

FAMILY TOOLS

Module 1

Improving Communication

Improving Communication

***“Entre dicho y hecho hay
mucho trecho.”***

***“There’s a great distance between
saying and doing.”***

-Spanish Dicho



Overview

The National PTA (2004) states, *“When parents and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved and students make greater progress.”*

This module addresses the challenges of effective school-family-community communication. As parents, families and teachers work through this module, all are invited to consider their understanding of school programs and policies, student progress, how to respond effectively to student problems and how to improve communication with schools and teachers.



Research Link

Communication is evident when educators and families *“...communicate about school programs and student progress in varied, clear and productive ways. Create two-way communication channels from school to home and from home to school, so that families can easily keep in touch with teachers, administrators, counselors and other families”* (Epstein, 1995).

Research indicates that it is the quality of teacher/parent interaction that contributes most to student achievement. The researchers recommend using the following strategies to improve family school communication:

- Make It Positive:** Teachers communicate with parents most often when the child misbehaves. Ask teachers to share positive achievements and your child’s progress regularly. Ask how you can be responsive to the strengths and needs of your child.
- Make It Practical:** Ask and look for resources to understand the curriculum and New Mexico Content Standards. Be specific when communicating concerns with teachers. Ask for specific suggestions about what you can do to help your child in challenging areas. Talk with your child about the New Mexico Content Standards and how they are tested.
- Make It Personal:** Under the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, parents can request information regarding teacher qualifications. Check the school web site for information about staff, programs and initiatives. Communicate in person, via e-mail, notes, and phone calls with any questions, concerns or praises. Ask for information about your child’s individual test scores, assessment data and samples of work.



Practices to Improve Communication with Teachers

Epstein (2002) shares lessons learned on how to effectively communicate with teachers.

- Introduce yourself to your child's teachers early in the school year. Find out what the overall learning expectations are, how much homework to expect and how you can reinforce the lessons being taught.
- If you cannot make a parent-teacher conference, reschedule for another date that fits your schedule. You can also ask the teacher to meet you in a more convenient place.
- Check in with your child's teacher on a regular basis. You do not need to wait until you have a concern. You can call just to discuss your child's progress or to request that progress reports be sent home.
- When you do not understand a memo, school policy or program, ask your child's teacher to explain it.
- Fill out surveys sent out by the school. Your ideas and input are important to creating a better school environment for your child.
- Visit the school web site regularly to find out more about the school, events and staff.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what we do requires extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach a new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all of our children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides the framework for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be "highly qualified" as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) relevant to communication are listed below.

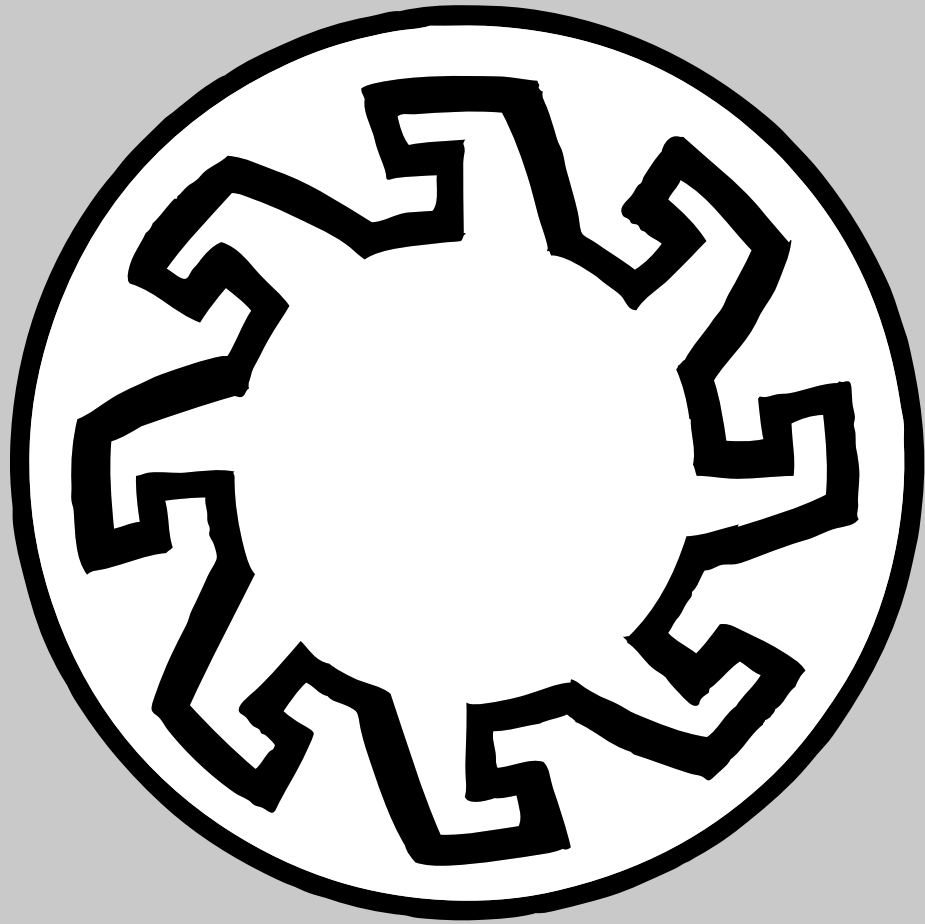
- Teachers develop a two-way system of communication with students and families about student progress.
- Teachers foster the development of respect for individual, cultural, linguistic, disability and religious differences.
- Teachers demonstrate knowledge of specific school, family and community resources that can support learning.



Parent/Family Communication Reflection

Use this checklist to rate the school in school-home-community communication and think about specific questions and actions you can take to improve communication.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to improve communication
I receive communication from the school in a variety of ways such as newsletters, e-mail, home visits, phone calls, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have received or requested clear information about school policies and procedures, discipline procedures, assessment tools and school goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I receive information from the school in a format and language that I understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I feel parent-teacher communication is planned to fit into my schedule and meets my language needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I share information about my child's strengths, learning preferences, concerns, attitudes and what motivates my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have received or requested information about the curriculum plans, the New Mexico Content Standards, student expectations and how I can help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 1



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

<p>Communicating with Your Child http://www.uft.org/parent/communicate/ Helping your child develop good study skills is one of the most important ways parents can support children’s emotional and psychological growth during the school years. This site is from the United Federation of Teachers.</p>
<p>Communicating with Your Child’s Teacher http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5283.html Ohio State University offers tips for parents on how to communicate with your child’s teacher.</p>
<p>Educational Trust http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/ This web site offers user-friendly information on the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> and other fact sheets and resources. Special sections on state and local policy, national policy, professional development, parents, and community, make this web site a great resource for everyone involved in education. Be sure to check out the “Tools for Parents and Community Members.”</p>
<p>Helping Children Succeed in School http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/succeed/09-communication.html An article for parents on parent/teacher communication is available in English and Spanish on this site. Helpful links to other articles and tips for parents are also included.</p>
<p>Public Broadcasting System (PBS) – Establishing Strong Family/School Communication http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents/f-s.html This article addresses strong Family/School communication with links to other helpful resources.</p>
<p>Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parents Centers http://www.taalliance.org This site offers families of children with disabilities information and guidance on how to talk to teachers, staff and schools about their children’s special needs.</p>
<p>The Learning First Alliance http://www.learningfirst.org The site is stocked with “practical guides” for communicating with the community about schools, the <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> and other issues. The “Resources for Parents” section allows families easy access to information about a variety of education issues and practices. There are also downloadable tips and guides to help families become more involved in their children’s education.</p>
<p>What Kids Can Do http://www.whatkidscando.org This site is inspirational in reminding us what can happen when we listen to children. It offers resources for talking to children about college, conducting teen-adult forums and engaging students as allies in improving schools.</p>



Resource 2

Communication Ideas for Parents

These actions will help you communicate with your child's teachers and school staff. Choose those that you think you can do and then revisit this list in about one month to check on your progress.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF	Introduce yourself to your child's teacher as early as possible in the year. Let the teacher know that you are a supportive parent and want to be involved in your child's learning.
DON'T BE A STRANGER	Parents send a message of support when they take the time to visit the school. Make an effort to have regular contact with school personnel. Make arrangements with the classroom teacher to occasionally visit the classroom, have lunch with your child or volunteer at the school.
TOUCH BASE	Talk with your child each day about what goes on at school. Learn the language of the classroom and use it to question your child about his/her day.
CONFERENCES	Attend parent-teacher conferences. Ask for a meeting if you have concerns or questions at other times of the year.
SHARE INFORMATION	Help your child's teacher by informing him or her of the learning styles and strategies that you use at home that work with your child. Also share the language and culture of your home.
QUESTION PRIVATELY	It is important that students view parents and teachers as a collaborative team. Questions or concerns should be handled privately between the parent and teacher. It is important to let your child know that you are communicating with the teacher.
ASK FOR E-MAIL VISITS	Sometimes your schedule and the schools don't match up. E-mail is an efficient way to communicate with school personnel. Check with your local library for Internet access if you do not have a home computer.
KEEP PERSPECTIVE	Parents sometimes have difficulty separating school concerns and issues from the emotional attachment they have for their child. Remember that the school is your partner, and by working together positively, you can help your child succeed to his or her fullest potential.

 Resource 3

Talking with Your Child

Talking with children involves the exchange of words, ideas and feelings. Communication leads to warm relationships, cooperation and a positive sense of self. It is important that we pay attention to what we say and how we say it to children. We communicate with looks, actions, silence, as well as with words. Remember to think before you speak.

Communicate Acceptance

Accepting a child just as he/she is, makes it easier to communicate with him/her. The child who feels accepted will be more likely to feel good about him/herself and share feelings and problems.

Instead of saying:	Say:
"You are acting like a baby, there is nothing to be afraid of."	"I know you are scared, I will leave the light on for you."
"Don't be upset, everyone loses sometimes."	"You are upset because you did not win the game."

Use Door Openers and Listen

Invite children to say more, and share feelings. Let children know that you accept and respect what they say.

"I see." "Mm hmmm." "Tell me more." "How about that."

Get a child's attention before speaking to him/her. Communicate at eye level. Try not to interrupt or scold children when they are telling you their stories.

Focus on Finding Solutions

- Teaching and modeling problem solving takes time, but the results are long lasting.
- Looking for solutions is usually the best approach to a problem behavior. Rather than focusing energy on blame or punishment, we can invite our children to work with us to solve a problem.
- The best solutions are those that children have a hand in designing and that focus on preventing problems in the future.



Resource 4

Ask the Right Questions

Parents want to know about how their child spent his or her day at school. Many times parents don't ask specific enough questions to get specific answers from children about their school day.

Often when you ask your child, "What did you do at school today?" the answer is, "Nothing." or "We played." This is especially true of elementary children. Or you ask, "How was school today?" and all you get is "Fine." Children want to share what happened during the day but the question "What did you do at school today?" may just be too wide open for them to answer, as they probably did a lot at school today!

Parents must know the language used in the classroom to refer to different activities, such as reading circles, science centers, cooperative groups, etc.

Ask the teacher to provide a daily schedule or list of questions which use this language, so that you will know how to better ask a child about his or her day.

Some examples might be:

"What story did you read in reading circle today?"

"What did you learn in science centers this week?"

"What was your role in the cooperative group today?" and "Who was the reporter?"

It is also helpful if the teacher helps remind young children or brainstorm together what they did that day just before they leave. It can be a very long day for some children and, by the time they see their parents, they may have honestly forgotten what happened earlier in the day.

A parent might ask:

"What was the first thing you did at school this morning?"

"What happened right after you came back from lunch?"

If you ask a more specific question - you might just get a more specific answer!



Resource 5

Understanding Standards-Based Education

If you have questions or concerns about student expectations and standards-based education, use the following suggestions and questions as a guide.

Ask how you can better understand the New Mexico Content Standards.

- How do I get a copy of the standards?
- What is my child expected to learn?
- What can I do if my child needs more challenge or support?
- How do I support my child?

Ask how your school uses the standards.

- Who makes decisions about what is taught and how it is taught in this school?
- How do I know how my child is doing in relation to the New Mexico Content Standards?
- How often will my child be tested?
- How will I know the results of the tests my child takes?

At the start of the school year, ask about expectations for your child's learning.

- What do you expect my child to learn this year in reading, math and science?
- What are the most important things for the children in your classroom to learn this year?
- What can I do at home to help my child learn these skills?
- How much time should my child spend on homework each night?
- How can I help with homework?
- What types of writing projects will my child have this year?

During the year, follow up on how your child is doing.

- How is my child's work evaluated using the New Mexico Content Standards?
- Do you use specific criteria (scoring guides, rubrics, etc.) to show progress?
If so, ask to see these.
- How often is the reporting of progress made to parents?
- How will I know if my child reaches the "proficiency" level that is expected and what is meant by each of the levels?

To access the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks visit:

- www.nmlites.org/standards/index.html
- www.cesdp.nmhu.edu



Resource 6

Ways to Communicate the Importance of Education to Children

The best thing you can do to help your child succeed is to stay interested in his or her education and share the joy of learning, as well as model good habits in reading and writing. Students actually spend much more time at home than they do in the classroom. How they spend their time outside school affects their academic success.

Which of these things can you do to help your child succeed?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Let your child know that education matters. Work with your child every day so that he or she knows that education is a top priority. Ask specific questions, such as, “How did your math test go?” or “Was your science experiment fun?” Find out about the specific activities carried out in the classroom to know what questions to ask.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Learn as much as you can about your child’s school. Get to know your child’s teachers and let them know you want to support your child’s education. Attend parent-teacher conferences. Join a parent-teacher organization at the school. Visit the classroom, or even better, volunteer to do something for the school. If it is difficult for you to get to the school, ask about how you can help at home or come up with ideas of your own.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Extend your child’s learning. Every waking moment is an opportunity to learn. Limit the amount of time your child spends watching television and playing video games. Make sure your child is reading and writing and that he or she sees you modeling reading and writing. Take your child to libraries, museums, zoos, outdoor sites, businesses and other places that can help him or her learn.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Be sure your child is prepared for school daily. Make sure your child gets a good night’s sleep and a healthy meal before heading out the door. Check with your child and his/her teacher to make sure that homework is completed. Help your child practice new concepts and facts, like multiplication tables and spelling new words.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Encourage your child and talk about role models in your community. Point out the people who have a college degree or a professional career and how they contribute to your local community. Talk about career choices and how doing well in school is connected to having choices in life. Reinforce the importance of valuing your culture, heritage and language.</p>

Your child’s academic success depends on your active participation.



Resource 7

Developing a Vision for Your Child

Families want the best education possible for their children. This form offers a way to look at both the strengths and challenges your child has. Complete it and share the information with your child's teacher.

Child's Name _____

Strengths, special interests and talents: _____

Challenges and needs: _____

Long range work and educational goals:	Goals for interacting with family:	Community participation goals:
Next year:	Next year:	Next year:
In five years:	In five years:	In five years:
As an adult:	As an adult:	As an adult:



Resource 8

Planning Guide for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Complete this form before attending your child's parent-teacher conference and bring it with you to the conference.

Our Parent-Teacher Conference

Child's Name: _____ Parents' Names: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

Conference Date: _____ Time: _____

Things I Want To Talk About

A. What I think my son/daughter does well at home:

B. What I think my son/daughter does well at school:

C. Questions I would like to ask the teacher:

D. One issue I would like to discuss with the teacher:

About My Child

Ask your child what he or she would like to have you talk about or what he or she would like to know more about.

1. Important things in my child's life I think you should know about:

2. Talk to your child. Ask him/her questions like: What do you like about school? Share this with the teacher.

What do you dislike about school? _____

Is there anything you would like me to ask or tell your teacher?

3. Other questions or concerns my spouse, partner or family members and/or I have:

At the Conference

(Please read these questions before the conference to help you plan what questions you would like to ask.)

1. Is my child at grade level with his/her reading, writing and math?

2. May I see something my child has written?

3. May I see an example of grade level or excellent work?

4. What are my child's strengths in class?

5. What are my child's weaknesses in class?

6. Which benchmarks and standards has my child achieved so far?

7. What do you expect from children in your class (behavior, work habits, etc.)?

8. What can I do at home to support you and my child in school?

9. How can I reach you if I have any questions or want ideas on how to help my child succeed in school?

10. Do we need to meet again? When will we meet?

After the Conference

1. Talk about it with your child. Praise your child's strengths.
2. Decide how you will follow through with any plan that you and your child have agreed upon with the teacher.
3. Start a folder about your child. Include in it:
 - Report cards
 - Samples of work
 - Notes from the teacher
 - Test scores
4. Make a calendar and mark:
 - Meetings
 - Important events
 - Social events at your child's school
5. Check your child's class work and homework every day.
6. Keep talking with the teacher to discuss your child's progress.



Action Plan:

Ways the parent, the child and the teacher can work together to ensure success.
(Do this with the teacher at the conference).

A. What the teacher will do at school:

B. What we will do at home:

C. How we will check our progress (notes, telephone calls, e-mail, follow-up conference, etc.):



Resource 9

Parent and Child Rights in Special Education

Use this information, from the New Mexico Public Education Department's Special Education Bureau web site, to review the rights of children in Special Education.

What Is Special About Special Education?

Special education is instruction designed specifically to meet the unique needs of children with exceptionalities—those who have one or more disabilities as defined by federal law,* or in the state of New Mexico, who are determined to be gifted. It is important to note that not all students who have a disability or who are struggling qualify for special education. To be eligible for special education or related services, the child must meet two requirements. First, he or she must be found to have a qualifying exceptionality. In addition, the nature of the exceptionality must be such that it directly affects his or her opportunity or ability to learn and progress in the educational program or environment provided for the general student population. Special education and related services are designed to help a child learn the information and skills that other children are learning.

An Overview of the Special Education Process

Every child is special because he or she is a unique individual. In the United States, we provide a free, public education to every child. Schools provide a general curriculum designed to meet the needs of most children and prepare them to function independently as adults and participate in their community. Special education services are provided to those students who, because of exceptionalities, need additional support in order to learn and attain these same goals. It is also the goal of special education to provide services and supports to students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) along side students without disabilities.

Decisions about a child's program and/or placement are not made lightly or easily. It takes a team using their combined knowledge and expertise to make decisions that are in the best interest of the child. A specific process is followed and you, the parent, are an essential part of the team. The child is also included whenever possible and must be invited to participate if he or she is 14 or older.

In order to better understand your role and your rights in the decisions made about your child, it may be helpful to first take a look at how the special education process works in general.

Step 1 - Pre-referral/Referral Interventions

The child is referred for consideration of the possible need for special education and/or related services. Referrals can come from the school or parents. Local school districts must provide screening and appropriate interventions through a Student Assistance Team (SAT) child study process before referring a child for a full special education evaluation unless a student has an obvious disability or a serious and urgent problem.

Step 2 - Initial Evaluation

The child is evaluated. This may involve formal testing, observations or even outside specialists. Written parental consent must be given before an initial evaluation or a reevaluation.

Step 3 – Determine Eligibility

Based on all the information gathered, a group of qualified professionals and the parent decide whether the child is eligible for special education or related services. A student may be found to be eligible because he or she has a defined exceptionality that directly affects learning or found to be ineligible because either the exceptionality does not directly affect learning or there is no concrete evidence that an exceptionality exists.



Step 4 – IEP Development

If the child is found eligible, a team is assembled and a meeting held to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is the master plan for the child’s special education and any related services, such as speech therapy or physical therapy that the child needs to benefit from instruction. Parents must be invited to the meeting and to participate as members of the team.

Step 5 – IEP Implementation

Parents consent is required before beginning any special education or related services.

Step 6 – IEP Review/Revision

The IEP must be formally reviewed at least once a year, more often if necessary, or as requested by the school or parent.

Step 7 – Reevaluation

A child receiving services must be reevaluated at least every three years (unless you and the school agree that a specific reevaluation is not necessary).

Step 8 – Determine if Eligible

Eligibility must be reexamined and re-determined after a reevaluation as in Steps 2 and 3.

Step 9 – Exit from Services or Continued Services

If the child is found to still be eligible, the team begins again at Step 4. If not, he or she exits the program.

*Federal law (IDEA-Part B 34 CFR Sec.300.7) defines thirteen categories of disability: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disability orthopedic impairment, other health impairment (including ADD, ADHD), serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment, including blindness.

For more information, this document, “Parent and Child Rights in Special Education”, can be accessed in its entirety from the New Mexico Public Education Department’s Special Education web site at:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/library/procedural.safeguards.interim.draft.pdf>



Resource 10

Bilingual Education in New Mexico

Research studies have found many benefits of Bilingual Education Programs, including:

- Building self-esteem and improving academic achievement by incorporating the students' cultures into classroom instruction;
- Enhancing student intellectual flexibility, creativity and problem solving;
- Developing students' literacy skills in English and in the home language;
- Building lessons from resources that exist within students' experiences and backgrounds in order to promote more active student engagement and increased student learning;
- Encouraging parent participation in school activities and goals;
- Expanding student access to people and resources;
- Increasing opportunities to compete in the workplace; and
- Supporting the development of a stronger national economy.

What is Bilingual Education in New Mexico?

Bilingual Education is an instructional program that uses two languages, one of which is English, as a medium of instruction in the teaching-learning process (New Mexico Bilingual Education Regulation, June 2002).

Models of Bilingual Education in New Mexico and Their Purposes

- A **Two-way Dual-Language Immersion** model is designed to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in English and another language for both English-speaking and students with a home language other than English.
- A **Maintenance** model is designed to develop and maintain proficiency and literacy in the student's home language and English.
- A **Transitional** model is designed to transfer students from instruction in their home language to an all-English curriculum.
- An **Enrichment** model is designed to further develop the home language of fully English proficient students and to teach the cultures of the state.
- An **Indigenous Language Revitalization** model is designed to support and revitalize a student's native language and culture through oral and/or written language instruction with tribal approval.

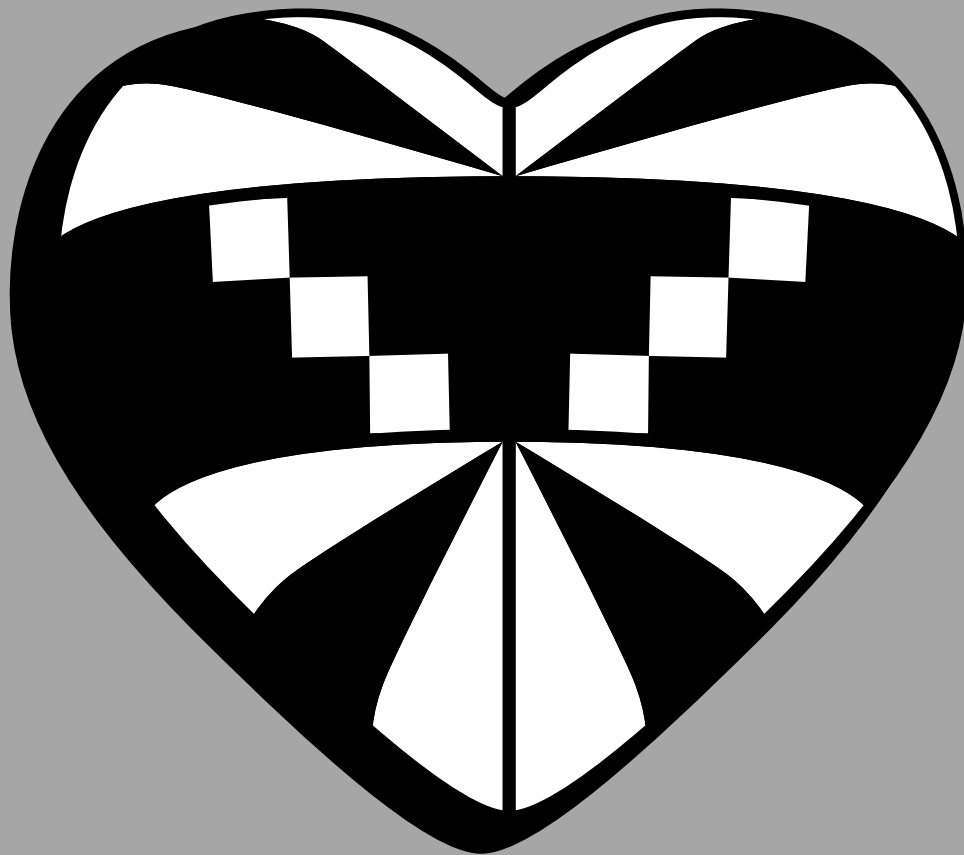


Important Facts About Bilingual Education

- Bilingual/ESL teachers teach English more effectively. They have more training on how best to instruct children learning English.
- Bilingual Education is PROVEN to close the gap better and faster than English Immersion.
- English Immersion is proven to widen the gap.
- Bilingual Education is supported by second language acquisition research and experts.
- A person who speaks two languages increases his or her marketability in the work place.
- Bilingual Education enriches academic productivity, creative talents and self-esteem in students.
- In the era of globalization, the rest of the world prepares their students to communicate in more than one language. We should join in.
- Bilingualism is a window into two worlds.
- Bilingualism and multilingualism ultimately provide a competitive advantage in the workforce and allow for additional job opportunities.
- The student's native language supports the learning of the second language and the comprehension of all subject areas.

Source: New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education (NMABE) web site www.nmabe.net (2006)

Notes



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 2

Promoting Positive Parenting

Promoting Positive Parenting

*“La memoria de la niñez
dura hasta la vejez.”*

“A child’s memory lasts a lifetime.”

- Spanish Dicho



Overview

This module focuses on helping families develop positive parenting skills and establish home environments to support children as learners. It also emphasizes the need for families to share information with the school staff about their concerns and goals for children.



Research Link

According to research conducted by Epstein (2002), parents who work to improve their parenting skills with the support of schools, community organizations and other resources, can positively impact students, families and educators in a variety of ways including those listed below.

Results for Students:

- Balance between time spent doing chores, other activities and homework
- Respect for self, parents and family
- Awareness of importance of school
- Responsible behavior and ownership of learning
- Positive attitudes, higher grades and high attendance in school

Results for Families:

- Understanding of child growth and development: birth - adolescence - young adult
- Support for children as learners at each grade level
- Understanding of teacher roles and responsibilities
- Exchange of information between educators and parents about concerns and goals for children
- Support for health, safety and nutrition of children

Results for Teachers:

- Understanding of families’ goals and concerns for children
- Respect for families’ strengths, needs and efforts
- Awareness of own skills to share information on growth and development
- Completed homework assignments
- Increased parental involvement
- Improved student attendance



Practices to Promote Positive Parenting

Epstein (2002) shares sample practices parents can use to establish home environments that support their children as learners:

- Never do your child's homework or projects yourself. Instead, make it clear that you're always available to help or answer any questions.
- Review your child's homework nightly, not necessarily to check up on him or her, but to make sure your child understands everything.
- Make sure your child knows what to do and who to contact in the case of an emergency.
- Inform your child's teacher about any conditions that may affect how your child learns.
- Set firm but kind expectations that your child should start tackling on his or her own. This reinforces independence and encourages him or her to accept a certain level of responsibility. Your child will learn that others will set expectations and that he or she can meet them.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what schools do requires a lot of extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach to a whole new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all of our children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides a structure for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be "highly qualified" as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The teacher competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) related to positive parenting are listed below.

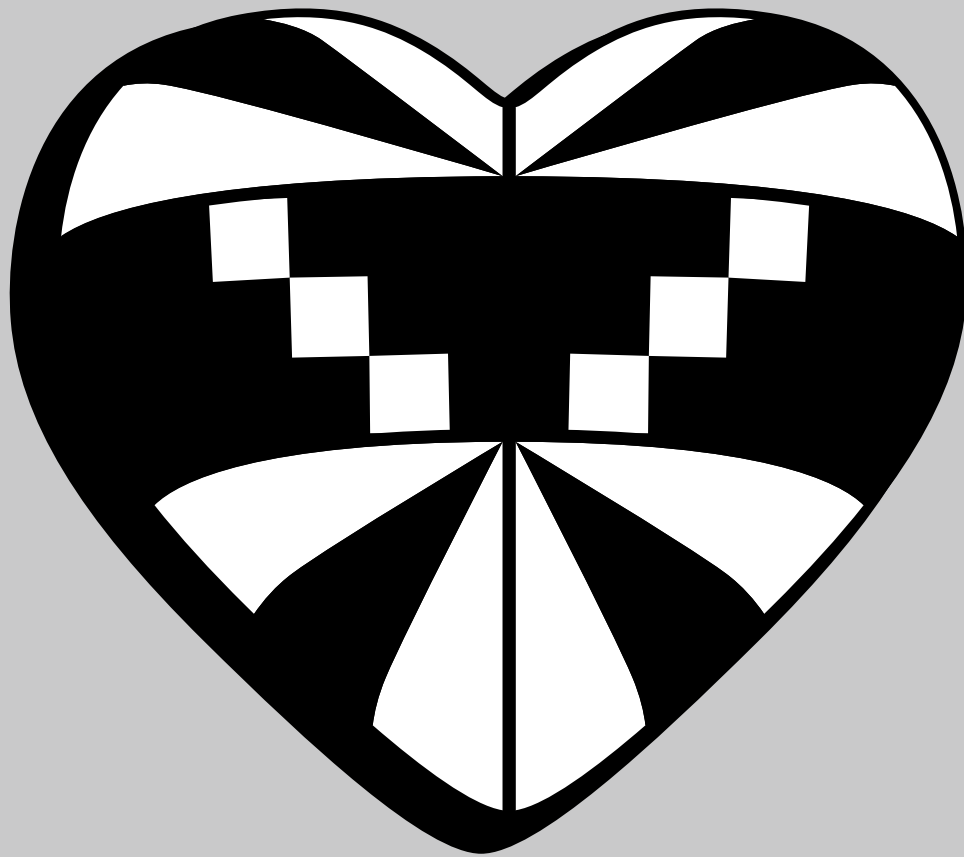
- Teachers work together with families to create positive learning environments.
- Teachers work together with students and families to build a positive learning community in the classroom.
- Teachers use knowledge of specific school, family and community resources that support learning.



Parent/Family Reflection on Positive Parenting

Use this checklist to rate the school in the area of positive parenting partnerships and think about specific questions and actions you can take to improve parenting skills.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to improve parenting
I receive useful information from the school about my child's physical, emotional and social development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I can go to the school for information and there is someone there to provide me support and discuss what is going on with my child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I feel that the school staff respects and values me as a parent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have high expectations for my child, in school and in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I am comfortable sharing my hopes and dreams for my child with school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have access to the Parent Room or Resource Center and always feel welcome and comfortable there.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 2



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

<p>Bullying http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=697 An article titled What Parents Can Do about Bullying offers practical advice on the topic.</p>
<p>Child Welfare League of America http://www.cwla.org/positiveparenting/ This site offers links to resources and advice for parents of children of all ages. The resources are divided into different categories to make access easy.</p>
<p>A Family Guide to Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy and Drug Free www.family.samhsa.gov Aimed at families of middle and high school students, this site has practical advice and information to help parents with their adolescents.</p>
<p>Healthier Schools New Mexico http://www.healthierschools.org/ This site highlights the coordinated school/health model from the State of New Mexico.</p>
<p>Kid's Health - For Parents http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/ This web site from Kid's Health includes topics on Talking to Kids, Learning and Education and Family Life.</p>
<p>Mental Health America http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/information/get-info/strengthening-families/ This site includes a fact sheet for parents with some tips for positive parenting.</p>
<p>Office of Child Development: New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department - New Mexico Kids http://www.newmexicokids.org/Family/ You can find information about networking, resource awareness and technical assistance for child care professionals, parents and health educators. Information is offered on child development, health and selecting quality child care.</p>
<p>Parents Reaching Out http://www.parentsreachingout.org/ Parents Reaching Out is directed at helping families learn to make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. This site includes information on special education issues that parents face, advocacy information and early intervention suggestions.</p>
<p>Parent Smart www.parentsmart.com This web site offers everything from help with homework to tips for talking with children about disasters.</p>
<p>Positive Parenting - Peace Begins at Home http://www.positiveparenting.com/ This web site has many resources for parents on parenting and positive discipline including articles, books and workshops.</p>
<p>Teaching Tolerance http://www.tolerance.org/teach/index.jsp This site is for anyone interested in creating communities that value diversity. It contains pages for teachers, parents, teens and kids.</p>



Resource 2

Ten Tips for Successful Parenting

Parenting is the most important job you will ever have. It is also one of the most challenging. Your job of parenting changes as your children grow and mature requiring you to adjust to the needs and ages of your children. Use the following tips to help guide your parenting in healthy and positive ways.

1. Celebrate the Positive

Recognizing children for their effort is as important as the actual effort. For example, if your child has just folded the laundry, celebrate that effort and accomplishment even though it may not be folded exactly the way you might have done it.

2. Take Time to Talk and Really Listen

Encourage children to talk openly and let them know that talking through their feelings is a healthy way of expressing themselves. Provide children with the words and be a role model by talking about your own feelings.

3. Use Discipline, Not Punishment

“Discipline” is a method of teaching children life-long responsibility and acceptable behaviors. Punishment, on the other hand, tends to force children to behave a certain way and does not allow for children to be responsible for their own behavior. The use of natural and logical consequences when children make mistakes or misbehave allows for discipline that teaches responsibility and life-long learning.

4. Teach Responsibility Constructively

Teach responsibility by giving children frequent opportunities to practice making decisions about what he or she needs to do in a given situation. For example, instead of saying “You made a mess, you left your dishes on the table and you need to take them to the sink and rinse them.” Try saying, “The table is a mess, what do you need to do to get it cleaned up?”

5. Separate the Child from the Behavior

Never tell a child that he or she is bad. This really hurts a child’s self-esteem. Communicate to your child that it isn’t that you do not like him or her, but it is the behavior that you are unwilling to tolerate. For example, instead of saying, “You are acting like a baby,” try saying, “I know you are upset but I can understand you better if talk to me in your regular voice.” Your child must know that your love is unconditional and although you may be upset with his or her behavior, it does not affect your love for him or her.

6. Actions Speak Louder than Words

If you find that your child has stopped listening, it is because, on average, we give our children over 2000 commands per day! They stop listening when they feel we are nagging or yelling. Instead of telling your child a third or fourth time, think about what action you could take. For example, if your child continues to throw his towel on the bathroom floor rather than hang it up, instead of doing it for him or yelling at him one more time, simply remove the towel or leave it in a heap on the floor. It will either be gone or still damp the next time and will better deliver the message of why it is important to hang it up.

7. Use Natural and Logical Consequences

Think about what would happen in a situation if you do not interfere. When we interfere unnecessarily, we rob children of the chance to learn from the consequences of their actions. By letting the natural consequence take place, we avoid nagging. If your child forgets his PE shoes one day, instead of taking them to school or to the game, let the child suffer the consequence of not playing that day. When natural consequences are not safe or not practical, be sure the consequence is logical. A consequence must be logically related to the behavior to be effective. For example, he forgets to return his video to the rental store where a daily late fee will add up, return the video, but deduct the late charge from his allowance or let him pay it off over time if it is already several days overdue. This allows your child to see the logic to the discipline.

8. Spend Quality Time with Your Child and Leave the Stress of Work at Work

We all lead busy lives and often we are thinking about all we have to do rather than spending 100% of our attention being with and listening to our children. We sometimes pretend to listen or unintentionally ignore what our children are saying. If we don't give our children 100% attention, they will start to misbehave. In a child's mind, negative attention is better than no attention at all. Remember that your child's feelings are important to recognize. If your child says, "Mom you never play with me", (even though you just finished playing with her) she is expressing what she really feels. It is important to validate her feelings by saying, "Yeah, I bet it does feel like we haven't played in a long time." Parents are all busy, but it is important to remember not to take your job home with you. When parents bring job related stress home with them, they are less tolerant and more prone to argue with their children.

9. Give Children Input into the Decisions that Affect Them and Hold Family Meetings

Ask your child's advice when it is appropriate to do so. This can help a child feel powerful and valuable. Give your child choices, let him/her help you and have input into simple daily decisions. It may seem like it is sometimes easier to do a simple task ourselves rather than waiting for the child to complete it, but this does not allow the child to make choices and feel important. Many families find that having a regular family meeting time is helpful. Family meetings allow time for everyone in the family to bring issues to the table and discuss them.

10. Be Kind Although Firm and Consistent

If you set a limit with your child and it comes time to act on it, act with reason and firmness and do not allow your child to get into a power struggle with you. For example, suppose that you have told your child that the toys must be picked up by the time the timer goes off or the remaining toys will be put away for a while. When the timer goes off simply pick up the remaining toys and put them out of sight without any more nagging or extension of time. Do not give in to pleas, tears, pouting or promises. Your child will learn to respect you more if she or he learns that you mean what you say.

Adapted from positiveparenting.com's Ten Keys to Successful Parenting and the National Mental Health Association's Strengthening Families Fact Sheet.



Resource 3

Parents Can Make A Difference . . . Daily

Your home may not be a classroom, but it is still a powerful place of learning. One of the most important things you can do as a parent or guardian, is to show (in words and actions) confidence in your child’s ability to succeed everyday in school and in life. Positive messages have a way of becoming real actions and attitudes. Use this guide as a reminder of ways you can make a difference in your family.

Encouraging children costs nothing and yet, offers big rewards. Remember to:

	I already do this	I will try doing this
• Always find something positive to say	_____	_____
• Praise your child’s efforts, not just his or her accomplishments.	_____	_____
• Help your child feel good about him or herself by saying things like:	_____	_____
“I can tell you worked very hard on that.”		
“You’re getting much better at that.”		
“I appreciate what you did.”		
“You really handled that situation well.”		
• Have faith in your child. Don’t be afraid to give your child increasing responsibility and independence.	_____	_____
• Discourage competition (in all forms) between brothers and sisters.	_____	_____
• Respect your child by treating him or her with dignity.	_____	_____

Another important way you can make a daily difference in the life of your children is by spending some quality time with them. Busy parents have a limited amount of time to spend with their children. Spending time with your child, no matter what the age, is extremely important. It is the *quality* of the time spent (reading together, playing, asking questions), not the *quantity* of time that is important. Communicating with your child encourages him or her to tell you what he or she is thinking and feeling. This will improve vocabulary and develop thinking skills, all of which are important for success in school and life.

Quality time can happen at any time or any place. The quality of the time you already spend together can be made even better, by talking with and listening to your child. Driving in the car or riding the bus, walking through the neighborhood or going for an ice cream after dinner are all good times to talk together and stay connected. Children of all ages enjoy having your full attention at bedtime to read or talk together. Reading together offers ways to discuss important issues that may not be discussed otherwise.

Think of ways you can spend quality time with your child/children. What are some ways you can turn chore time into quality time?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Being a good parent is not about *saving* time—it is about *investing* time. Our children need daily encouragement and quality time with us so that they will be strong individuals and successful adults.



Resource 4

Guiding Children and Youth in Making Healthy Choices

Healthy kids make better students.

Better students make healthy communities.

Children and youth who begin each day as healthy individuals can learn more effectively and are more likely to complete their education.

It is important for families to work together with schools and community to model and support children in their growth and development. Our children are faced with many decisions and it is our responsibility to guide them in healthy choices.

Use this as a guide on ways that parents and caregivers can influence children and youth in making healthy choices.

Nutrition and Healthy Food Choices

Healthy foods are the primary building block for a child's physical growth, brain development and ability to resist disease. Food also affects a child's emotions, sense of well-being and ability to learn.

Parents and family members can guide children in:

- modeling and making smart choices from every food group;
- finding a balance between food and physical activity; and
- monitoring healthy amounts of good foods.

Physical Education and Activity

Physical education and regular exercise provide the optimal opportunity for all students to learn and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to decide to participate in a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

Parents and family members can:

- promote and model a physically active lifestyle;
- provide opportunities for children to participate in school and community activities which allow for movement and exercise such as team and individual sports programs, dance, martial arts and other activities;
- model responsible personal and social behavior in a physical activity setting; and
- provide other opportunities for physical self-expression, challenges, social interaction and enjoyment.

A Healthy and Safe Environment

A healthy and safe environment for children supports a total learning experience that promotes personal growth, healthy interpersonal relationships, wellness and freedom from discrimination and abuse.

Families can maintain a healthy environment by:

- supporting the child's personal safety through a violence/harassment-free environment;
- keeping the child's home environment inviting, clean, safe and in good repair;
- providing an environment where children and all family members feel accepted and valued, and high expectations are set for personal behavior and accomplishments;
- encouraging "global" citizenship through environmental awareness and activities that promote the child to act locally in the community; and
- creating and maintaining a home environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

Social and Emotional Well Being

Families can support healthy social and emotional well-being in children and youth by encouraging:

- acceptance of self;
- the ability to express thoughts and feelings in a responsible manner;
- understanding and respect for differences in others;
- positive interpersonal relationships;
- the ability to give and receive support;
- balance between meaningful work and play;
- awareness of stressors which interfere with health development; and
- willingness to request assistance when needed.

Health Education and Life Skills

Through modeling, the promotion and support of health education and life skills, families can help with the prevention of the following six risky behaviors:

- use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs;
- dietary patterns;
- sedentary lifestyles;
- behaviors that result in sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy;
- behaviors that result in unintentional injuries; and
- violent and other anti-social behaviors.

Contact the New Mexico Public Education Department's School and Family Support Bureau for more information at www.healthierschools.org



Resource 5

Finding Positive Ways to Talk About Your Children

Use these suggestions to guide you in finding positive and encouraging ways to talk about children.

Instead of . . .	Say . . .
"She talks too much."	"She is very verbal."
"She is a know-it-all."	"She knows and remembers facts."
"He asks too many questions."	"He is curious about many things."
"He has weird ideas."	"He has creative and innovative ideas."
"She is the class clown."	"She has a keen sense of humor."
"She is a bookworm."	"She reads a lot on her own."
"He tries to dominate everything."	"He shows leadership abilities."
"He is argumentative."	"He is good at defending his position."
"She always looks for the simple solution."	"She is good at solving problems."
"She is into everything."	"She has many interests and collections."
"He is so hyper."	"He has a high energy level."
"He is stubborn."	"He is goal directed."

Add other positive ways to talk with your children.

Instead of . . .	Say . . .



Resource 6

Natural and Logical Consequences

Use this tool to guide you in using natural and logical consequences with your child.

Discipline is a method of teaching children life-long responsibility and acceptable behaviors. Punishment on the other hand, tends to force children to behave a certain way and does not allow for children to be responsible for their own behavior.

The use of natural and logical consequences when children make mistakes or misbehave allows for discipline that teaches responsibility and life-long learning. Below are some examples of natural and logical consequences. Think about how these can be used with your child.

Example of Behavior	Consequence	Lesson Learned
Child forgets to return library book to school.	Child cannot check out another book.	Child learns to be more responsible in remembering the next time.
Child chooses not to study for a test or exam.	Child receives a poor grade.	Child learns that his or her decision can affect the overall outcome (in this case his or her grade).
Child forgets shoes or uniform for a sporting event.	Child is not allowed to play in the game.	Child learns the value of being prepared.
Child uses negative name calling with a friend.	The friend expresses hurt feelings.	Child realizes how powerful words can be.
Child doesn't put dirty clothes in the appropriate place.	His or her clothes do not get washed that week.	Child learns that he or she must do their part in helping with chores.
A teenager consistently shows up late for work.	He or she loses the job.	He or she learns the value of being prompt.

Points to Remember When “Disciplining” Children

- Natural and logical consequences can teach children to:
- be responsible for their actions.
 - recognize both parent and child’s rights.
 - focus on present and future behavior.
 - make decisions and learn from mistakes.
 - develop mutual respect between parents and children.
 - feel encouraged and develop positive self-esteem.



Resource 7

Promoting Responsibility

Use this guide to help teach children to think about their actions and make decisions for themselves.

Handling typical situations with “think starters” like the suggestions noted in the chart below will encourage children to be responsible for their own behavior.

Situation	Think Stoppers	Think Starters
Parent is on the phone or busy with another child; other child is noisy.	“Be quiet. You’re making too much noise.”	“Your noise is making it hard for us to hear. What can you do to help?”
It’s clean up time.	“Put the dishes in the sink, pick up the toys in the living room, and wipe off the tables.”	“It’s time to clean up. What do you need to do to clean up?”
One child is distracting another.	“Paul, move away from Ron.”	“Paul, find something else to do so that Ron can concentrate.”
One child is making noise while another is trying to speak.	“Be quiet.”	“It’s Pat’s time to talk. What do you need to do?”
A child is whining.	“Stop whining.”	“I can understand you better if you talk in your regular voice.”
Siblings are fighting.	“Stop it! Each of you sit on opposite sides of the room.”	“We can’t have fighting. Take time to cool off and then let’s talk about what you can do to let someone know that you are angry with him.”
A child forgot to put her name on her work.	“Remember to write your name on your work.”	“How will we know this belongs to you?”
A child is scared of the dark.	“There is nothing to be afraid of.”	“I know you are scared when your room is dark. What would make you feel more comfortable?”
A child is upset about a grade on a test.	“You should have studied harder.”	“What are you going to do to improve your grade?”
A child can’t figure out how to do something and says, “I can’t do this.”	“Here’s how to do it: First you…”	“Which part is giving you trouble?”



Resource 8

Raising a Reader

Use this tool as a guide to support your children in acquiring reading skills.

Learning to read happens over time in a developmental sequence.

Children will use several strategies for reading within the same sentence such as sight, sound or how the word fits in the sentence. Many experiences and activities help children learn to read such as talking and interacting, recognizing and connecting sounds and letters, life experiences and being exposed to all types of reading materials.

Reading is the written form of language.

Children need vocabulary and word recognition skills, phonics skills, and ways to see if what they read makes sense. Toddlers and preschoolers learn about reading by being read to and by early attempts to write and translate what they have written. The correct translation can be written below the scribbles and read back to the child. Reading and writing go hand in hand, and plenty of reading and writing materials should be available in the home. These materials say reading is important. Children must also be discouraged from watching too much television and encouraged to do other activities such as homework, playing games and having conversations with family members.

To be successful readers, children need to spend lots of time reading or being read to.

Parents can make reading fun by having a regular routine for reading—before bed each night, after dinner, before school or any time during the day for preschoolers. The important thing is that it happens regularly and is a *positive* experience.

“Understandings” About Reading

- Reading is the construction of meaning from written text and involves thinking and feelings.
- Background knowledge and prior experience are critical to reading.
- Social interaction is essential to learning to read.
- Reading and writing develop together.
- Reading involves complex thinking.
- Environments should be filled with reading and writing experiences.
- Children must be interested and motivated.
- Children’s understanding of print is different from adult’s understanding.
- Children develop awareness and knowledge of phonics through experiences with language.
- Children need to be taught many different reading strategies.
- Children need the opportunity to read, read, read. It is important that they are monitored and assessed.



Ages and Stages

<p>Infants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy action nursery rhymes • Fall asleep to nursery songs and lullabies • Listen to stories as they are rocked • Make the sounds of animals in books 		<p>Toddlers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like to read the same books over and over • Pick favorite books from the shelf • Can name objects in books and magazines 	
<p>Things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect them to put books in their mouths • Talk about the books with them • Listen to children’s music and move to it • Provide books with heavy pages • Repeat nursery rhymes 			
<p>Preschoolers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold books correctly • Are able to write some letters in their name • Pretend to read own “writing” and books • Can tell the difference between print and picture • Know some letters and point to them 		<p>Kindergarteners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize individual letters and words • Can read and write name and some words • Use illustrations to tell a story • Can say some rhyming words that start with sounds such as “t”, “m” and “d” 	
<p>First-graders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and know letters and sounds • Write some small words from memory • Can read “easy to read” books 			
<p>Things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read daily to your child and visit the library • Let child tell story from his drawing • Reread the story and let her tell the ending • Let child read aloud and accept mistakes 			
<p>Second-graders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pride in showing off their reading • Can read early reader and “transitional” words • Are able to read silently • Can work out unknown words 		<p>Third-graders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use encyclopedia, computer and atlas • Read assignments and follow directions • Make predictions about the outcome of a story • Use the computer to write and search for information 	
<p>Things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow your child’s interest • Continue to read more difficult books • Limit television viewing • Play games that involve reading • Provide blank books for drawing and writing • Visit the library regularly 			
<p>Fourth-graders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read familiar text with ease • Can tell fact from opinion • Can read silently for extended periods • Read and understand instructions/recipes 		<p>Fifth-graders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read for new information • Use table of contents and reference materials • Choose to read for leisure • Use the computer to write and search for information 	
<p>Things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep reading aloud to your child • Link movies and TV shows to books • Use computer software that matches the interest of the child • Provide supplies for children to write and illustrate their own stories • Visit the library regularly • Give gift cards to bookstores 			

By the time children are in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, they are fluent, independent readers who use reading as an important part of their everyday lives. They read for entertainment, information and learning. Remember to model reading and give gifts that encourage reading.

Adapted from: Parents Reaching Out, www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 9

Preparing for the Teen Years

Consider using some of these ideas with your adolescent or teenage children who are going through the difficult stages of becoming young adults.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Share your values with your teens. Let them know what's really important to you and help them clarify their own values.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't fight the small stuff. Minimize the number of household rules, but stick to the ones you do set. Save major power plays for issues that compromise health and safety or important values, like drinking, drugs and sex.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep communications honest and open, listening to what's really going on before jumping to conclusions. Be ready for those unexpected in-between times when your teen wants to talk in the car, doing the dishes or at bed time. That's when real closeness develops.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoid the "20-questions" approach to conversation, which teens find intrusive. At this stage, privacy is very important to them. Instead engage in open-ended conversations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	As teens try to separate from their childish selves, they sometimes feel that your existence is an embarrassment. Don't take it personally... and do drop them off a block from school or the mall and save your hugs and kisses for private times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teens sometimes try on behaviors and roles the way we try on clothes. Although it can be scary to watch, these new personas usually don't last long.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Even though it's tempting to be your teen's friend, it's much more important to be the parent, setting reasonable limits and being a force of stability in their lives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tell teens they can use you as the "bad-guy" excuse for declining to participate in activities that make them feel uncomfortable. That way, they know you're cool, but they can pretend you're not.
<input type="checkbox"/>	When offering advice, don't expect a positive response; you're more likely to see irritation or disgust. It's important to know, however, that much of what you say is absorbed anyway, waiting to come out.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage teens to exercise and develop their problem-solving and decision making skills by helping them evaluate potential choices and responses to situations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain perspective, being careful not to over-parent and over-manage on the one hand, or to under-parent and under-support on the other.

Source: Parents Place, www.ParentsPlaceOnline.org



Resource 10

Ideas for Busy Parents

No matter how busy you are, spending quality time with your child cannot be put off. Giving personal time and effort to your child will provide many long-term benefits for both of you.

Each of the following ideas take less than thirty minutes – and it just may be the best half hour you could spend to help your child learn and grow. Go through this list and check the things you are doing now. Go through the list a second time and check the things you can start to do right away.

- Read to your child**—at least twenty minutes a day. Keep lots of books or magazines around. Books and books on tape can be checked out of most libraries. Studies show that children of parents who read to them earn higher grades.
- Help your child organize his/her work area.** Make sure they have pencils, markers, crayons, glue sticks, a dictionary and any other materials they need to complete their assignments in a quiet environment.
- Review homework assignments to make sure it is done.** Talk to his/her teacher right away if the homework seems too hard or too easy for your child.
- Find out what’s going on in school.** Let your child know that you will ask questions everyday about what he or she learned at school. Read the school or classroom newsletter to learn about what is going on in school.
- Play word games or listening games.** Play “Simon Says” with your child to increase vocabulary and memory skills. Ask your child’s teacher or the librarian for other ideas of things to do.
- Set rules about your child’s TV viewing time.** Instead of letting your child watch television for fun and relaxation, have him or her read a good book, play a board game or have free-play time.
- Get to know your child’s teacher.** Write a personal note or introduce yourself in person. Share with the teacher your child’s feelings about school and any special needs or interests that he or she has.
- Talk as a family about everyday happenings.** Whether it’s from the front page of the daily newspaper, or something you saw or read, help your child see their place in the larger world. Listen carefully to your child and he or she will learn how to listen to others.
- Take advantage of time in the car.** Use this time to chat with children about what is going on in your lives (save heavier issues or concerns for family meetings). This is also a good time to share musical interests and listen to books on tape.

Source: The Shell Poll, 1999. http://www.countonshell.com/shell_poll.html



Resource 11

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is when a child does something he or she does not want to do as a result of being pressured by friends. All children experience peer pressure and give into it at one time or another. Consider these steps that parents can take to minimize the effects of peer pressure or gang activity.

Family is important to teens:

- Develop a close, open and honest relationship with your children so that they will want to identify with and work to please their parents. These children are much more likely to come to their parents when they are in trouble or are having problems. Talk to children about morals and values - the best defense against peer pressure.
- Help children understand peer pressure so they will be better able to make good decisions. Let them know peer pressure is something all children and adults experience at some time and that it is normal to want to fit in. Gangs are less attractive to children who get their needs met at home.
- Plan regular and frequent activities the whole family can participate in such as picnics, hiking, sports, etc. Parents who spend quality time together develop close relationships with their children; thus children are less likely to give in to peer pressure or gangs.

Stay Involved in Your Child's Life

- Encourage friendships with positive role models and join groups or activities which involve interacting with positive role models (i.e. scouting, sports, church groups).
- Get to know your children's friends and their parents to determine if they are a positive influence and have similar values.
- Know where your children are at all times. Supervise them at home, know where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.
- Don't criticize children's friends who might be a negative influence. They will become defensive and continue to be with them. Do discuss specific behaviors and actions. "It seems like every time you are with Tom you get into trouble."
- Encourage a wide variety of friends. This promotes individuality and makes it less likely for children to give in to peer pressure from any one group.
- Teach responsibility. Responsible children consider their options. They tend to cooperate more consciously than "people pleasers" (children who are motivated by approval) by considering their options rather than automatically making choices to avoid conflict or negative reactions from someone.



Help Your Child Develop a Positive Self-Image

Encourage individuality and independence by modeling or demonstrating those behaviors. Parents who resist peer pressure are teaching their children to do the same. Discuss independence with your children and stress the importance of being one's own person and doing what he or she feels is right.

Teach assertiveness through role playing so that children will be able to stand up for what they believe is right. We can also teach problem solving when children are faced with peer pressure by suggesting alternative activities or explaining why they refuse to participate in a certain activity.

Praise assertiveness—behavior that is praised is much more likely to be repeated.

Provide appropriate discipline when children give into peer pressure such as restricting privileges, or not letting the child spend time with the friend or friends with whom he got into trouble.

If you are suspicious that your child may have given into peer pressure, try to figure out the reason the child has given into peer pressure and address it. If they lack self-confidence or self-esteem, then work on building those qualities.

Seek help if a child is consistently giving into peer pressure.

Signs of Peer Pressure

- Excessive demands for material things his friends have
- Disregarding your rules in order to do things with friends
- Stealing with friends
- Any hint of alcohol or drugs
- Teens seriously misleading you about friends or whereabouts
- Doing things to avoid rejection like going along with friends who use poor judgement

Show Teens We Care

- Always take time to really listen
- Give children privacy; teens need space
- Be accepting of our children and not too critical
- Don't rush the teen years or raise false expectations
- Develop a strong sense of family unity by spending time together
- Talk about sex, drugs and alcohol

Peer pressure can be positive. It can keep youth participating in extra-curricular activities, going to meetings and playing on sports teams. The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy and understanding; it is a place for experimentation and a supportive setting for achieving the two primary developmental tasks of adolescence. These are identity (who I am) and autonomy (seeing oneself as separate and independent from parents).

Adapted from: Parents Reaching Out, www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 12

Bullying

Being bullied or bullying is not just a part of growing up! Use this information to help you better understand bullying.

Bullying among elementary school children and teenagers is a growing problem in many schools. It's happening in urban, suburban and rural schools. Children who have learning or other disabilities seem to be especially prone to bullying. While bullying isn't new, professionals today have a new level of understanding of the problem. Bullying is a learned behavior that can be prevented! Effective bullying prevention programs are being used in many school systems throughout New Mexico. It's important for parents, students, teachers and school administrators to understand and learn to manage bullying that occurs at school and elsewhere.

What is Bullying?

Bullying may involve physical aggression such as fighting, shoving or kicking; verbal aggression such as name calling; or more subtle acts such as socially isolating another child. It is important for adults and youth to understand the difference between bullying and normal conflict.

Normal Conflict	Bullying
Happens occasionally	Happens repeatedly
Accidental	Done on purpose
Not serious	Serious — threat of physical or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction on part of the victim
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power or control
Not trying to get something	Trying to gain material things or power
Remorseful — takes responsibility	No remorse — blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve the problem

If you're a parent concerned about bullying, it's important to recognize the signs that a child is a bully, as well as the signs of one who is being victimized. Being alert and observant is critical, since victims are often reluctant to report bullying. Many victims don't report it to their parents or teachers because they're embarrassed or humiliated by the bullying. They may assume that adults will accuse them of tattling or will tell them to deal with it themselves. If bullying behavior is reported, bullies usually deny their involvement.

What can parents of the victim do?

If you know or suspect your child is being bullied, but the school hasn't communicated with you about the situation, you should contact your child's teacher(s) right away. Keep in mind that your primary goal should be to get the school's cooperation to get the bullying to stop. Knowing your own child is being victimized can evoke strong feelings, but you'll get much more cooperation from school personnel if you can stick to the facts and not become emotional. While you may want assurance that everyone involved is punished, try to focus on putting an end to the bullying. If your child is a victim of bullying, try helping him with the following strategies:

- Listen carefully to your child's reports of being bullied. Be sympathetic and take the problem seriously. Be careful not to overreact or under-react.



- Do not blame the victim. When a child finally works up the courage to report bullying, it isn't appropriate to criticize him for causing it or not handling the situation correctly. For example, don't ask, "Well, what did you do to bring it on?"
- Realize that for a child who is being bullied, home is a refuge. Expect the child to have some difficult times in dealing with victimization. Talk to the school counselor for support, if needed.
- Encourage your child to keep talking to you. Spend extra time together. Provide constant support and encouragement.

What can the parents of the bully do?

Parents of bullies should understand that children who aggressively bully peers are at increased risk for engaging in antisocial or criminal behavior in the future. It is therefore important to try to help bullies change their negative attitudes and behavior toward others.

- Take the problem seriously. Resist a tendency to deny the problem or to discount the seriousness of it. Avoid denial thinking such as "Bullying is just a natural part of growing up."
- Listen carefully and check out the facts. Do not believe everything your child tells you. Children who bully are good at manipulating adults and can be very artful at weaving a story that makes them look innocent.
- The school or the victim's parents may be documenting reports of your child's bullying behaviors. It doesn't serve your child to deny his involvement if there is evidence to the contrary. Check out the dates and the activities and determine if there is a pattern in his bullying behavior.
- Explore the reasons for your child's negative behavior. Speak with the school counselor or get professional help, if necessary, for your child and/or your family.

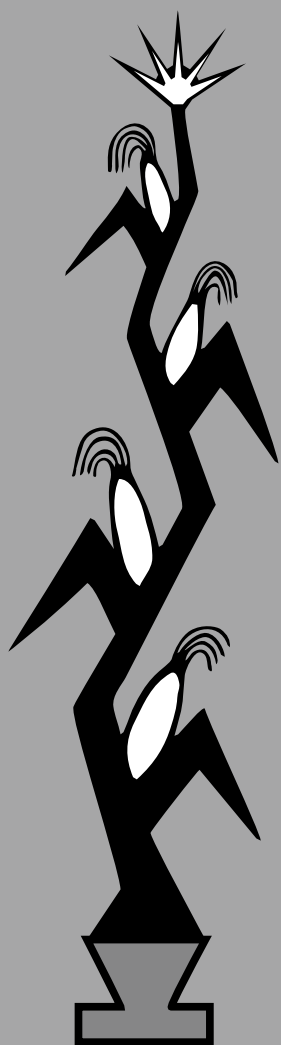
What can — and should — parents expect the school to do?

Whether your child is a bully, victim or bystander, you should expect the following from the school:

- School administrators, teachers, counselors and staff should take bullying problems seriously. The school should investigate the situation and let you know what steps they're taking to help stop the bullying.
- Written school policies and rules against bullying, harassment and intimidation should be in place and be enforced.
- Teachers, counselors and administrators should speak to the bully and his or her parents. They should also tell the child what the consequences will be if he or she doesn't stop bullying others. If the bullying continues, the school should enforce the pre-determined consequences immediately.
- Teachers and administrators should increase adult supervision in the areas of the school campus where bullying incidents are most likely to occur.
- School personnel should be informed about the children who are being victimized by bullies so they can monitor and provide support to the victims as needed. They should also communicate often with the victims' parents to tell them how the situation is being handled at school.

Finally, be aware that bullying prevention programs in schools are often a very effective way to stop bullying. If you believe that your child's school would benefit from a bullying prevention program, get involved in finding out how to bring such a program into the school.

Notes



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 3

Enhancing Student Learning

Enhancing Student Learning

“El buen trigo hace buen pan.”

“Involved parents make good students.”

-Spanish Dicho



Overview

School-Home-Community partnerships tied to student learning can and do increase student achievement. Student learning increases when educators and families work together as a team to provide a support system for each student.

This module addresses what happens when families and schools invest time and effort to influence learning. The resources in this section assist families in:

- supporting their child’s learning at home;
- helping with homework;
- mentoring their child into college; and
- thinking about how they can improve student learning at home.



Research Link

Parents play an important role in assisting student learning. In today’s world, all children need help from their families and other caregivers to succeed in school and in life. Families can share positive attitudes about education such as learning can be fun and interactive, education is valuable and important and setting high expectations for oneself can help shape one’s future.

Research supports the idea that family involvement in learning often provides the following benefits (Epstein et al., 2002):

Results for Students:

- Gains in skills, abilities and test scores
- Productive homework completion
- Positive attitudes towards school and self as a learner

Results for Families:

- Support to children through all stages of schooling
- Communication with children about school, homework and other activities
- Clear understanding of expectations based on the New Mexico Content Standards

Results for Teachers:

- Homework assignments that engage families and community
- Recognition of diverse family needs
- Student ownership of learning



Practices to Enhance Student Learning at Home

- Show that you value reading. Let your child see you reading for pleasure as well as for performing your routine activities as an adult such as reading letters and recipes, directions and instructions, newspapers, computer screens and so forth. When your child sees that reading is important to you, she or he is likely to see it as an important skill to learn.
- Engage your child in thought-provoking discussions about classes, homework assignments, school projects, grades and activities, focusing on the positive aspects of school. Your perspective can help your child apply what's being taught in school to the "outside" world.
- Have your child organize and set out what is needed for the school day the night before (i.e., homework and books should be put in backpacks and clothes should be laid out).
- When your child talks to you, stop what you're doing and pay attention. Look at him or her and ask questions or restate what he/she said to let your child know that you've heard what he/she said: (i.e., So when are you going to help your granddad work on his car?).
- Set a regular time for homework. Having a regular time to do homework helps children to finish assignments. Of course, a good schedule depends in part on your child's age, as well as her specific needs. You'll need to work with a young child to develop a schedule. You should give your older child the responsibility for making up a schedule independently—although you'll want to make sure that it's a workable one.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what schools do requires a lot of extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach to a whole new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides a structure for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be "highly qualified" as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) relevant to student learning for families are listed below.

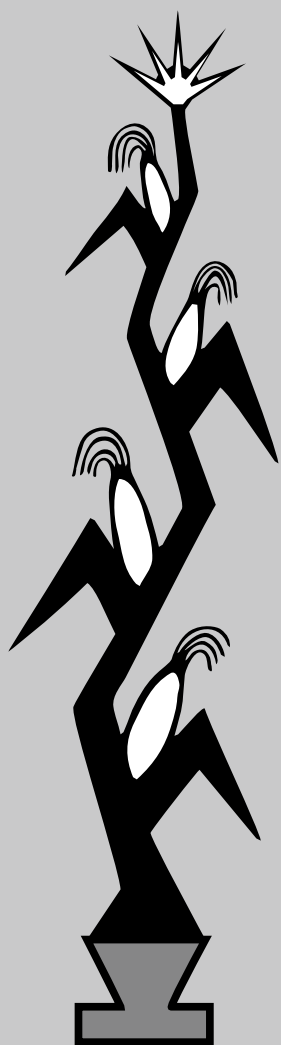
- Teachers follow the New Mexico Content Standards that describe what students should know and be able to do at all grade levels and in all subject areas.
- Teachers use a variety of resources and teaching methods appropriate for the language and culture of the students and families.
- Teachers understand how students grow and learn in grades K-12.



Parent/Family Reflection for Enhancing Student Learning

Use this checklist to rate the school in the area of school/home/community student learning and think about specific questions and actions you can take to enhance student learning.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to improve learning
I provide a quiet place and time to do homework with lighting, writing tools, paper, computer, dictionary and other reference materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have received or requested clear information about what is expected of my child based on the New Mexico Content Standards for student achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I make sure that the school provides me with information in a format and language that I can understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I make an extra effort to help my child manage and complete homework assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have visited the school web site and/or made an effort to find out about the school's programs and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I participate in parent nights, or other events that invite parents to the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 3



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

Connect for Kids

www.connectforkids.org

The site includes a Parent Involvement in Education topic page for ideas on how to be an active participant in your child's education, as well as tips and tools for becoming a more effective advocate.

CRESST Parent Page

A click here takes families to a site with everything from subject-area printables, to both expert and peer advice on such topics as whether to retain your student.

Family Education Network

www.familyeducation.com

Broken down by age and grade level, this site has a treasure trove of learning activities to do with children. It has special sections on issues such as retention and school safety.

For Moms and Dads Only (and other loving caregivers)

<http://surfaquarium.com/FAMILY/parent.htm>

This site includes an extensive list of links to many resources.

Media Wise

www.mediafamily.org

For families concerned about media, this site offers many facts, tips, research, reviews of video games and movies, as well as a quick quiz to find out about media use.

National Education Association

www.nea.org/parents/index.html

This web site offers information on parent-teacher conferences, understanding testing, getting involved in your child's school and other resources to help make your child's school experience successful.

Native American Lore

<http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html>

This site includes an index of Native American Stories from across the nation.

Reading Rockets New Mexico

<http://www.readingrockets.org/resources/c290>

Reading is a critical skill for everyone. From the moment a child is born, there are simple things the parent can do to help him or her become a good reader. This site also includes signs to watch for that may indicate that a child may have trouble learning to read, so you can get him or her help early. It offers a step-by-step guide to what parents can do to raise a reader.

A page titled For Families includes the following topics:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/families>

- Build your child's early reading skills at home
- Recognize early signs of trouble
- Tap into the power of a high-quality preschool
- Find good schools and good teachers
- Know when your child is struggling in school
- Get extra help through tutoring
- Stand up for your child
- Get extra help through special education



Resource 2

Things You Can Do at Home to Help Your Child Succeed

Try these ideas of how you can include learning in your home routine.

Learning doesn't just happen at school, it can happen anywhere. There are a number of skills that you can easily incorporate into your home routine. This list is just a start. Ask your child's teachers for other things you can do at home to support your child's learning.

Talk with your child

Talk about the things that are important to your child and your family. Talk about books you read or what you see on TV or in the world around you. Always try to make connections between what your child already knows and what they hear and read. For kids of all ages, talking, listening and discussing issues together not only helps language development, but shows you're genuinely interested in what she has to say.

Reading

When reading a book or watching a television show or a movie, ask young children to repeat the plot, the story's characters (including the main character) and the setting. Ask him to retell what happens in the beginning, middle and end. After you read a book together, ask him questions about what happened. For older students, be aware of what your child is reading. Ask your child to tell you about his reading and his feelings about it.

Language Arts

Work on increasing your child's vocabulary by using and defining more difficult words in everyday speech. Use a dictionary to check meaning. Practice using antonyms and synonyms. Have your child become proficient at alphabetical order by organizing materials that way -- books, kitchen supplies, videos, etc. For older students, make sure to ask open ended questions, rather than just yes or no questions. This encourages your child to use language and vocabulary for self-expression.

Math

Help your child see that math is everywhere and that we use mathematical skills everyday. Encourage young children to learn to count by twos, threes and fives. Play number games, make up word problems and use manipulatives or objects that they can count and move. Create graphs based on family activities and practice reading graphs together. Practice time and money concepts. For older students, take an interest in the area of mathematics your child is currently studying and have her explain the concept to you.

Science

Observe and discuss the world around you such as plants and animals and the weather or night sky. Encourage questions and look for answers together. Classify and organize information, set up simple experiments and discuss and predict what they think might happen. For older students, discuss the concepts your older child is studying in science, whether it be physical science, life science or earth and space science.

Social Studies/History

Share your family history with your child by telling stories about yourself or older family members. Read with young children about historical people and events. Help your child understand that people who make history are real. For older students, help them explore family and community history as well as government structures.

Arts

Encourage your child's participation in local music, drama, art and museum programs. Allow your child to bring a friend along and give it a try. Ask your child to read a review of a play or musical performance. Then ask him to write a review of a favorite or new CD, movie or TV program. Listen to the CD or watch the movie or program together and discuss the review.

Writing

You may have heard the term "writing prompt" used at school. A writing prompt is simply a suggestion for an idea, a form or a story to structure a writing activity. It can be lots of fun to develop writing prompts into home writing activities, and you'll be helping children develop skills that they can use in the classroom. Consider these possibilities:

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about an issue of concern to your community.
- Write a letter of complaint about a toy or game that didn't live up to your expectations.
- Write an e-mail message requesting information about a certain product.
- Write a movie review and send it to your local newspaper or entertainment weekly.
- Think about a time that you were really scared, really sad or really happy. As a parent, write a paragraph about that time. Ask your child to do the same. Then compare and contrast the events and the emotions surrounding them.

Adapted from school.familyeducation.com (2006)



Resource 3

Tips for Parents and Families

Use these suggested activities to help you support your child with school.

- ▮ Make sure your child goes to school every day. Support community efforts to keep children safe and off the street late at night.
- ▮ Commit yourself to high standards and set high expectations for your child. Challenge your child in every way possible to reach his/her full potential.
- ▮ Familiarize yourself and your child with the New Mexico Content Standards that describe by grade level, what students should know and be able to do.
- ▮ Stay in touch with your child's teacher. Ask about homework expectations, what they are studying and how you can support your child's learning at home.
- ▮ Praise your child for doing well. Make praise a habit.
- ▮ Limit television viewing on school nights, even if that means that the remote control may have to disappear.
- ▮ Read together. It is the foundation of all learning.
- ▮ Make sure your child takes challenging courses at school and schedule daily time to check homework.
- ▮ Take the extra time to model learning with the family. Commit yourself to learning something with your child. You will be rewarded by the shared effort.
- ▮ Set a good example and talk to your child, especially your teenagers, about the dangers of tobacco, drugs and alcohol and the values you want your child to have. Such personal talks, however uncomfortable you may feel, may save relationships and lives.

Source: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, www.ed.gov/parents (1995)



Resource 4

Secrets of Student Success: What Parents Need to Know

Here are some ways you can support your child with school.

1. Establish daily family routines for:

- homework (time/space/supplies)
- reading (together and independently)
- hobbies
- bedtime
- household chores

2. Monitor out-of-school activities by:

- checking in by phone
- limiting television watching to less than 12 hours a week
- checking on the whereabouts of your children

3. Set age-appropriate and specific expectations about:

- school achievement
- behavior and manners
- work activities and ethics

4. Promote life-long learning by:

- showing an active interest in school, education and related activities
- recognizing and supporting child's talents and interests
- helping to explore career possibilities
- reading, writing and talking together
- expressing confidence in your child's ability to be successful in life

These secrets require little or no money. The bottom line is this: what children need to be successful in the classroom turns out to be the very same thing that they need to be successful outside of the classroom - caring and involved adults paying close attention. There is no substitute for adult supervision and guidance.



Resource 5

All About Homework

Use this guide to help you support your child with homework.

Why do teachers give homework?

Teachers use homework:

- to inform parents what is being taught at school so it can be reinforced at home;
- to help students understand and review the work that has been covered in class;
- to see whether students understand the lesson; and
- to help students learn how to find and use more information on a subject.

Research shows that when homework is turned in to the teacher, graded and discussed with students, it can improve students' grades and understanding of their schoolwork.

How much time should my child spend each night on homework?

Most educators agree that:

- for students in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 10-20 minutes each school day;
- older students, in grades 3-6, can handle 30-60 minutes a day; and
- in junior and senior high school, the amount of homework will vary by subject. Most older students will also have homework projects, such as research papers and oral reports that may have deadlines weeks away. They may need help organizing assignments and planning work times to make sure homework is ready to turn in on time.

Your children's teachers can tell you how much time they expect students to spend on homework. Teachers try to assign homework that is meaningful and relevant to the day's lesson. Teachers also try to take into account how much homework has been assigned in the student's other subjects and the time that it may take when all the other classes are added up.

Ask your principal if your school or school district has a homework policy. If it does, make sure you and your children know and understand that policy.

How can I help with homework?

There are several ways you can help:

- Send your children to school each day, well-rested, fed and with a positive outlook.
- Take an active interest in your child's schooling. Ask questions about what happened at school each day and how your child feels about it.
- Try not to let your own negative experiences keep you from supporting and encouraging your child's learning. Let them know how much you care about education by continuing your own learning and impress its importance upon them.
- If possible, set up a quiet, comfortable study area with good lighting and the school supplies your child needs. This can be almost anyplace in your home; you don't need a special room.
- Set a family "quiet time" where you and your child can work together on homework, reading, letter writing and playing games.
- Allow your child to study in the way that helps him/her learn best. For example, some children work best when they're lying on the floor with background music playing.
- Make homework a daily activity and help your child develop good homework habits.

Can my child do homework while listening to music or watching television?

Some students can work with a radio or CD on, while others must work in silence. Television can be a big problem. Many teachers ask that the television be turned off while the student is doing homework.

Research shows that American children, on average, spend far more time watching television than doing homework. It's best to leave the television off during homework time.

How much help should I give?

This depends on the child's grade level and study habits. Younger students often need extra homework help. First, make sure the child understands the directions. Do a few problems together, then watch your child do a few. When your child is finished, check the work. Praise right answers, and show how to correct mistakes.

Avoid doing your child's homework for him/her. Teachers need to see where your child is having trouble.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to show your child that you think homework is important. Many children today do their homework while their parents are at work. When you are at home, ask to see your child's homework and discuss it with him or her. Ask questions and be supportive.

What if I don't understand my child's assignment?

Today's students may have subjects that you never had or that you didn't like when you were in school. You can still help your child by praising progress, getting help from a public library or homework hot line and talking with the teachers. You don't have to be an expert in a subject to help with homework. There are many places to go for help.

Do teachers really want me to ask them questions about homework?

Teachers want children to learn and want parents and families to be involved in their children's education. When you stay in touch with your child's teachers, they can ease your worries and offer homework tips and ideas on how you can help your child learn. Meet each of your child's teachers and ask what kind of homework will be given. This is very important, even if you have children in middle or high school.

Early in the school year and regularly, ask teachers about your child's subjects and homework policies. For example, ask what books your child will be using, what kinds of assignments will be given and when the teacher is available to answer questions.

My child tries hard but still has problems with homework. What can I do to help?

There could be a number of reasons for your child's trouble. Suggest that the child ask the teacher for extra help before or after school. Tell your child to ask the teacher about homework or anything else he or she doesn't understand. Set a time to meet with the teacher to discuss the problem. You may need to meet again during the year to check on how your child is doing.

If your child understands the work but is still having trouble, ask for a meeting with the teacher. The two of you should work out a plan to meet your child's needs.



My child seems bored by homework. Is this normal?

It's normal for students not to want to do their homework. But if your child always seems bored or unhappy, you need to try to find out the reason by talking with your child. Then talk with the teacher to come up with a solution.

Teachers want students to learn from homework. Tell the teacher if your child thinks the homework is too easy or too hard. This will help the teacher match the homework with your child's ability and skill level.

When I ask my child if he/she has homework, they say that it's finished or that there is none. How do I make sure my child is really doing his/her work?

Make studying, as well as homework, a daily habit. Students can always review lessons, read a book or work on practice exercises during quiet time, even if they don't have homework. Ask younger children to show you their homework so that you can check it, sign it and date it. Teachers like to see that adults have checked children's homework. If your child's school has a homework hot line, call it to check for the day's assignments. If your child often has no homework to do, you should let the teacher know.

Don't ask your child if he or she has homework each night — assume that there is homework or studying to do.

What if my child still isn't turning homework in?

State clearly and strongly to your child that you expect homework to be done and turned in to the teacher. Let your child know you will not tolerate homework that is incomplete.

Don't wait until grades come out to find out if the problem has been solved. You may need weekly contact with the teacher until your child develops good homework habits.

Should I reward my child for doing homework or for getting good grades?

Children like to know when they've done a good job. Your approval means a lot. Praise your child's work often. Show pride when your child does their best, regardless of the grade.

Be careful about giving money or gifts as rewards. Most teachers want parents to reward students' work in other ways. The next time your child does a good job on a school project, plan a special family activity as a reward.

Adapted from the National Education Association (2005)



Resource 6

Ways to Help Your Child with Reading at Home

Consider these ideas on how you can support reading at home.

Setting the Atmosphere

- Help your child find a comfortable, quiet place to read.
- Orient your child to the book by looking at the cover first and talking about what you think it may be about or any way it reminds you of your life. Ask your child what s/he thinks.
- Have your child see you as a reading model.
- Read aloud to your child. Re-read favorite stories.
- Read with your child.
- Discuss the stories you read together.
- Recognize the value of silent reading.
- Keep reading time enjoyable and relaxed.
- Let your child see you reading for enjoyment and for information.

Responding to Errors in Reading

Based on the way most of us were taught to read, we tell children to “sound it out” when they come to an unknown word. To help children become independent readers who monitor and correct themselves as they read, try the following ideas before saying “sound it out”. When your child has trouble reading a word, give him or her wait time of 5 to 10 seconds. See what he attempts to do to help himself and then apply one or more of the following questions or comments.

- “What would make sense there?”
- “What do you think that word could be?”
- “Use the picture to help you figure out what it could be.”
- “Go back to the beginning and try that again.”
- “Skip over it and read to the end of the sentence (or paragraph). Now what do you think it is?”
- “Put in a word that would make sense there.”
- “You read that word before on another page. See if you can find it.”
- Help your child sound it out or tell what the word is.

Most importantly, focus on what your child is doing *well* and *attempting* to do. Remain loving and supportive. When your child is having difficulty and trying to work out the trouble spots, try these comments.

- “Good for you. I like the way you tried to work that out.”
- “That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there.”
- “I like the way you looked at the picture to help yourself.”
- “I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried it again. That’s what good readers do.”
- “You are becoming a good reader. I’m proud of you.”

Source: Routman, R. (1994)



Resource 7

Children and the Internet

Use this guide to learn more about how the Internet can support student learning.

Parents should learn about the Internet because it is a big part of many children’s lives, but parents should offer guidance and set limits.

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that connect people from homes, schools, businesses and organizations to provide information about any topic from health to history, and entertainment to sports, travel, government and many more topics.

The Internet offers:	
1.	Search engines—programs we can use to search the Internet for topics
2.	Web sites—places on the Internet dedicated to certain ideas
3.	E-mail—a way to send and receive written messages by phone line on the computer
4.	Chat rooms—areas visited by people with common interests. One types a message and can receive an answer instantly from another. This can be private or public.

Safe, sensible use of the Internet can help your child:

- Receive tutoring services
- Get help with homework
- Gain information for projects and reports
- “Tour” places studied in school
- Explore interests
- Meet others and share information across hundreds of miles without being face to face

The Internet is an amazing tool but, as parents, we must:

- Learn more about the Internet—its potentials and pitfalls
- Supervise our children on the Internet by being there with them, sharing our values and having discussions about the Internet, and building “critical” thinking skills about the information on the Internet
- Support community and school efforts to keep the Internet safe for our children

Dangers of the Internet

Anyone can create web pages and post information, making it easy for children to mistakenly stumble across sites devoted to:

- Sexual material—pornography and sexually-oriented sites (even by mistake)
- Alcohol and other drugs—advertising alcoholic beverages and glorifying drug use
- Violence—bomb making or other violent activities
- Hate and intolerance—promoting hatred of different races, religions and sexual orientations
- Gambling on-line—using their computers
- Information offered on legitimate topics is not always reliable or accurate

The best protection is to:

- Personally supervise children
- Block access to certain web sites or use software programs that block or filter offensive material
- Set up “bookmarks” that guide children to safe sites
- Review “use histories” or logs that show Internet activity
- Use public computers at libraries, shopping malls and community centers together with children, because access to the Internet may be unrestricted
- Spell carefully; a misspelled word or other typing errors can lead to an inappropriate site

Establish family rules:

- Keep computers in high traffic areas (family rooms, not in bedrooms or unsupervised areas)
- Put time limits on the computer-allowing time for physical activity, homework, friends and rest
- Decide what services are useful and affordable - Internet use costs money

Personal security is a must!

Teach children “netiquette” (etiquette on the Internet) so they will know how to behave on the Internet and will be able to recognize inappropriate behavior of others. Let them know they can come to us if they feel uncomfortable.

Never give out personal information over the Internet i.e. names, telephone, addresses, school functions etc., and never reveal if he or she is home alone.

Never respond to offensive messages—it only makes matters worse (assure children that they are not to blame for these messages and that they should report such messages).

Never arrange face-to face meetings alone—people often aren’t who they claim to be.

Contact local law enforcement and your Internet Service Provider (ISP) if you or your child gets a message that is harassing, threatening or of a sexual nature. Do not delete the message until the ISP tells you it’s OK to delete it.

Adapted from: Parents Reaching Out, www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 8

Helping Your Child Plan for the Future

Parents can help their children prepare for the future beginning in kindergarten. Use the checklist below as you help your child prepare for life after high school.

In **grades K-5** the focus is on **career awareness**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- Discuss the many employment opportunities available in and outside of your community.
- Display positive attitudes toward work and cooperating with others.
- Show attitudes of respect and appreciation towards workers in all fields.
- Familiarize yourself with the New Mexico Content Standards and ask teachers about how your child is doing in meeting the standards.
- Borrow books from libraries about various careers to share with your child and ask him/her what they think they would like to do for a career.

In **Grades 6-8** the focus is on **career exploration**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- Meet with your child's counselor to review course selection and ask for tools to help your child assess their own interests and abilities.
- Assist your child with challenging course selection such as honors courses, pre-advanced placement classes, Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1, a language other than English and academic preparation programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).
- Attend parent nights, parent-teacher conferences and school activities that focus on career exploration and college preparation.
- Inquire about tutoring and mentoring programs at the school.
- Use the internet at home, school and/or the library to explore careers and job requirements.
- Review all homework assignments and maintain communication with teachers and counselors.
- Assist your child in developing good study habits.
- Work with your children to set goals each year.
- Familiarize yourself with both high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements.

In **grades 9-12** the focus is on **career preparation**. You can help your child by doing the following:

- o Ask teachers and counselors about the state mandated exam for high schools.
- o Encourage your child to continue with languages other than English with bilingualism as the goal.
- o Talk with teachers and counselors to ensure that your child takes the pre-ACT/SAT (plan test) as a sophomore and the SAT or ACT first as a junior and then again as a senior.
- o Encourage your child to take good notes during classes.
- o Encourage your child to take the right sequence of mathematics: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Trigonometry.
- o Encourage your child to develop and enhance computer skills.
- o Model time management and organizational skills.
- o Assist your child in developing money management and independent living skills.
- o Encourage your child to participate in extracurricular activities such as student council, MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement), sports and community service projects.
- o Request college and career planning guides from the school counselor and/or the US Department of Education.
- o Request information about financing vocational training and/or college costs.

Source: Building Toward a Better Future: A College Planning Guide for Students and Their Families, U. S. Department of Energy
www.science.doe.gov



Resource 9

Questions and Answers About Student Expectations in New Mexico

New Mexico holds high expectations for its students. Listed below is information that you need to know and understand regarding student expectations in New Mexico.

What are the New Mexico Content Standards, Benchmarks and Performance Standards?

The Content Standards are broad descriptions of knowledge and skills students should learn in a particular aspect or strand of a subject area. They are few in number, general in scope, and often categorized by strand.

A Sample Mathematics Standard:

Students will understand geometric concepts and applications.

The Benchmarks are a more specific statements of what all students should know and be able to do in a content area across grade levels. Currently, the New Mexico Benchmarks are grouped K-4, 5-8 and 9-12. They are greater in number and more specific in scope.

Sample Mathematics Benchmark

Strand: Geometry (In grades K-4: Use visualization, spatial reasoning and geometric modeling to solve problems.)

The Performance Standards are more specific about what students should know and be able to do in order to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge framed by the content standards. They are many in number, specific in scope and often grade level specific. Concepts and skills introduced and learned at a grade level continue to be strengthened and developed in later grades.

Sample Mathematics Performance Standards for Grade 2:

1. Demonstrate relationships of different attributes with concrete materials.
2. Select and use visualization skills to create mental images of geometric shapes.
3. Describe geometric shapes and structures from different perspectives.
4. Relate geometric ideas to numbers.
5. Recognize geometric shapes and structures in the environment and specify their location.

How are the state content standards developed?

Many people are involved in creating the standards. Teams of K-12 teachers, parents, business and community leaders and representatives of the higher education community all have taken part in the development of the standards.

How is student progress toward meeting the standards measured?

No single type of assessment is enough to meet all the needs for information or to demonstrate how your child is meeting the New Mexico Content Standards. The combined use of a variety of ongoing **classroom, school, district and state assessments** provide a comprehensive assessment system of student achievement. Talk with your child's teacher or school principal about assessments being used in your school/district and how they are using test results to improve teaching and learning.

The statewide tests are Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) which are directly tied to the New Mexico Content Standards and designed to determine whether a student's performance meets specific levels. These tests will produce reports on each child that will be given to parents. For more information, talk to your child's teacher and visit the State's Assessment and Evaluation web site at <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/ais/assess/index.html>.

What questions should I ask?

- How do I get a copy of the standards?
- What is my child expected to learn?
- What can I do if my child needs more challenge or support?
- How often will my child be tested?
- How will testing results be reported to parents?

Throughout the school year, ask about student expectations.

- What do you expect my child to learn this year in reading and math?
- What are the most important things for the children in your classroom to learn this year?
- What can I do at home to help my child learn these skills?
- How can I help with homework?
- How often is the reporting of progress made to parents?

A complete set of the New Mexico Content Standards are available in a reference guide booklet and on line.
www.cesdp.nmhu.edu

They are also available on the Public Education Department web site.
www.nmlites.org/standards/index.html



Resource 10

Why Standards Are So Important

New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks outline what students should know and be able to do. All states have content standards and state mandated tests are developed around the state standards.

1. **Demands on students have changed.** The demands on students are higher than ever before. The changing character of society and today's information and technology-based economy are driving new questions about what students should know and be able to do when they leave school.
2. **Schools have changed.** Effective schools produce a different kind of student than they did even 15 years ago. To be successful today, students need to be able to problem-solve, work collaboratively, communicate clearly and think critically.
3. **The bottom line is student achievement.** Everything done in the school should be focused on reaching high levels of achievement for ALL students.
4. **Standards are the road map.** Standards help us identify what it is that students should know and be able to do in each academic subject area and how we know that they have learned it.
5. This requires **new roles and relationships** for all of us. We can no longer afford to practice business as in the past. Principals, parents and particularly teachers, must be accountable for whether students are learning.
6. **Together we can do this.** Schools have improvement plans in place and are making progress every day. Each school has an *Educational Plan for Student Success* (EPSS) which includes goals and strategies for improving student achievement. The EPSS must also include information on how parents and community members are involved in meeting the goals and strategies of the plan. We know that parent involvement is key to student success.

A complete set of the New Mexico Content Standards are available in a reference guide booklet and on line.

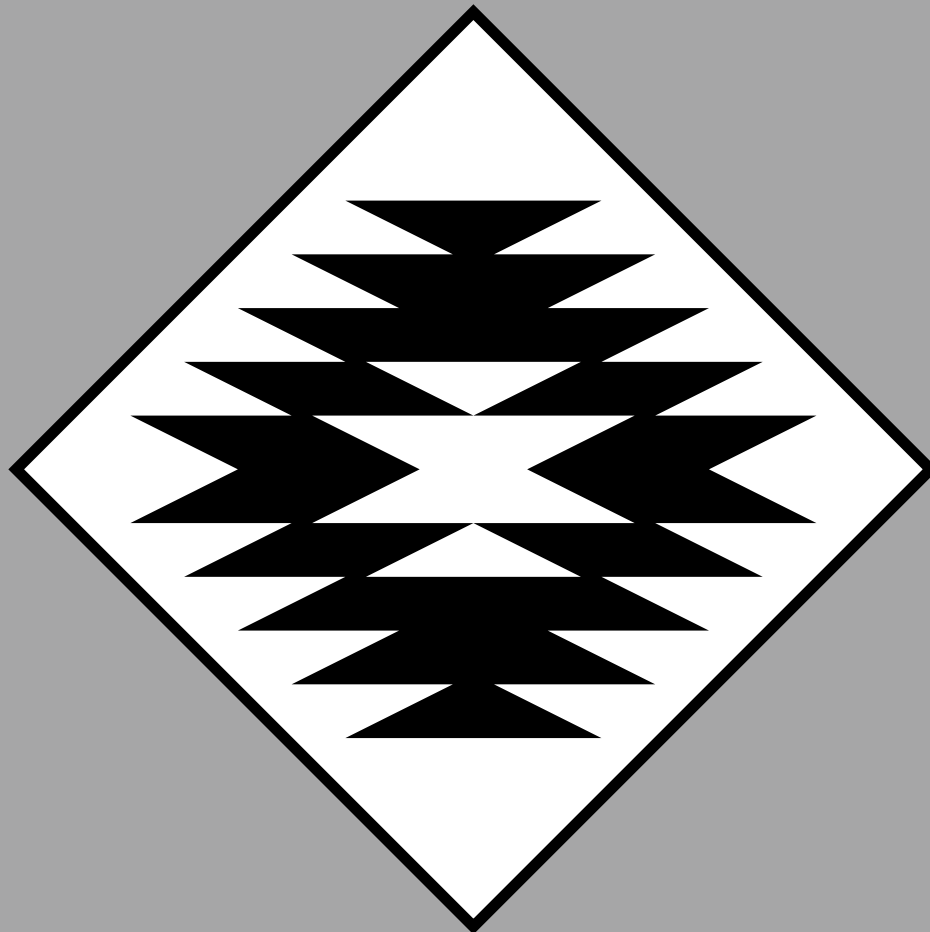
www.cesdp.nmhu.edu

They are also available on the Public Education Department web site.

www.nmlites.org/standards/index.html

Notes





FAMILY TOOLS

Module 4

Increasing Volunteerism

Increasing Volunteerism

“...spirituality, intellect, planning and life have been instilled within us; through these attributes we attain knowledge and wisdom. We shall combine the best learning and knowledge of other societies with our own for the benefit of our future.”

-Native American Wisdom



Overview

Volunteers give much of their time, energy, talents and resources so that schools can accomplish more than they ever could on their own. Volunteers also donate millions of dollars of service to schools so that students, families and communities benefit. This module can help families, schools and students meet and support the educational goals of their community.



Research Link

Tapping into the skills and expertise of parents, families and community members can:

- help schools to meet academic goals and student needs;
- provide a positive learning environment to show that the community cares about what goes on at school and encourages families to feel valued and welcome; and
- involve parents in ways that do not require them to be at school during school hours.

Make It Positive: Volunteer in ways that match your skills and interests. Be clear about your roles and responsibilities and how your involvement helps students. Remember, if the experience is fun, you will want to repeat it.

Make It Practical: Volunteer during times that are convenient for you. Remember that there are volunteer activities you can do in the classroom, school, home, or work.

Make It Personal: Ask for clarification on any questions you have about your responsibilities, special needs of students you are working with, time lines and school safety procedures. Share phone numbers and e-mail addresses with teachers and other parents that you are working with.



Practices to Increase Volunteerism

- Respond to school surveys about your interests, talents and needs.
- Assist school staff and educators in creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for parents.
- Assist school staff in recruiting parents and community members as volunteers.
- Work with school staff and teachers to develop volunteer activities you can do in the classroom, school or from home.
- Volunteer consulting services in your areas of expertise to school staff.
- Attend training and orientation on how to be an effective volunteer.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what we do requires extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach to a new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides the framework for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be “highly qualified” as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) relevant to increasing volunteerism are listed below.

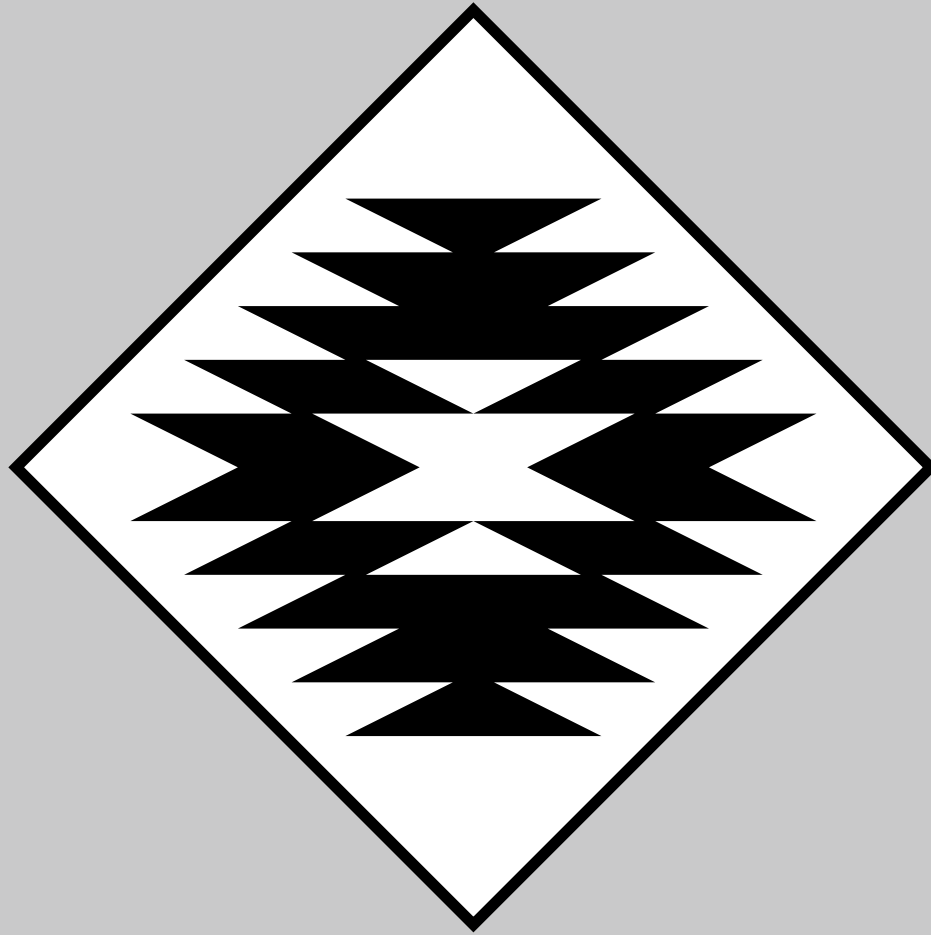
- Teachers use community resources, service agencies, parents and community members to teach students.
- Teachers use a variety of methods and opportunities to make it possible for parents and families to volunteer in the classroom, school, home and community.
- Teachers demonstrate knowledge of specific school, family and community resources that can increase volunteerism.



Parent/Family Reflection on Volunteerism

Use this checklist to rate the school in school-home-community volunteerism. Think about specific questions and actions you can take to increase volunteering.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to increase volunteering
I feel that the school has tried to find out about my interests and skills, and has connected me with things that I would be interested in doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
If I have questions about volunteering or an idea to share, I know who to talk to at the school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I feel that the school staff respects and values the skills and experiences I can share as a volunteer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I think giving back to the community is important and want my children to learn from what I do in the schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I feel good sharing my skills and experiences with students and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I think the school volunteer program is clear, organized and has many different things that I can do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 4



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

100 Ways to Know More. Do More.

<http://www.nmpta.org/100ways.html>

There are many ways to be involved. Here, you'll find 100 suggestions. You're probably doing some of these things already. The goal is to find a few new ones that you'd be comfortable trying now. Whatever you choose, you'll soon see the effects your efforts have on your children, their schools and yourself. When parents get involved in their child's education, everyone benefits.

Family Support America

<http://www.familysupportamerica.org/>

This site has various resources to identify and support family strengths, including information on work-family stress, reaching out to fathers, involving incarcerated parents and building on family assets.

New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism

<http://www.newmexserve.org/index.htm>

This web site was created to engage citizens of New Mexico of all ages and backgrounds in community based service to address the state's human, educational, environmental, public safety, health, housing, and other needs.

PTO Today

www.ptotoday.com

PTO Today provides PTA's and parent organizations with free articles, tips, resources and management tools to develop and sustain family involvement and volunteering in schools.

Project Appleseed

<http://www.projectappleseed.org/sitemap.html>

Project Appleseed is helping schools involve parents. This organization has created a list of 37 different ways in which parents can help and is on its way to recruiting 5 million parent volunteers nationwide.

Service Leader

<http://www.serviceleader.org/new/>

This site offers web based resources and links for school administrators, teachers, parent teacher organizations and other parent volunteers, as well as anyone who coordinates volunteer and community partnership activities with other organizations, including businesses.



Resource 2

Guidelines for Volunteers

Use these guidelines to help you make your volunteer experience valuable for the teachers, yourself and most importantly, for the students. Remember that whether you volunteer in the classroom, school or at home, volunteering is one of the most important things you can do to build a stronger community, and improve the achievement of students.

- **Communication**
Ask for clarification on any questions you have about your responsibilities, special needs of students you are working with, time lines and school safety procedures. Share phone numbers and e-mail addresses with teachers and other parents that you are working with. Avoid interrupting teachers while they are teaching. Questions and concerns can be addressed after instructional time.
- **Supplies**
Set aside any supplies or materials that you need. Carry what you need or set aside a place where you can keep supplies in the school or classroom.
- **Teacher's Lounge**
Be clear on the use of the teacher's lounge and whether volunteers are welcome to use the lounge for breaks. Do not feel insulted or offended if parents are not welcomed in the teacher's lounge. It is often the only place that teachers have to meet informally to discuss confidential issues such as school policies and individual students.
- **Confidentiality**
All information concerning students, teachers, and other families is strictly confidential and should not be shared with others. Don't repeat stories and personal information that children share with you. However, if you suspect abuse or neglect if a child, you are obligated to report this.
- **Schedule**
If you are volunteering in the classroom, call the school if you are coming in late or will be absent. If you are volunteering from your home, let others who are depending on you know if you are going to be delayed or not able to complete tasks that you are working on.
- **Boundaries**
Children often ask personal questions. It is best to be prepared to answer them in a polite way. Have a clear idea of what your personal boundaries are regarding how you would like the students to refer to you (first name, Mr., Mrs., Ms.) and your willingness to discuss aspects of your personal life.
- **Discipline Issues**
Most schools have a discipline plan with clear-cut consequences for negative behavior and rewards for positive behavior. Many teachers add to the schoolwide guidelines by making a more specific behavior plan for their classroom. Be familiar with school and classroom discipline plans and what role you will play in that plan.
- **Dress Code and Campus Policies**
Attire should be neat, clean, comfortable and appropriate for the school setting. Be familiar with the dress code and follow it. Advocating political or religious preferences is not allowed on school campuses. The use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco is prohibited.



Resource 3

Volunteer Survey

Use this tool or modify it to survey families' interest in volunteering. Use the results to match volunteer interests and skills with school needs.

School staff and active parent groups are always looking for ways to improve the school and opportunities available to students. In no way is this an obligation, just an opportunity. Please complete this survey and return it to your school to let them know your interest in volunteering. Return it to the school secretary, principal, parent representative or your child's teacher.

Name _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

What is the best time to reach you to talk about school events or your child? _____

What is the best time for you to attend meetings, conferences or school functions?

___ Week days Are there particular days of the week that are best for you?

___ Evenings Are there particular evenings that are best for you?

___ Weekends Do you prefer a particular day or time on the weekends?

Please complete the following page to let us know about volunteering opportunities you are interested in learning more about.



I am interested in learning more about volunteering **in the classroom** in the areas checked.

- Tutoring students
- Reading with students
- Working with small groups of students
- Translating for students – Language(s) _____ to _____
(English to Spanish) for example
- Helping prepare materials for classroom use
- Attending field trips
- Assisting with special events (performances, celebrations, science fairs, etc.)
- Appearing as a guest speaker in the area of _____
- Other _____

I am interested in learning more about volunteering **in the school** in the areas checked.

- Sponsoring a presentation to provide information about school goals and curriculum
- Leading a discussion at a community meeting or Chapter House meeting on school issues
- Working in the school library and/or computer lab
- Photographing school activities
- Providing transportation to parents and/or students for special events
- Accompanying children to the clothing bank
- Typing, clerical work, copying handouts or making phone calls
- Preparing newsletters
- Preparing bulletin boards, posters and displays
- Campus beautification
- Other _____

I am interested in learning more about volunteering **at home** in the areas checked.

- Recruiting parents, community members and local businesses to participate in special programs for students
- Typing or data entry on a computer
- Gathering resource materials
- Sewing
- Providing snacks or food for special events
- Preparing envelopes or mailings
- Other _____

 **Resource 4**

Can You Help? A Skills and Experience Inventory

The purpose of this Skills and Experience Inventory is to identify your gifts, strengths and abilities that can be shared with your child's class and/or school. The skills may have been learned from experience in the home or with your family. They may be skills you've learned in the community or skills you learned on the job. Please add any skills we've overlooked in the blank spaces provided in each section.

If you have skills or repeated experience during the last three years with any of the following activities, please mark the box.

COMMUNICATION

1.	Organizing a special event or field trip		11.	Serving as a Big Brother, Big Sister or mentor	
2.	Telephoning a list of people to invite them to an activity		12.	Teaching a language other than English	
3.	Talking to groups		13.	Publicizing events	
4.	Counseling individuals or groups		14.	Organizing or helping with fund-raising	
5.	Presenting a workshop		15.	Writing grant proposals	
6.	Representing a group		16.	Writing reports	
7.	Writing letters to the newspaper, school board or government		17.	Interviewing people	
8.	Teaching one-on-one or tutoring		18.	Collecting and/or analyzing data	
9.	Teaching a group of adults		19.	Providing a class activity or program	
10.	Teaching a group of children		20.	Other	

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1.	Boy Scout/Girl Scouts/4H		10.	Arts organization	
2.	School booster club		11.	Religious organization	
3.	Sports teams		12.	Charitable organization	
4.	Yard or rummage sale		13.	Book club	
5.	Bingo		14.	Special interest club (hobby, sport, etc.)	
6.	Church activities		15.	Property owners association	
7.	Volunteer fire department		16.	Tenants' association	
8.	Hospital or fire dept. auxiliary		17.	Neighborhood Watch	
9.	Fund raiser for an organization		18.	Other	



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

1.	Listening to a child read aloud		7.	Making instructional games or materials	
2.	Working in a literacy program		8.	Leading recreational activities	
3.	Organizing games and activities for children or adults		9.	Working in the school library – reading or storytelling	
4.	Providing support for the school		10.	Chaperoning a field trip	
5.	Chaperoning teen events		11.	Helping in the classroom	
6.	Providing music, arts or crafts instruction		12.	Other	

FAMILY SUPPORT, PARENTING AND CHILDCARE

1.	Caring for babies		9.	Visiting or calling the home-bound or lonely	
2.	Caring for children		10.	Knowledge of first aid or CPR	
3.	Caring for a child with a behavior problem		11.	Caring for someone’s pet	
4.	Caring for a child with special needs		12.	Cooking and delivering meals for someone in time of need	
5.	Being a foster parent		13.	Listening to or giving support to someone who has a problem	
6.	Working as a child care provider		14.	Running errands, shopping or driving for someone who needs transportation	
7.	Having a special relationship with a child who is not in your family		15.	Caring for an adult/Hospice	
8.	Providing respite care so that a care-giver can have a break		16.	Other	

FOOD PREPARATION AND FOOD SERVICE

1.	Catering		9.	Working in a food supply service	
2.	Preparing and serving food at home		10.	Working in a grocery store	
3.	Preparing and serving food for groups of 10 or more		11.	Working in a food processing plant	
4.	Planning menus		12.	Nutrition and healthy food choices	
5.	Setting or clearing tables for groups of 10 or more		13.	Gardening/growing fruits and vegetables	
6.	Washing dishes for groups of 10 or more		14.	Hotel/Restaurant management	
7.	Baking or cake decorating		15.	Working in a food bank	
8.	Working in a restaurant		16.	Other	

MANAGEMENT AND OFFICE SKILLS

1.	Chairing a board or committee		15.	Setting up or troubleshooting computer hardware	
2.	Serving on a board or committee		16.	Web searches	
3.	Preparing a budget		17.	Web page design/maintenance	
4.	Planning work or activities for others		18.	E-mail list serve	
5.	Directing or supervising others		19.	Computer programming	
6.	Keeping records of meetings, activities, personnel or goods		20.	Bookkeeping or accounting	
7.	Filling out forms		21.	Selling products or services	
8.	Answering phones, taking messages		22.	Writing correspondence or reports	
9.	Taking inventory		23.	Designing research projects	
10.	Filing alphabetically or numerically		24.	Starting a small business	
11.	Operating adding machine or calculator		25.	Operating a small business	
12.	Typing or data entry		26.	Research	
13.	Using word processing or spreadsheet programs		27.	Other	
14.	Desktop publishing/newsletters				

MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION

1.	Auto or truck repair or maintenance		16.	Furniture making or repair	
2.	Putting things together/assembly		17.	Bricklaying and masonry	
3.	Pruning trees and shrubs		18.	Setting tile	
4.	Planting and caring for garden and landscaping		19.	Hanging drywall	
5.	Repairing small appliances and electronic equipment		20.	Roofing	
6.	Repairing computers and computer equipment		21.	Installing insulation	
7.	Repairing major appliances		22.	Pouring concrete	
8.	Bicycle repair or maintenance		23.	Hanging wallpapering	
9.	Repairing small engines		24.	Plumbing installation	
10.	Repairing heating or air conditioning		25.	Window installation	
11.	Basic plumbing repairs		26.	Building room additions	
12.	Basic electrical repairs		27.	General carpentry work	
13.	Cutting firewood		28.	Cabinetmaking	
14.	Cleaning carpets		29.	Architecture and building design	
15.	Painting		30.	Other	



ARTS, CRAFTS AND OTHER HOBBIES

1.	Singing solo	
2.	Singing in a group	
3.	Teaching or leading singing	
4.	Teaching or leading instrumental music	
5.	Playing an instrument (solo or group)	
6.	Creative writing	
7.	Theater: acting or directing	
8.	Theater: working backstage	
9.	Calligraphy	
10.	Dance or choreography	
11.	Photography	
12.	Drawing or painting	
13.	Graphic design	
14.	Sculpture	
15.	Pottery or ceramics	

16.	Quilting or other fabric arts	
17.	Sewing, dressmaking, tailoring	
18.	Knitting, crocheting	
19.	Tin work	
20.	Jewelry making	
21.	Weaving	
22.	Storytelling	
23.	Landscape design	
24.	Building models	
25.	Flying kites	
26.	Upholstering	
27.	Interior decorating	
28.	Farm and ranch skills/animal husbandry	
29.	Hair dressing/cutting	
30.	Other	

CAREER AND OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS

1.	Sharing occupational skills from your field of work such as science/health fields, transportation, business, communications, etc.	
2.	Please specify area of expertise:	

3.	Career planning and guidance	
4.	Other	

We will use this inventory to match how your skills and talents could best be used to help support our school. Please let us know who you are, how we can reach you and the place and times you may be available to help.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

I can help:

At School	At Home	Other

The best time for me to volunteer at school is:

Morning	Afternoon	After School Hours

 **Resource 5**

Ideas for Volunteers

Review this list of ideas for volunteers and check those that interest you. Share this checklist with your school PTA/PTO or your child's teacher.

Idea	Check if you can help in this area.
Share information with a student or class about a hobby.	
Share information with a student or class about a career.	
Share information with students about another place (country) in which you have lived or visited.	
Tutor one or a small group of students in reading, math or other areas.	
Help coach an athletic team.	
Help check a student's written work.	
Help publish a school or classroom newsletter.	
Help sew or paint a display.	
Help build something (such as a loft in a classroom).	
Help students work on an exhibition or project.	
Help answer the school phone.	
Help plan and/or build a new playground for the school.	
Help plan a theme-based presentation for students.	
Demonstrate cooking from a particular country or culture to students.	
Share a skill with the faculty.	
Help students plan and build an outdoor garden or other project which beautifies the school.	
Translate written material into another language.	
Help coach students for academic competitions such as Spelling Bees.	
Bring senior citizens to school to watch a student production.	



Resource 6

Determining Whether Your School is Father-Friendly

Check *yes* or *no* to determine how well your school supports fathers and other male caregivers .
Share the results with a parent representative, teacher or administrator at the school.

	Yes	No
1. Do faculty and staff welcome and value the involvement of all fathers and/or male caregivers?	_____	_____
2. Do faculty and staff members greet fathers as they drop off and pick up their children?	_____	_____
3. Do school forms include a space where a “significant male” can be listed?	_____	_____
4. Are opportunities to be involved of interest to fathers, grandfathers and uncles?	_____	_____
5. Are activities planned to show fathers that they are an important part of the program and their children’s lives?	_____	_____
6. Do school posters and brochures show images of fathers as well as mothers?	_____	_____
7. Does program literature include references to both fathers and mothers, “he” as well as “she”?	_____	_____
8. Are program hours flexible so working fathers and mothers can participate?	_____	_____
9. Are fathers asked how they can be involved?	_____	_____
10. Are report cards sent to both parents to keep non-custodial fathers informed?	_____	_____
11. Are male outreach workers a part of the school staff?	_____	_____
12. Are male tutors and mentors recruited by the school?	_____	_____
13. Are opportunities provided that will help fathers enhance their parenting skills through education and modeling?	_____	_____
14. Are professional development opportunities offered to the faculty and staff on father involvement?	_____	_____
15. Are opportunities provided for father-to-father support?	_____	_____
16. Do school programs promote the idea of “cooperative parenting,” whether parents live together or separately?	_____	_____

Source: Carter, S. (2003)

Notes





FAMILY TOOLS

Module 5

**Supporting Decision Making
and Advocacy**

Supporting Decision Making and Advocacy

“Juntos podemos hacer lo que uno solo piensa.”

“A team can accomplish more than only one member.”

-Spanish Dicho



Overview

The National PTA (2004) shares, “Studies have shown that schools with parents who are involved in decision making and advocacy have higher levels of student achievement and greater public support”. Effective partnerships develop when each partner is respected and empowered to fully participate in the decision making process.

This module will support families in strengthening their role in schools to become active participants through collaboration. Specifically, it will provide information and ideas on:

- the role of parent organizations, advisory councils, parent advocacy groups and networks;
- the importance of networks for family advocacy and decision making;
- the importance of parents staying informed and trained on critical issues; and
- the role parents need to play in understanding, supporting and participating in the election process.



Research Link

Research has documented that parent involvement in school decision making can provide many benefits to all students, families, teachers and administrators. (Epstein et al.,2003).

Students

- Understand that their rights are protected
- Become more aware of families’ representation in school decisions
- Benefit from specific policies enacted by parent/school committees

Families

- Gain a voice in school decisions and policies that affect children
- Become aware of school and district policies
- Feel a sense of ownership in their children’s school

Teachers and Administrators

- Become aware of the contributions parents can make to school policy development and educational reform
- Grow to accept and support the equality of parents serving on school committees
- Offer training to parents on decision making and advocacy skills



Practices to Support Decision Making and Advocacy

- Learn of school and district policies and practices that affect children.
- Voice your support or concerns on any issue that will affect your family by contacting the school and/or attending PTA/PTO, school board or community meetings.
- Encourage and support children to serve in student leadership positions.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to develop a parental involvement policy and the *Educational Plan for Student Success* (EPSS).
- Vote in local, state and federal elections for public officials that support education.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what we do requires extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach to a new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides the framework for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be “highly qualified” as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) relevant to decision making and advocacy for families are listed below.

- Teachers modify the teaching and learning environment so that ALL students can learn.
- Teachers treat and include all students and families equally, regardless of differences in language, learning abilities and backgrounds.
- Teachers recognize student diversity and create a learning environment that promotes active student involvement in decisions that affect them at school, home and in the community.



Parent/Family Reflection on Decision Making and Advocacy

Use this checklist to rate yourself and the school in the area of school-home-community partnerships with parents. Think about specific questions and actions you can take to improve these partnerships.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to improve decision making and advocacy
I am encouraged to serve on parent committees and attend PTA/PTO meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I feel that the school staff welcomes and announces meetings of parent committees and groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I am encouraged to serve on and attend district level committees and trainings on school decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I receive information regarding school board elections and other issues that impact school policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I receive information on networks that link families with parent representatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 5



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

Advocacy for Academically Talented Students

<http://www.cmu.edu/cmities/advocacy.html>

This web site has an important resource for parents and teachers of academically gifted students.

The Learning First Alliance

www.learningfirst.org

This web site is stocked with practical guides for communicating with the community about schools, the *No Child Left Behind Act* and other issues. The Resources for Parents section allows families easy access to information about a variety of education issues and practices. There are also downloadable tips and guides to help families become more involved in their children's education.

Parents Reaching Out

<http://www.parentsreachingout.org/>

Parents Reaching Out is directed at helping families learn to make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. It includes information on special education issues that parents face and provides advocacy information and early intervention suggestions for parents.

Parent-School Partnerships: A National MALDEF Program

www.maldef.org/psp

This web site offers step-by-step (free) guidelines on how to write and resolve complaints. The National Parent School Partnership (PSP) Program is a national program designed to train parents, school personnel and community based organizations to lead in the educational attainment of children.

Study Circles

<http://www.studycircles.org/en/index.aspx>

The resources on this site can help communities and schools start discussions regarding race, educational achievement and diversity. A special section focusing on youth issues offers information on organizing study circles as well as information on training youth to become facilitators.



Resource 2

Twelve Things Parents Should Know and Expect from Schools

In order for parents to become strong advocates for their children and equal partners in the decision making process they need to know how they can help. According to KSA-Plus Communications (September 2004), there are twelve things parents should know about and expect from their schools.

- | |
|--|
| <p>1. Your involvement matters a lot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child is more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, enroll in higher level programs, be promoted and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills and graduate and go to college. |
| <p>2. You can be involved in many ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By establishing a learning environment at home for the whole family. By volunteering at school and taking part in school activities that promote education. By being an advocate for your child and others by urging state and local leaders to establish stronger programs and higher achievement standards. By being a decision-maker through taking part in decisions about programs, staffing and policies. |
| <p>3. The children need you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that American students are not doing as well in school as they should. Less than one-third are doing well in reading, writing, math, science and other critical subjects. Skills needed for success in the 21st century demand that we hold higher expectations for our students. |
| <p>4. The schools need you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the major challenges facing schools today is the lack of parent involvement. Parent involvement is needed in a variety of areas. |
| <p>5. You should be told clearly what the learning standards are in each grade.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and students need to know, at the start of the school year, what is being taught in all subjects. Parents need to know how learning will be assessed so they can understand how to help their children. Parents should have access to New Mexico Content Standards just as teachers and administrators do. |

<p>6. You should be told about the school's safety standards and discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to feel safe in order to learn. • Parents should know what the school's safety and discipline standards are, how problems are handled, and what the school is doing to ensure safety standards are upheld.
<p>7. You should be informed on a regular basis how your child and your child's school are doing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School districts are required to publish parent-friendly report cards every year that show both how students are performing, as well as how the school is performing as a whole.
<p>8. Middle and high school parents should be told what steps should be taken for your child to apply for college.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle school is not too early to begin thinking about what kind of courses your child should be taking if he or she wants to go to college.
<p>9. You should know your options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>No Child Left Behind Act</i> has many requirements that schools must meet in order to be in compliance. Ask for this information and ask questions about it.
<p>10. You should be able to get answers to your important questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I know my child is safe? • What is my child expected to know and be able to do in reading, writing, math and other subjects? • How is learning measured? • What will the school do to help if my child is behind? • What can I do to help?
<p>11. You should be treated with respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators are hired to work for you and your children. • You have the right to be treated as equal an partner in your child's education.
<p>12. You're more likely to get what you want for your child if you work with other parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "Let's have a meeting". • If ten parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "We'd better listen". • If twenty-five parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "Our dear friends...". • If fifty parents approach the teachers or administration with a concern, the response is likely to be, "This is a powerful organization".

Source: KSA Plus Communications, September 2004
<http://www.parents.ksaplus.com/>



Resource 3

Rate Your School

“Parents and educators depend on shared authority in decision making systems to foster parental trust, public confidence and mutual support of each other’s efforts in helping students succeed. The involvement of parents, as individuals or as representative of others, is crucial in the collaborative decision making process on the issues ranging from curriculum and course selection to discipline policies and overall school reform measures.” (National PTA, 2002)

Use this checklist to rate your school on how it involves families in the decision making process. Share the results with the PTA/PTO or other parent groups.

Rating Scale	
Excellent	Activity occurs each year and is consistently implemented throughout the school year
Good	Activity occurs sometimes during the school year, but is not consistently practiced
Fair	Activity occurs rarely during the school year
Poor	Activity does not occur at the school

Does the school:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Provide workshops for parents that teach them to influence decisions, raise issues or concerns and resolve problems?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Encourage PTA/PTO or other parent groups that respond to issues of interest to parents?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Include and give equal representation to parents on decision making and advisory committees?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Provide parents with current information regarding school policies, practices and both student and school performance data?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Encourage and facilitate active parent participation in the decisions that affect students (e.g. student placement, course selection and individualized education programs [IEPs])?	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Treat parent concerns with respect?	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Promote parent participation on school, district, state and national committees that focus on education issues?	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Provide training for staff and parents in how to be collaborative partners and share decision making in areas such as policy, budget, school reform, safety and hiring personnel?	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Provide parents with an opportunity to participate in professional development activities (e.g., workshops, or technology training)?	_____	_____	_____	_____



Resource 4

What *NCLB* Says About Parental Involvement*

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* became law in 2002 with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). One of the programs within the ESEA that has a strong parental involvement component is the Title I Program. The purpose of Title I is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and State academic assessments. *NCLB* requires that all schools receiving Title I dollars have a written parental involvement policy which is developed jointly with, and agreed upon by parents and educators. It must be distributed to parents and educators of children participating in Title I programs. It must ensure that successful strategies to encourage and sustain active parental involvement are in place in every school.

Check yes or no to determine how well your school is addressing parental involvement. Share your results with a teacher, principal or other parents.

Title I schools are required to:	Yes	No
1. Develop with parents, a written parental involvement policy that is distributed to parents and made available to the local community.	_____	_____
2. Hold an annual meeting for parents to inform them of the policy and their right to be involved. The meeting should be scheduled at a time convenient for families.	_____	_____
3. Offer flexible parental involvement meeting times. Schools may use Title I parental involvement funds to provide child care, transportation or home visits.	_____	_____
4. Involve parents, in an organized and ongoing way, in the planning, review and improvement of the Title I plan.	_____	_____
5. Develop with parents, a school-parent agreement that outlines actions to be taken to improve individual student academic achievement.	_____	_____
6. Increase opportunities for parental involvement in the school by helping parents understand academic content standards.	_____	_____
7. Provide materials and training for parents, teachers and all staff to foster greater parental involvement.	_____	_____
8. Integrate activities with other federal programs, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Head Start, English as a Second Language (ESL) and others.	_____	_____
9. Inform parents as to their right to inquire about the qualifications of their child's teachers.	_____	_____
10. Inform parents if their child is taught for four or more weeks by an unqualified teacher or long-term substitute.	_____	_____
11. Inform parents of the school's <i>NCLB</i> designation.	_____	_____



What Parents Can Do

The law requires Title I schools to ensure that each parental involvement policy statement be written with parents, school staff and school district personnel. This requirement enables parents to sit at the table with school administrators and other educators and write a parental involvement policy. This policy should address how the school, in partnership with parents, will promote the social, emotional and academic growth of children. Parents are now required to be a part of the discussion about how schools will help all children meet the state’s academic performance standards.

- **Ask for a copy of your school’s parental involvement policy. Take time to review it. If you need more information, meet with the principal to review the policy.**

- **Find out what other parents think about the policy and if it covers their concerns. PTA or PTO meetings, neighborhood or community events are good places to visit with other parents. Find out when school and district meetings are scheduled and plan to attend. Get contact information for parent leaders in your school. Take time to contact them.**

- **When you review the policy, look for the answers to these questions.**
 - How were parents involved in developing the policy?
 - How often is the policy reviewed? When was it last reviewed and updated?
 - Does the policy consider some of the reasons why parents do not get involved and ways to address these challenges?
 - How does the school get parent input and approval of the policy?
 - What kind of parent training will be offered and when? Do the topics reflect the interests of families?
 - What ways are planned to make meetings and other events convenient and accessible to families? Are times flexible? Is there transportation and childcare?

* For more information and current revisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* go to the US Department of Education’s *NCLB* web site page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Adapted from: Parents Reaching Out, www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 5

What NCLB Says About Your School District's Parental Involvement Policy*

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* became law in 2002 with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). *NCLB* requires all school districts that receive Title I funds to have a written Title I parental involvement policy developed with and approved by parents of participating Title I children. This policy must be evaluated each year. It must explain how the district will involve parents in developing its Title I plan and how parents will be informed about ways they can be included in decision making for the program.

What can I do?

Call your school superintendent's office to get a copy of your district's Title I parental involvement policy. Find out:

- *How parents were involved in developing, approving and reviewing the policy.* *NCLB* says the policy must be developed jointly with parents, agreed on with parents and if possible, be distributed to parents in a language that they can understand.

(Parents must also be involved in an annual review of the policy to determine how effective the school has been in increasing the participation of parents. Results are used to identify and plan strategies to correct barriers to parental participation and to build capacity for parental involvement.)

- *If the policy explains how parents, including those with limited English proficiency, will be involved in school review and improvement.* *NCLB* says that districts must state how parents will be involved in addressing academic issues for schools "in need of improvement."
- *How the district will help Title I schools engage parents in activities to improve student achievement.* *NCLB* says that districts will look at how schools are involving parents and will provide technical assistance to schools "in need of improvement" in carrying out parental involvement activities and plans.
- *What does the policy require schools to do?* The law says that schools in need of improvement must have school improvement plans that include ways to effectively involve parents in the school. (In New Mexico, the *Educational Plan for Student Success* is the school improvement plan.)
- *If the policy applies only to Title I schools or to all schools in the district.* The law says that the policy has to apply to Title I schools, but some districts may choose to apply it to all schools.



Get the facts about your district's parental involvement policy.

- Find out how the district connects with the parental involvement plans with other programs for young children, such as *Head Start, Parents as Teachers and Even Start*. The law says that districts must coordinate and integrate Title I parental involvement strategies with other programs for young children in the district.
- Find out if the district parental involvement policy clearly explains how the district will work with schools to:
 - Explain state standards and annual test results to parents.
 - Let parents know how they can be involved in the school.
 - Help parents work together with teachers to make sure students are making progress.
 - Provide materials, information and other resources to help parents with home learning activities.
 - Find out the best way to reach out to all parents so they can be involved as equal partners.

Remember . . .

Parental involvement has always been an integral part of Title I. Under the law, one of the purposes of Title I is to ensure that Title I Parental Involvement funds are used to promote parental involvement. Parents should take full advantage of the opportunities for involvement that the law provides.

The law requires Title I schools to ensure that each parental involvement policy be written with parents, school staff and school district personnel. This requirement enables parents to sit at the table with school administrators and other educators and write a parental involvement policy. This policy should address how the school, in partnership with parents, will promote the social, emotional and academic growth of children. Parents are now required to be a part of the discussion about how schools will help all children meet the state's academic content standards.

The school and district parental involvement policy may be one and the same, or the school may develop it's own policy.

* For more information and current revisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* go to the US Department of Education's *NCLB* web site page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Adapted from : Parents Reaching Out , www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 6

What *NCLB* Says About School and District Report Cards*

Parents have a right to know about their child’s progress in school. District report cards are used to show how the schools and district are performing and where improvement is needed. Under the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*, schools districts must now distribute a District Report Card on how each school and the district as a whole are performing. District Report Cards should be made available for staff and parents to view.

The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* requires public schools and school districts to be accountable.

1. Each fall, school districts must send out a report card showing how each school and the district has performed.
2. In New Mexico, the school and district accountability reports include results in these areas:
 - Reading and math achievement from statewide assessments, with results reported by subgroup including: subgroup results must include: ethnicity, English language proficiency, disability status and low income status. Science assessments must be in place by the school year 2007-2008; and
 - Attendance and graduation rates.

The district report card must also include the number and percentage of schools identified for improvement, which have received an *NCLB* designation.

3. Schools should hold parent meetings to explain the report cards and to help parents understand their children’s individual test results.

What you can do:
<p>Make sure you receive an invitation to view the District Report Card. If you do not have access to the District Report Card, talk to your principal or parent leader.</p>
<p>Review the report card. If you do not understand everything in the report card, ask for explanations.</p>
<p>Ask the principal to schedule a meeting to explain the results. This meeting would also be a good time for the principal and other staff to show parents how to interpret their child’s individual test results.</p>
<p>Ask about the <i>Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS)</i>. Every school in New Mexico must have an EPSS. Look for ways it addresses the information from the school and district report cards. Parents should be involved in the development of the EPSS.</p>

* For more information and current revisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* go to the US Department of Education’s *NCLB* web site page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Adapted from : Parents Reaching Out , www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 7

What *NCLB* Says About Public School Choice*

One of the changes that *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* provides for families is called Public School Choice. Beginning with the school's first year identified as being a school "in need of improvement", parents may choose to take their child out of a low performing school and transfer him or her to a different school that is not designated as being in need of improvement. Public School Choice is available to parents of students enrolled in Title I schools that have been identified for school improvement, corrective action or restructuring. Ask the school's principal if your child's school receives Title I funds and whether the school has an *NCLB* designation of school improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

How School Choice Applies to Schools in Need of Improvement:

1. *NCLB* says that a school is determined to be "in need of improvement" if it has failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two years in a row.
 - Student achievement is measured by whether a school makes AYP. In 2003-2004 New Mexico began using Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs) based on New Mexico state content standards to determine AYP. In high schools, AYP currently is determined by the percentage of students passing the New Mexico High School Competency Exam in grade 11. This will eventually be determined by a High School Standards Based Assessment.
 - The entire school and each of its subgroups (special education, second language learners, students receiving free or reduced lunch and five ethnic groups) must make adequate yearly progress for the school to be considered as meeting AYP. Schools must test 95% of its students to make AYP. Elementary and Middle Schools must also meet a required attendance rate of 92% to meet AYP. High Schools (04-05) must have at least a 90% graduation rate to meet AYP.
 - If the scores of the school or any of its subgroups are not high enough, then the school has failed to make AYP. Schools who fail to meet AYP two years in a row are labeled as being "in need of improvement".
2. The school district must notify all parents if a school is in need of improvement, thereby giving parents the choice to transfer their child to a school that is not labeled as being in need of improvement, including charter schools. Notification must be in a language that parents can understand.
3. School choice applies to parents of all children, including children with disabilities, attending schools in need of improvement, corrective action or restructuring.
4. The district must provide a choice of schools in the district which have met AYP. Parents can select one of those schools for their child to attend. The district is required to pay for the child's transportation to the new school.
5. *NCLB* says that if there are no other schools within the district that can accept your child, then the district may enter into cooperating agreements with nearby districts that do have eligible schools. Even if there are no schools close enough, the district must notify parents if the school is on New Mexico's list of schools in need of improvement, corrective action or restructuring.
6. Parents must be informed that school choice is available no later than the first day of school following the school year in which the district administered assessments that resulted in the school being identified as in need of improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

Here are answers to some of the questions parents may ask about school choice:

If I decide to move my child into another school, how long can he/she stay in that new school?

Your child can stay in the new school as long as you choose through the highest grade offered in that school. The district will pay for transportation as long as your child's original school remains in improvement status. If the original school makes adequate yearly progress, the district will no longer provide free transportation to the new school, but your child can still stay in that school. You will then be responsible for transportation to that school.

What if my child's school is the only one in our district, or the next nearest school is too far away?

The law says that if there are no other schools in the district that can accept your child, then the district may enter with cooperating agreements with nearby districts that do have eligible schools. If there are no schools nearby, your school must still notify you if it is "in need of improvement".

What information should I get from the eligible schools to help me make an informed decision?

Visit the school. Visit with other parents who have children attending the school. Ask yourself if the school feels family friendly.

Here are some questions you can ask the principal of a school that you are considering for your child:

- How do you deal with students who are having learning difficulties in school?
- How do students score in reading, math and other subjects?
- How has achievement changed in this school over the last few years?
- Tell me about your school's reading and math programs.
- Are all teachers highly qualified? Ask to see their qualifications.
- How will you help my child be successful?

* For more information and current revisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* go to the US Department of Education's *NCLB* web site page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Adapted from : Parents Reaching Out , www.parentsreachingout.org



Resource 8

What NCLB Says About Supplemental Educational Services*

One of the provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* that is important for parents to know about is called Supplemental Educational Services. This is extra, outside help for students who attend Title I schools which are in their second year of school improvement or beyond. Ask your school principal if your child's school receives Title I funds and whether the school has an *NCLB* designation of School Improvement Year 2, Corrective Action or Restructuring.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* says that a school is determined to be "in need of improvement", if it has failed to meet state goals or adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two years in a row.

- In New Mexico, that is determined primarily by results on statewide assessments based on New Mexico standards and benchmarks.
- There is a formula to find out how the scores should be progressing. This is called "adequate yearly progress" (AYP).
- If a school's scores are NOT high enough, then the school has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). If this happens for two years in a row, the school is said to be "in need of improvement."

Parents of students attending Title I schools identified "in need of improvement" are offered the following options:

- Public school choice is available to all children in Title I schools "in need of improvement". It must be offered in the first school year after a school has been determined to be "in need of improvement".
- Supplemental educational services must be offered to parents *at the district's expense* in the second and subsequent years after a school has been determined to be "in need of improvement".
 - All eligible families are offered these services. Priority for this additional help is given to low-income parents.
 - The district provides money for parents to choose the provider of these extra services from a list approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department.
 - The supplemental educational services provide extra help in reading, language arts or math and must take place outside of regular school hours.
 - These services can take place before or after school or on weekends. Services may include tutoring, extra classes or special programs offered by providers in the community.

Here are answers to questions parents may ask about Supplemental Educational Services.

How will I know if my child is eligible for these supplemental services?

If your child attends a Title I school that is “in need of improvement”, supplemental services must be offered in the second year of this rating. As soon as your child becomes eligible for this extra help, the district should notify you and provide a list of organizations and tutors who have been approved by the state as providers.

You are free to choose any provider on the list. Your school district will pay for the services to your child. Churches, nonprofit organizations, private tutors, for-profit companies and other providers may be on the approved list.

How can I learn more about the providers on the list so that I’ll be able to decide which one I want to work with my child?

The list you receive from the school district should include information about these providers, such as their qualifications to provide the specific services and their past results. Before you choose a provider, it would be a good idea for you to talk to a few of them. Ask questions about how they will help your child. Find out how they teach the subjects that your child needs the most help with.

How will I know if these services are helping my child?

When you have chosen the provider you want to work with your child, you will meet with them to set some goals for your child. You will also discuss how you will be sure the goals have been met and set a time line for getting it done.

Will providers on the list also know how to work with students with disabilities?

Students with disabilities must have the same access to extra services as students without disabilities. The state must be sure to include on the list of providers those who can adequately help students who need extra accommodations.

What if my district doesn’t give me this information?

You can request information about Supplemental Educational Services offered under *NCLB* from the New Mexico Public Education Department’s School Assistance Bureau or Title I office.

* For more information and current revisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act* go to the US Department of Education’s *NCLB* web site page at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>

Adapted from : Parents Reaching Out , www.parentsreachingout.org



Notes

Notes



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 6

**Collaborating with
the Community**

Collaborating with the Community

*“Una mano lava a la otra
y las dos lavan la cara.”*

*“One hand washes the other,
and both wash the face.”
(collaboration is key).*

-Spanish Dicho



Overview

This module will provide families with tools to measure and improve school-family-community collaboration. It will also provide suggestions on how to work more effectively with the school to access community resources which enhance student learning by:

- establishing strong communication with the school and community;
- developing strategies to access resources and strengthen partnerships in the school and community;
- using knowledge and insights from community members to enhance learning;
- creating partnerships for life-long learning; and
- assisting students to explore and become contributors to their community.



Research Link

The benefits of community-home-school collaborations are profound and wide ranging. Effective school, family and community partnerships can provide benefits for students, parents, educators and the community.

Results for Students:

- Increase in skills and talents from enriched curricular and extracurricular activities
- Development of positive relationships with adults
- Development of a sense of value and belonging to the community
- Realization of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle

Results for Families:

- Gain in an awareness of the community’s contributions to the school
- Develop a sense of connection with other families in the community
- Gain in knowledge of and use local resources to obtain services, improve skills or both

Results for Teacher and Administrators:

- Gain in involvement in the social and community service referral process for families
- Development of skills for working with business partners, community, volunteers and mentors
- Gain in knowledge and use of community resources to enrich classroom instruction

Results for Community Agencies, Organizations and Businesses:

- Gain in improved access to school resources
- Formation of connections between businesses and future employees
- Gain in a greater sense of purpose by sharing strengths and wisdom with students



Practices to Improve Community Collaboration

- Find and use information on community resources and organizations.
- Make local agencies and businesses aware of what is happening at your school.
- Ask local businesses to make donations and support school programs.
- Help organize and/or participate in community health fairs.
- Encourage and help facilitate your child's participation in community service.
- Be a role model: provide a healthy environment and be active in community service yourself and together with your child.



New Mexico Teacher Competencies

Getting better at what we do requires extra effort and help. For teachers, this means participating in professional development that helps them reach to a new level of teaching. Improving teacher quality through professional development improves learning for all children.

New Mexico teachers are required to meet nine teacher competencies. The *New Mexico 3-Tiered Licensure System* provides the framework for documenting teacher qualifications. The *No Child Left Behind Federal Act* requires that teachers who teach the core academic subjects and special education must be “highly qualified” as defined by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

The competency areas for Level III (Master Teacher) relevant to collaboration with the community are listed below.

- Teachers use community resources, service agencies, other school personnel, parents and community members to help teach students whenever possible;
- Teachers work with local businesses, industries, libraries, parks, museums and other organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning; and
- Teachers involve families in locating and using community resources.



Parent/Family Reflection on Community Collaboration

Use this checklist to rate the school in the area of school-home-community collaboration. Think about specific questions and actions you can take to improve community collaboration.

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Specific questions to ask at school	Actions to take to improve community collaboration
I help distribute information regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social and other resources that serve families within the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I have helped to create partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to enhance student learning and skill development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I contribute to the development of after-school, summer and community education that utilizes the school facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I encourage partnerships that provide integrated services and help to meet the needs of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I help facilitate education and service-related activities that support student interactions and contributions to community development and well being.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



FAMILY TOOLS

Module 6



Resources



Resource 1

Worth a Click

<p>Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Youth Entrepreneurship Awareness http://www.kauffman.org/entrepreneurship.cfm This web site offers information and resources to support youth entrepreneurship.</p>
<p>The Foxfire Fund http://www.foxfire.org Foxfire (The Foxfire Fund, Inc.) is a not-for-profit, educational and literary organization. The organization promotes a sense of place and appreciation of local people, community and culture.</p>
<p>National Council of La Raza http://www.nclr.org/ This organization is a national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization that works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans.</p>
<p>National Hispanic Cultural Center http://www.nhccnm.org/ The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) is dedicated to the study, advancement and presentation of Hispanic culture, arts and humanities.</p>
<p>National Native American Families Together Center http://www.nativefamilynetwork.com/ This site details an outreach program to increase partnerships between Native American Families and the professionals who serve Native American children.</p>
<p>Navajo Nation Chapters http://www.nndcd.org/chapters.html A listing of Chapters serving the Navajo Nation is included on this site.</p>
<p>Rural School and Community Trust http://www.ruraledu.org The Rural Trust provides a variety of services to increase the capacity of rural schools, teachers, young people and communities to develop and implement high education.</p>
<p>The Smithsonian Folk Life and Oral History Interviewing Guide by Majorie Hunt http://www.folklife.si.edu The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage promotes the understanding of diverse cultures in the United States and around the world. The Center produces the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, exhibitions, documentary films and videos, publications and educational materials.</p>
<p>Tribal Departments of Education http://www.ped.state.nm.us/indian.ed/tde.htm A listing of all the tribal education agencies serving New Mexico is included in this site.</p>



Resource 2

Out-of-School Learning Opportunities

Local communities offer many learning opportunities that are often free or inexpensive. Use the following ideas to plan activities that support your children as learners and members of the community.

What does it take to grow? Teach cause-and-effect relationships. Use two similar, healthy plants. Ask your child to water one plant and ignore the other for a week or two. Keep both plants in the same place. What happens? Inspect animals and insects found near your home. Ask your child to watch them and record their behavior. Check out library books and movies to learn more about plants and insects.

Let your voice be heard. Promote good citizenship by helping your child write letters to the editors of local newspapers about issues affecting children. For example, suggest a bike path be built near the school or that a city event be planned for children. Children are citizens and their ideas are worth sharing.

History time line. Record history at home. Stretch a roll of paper along the floor. Use a ruler to make a line about three feet long. Ask your child to fill in the important dates in his or her own life, starting with the child's birth. Family members familiar with family history could fill in other major dates. Display the finished time line in a special place for all to see and to add to as major events occur.

The foreign touch. Travel overseas at home. Visit ethnic shops, food stores and restaurants in your community. Using a map, have your child find the different countries you might "visit". Encourage your child to talk and write about what he or she might see. Check out library books and films about the countries, including cookbooks and books on how to make arts and crafts from the different places.

On the move. Sharpen math skills on trips. Use even short trips around town. For example, at the gas station, ask your child how much gas you needed and the cost per gallon. On the highway, ask your child to read the signs and check the different speed limits. Then ask the child to watch the speedometer readings and notice how fast or slow the car is going. Have your child estimate distances between cities and check the estimates on a road map.

A trip to the supermarket. Ask your child to choose a dish to prepare for a meal, such as a pudding, a salad or a sandwich. Have your child check to see what supplies are on hand, and make a shopping list. First, let your child decide which items are the best buys and make selections. Next, have your child write the price of each item on the list, and if possible, figure the total. Afterward, the child can check the prices against the sales receipt.

Community smarts. Gather maps and schedules to a special place in your area—a zoo, a museum or a baseball stadium. Let your child plan a trip for friends or family. Determine the travel time required, the cost and the best time to make the trip. This puts the child's reading and math skills to practical use.

Camps. Whether choosing an overnight or day camp, keep in mind your children's interests. 4-H, YMCA, schools, churches and civic organizations often have camping opportunities that focus on building skills and talents or are geared toward specific subjects, such as environmental camps.

Classes. Swimming, art, karate, cooking and foreign languages are just a few of many programs you may find. Often, libraries have special programs at low or no cost for children of all ages.

Recreational activities. Local parks departments may sponsor organized sports activities. Soccer, baseball and basketball are just a few sports sometimes offered. Ask for a schedule of events.

Arts and entertainment. Local arts councils often sponsor plays, concerts and “arts in the park” activities to promote cultural awareness.

Tourism promotions. Contact your local tourism commission. Find out what points of interest are promoted in your area, and obtain a schedule of season highlights. Many state parks offer free entertainment and activities during tourist seasons. Visit local historical attractions and check out the history of your area. Often there are tours, festivals and programs celebrating historical events.

Visit the library and get online. In addition to printed materials, libraries often lend audiotapes and videocassettes of books and movies, and most libraries have computers available for public use. Many libraries also offer special programs after school and during school vacations.

Local parks and museums. Local parks, museums and businesses can offer a wide range of activities and special events that are of interest to children, youth and families. Check to see what is offered in or near your community.

Tour local businesses. Many businesses such as bakeries, factories, bookstores, veterinarians and printing companies offer tours for small groups of children or families. When you call around and express interest about what is offered near your community, you may be surprised at the many learning opportunities you may find.

Local colleges and universities. Taking young children and youth to tour campuses of colleges and universities gives them a sense of what college is like, as well as incentive to attend one day. Many colleges and universities also offer classes for children and youth on Saturdays and evenings.



Resource 3

Fifteen Ways that Families Can Help Increase School-Community Collaboration

Use these tips to help increase school-community collaboration.

- | |
|---|
| 1. Find out about and use information on community resources and organizations. |
| 2. Help your school develop a directory of social and community services. |
| 3. Make local agencies and businesses aware of what's happening at your school. |
| 4. Help coordinate and participate in events that support community groups. |
| 5. Talk with employers about holding parent meetings or parenting workshops on-site. |
| 6. Encourage employers to adopt flexible work schedules and time off so that employees might attend school functions. |
| 7. Ask employers and local businesses to make donations and support school programs. |
| 8. Help organize and/or participate in community health fairs. |
| 9. Recruit community members (seniors, business people) to volunteer at school. |
| 10. Become active in community groups such as YMCA and Boy and Girl Scouts. |
| 11. Serve on local community advisory councils and committees. |
| 12. Work with local authorities and public officials to sponsor community events. |
| 13. Help organize and/or participate in a community "clean up" or "beautification" project. |
| 14. Encourage and help facilitate your child's participation in community service. |
| 15. Be a role model; be active in community service yourself or together with your child. |

Source: NEA 100 ways (2006)



Resource 4

Community Service Ideas for Families

One of the many benefits of service learning is that students can select a project that is meaningful to them while helping them to meet curricular objectives. Service projects can be as diverse as the students, and as unique as your community. Before students select their project, they should ask themselves if it is important to them, if it is an authentic need in the community, and if it is possible. Fifty project ideas are listed to help with this process.

Animals

- Work at or raise money for a shelter
- Match animals in shelters with families
- Care for a neighbor's pet
- Write to companies protesting animal testing
- Make and sell identification tags for dogs and cats
- Organize a lost animal search group

Children

- Read to or tutor younger children
- Organize a clothing drive for needy children
- Visit sick children
- Organize a book drive to give books to children
- Organize after-school activities for latchkey kids

Citizenship

- Organize a voter registration drive
- Support an important piece of legislation
- Organize a community poison control campaign
- Organize an event that recognizes volunteer efforts

Community Development

- Beautify a playground
- Clean up a stream bed or arroyo
- Paint and repair the homes of senior citizens or low-income residents
- Start a petition for necessary traffic signals
- Make your neighborhood safer
- Paint over graffiti

**Elderly**

- Read to the elderly
- Shop for the elderly
- Do odd jobs for the elderly
- Organize an “adoption” program for lonely elders
- Teach computer skills to the elderly
- Lead an exercise program for the elderly
- Rake leaves or shovel snow for the elderly
- Volunteer at a nursing home or hospital

Environment

- Clean up litter at school or in the neighborhood
- Organize a recycling drive
- Plant trees
- Raise money to improve a playground or park, or to repair a sidewalk
- Grow a school garden
- Help a community that has been impacted by a natural disaster

Health/Safety

- Create a presentation for how to handle health or crime emergencies
- Set up prevention groups to patrol neighborhoods
- Coordinate an after school hot line
- Organize a bike, roller blade, scooter or car seat safety demonstration
- Develop and teach a baby sitting course
- Organize a community health fair

Homeless

- Collect food, toiletries or clothing for the homeless
- Work at a soup kitchen
- Collect and distribute blankets
- Collect toys for shelters

Diversity

- Organize ethnic awareness days
- Tutor people whose second language is English
- Encourage sites around town to become wheelchair accessible
- Help people with special needs
- Develop a peer conflict mediation program



Resource 5

Let's Use the Library!

Most public libraries offer a wide variety of children's books and magazines in English as well as other languages. In addition to printed materials, libraries often lend audiotapes and videocassettes of books and movies, and more libraries are making computers available to the public. Many libraries also sponsor special programs, including children's story hours, summer reading programs and homework help. If your child has special needs, be sure to ask about services the library offers for the blind, the deaf and those who are gifted or need remedial help. Many libraries have specially trained librarians for children. Feel free to ask them for help.

Here are some things you can do to introduce your child to the library.

- Include children, even toddlers, in trips to the library, and go often.
- As soon as you can, help your child get a library card.
- Borrow recordings of children's stories and songs, cassette tapes, compact discs, videotapes, even puppets and educational toys.
- Find out if your library has computers and how your children can use them to learn or upgrade skills.
- Encourage your children to use the library to find information for their homework.
- Encourage your children to ask for help from you and the librarian in finding books and materials.
- Work with the librarian to teach older children how to find things in the library on their own.
- Teach your children how to take care of themselves in public places, especially if they use the library alone.
- Stress common sense guidelines for behavior in the library.

Become Members of Your Local Library

- Sign up for a library card yourself, and check out books to learn stories, songs, rhymes and fingerplays to use at home to stimulate and encourage your child's development.
- Get a library card for your child as soon as possible. (Some libraries will issue a card as soon as a child can write his or her name.)
- Encourage your child to check out books. This can encourage responsibility.
- Take your child to the library for special programs.

Reference Desk

- Encourage your children to use the library for schoolwork. Help them determine if the library has the resources they need or if they need to check other information sources.
- Give your children encouragement, advice and a ride if they need it, but resist the temptation to take over an assignment. Let your children be responsible for researching and writing reports.
- Check out the special services your library offers for helping students with school assignments, such as homework hotlines and term paper clinics.

Source: US Dept. of Education
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/LearnPtnrs/library.html>



Notes



Notes