is truly negligence and endangers the life of the child.

If it is determined that a ***parent is uncooperative and the student is judged to be at high risk*** for a suicidal behavior, then local law enforcement or child protective services should be contacted and child neglect and endangerment report made. ***If the parent is uncooperative and the student is judged low risk*** for suicidal behavior, then it is recommended that the parent sign a "Notification of Emergency Conference" form which serves to document that the parents have been notified of their child's suicidal assessment in a timely fashion. There will be occasions ***when a student does not want a parent notified***. When children are thinking of harming themselves, they are not thinking clearly and, therefore, may not be the best judge of what might be their parent's response. The crisis team has only one decision to make: Will the child be placed in a more dangerous situation by notifying the parent? In such a situation, child protective services will typically be notified. The parents must still be notified and it is the challenge to school personnel to elicit a supportive response from parents.

The parent often has critical information necessary to make an appropriate assessment of risk. Thus it is critical to ***include parents in the risk assessment***. This information may include previous school and mental health history, family dynamics, recent traumatic events in the student's life, and previous suicidal behaviors. Interviewing the parent will also assist the psychologist in making an appropriate assessment of the support system that surrounds this student. Finally, it is important to determine ***what mental health insurance does the parent/family have?*** This information is essential in directing families to appropriate community agencies. All modern mental health intake interviews include questions regarding insurance coverage and it is wise for the school psychologist to be aware of the various local providers. If a student is directed to an emergency clinic, they may later require emergency transport to an appropriate HMO provider. This may not only further traumatize a suicidal student (because most transports must be done under restraints) but also generate a bill of great expense for the parent. It is certainly in the best interest of the child and family to limit the trauma of any student in need of emergency action.

3. Duty To Provide Referrals.

It is critical to stress the importance of identifying and collaborating with community agencies before the crisis occurs. It is recommended that the school crisis team representative call the agency to provide accurate information that the parent may omit or forget. School districts have an obligation to suggest agencies that are nonproprietary or offer sliding scale of fees.

4. Follow up and support the family.

Finally, it is important for school staff to provide ongoing modifications to the student's program, perhaps utilizing student study teams.

Resources for School Teams:

National Association of School Psychologists
www.nasponline.org

Center for Mental Health in Schools
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/resource.htm#crisis>

National Victim's Assistance Organization
<http://www.try-nova.org>

NASP represents 22,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and abroad. NASP's mission is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service. Modified from material posted on the NASP website, September 2001.

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www.nasponline.org

Other Resources for Information about Suicide

American Association of Suicidology

Leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research and education, and to reaching out to people with mood disorders and those impacted by suicide.

888-333-2377

American Psychological Association

APA's Help Center is your online resource for brochures, tips and articles on the psychological issues that affect your physical and emotional well-being, as well as information about referrals.

800-374-2721

The Jed Foundation

Works nationally to reduce the rate of suicide and the prevalence of emotional distress among college and university students.

Mental Health America

Dedicated to helping ALL people live mentally healthier lives.

800-989-6642

National Institute of Mental Health

News, overview, clinical trials, research, treatment, organizations on suicide provided by National Institute of Mental Health.

800-421-4211

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

With more than 130 crisis centers across the country, our mission is to provide immediate assistance to anyone seeking mental health services.

800-273-8255(TALK)

The Trevor Project

A national 24-hour, toll free confidential suicide hotline for gay and questioning youth.

1-866-488-7386 (4-U-TREVOR)

Parent-Teacher Conference



Parent–Teacher Conference

BEFORE – *BE PREPARED*

The most common reasons for a parent–teacher conference include:

- Beginning of the year “get to know you” meeting, most common in elementary school
- A child is experiencing academic setbacks
- The child is exhibiting behavior that is disruptive
- End of the year review of academic progress, results on state assessments, and the possible need for summer school or retention at the same grade level

The parent–teacher conference needs to be focused on the student and positive student outcomes

Be proactive:

- Contact the parent(s) when you first observe difficulties (phone, email, text message, handwritten note)
- Maintain frequent positive two-way communication with the caregivers
- Clearly explain your concerns, and patiently listen to their response and suggestions
- If problems persist a parent–teacher conference may be necessary

Be prepared:

- Academic Setbacks...
 - Have samples available of student work and assignments, and the grade book record of homework, quizzes, tests, and other assignments such as lab activities or essays, etc.
 - Be able to explain what you have done to provide reteaching and reinforcement to improve comprehension and mastery.
- Disruptive Behavior...
 - Have a record of specific behaviors, identify the date and the time of day, and describe the student behavior
 - Be able to explain what you have done to try to correct the behavior and to reinforce positive behavior

Make suitable preparations:

- Arrange a convenient time for the parents/caregivers to meet with you, the educator
- Arrange a convenient place, although typically it is the school building, or it may be necessary to meet elsewhere
- Be aware that just as you may be slightly anxious about the parent–teacher conference, the parents are likely experiencing similar feelings; be sensitive to the parent’s feelings
- Make the setting for the meeting comfortable, for example do not ask the parents to sit in student chairs while you sit in an adult (office) chair
- Meet in a well lit room and provide a glass or bottle of water
- Contact the parent(s) in advance of the meeting as a friendly reminder of the date, time, location, and primary talking point(s)

Parent–Teacher Conference

DURING – *BE PROFESSIONAL*

Prior to the meeting:

- If necessary have a sign that directs parent(s) to the meeting place
- Have all your documents ready and be prepared to start on time
- Greet parents/caregivers warmly
- Introduce yourself and speak to the parent(s) by name

Parents and family members don't care how much you know until they know how much you care

Introduction

- Thank the parents/care-givers for their willingness to meet with you
- Simply state that you are concerned about the well-being of the child
- Reinforce the hope that together you can agree on strategies that can lead to improved student performance

The purpose

- Clearly state the purpose of the meeting
- Identify and explain what you have observed
- DO NOT bring up past incidents that have been previously addressed
- DO NOT address too many issues at one time, keep it simple and specific (K-I-S-S)
- DO NOT compare the child to other students or to siblings
- Describe what you have done to assist the child

The Parent's Concerns

- Maintain eye contact
- Be a good listener
- Ask parents/caregivers if they have noticed similar problems at home
- Ask if the child has been experiencing any health problems that might affect him/her
- Gently ask if the child has been dealing with personal or family issues that might affect him/her
- Answer the questions of parents/caregivers respectfully and professionally

The Outcome

- Agree with parents as to...
 - Reasonable actions to address the need, both teacher actions and parent actions (specific and concrete)
 - Reasonable expectations to observe and identify improvement, student actions (specific)
 - Reasonable time frame to identify improvement
 - Next report of student progress
 - Who will explain the expectations to the child; it is often good for both the teacher and the parents together to talk to the child, especially for secondary-aged students

IMPORTANT!!! Maintain written documentation of the parent–teacher conference stating the purpose and concerns and the agreed upon outcomes; and each attendee should sign the documentation.

Parent–Teacher Conference

AFTER – BE PERSISTENT AND POSITIVE

Although the parent–teacher conference has concluded the actions (teacher, parents, and student) must now be implemented.

Implement the Plan

- Follow the agreed upon actions
- Document both positive improvements and recurring problems
- Report to the parents/caregivers the student progress
- Inquire about their observations of student progress
- Acknowledge and accentuate student successes
- Be persistent and positive when progress is slower than hoped or setbacks occur

In most cases one parent–teacher conference with clearly defined expectations and agreed-upon actions, implemented with consistency and concern for the child, results in improved performance.

When Problems Persist

- Initiate another parent–teacher conference and include other teachers and/or professionals
- Strive for collective understanding and mutual agreement to provide new strategies to assist the child
- Be persistent and positive

F-E-E-L

Family Engagement Enriches Learning

Parent-Teacher Conference Documentation

Student Name: _____ School and Grade: _____

Date and Time: _____ Meeting Location: _____

In Attendance: _____

Identified Concerns about Student Performance: _____

Agreed-Upon Actions (Teacher, Parents/Care-Givers, Student): _____

Parent/Care-Giver Signatures: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

MAKING PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES WORK FOR YOU

A parent-teacher conference is a conversation between a parent and the child's teacher. There is no need for tension, fear and frustration. Although a certain amount of nervousness is natural, it may help to remember that teachers are nervous too. Many teachers are parents and have experienced your feelings.

If parents and teachers already know each other, the fear of the conference is removed. Therefore, it is a good idea to create a relationship with the teacher as early as possible. This shows teachers that you care about your child's education. This relationship can begin with a simple note, e-mail, or telephone call. Call the school to find out when it would be convenient to contact your child's teacher. Don't expect teachers to leave the class to take your calls. Remember, positive contacts can establish a good working relationship.

Some things to remember:

- If this is your first contact with the teacher, help to put him/her at ease. Ask how school is going.
- If you've initiated the conference, write down the main points you'd like to discuss.
- Try to come up with a plan upon which you and the teacher can agree.
- Does any other school representative (counselor, another teacher) need to be in on the conference? If so, contact them.
- It takes at least two weeks of doing something in a different way to produce good results.
- Remember you are the parent, the child is the student, and the school representative is the teacher. All must work together, but each has a different role.

How Do You Know if You Need to Call The Teacher?

You suspect your child is having a problem in school. Should you call the teacher, or should you say nothing and hope for the best?

Most teachers say they want to know what's going on in a student's life. If you notice a problem, chances are your child's teacher **has too**. **By working together, you will be able to come up with a solution that's right for your child.**

Below is a list of times you should definitely call your child's teacher:

- You see a dramatic change in your child's behavior.
 - A happy child becomes withdrawn. A friendly child wants to be alone.
- There's a change in your family.
 - A divorce, a new baby or a new marriage can affect your child's school work.
- Grades drop.
 - This may happen in one subject or all of them.
- Your child begins to tell you things about school that aren't likely to be true, such as, "the teacher doesn't like me" or "no one will play with me."

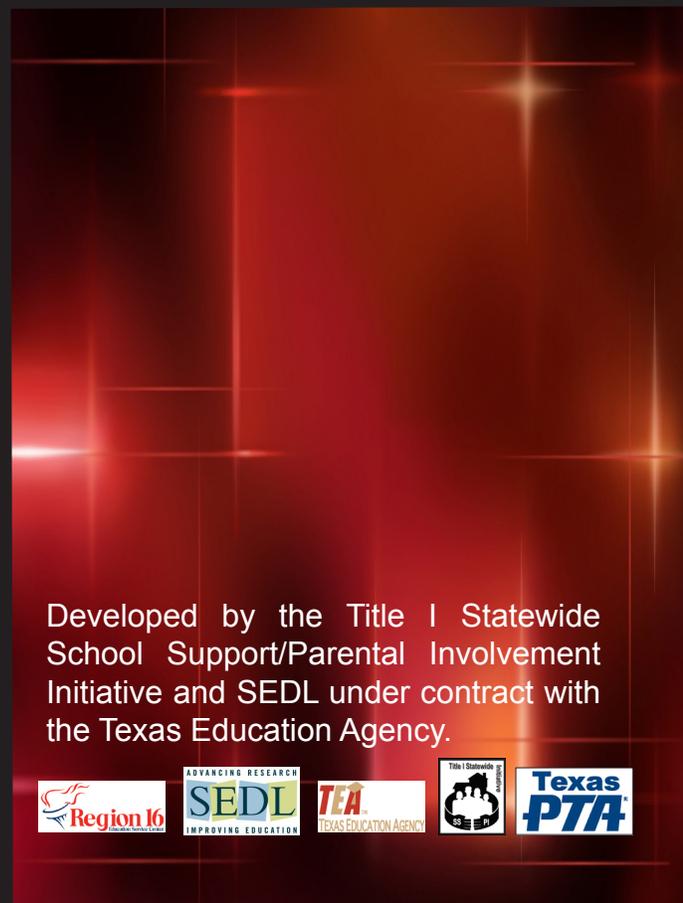
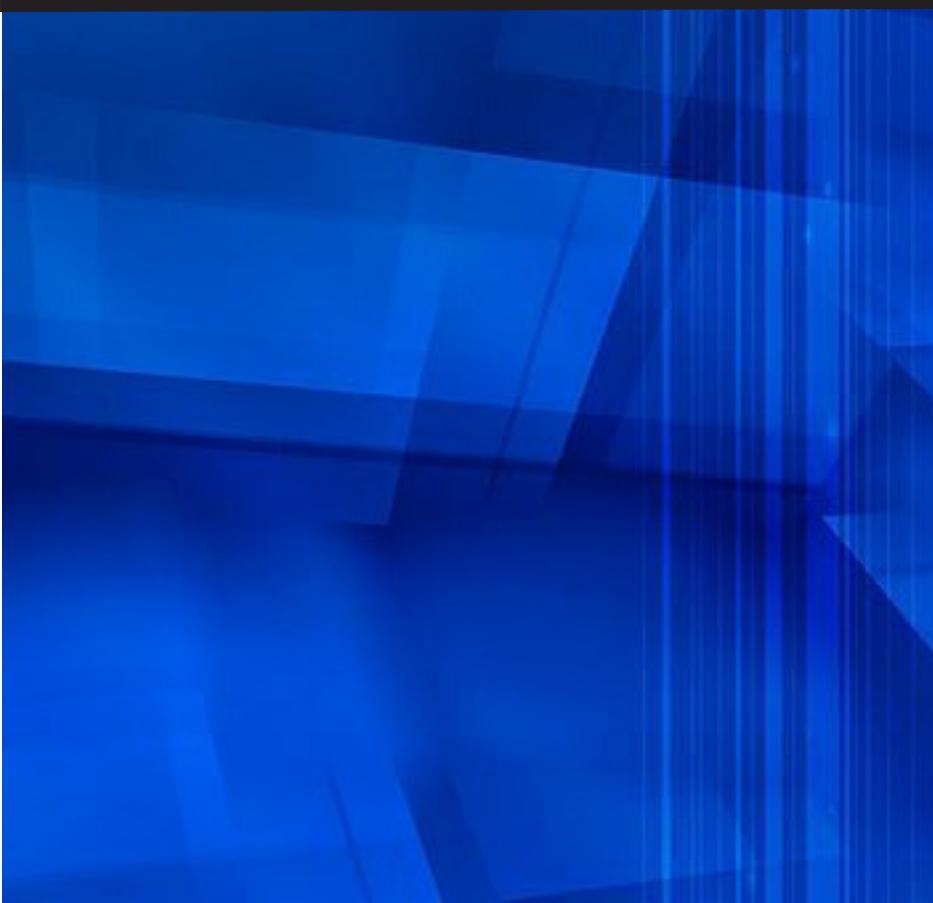
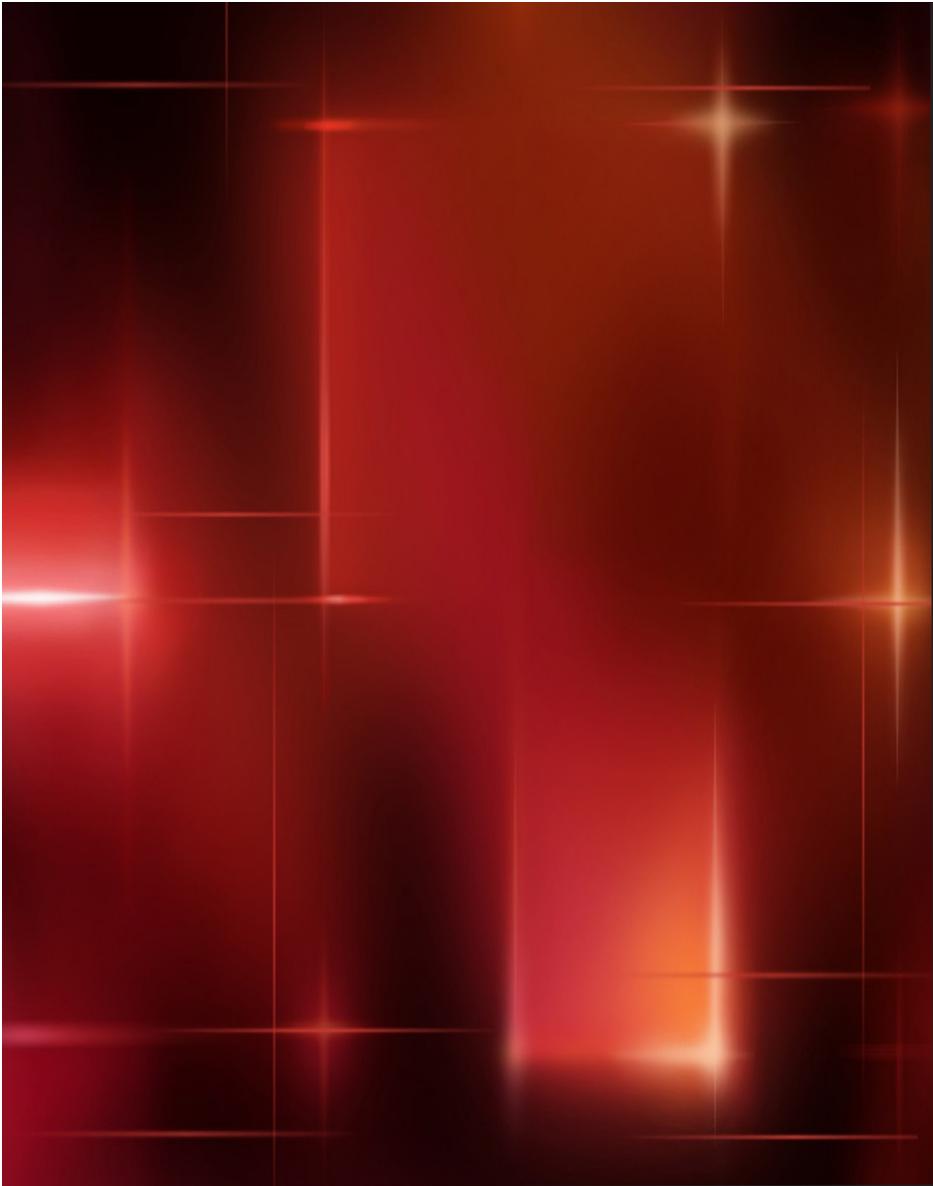
How Do I Learn About My Child's School?

You have decided it's time to learn more about your child's school. But how do you go about it?

- First, make an appointment to tour the school.
- Talk with other parents about their experiences.
- Look at the school's or school district's website.
- Read school board minutes and news articles in your newspaper.
- Take opportunities to visit the school.
- Attend school functions: athletic events, fine arts programs, UIL competitions, school dances, classroom parties, etc.
- Call, e-mail or write your child's teacher a note.
- Always join the PTA or other parent organizations and attend meetings, especially Open House.

Remember, the better you know the school and teachers, the better job you can do as a partner in your child's education.

SCHOOL IS WHAT WE ALL MAKE IT!!!



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