



Breaking Down Barriers, Creating Space:

**A guidebook for increasing
collaboration between
schools and the parents of
English Language Learners**

Compiled by:

Robin A. Waterman

Harvard Graduate School of Education

Colorado Department of Education

February 2006



Table of Contents

- A. Overview 1
- B. Framework and Dedication 2
- C. The Requirements: NCLB 3
- D. Research on Parent Involvement 7
- E. Policy Recommendations 15
- F. Effective Parent Involvement Strategies 23
 - 1. Effective Translations 26
 - 2. Initial Parent Meetings 28
 - 3. Regular/Monthly Parent Meetings 31
 - 4. Skills-based Workshops for Parents 35
 - 5. ESL Classes for Parents 39
 - 6. Organized Parent–Teacher Meetings (PTO/PTA/BPAC) 42
 - 7. Parent Volunteer Program 44
- G. Existing Parent Involvement Programs and Resources 49
 - 1. Staff Development Resources 51
 - 2. District-Level Parent Leadership Classes 51
 - 3. Parent Leadership Institute 52
 - 4. Parent Workshops and Staff Development Specific to Latino Families 52
 - a. Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition 52
 - b. Parenting for Academic Success: Curriculum and T.O.T. 53
- H. References 55
- Appendices 59
 - Appendix A: State-wide Parent Involvement Resources 61
 - Appendix B: Publications, Materials and Web Sites 64
 - Appendix C: Contact Information for Demonstration Sites 71
 - Appendix D: Using Title I Money for Parent Involvement Activities 72
 - Appendix E: NCLB Checklist for Districts and Schools 73

Acknowledgments

Many folks at the Colorado Department of Education were involved at various stages of this document's development and production. A special thanks to individuals in the English Language Acquisition Unit, the Office of Special Services, Migrant Education Even Start, and Adult Education & Family Literacy. Parent Involvement is a vital cornerstone of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. As such, the Department recognizes the need to continue providing technical assistance to districts and schools in Colorado. We hope that this publication helps with some of this work.

Colorado State Board of Education

Pamela Jo Suckla, *Chair*, 3rd Congressional District

Jared Polis, *Vice Chair*, Member-at-large

Randy DeHoff, 6th Congressional District

Evie Hudak, 2nd Congressional District

Peggy Littleton, 5th Congressional District

Karen Middleton, 7th Congressional District

D. Rico Munn, 1st Congressional District

Bob Schaffer, 4th Congressional District

William J. Moloney, *Commissioner of Education*

Colorado Department of Education, Office of Special Services

Additional CDE resources can be found at:

Adult Education and Family Literacy: http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_adult.htm

No Child Left Behind: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/NCLB/index.asp>

English Language Acquisition: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/index.htm

A. Overview



This document is intended to be a resource and a guide to a myriad of educators who serve English Language Learners (ELL) and their parents in the state of Colorado. Primarily, it is directed at district and building-level administrators, parent liaisons and teachers.

Drawing from experience developing parent involvement in schools and an assessment of existing resources and research, *Breaking Down Barriers, Creating Space* contains the following information:

Information about No Child Left Behind (NCLB):

This is presented as a chart listing the primary aspects of NCLB that are related to parent involvement. There is a direct link between this information and the parent involvement strategies and resources described in this handbook.

Research on Parent Involvement:

This review of research integrates an analysis of academic research and an analysis of work and research in Colorado public schools. It provides information about the factors that hinder or support parent involvement with the parents of ELLs, while also offering insights about how to break through barriers and effectively build collaborative efforts between parents and schools.

Policy Recommendations:

This list of policy recommendations—from the simple to the more complex—directly links NCLB, research and effective practice.

Effective Parent Involvement Strategies:

This section provides detailed information about six different parent involvement strategies that have effectively increased meaningful parent involvement and home-school collaboration in Colorado public schools. For each strategy, there is information about the specific link to NCLB compliance followed by a listing of the necessary monetary, material and human resources. There is also a comprehensive list of possible steps toward initial implementation and on-going support.

Existing Programs and Resources:

This section provides information about existing programs and resources available to help develop parent involvement in Colorado public schools.

Appendices:

The appendices provide information about many other resources available to support parent involvement work. This information includes programs, publications, and websites, as well as contact information for demonstration sites—schools that are currently experiencing success as they implement the programs described in this document. Appendix D provides guidance regarding the use of Title I funds for parent involvement work, and Appendix E is a resource for planning and evaluating NCLB compliance.

B. Framework and Dedication



The framework for *Breaking Down Barriers, Creating Space* is based on a thorough analysis of research, as well as years of working with the parents of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Colorado public schools. As a result, this document is guided by a clear understanding that these parents bring many resources that could support the academic achievement of their children. The vast majority of these parents are immigrants to the United States, and most come to this country with a focused and profound commitment to help their children build toward a successful and satisfying future. In the case of many parents, they contrast this with their own lives, which have been marked by poverty, suffering and manual labor. Ultimately, these parents firmly believe that supporting academic success is central to achieving their dreams for their children.

The contents of this document are also guided by an awareness that many school staff also bring resources as well as commitment to their work with ELLs.

These two groups, however, represent a broad range of cultures and languages. For these reasons and others, there exist barriers that prevent the kind of communication, understanding and collaboration necessary for each group to fully participate in and realize their goals.

Breaking Down Barriers, Creating Space is dedicated to these parents and these educators. It represents an attempt to glean from years of research, professional experience and personal relationships in order to offer insights and guidance to all educators who serve the parents of ELLs. Ultimately, it is intended to help break through the barriers that impede communication, understanding and collaboration.

Robin A. Waterman



C. The Requirements: NCLB

C. The Requirements: NCLB

(See Appendix E for a detailed checklist for districts and schools)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) establishes a number of parent involvement requirements for schools. The following is a summary of these requirements for schools that receive Title I funds, and a separate listing for schools that receive Title III funds. These lists are comprehensive and intended to create a cohesive link between all other points presented in this handbook: research, policy recommendations, and effective parent involvement strategies.

District Parent Involvement Policy Requirements— NCLB, Title I, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 1118

- A. Involvement with Title I planning
 - 1. Conduct an annual meeting with parents to discuss program plan, implementation, & suggestions
 - 2. Decide with parents how Title I funds allotted for Parent Involvement activities shall be used
- B. District support to build capacity for strong parent involvement
 - 1. Provide coordination of district activities to build capacity for parent involvement in schools
 - 2. Provide technical assistance to schools in building capacity for strong parent involvement
 - 3. With the assistance of parents, educate staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents; how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; implementing and coordinating parent programs; and building ties between parents and the school.
- C. Coordination of parent involvement activities with other district programs
 - 1. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other programs, such as Head Start, Early Reading First, Even Start, ECE home visitation programs and district preschool programs.
 - 2. Conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents more fully to participate in their child's education
- D. Schools' Responsibility for Building Parent Capacity for Involvement
 - 1. Assist parents in understanding the State's academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessment.
 - 2. Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology.
 - 3. Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request
- E. Student Learning
 - 1. Coordinate and integrate Title I parent involvement strategies with other educational programs in the district to improve academic quality of schools
 - 2. Identify barriers to greater participation by parents of diverse backgrounds
 - 3. Develop written materials and training for staff to help parents work with students to improve student achievement
- F. School-based Parent Involvement Activities
 - 1. Describe how parents will be encouraged to become involved in activities of schools with Title I programs
- G. Method of communicating with parents
 - 1. To the extent practicable, send parents information that is in a format and language that they can understand
 - 2. Give parents notifications in a timely manner
- H. Annual Evaluation
 - 1. With the involvement of parents, conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the policy that:
 - a. Includes measures of student achievement and school performance
 - b. Specifically addresses barriers to greater participation of parents of diverse backgrounds in activities authorized by law
 - 2. Use the findings to design strategies for more effective parent involvement to revise, if necessary, this policy
 - 3. Provide other reasonable support to parents, as requested
- I. Ensure Development of School-level Title I Parent Involvement Policy
 - 1. Ensure the development and distribution to parents of a school-level Title I policy that reflects input from parents of students participating in the Title I program
 - 2. Include a compact that outlines how parents and school staff will share responsibility of improved student academic achievement and describe the means by which the school and parents will build and develop partnerships to help students.

(Compiled by CPIRC, 2005 with additions from CDE, Title I, 2005)

Title III, Public Law 107–110, Section 3302

A. Parental Notification

1. Notify parents of the reasons for the identification of their child as limited English proficient and in need of placement in a language instruction program;
2. The method of instruction used in the program and the methods of instruction used in other available programs, including how these programs differ in content, instruction goals, and use of English and native language in instruction;
3. How the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child;
4. How such a program will specifically help their child learn English, and meet age appropriate academic achievement standards for grade promotion and graduation;
5. The specific exit requirements for such programs, the expected rate of transition from such programs into classrooms that are not tailored for limited English proficient children.
6. In the case of a child with a disability, parents should be informed of how the child's instructional program meets the objectives of the individualized educational program of the child.
7. Parents should receive information about their right to decline enrollment or remove their child from an instructional program. They will also be informed of the option to choose another method of instruction, if available.
8. Parents will be assisted in selecting from among various programs and methods of instruction, if more than one program or method is offered.
9. All who receive funds provided under Title III to provide a language instruction education program, that have failed to make progress on the annual measurable achievement objectives, shall inform all parents of children identified for participation in such programs of this failure, within 30 days

B. Parental Participation

1. All who receive Title III funds shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of limited English proficient parents.
2. They must inform parents of how they can be involved in the education of their children and how they can assist their children to learn achieve at high levels in core academic subjects and how they can help their children meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet.
3. This outreach shall include holding and sending notices of opportunities for regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of limited English proficient students





D. Research on Parent Involvement

D. Research on Parent Involvement: A SUMMARY

Parent involvement is central to the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs). Schools that support meaningful parent involvement have higher levels of student achievement, improved school attendance, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education and their students have a more positive attitude about school (e.g., August & Hakuta, 1997; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Currently, however, there are many barriers that hinder meaningful parent involvement and parent–school collaboration. The following analysis of research offers a guide for breaking through those barriers and building on sources of support.

A primary factor that can hinder effective parent–school collaboration is a *deficit view* of the parents of ELLs. Deficit views reflect the belief that students fail in schools because their families are inherently flawed (Valencia & Black, 2002). These views are also reflected in programs aimed at teaching and changing parents, approaching parents as though they have little or few of the skills necessary to support academic achievement (Rioux & Berla, 1993).

In direct contrast to these views, an essential source of support for parent involvement is—or could be—the *attitudes and values* that many immigrant parents bring. Most immigrant parents place a high value on schools, teachers and education and are very interested in supporting their children’s academic achievement (Goldenberg, 2004; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

Many schools, however, report low levels of parent involvement. This indicates that the attitudes and values of immigrant parents have not been enough, by themselves, to generate meaningful parent involvement and parent–school collaboration. This leads to a close consideration of the following factors related to *the available opportunities for parent involvement in schools*:

1. **Language barriers and insufficient opportunities to effectively learn English.** Language is, by far, the most significant barrier to immigrant parent involvement, yet there are insufficient high-quality adult ESL programs available (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000).
2. **Access to information and comprehensible explanations about U.S. school systems.** Many parents of ELLs have had little or no prior exposure to U.S. schools (Valdés, 1996). It is very important that schools provide clearly written information that is easy to understand, as well as meetings involving school staff and parents.
3. **Immigrant parent isolation—opportunities for parent-to-parent support.** Because many immigrant parents experience tremendous isolation, school-supported opportunities for parents to share information and build relationships with one another effectively increases parent involvement (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001).
4. **Prevalence and influence of undocumented legal status.** A large number of parents of ELLs are not legally documented U.S. residents. This can negatively influence their involvement in schools, especially if school staff are not aware of how to address this issue (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).
5. **School-initiated efforts to build partnerships.** Successful school-initiated efforts to establish collaborative partnerships between parents and school staff can be a powerful vehicle for generating increased and viable immigrant parental involvement (McCaleb, 1997).

Research on Parent Involvement;

In-depth description:

Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement is central to the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs). Schools that support meaningful parent involvement have higher levels of student achievement, improved school attendance, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education and students with more positive attitudes about school (e.g., August & Hakuta, 1997; Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Yet, many schools that struggle with low academic achievement, including schools with high numbers of ELLs, report minimal parental involvement (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Swap, 1993; Valdés, 1996). These schools also struggle to achieve high-quality, effective school–parent collaboration.

Considering the high level of commitment and interest on the behalf of many immigrant¹ parents and school staff in Colorado



public schools, it is imperative to analyze the research for insights about how to improve existing parent involvement efforts. The following review, therefore, outlines what research reveals about the factors that support or hinder the involvement of parents of Colorado's ELLs.

Defining parent involvement:

At the outset, it is important to define parent involvement. One dimension of parent involvement includes a number of activities performed in the home that are meant to supplement classroom instruction, such as school readiness activities and ensuring the completion of homework (Epstein, 1987; Goldenberg, 2004). It also includes the specific ways that parents can be involved in schools, such as participating on the school's Parent–Teacher organization, (PTA, PTO or BPAC), attending Back-to-School nights and parent–teacher conferences (López, 2001).

Parent involvement also includes many forms of collaboration between schools and parents (Shirley, 1997). First, this refers to involvement that reflects shared value and power between school staff and parents. When this exists, parents participate in schools in ways that utilize their own knowledge, experiences and skills (González, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales & Amanti, 1993; Noguera, 2001). Second, this form of parent involvement refers to parents being informed, knowledgeable and capable of choosing ways to be involved in their children's schools and education that are congruent with their culture and values (Valdés, 1996). It is equally important that parents are also able to consider and incorporate the school's vision, goals, procedures and resources (Shirley, 1997, 2002). Third, this kind of parent involvement is reflected in parents working as advocates for their children (Diaz-Soto, 1997). Ideally, there would always be mutual accountability, where parents are accountable to school staff and school staff are accountable to parents (Shirley, 1997, 2002).

¹ The terms “immigrant parent involvement” and “ELL parent involvement” will be used interchangeably, as research demonstrates that most parents of ELLs are immigrants to the U.S.



Deficit views:

A primary factor that can hinder effective parent–school collaboration is a *deficit view* of the parents of ELLs. Deficit views are represented by the belief that students fail in schools because their families are inherently flawed (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 83). In some situations, families are blamed for their children’s school failure, with little consideration given to root causes that may be related to schools, educational systems or society.

A prevalent expression of a deficit view directed at some of the parents of ELLs is the assumption that Mexican immigrant families don’t value education. This assumption then leads to the belief that these parents are unwilling to support their children’s education, which is then offered as the reason for high Latino dropout rates and school failure (Valencia & Black 2002, p. 83).

Another expression of a deficit view is a judgment of students and their parents for a lack of English fluency (Crawford, 1991; Diaz-Soto, 1997; Villenas, 2001). Immigrant parents often are judged as failing their children because they do not instill the kinds of language skills and values that prevail in mainstream families and schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 1997, p. 45).

Deficit views are also reflected in programs aimed at teaching and changing parents, such as programs that approach parents as though they have little or few of the skills necessary to support academic achievement (Rioux & Berla, 1993).

Attitudes and values pertaining to education:

In direct contrast to these assumptions about deficit views, research on the parents of ELLs reveals that a primary source of support for parent involvement is, or could be, the *attitudes and values* that many immigrant parents bring. Many immigrant parents place a high value on schools, teachers and education and are very interested in being involved in their children’s schools (Goldenberg, 2004; López, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Valdés, 1996). The dominant reason that many immigrants come to the United States, in fact, is to pursue a better life for their children (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Over time, education often becomes the primary emphasis of immigrant parents’ hopes for their children’s future; many parents come to perceive school success as the most important way for their children to get ahead in the U.S. (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).



Access to the means and opportunity for parent involvement:

In spite of the high value that many parents of ELLs place on education, low levels of parent involvement in schools indicate that this is not sufficient, by itself, to generate meaningful parent involvement. It is important to look further and more deeply, giving consideration to the availability of the means and opportunity for parent involvement in schools.

Primarily, the related factors are: language barriers and opportunities to learn English; access to information and explanations about U.S. schools; opportunities to build relationships with other parents; and school-initiated efforts to build partnerships.

1. Language barriers and access to effective opportunities to learn English:

Language often functions as one of the most significant barriers to immigrant parent involvement, including parents' lack of English skills and small numbers of school staff who are able to speak the language of the parents (Crawford, 1991; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Trueba, 2002). This language barrier prevents immigrant parents and teachers from being able to communicate with one another, orally and in written form (Delgado-

Gaitan, 1990). This, in turn, has a significant effect on understanding and relationship-building between parents and school staff.

It is important to consider that the vast majority of immigrant parents are interested in learning English. Currently, enrollments in adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are rapidly increasing, yet the current demand for classes far exceeds the number of classes or student slots available (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The quality and effectiveness of ESL classes is also a factor because many of these classes are not adequately supported with funding or technical assistance. In many cases where adult ESL classes are offered in schools, for example, the instructors receive little training or guidance, yet they are expected to be responsible for all aspects of registering, assessing students and developing a meaningful curriculum.

English language abilities are not the only language barrier. A language barrier can be created by the vocabulary and grammatical structure used in many forms of written correspondence to parents. Many school district translators, for example, believe that their translations must be written at a "high level" in order to be of sufficient quality. But this often results in written language that is more formal and less clear to many parents.

2. Access to information and explanations about U.S. school systems:

The fact that many immigrant parents have had little or no prior exposure to U.S. schools is also a significant factor when considering their involvement in schools (Valdés, 1996). Parents are often unaware of the educational programs that exist for their children, such as the different forms of instruction offered to children who are learning English as a second language (Valdés, 1998). When students at the secondary level are offered the opportunity to select from an array of courses, parents are often unfamiliar with the content of the courses offered (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Many parents are also unfamiliar with the U.S. report card and are unable to understand the information about their child's academic progress it is intended to communicate (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Parents are also often unfamiliar with many aspects of U.S. school systems, including the staff and resources that are available and how to access these.

Simple access to this information, however, does not necessarily help parents and school staff overcome this barrier. As with the language barrier, this information must be conveyed to parents in a way that is comprehensible; it needs to reflect a manner of speaking and an academic level that is familiar to parents who have often had limited experience with formal education (Waterman, 2003).

Because of differences in cultural practices, many immigrant parents are also unfamiliar with the expected ways that they are to be “involved” in schools and “support” their children's education in the U.S. (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; López, 2001; Valdés, 1996). In U.S. schools, parents are often

expected to be involved in particular, socially sanctioned ways. Yet, in order for parents to be involved in these ways, parents and other family members must have prior knowledge and understanding of these expectations (Valdés, 1996). This is confirmed by research where immigrant parents have been informed about U.S. schools and the programs, resources and systems that function within—in a comprehensible format and manner. In these cases, immigrant parents frequently took advantage of opportunities to be involved in their children's education and collaborate with school staff, often in large numbers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Goldenberg, 2004; McCaleb, 1997).

3. Countering isolation—opportunities for parent-to-parent relationship building:

Many immigrant parents experience tremendous isolation from other parents in their communities and this reinforces the barriers caused by a lack of access to comprehensible information about schools (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). Conversely, school-supported opportunities for immigrant parents to communicate and build relationships with one another function as a significant source of support, with many positive effects (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 2001; Shirley, 1997, 2002). In fact, any form of parent-to-parent contact can be a valuable way to help immigrant parents create social networks, facilitating their ability to circulate knowledge and their understanding of many aspects of U.S. society and schools (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). These social networks often involve a mutual exchange of information and resources, as well as mutual trust, both of which contribute toward building long-term



relationships (Moll, Amanti, Neff, Gonzales, 1992; González, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales & Amanti, 1993).

4. Undocumented legal status:

For many reasons, a large number of the parents of ELLs have not obtained legal residency in the U.S. This can negatively influence their involvement in schools (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). It is particularly relevant when school staff are not aware of how to address this issue. In some cases, parents will not fill out any form that may require a social security number, such as the application for Free and Reduced lunch (Waterman, 2003). Undocumented parents may limit their activities outside of their home, fearing that they or their children could be deported at any time (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 34). It is important, therefore, that school staff be aware of this and inform parents when providing a social security number is optional.

5. School-initiated efforts to build partnerships:

Successful efforts to establish collaborative partnerships between parents and schools can be a powerful vehicle for generating increased and viable immigrant parental involvement. When schools, families and communities work together, this collaborative partnership will enhance student achievement as well as parental involvement in children's education. Schools and teachers must make efforts to build these partnerships, as they will not simply emerge naturally (Epstein, 2001, p. 6). Parents, students and teachers benefit further from creating opportunities to participate together in reflection and dialogue about numerous topics of common interest (McCaleb, 1997, p. xiii).





E. Policy Recommendations Summary

E. Policy Recommendations Summary



The following matrix shows the link between each policy recommendation and the parent involvement strategies that are provided in the next section of this document. Each of these recommendations and strategies are also directly linked to numerous aspects of NCLB compliance. (Specific links to NCLB can be found in the *Effective Parent Involvement Strategies* section of this document, in relation to each individual strategy.)

Policy Recommendation	Parent Involvement Strategy
Schools initiate opportunities for effective communication with parents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective translations 2. Initial parent meetings 3. Monthly/regular parent meetings
Offer informational meetings and skill-based workshops	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial parent meetings 2. Monthly/regular parent meetings 3. Skill-based workshops 4. ESL classes for parents
Use parent-school liaisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective translations 2. Organized parent-teacher meetings 3. Parent volunteer program
School principal shows explicit support for parent involvement work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial parent meetings 2. Organized parent-teacher meetings 3. School-based ESL classes 4. Parent volunteer program
Offer school-based ESL classes or family literacy programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. School-based ESL classes
Include culturally and linguistically diverse parents in decision-making meetings and groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organized parent-teacher meetings 2. Parent Leadership Institute 3. District-level parent leadership classes
Create and support a parent volunteer program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent volunteer program
Promote and support parent leadership development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monthly parent meetings 2. ESL classes for parents 3. Organized parent-teacher meetings 4. Parent Leadership Institute 5. District-level parent leadership classes
Create and support district-level parent involvement programs and leadership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent Leadership Institute 2. District-level parent leadership classes

Policy Recommendations:

A number of policy recommendations emerge when analyzing research regarding ELL parent involvement supports. Considering that schools may need to gradually introduce new programs or policies, this information is presented in an order that reflects the skills and resources necessary for successful implementation, beginning with those that require more basic skills and resources on to those that require a more complex and developed set. While this is presented as a guide, and not a prescriptive formula to apply across all contexts, the intention is that it will be a useful and relevant way to take steps to break through barriers and generate meaningful parent involvement.

1. School initiated opportunities for effective communication with parents:

Communication between the home and the school is vital to supporting and enhancing parental involvement (Epstein, 2001). It is essential, however, that this communication be written in the language of the parents, and in a format and a level that is clear and comprehensible to parents (Waterman, 2003). If not, even well-intended attempts to communicate with parents can create a barrier between parents and schools. Particular attention should be paid to the work of translators that believe they need to produce correspondence that reflects a high level of vocabulary and grammar structure. These types of translations are often not clear to many parents of ELLs, as many of these parents have had limited experience with formal education.

While all forms of communication between parents of ELLs and schools are important, information from teachers about the progress of the students, sent home to parents on a regular basis, is particularly helpful toward promoting parental support of academic work. Offer parents a clear and simple way to follow-up with teachers, and a way to provide questions or comments. It should not be assumed that telephone calls or e-mails will be comfortable or even acces-



sible to all parents of ELLs. Language barriers, familiarity with schools and teachers, and access to technology should be considered. In many cases, bilingual parent liaisons and bilingual front desk secretaries can be extremely valuable in answering parent questions and guiding them toward how to best communicate with teachers or principals about specific questions or concerns.

2. Offer informational meetings and skill-based workshops:

Parent meetings and workshops, intended to communicate information or develop parental skills, are a very effective way to increase parent involvement, particularly with culturally and linguistically diverse parents such as the parents of ELLs (Epstein, 2001; Lareau, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Waterman, 2003). These meetings can serve the purpose of providing information and ideas that may not be familiar to families whose culture and educational experiences have not equipped them to understand U.S. public schools. For example, these meetings and workshops can guide parents to better be able to help with homework (Epstein, 2001), and provide them with information about resources that exist in the school or community, how the school system functions and the role of the various staff members (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). At another level, schools and districts can also offer workshops directed at developing parental leadership skills, including how to participate in school decision-making and planning (Epstein, 2001, 1997; Shirley, 2002, 1997).

Parent meetings can also be a way for school districts to fulfill their responsibility for providing accurate information and guidance to parents (Diaz-Soto, 1997). Through a parent meeting, for example, schools can inform the parents of ELLs about the instructional practices utilized with the ELLs in their school and the process of evaluation for placement in any special education program. Schools are also responsible for being honest and ethical, even if that means that they need to acknowledge limitations. Yet these meetings can also allow an opportunity for dialogue with parents about how to collaboratively address any limitations that the schools may face as they aim to provide a high quality education to ELLs.

3. Use Parent Liaisons:

Parent-school liaisons can serve a vital function in helping to increase parental involvement, especially with culturally and linguistically diverse families such as the parents of ELLs (Epstein, 2001; Rioux & Berla, 1993). In fact, immigrant parents throughout the country most often report that it was the outreach of a bilingual staff person, or someone designated to serve the role of liaison, that first inspired their involvement in their

children's schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). These staff members are of greatest value, however, if they can speak the language of the parents. Equally important, these staff members should either be from the community of the parents or should demonstrate an ability to understand the parents and be committed to building communication and relationships between the parents and the schools (Shirley, 2002). In order to be most effective, liaisons should also be capable of implementing and developing school-wide parent involvement programs, rather than only having skills and experience related to contact with individual parents (Waterman, 2003).

In order for this position to effectively support parent involvement, it is also essential that principals and other supervising staff allow the liaisons to remain primarily focused on work with parents. Especially in schools newly experiencing a large influx of ELLs, liaisons are too often requested to be responsible for translations and interpretations, which leaves them with insufficient time to implement and support effective and meaningful parent involvement work (Waterman, 2003).



4. School principals should demonstrate support for parent involvement work:

The school principal plays an extremely important and pivotal role. If the principal believes in the value of parent involvement, and demonstrates that through policy and staff decisions, this attitude and support will help increase ELL parental involvement in multiple ways (Shirley, 2002; McCaleb, 1997; Waterman, 2003). Principals should be sure to have front desk staff and/or a parent liaison who are capable of communicating with and building a relationship with the parents of ELLs. Principals should also commit to attending parent meetings, even if for just for part of the time, in order to receive and respond to parent questions or concerns. Principals should also make it clear to teachers and other school staff that they value parents and parent involvement efforts, demonstrating this attitude through attention to these efforts at staff meetings, allocation of school resources toward parent involvement work, and genuine support of parents and parent involvement work (Waterman, 2003).

5. Offer school-based ESL or family literacy programs:

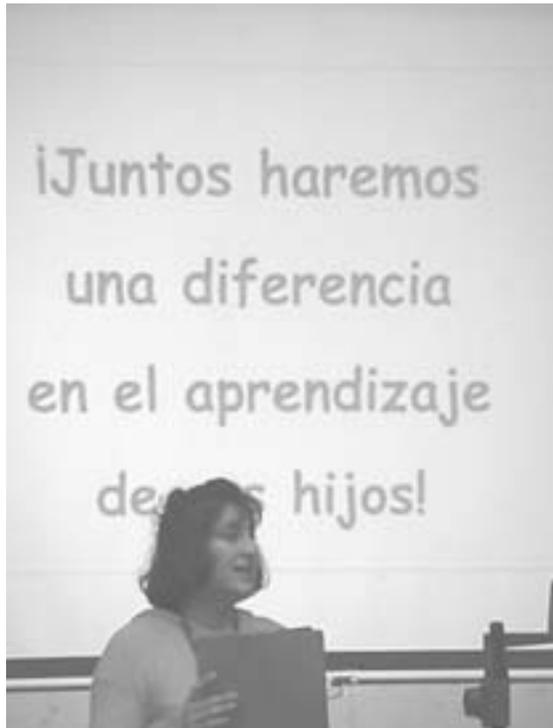
Adult education opportunities can help increase the number of immigrant parents who become involved in their children's education as well as the quality of that involvement. Analysis of successful parent involvement programs suggests that offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for parents at school-sites plays a central role in promoting increased parental participation (Rioux & Berla, 1993). In schools that serve high numbers of ELLs, adult ESL classes can play a significant role in supporting parents to better help with home-

work, understand the written communication between the school and the home, participate in school-based activities and build relationships with teachers and other school staff. Family literacy programs, such as Even Start, can also provide a multi-pronged source of support that increases parental involvement skills. These programs, by definition, include components directed at increasing parental capacity to be involved in their children's schools and effectively support their education in others ways in the home (St. Pierre, Swartz, Gamse, Murray, Deck, & Nickel, 1995).

6. Include culturally and linguistically diverse parents in decision-making bodies:

It is very important that schools create specific strategies aimed at including a diverse group of parents on their school-site decision making bodies, such as Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (BPAC) and school site councils (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Epstein, 2001; Noguera, 2001). Yet in spite of sincere desire on the part of many principals and teachers, schools often struggle to legitimately involve a representative sample of parents (Waterman, 2003).

Therefore, schools would benefit from learning new skills for effective, informed outreach aimed at including the parents of ELLs on school-wide decision making bodies. When this outreach has been successful, the participation of ELL parents would strengthen the involvement of these parents in schools and their children's education, while conversely, an absence of such efforts could limit their involvement.





7. Create and support a school-based parent volunteer program:

Creating and effectively supporting a school-based parent volunteer program is a valuable way to increase and guide meaningful parent-teacher partnerships (Epstein, 2001). This is a serious commitment, as should be reflected in ways that principals allocate staff resources. Schools need to offer a well-organized training for parent volunteers and involved staff and assign a staff person to serve as a source of support for the program, the parents and the school staff. It is also important that parents are given opportunities to volunteer at various times and in places. If this structure and support does not exist, efforts to involve parents as volunteers could fail and ultimately cause further problems between parents and school staff: Parents and teachers could become frustrated, and in the absence of sufficient guidance and support, parents could doubt their capacity or value (Waterman, 2003).

8. Create and support parent leadership development:

School-based efforts to cultivate parent leadership can generate a strong base of support for high quality parent involvement, in a variety of ways. Such efforts could yield ELL parent representation in school agendas, decisions and community education programs (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). These efforts could also serve as a way to generate effective parent outreach, as parent leaders are often a school's most valuable resource for recruiting other parents (Waterman, 2003). Parent leadership classes and workshops can also help develop immigrant parents' awareness of their value and power, thus creating opportu-

nities for parents to recognize that they have something to offer other parents and that they are capable of making a difference in their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Shirley, 1997, 2002).

9. Create and support district-level parent involvement programs and leadership:

District-level commitment to parent involvement, as expressed in district-level structures and staff, is key to increased parental involvement. When working with parents of ELLs, this commitment must also reflect an awareness of the particular needs and strengths of this population (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Waterman, 2003).

Specifically, it is important that district-level parent involvement efforts receive administrative level support, both at the level of individual schools as well as at the district level. Some valuable examples of this kind of support are: district-level staff assigned to support and guide parent involvement work; administrator attendance at parent meetings; and administrator commitment to allocate staff hours toward guiding the development of the program or activity.

Another essential component is district-level support of developing parent leadership skills. This reflects a respect for parents' abilities and potentials—something that cannot necessarily be measured by their level of formal education or their English language fluency. This decision also reflects an understanding that parents need guidance and information, particularly because of the linguistic and cultural barriers that may prevent them from fully understanding how schools function in the U.S.



F. Effective Parent Involvement Strategies

F. Effective Parent Involvement Strategies



Each of the strategies presented in this section have been implemented, tested and refined in a number of Colorado public schools, utilizing the input of principals, ELL teachers and parents. Each reflects a direct link to multiple points of compliance with NCLB. All of these strategies are also intended to be accessible to most school staff and parents, as they require minimal resources beyond what are available to most schools.

The presentation of each strategy will contain the following information. This information is meant to serve as a *guide*, not a recipe, so that school staff and involved parents can utilize it as is most appropriate for their particular school context and parent population.

1. Description of the strategy
2. The research base of the strategy
3. Link to NCLB
4. Objectives
5. Resources involved:
 - ▶ Expenses
 - ▶ Materials
 - ▶ Space
 - ▶ Staff time
 - ▶ Volunteer time
 - ▶ Skills
6. Steps toward implementation
7. Demonstration sites (Schools that are successfully implementing this strategy)
8. Resources available to support this work

1. Effective Translations

Description: This strategy refers to specific ways that written translations are conducted and presented. Effective translations are those that are accurate but also clear and comprehensible to the majority of parents of ELLs.

Research base: The written correspondence sent home to parents of ELLs is not always clear and does not always convey the intended message. For these reasons, this form of parent-school communication does not accomplish its primary purpose nor does it help build understanding or partnerships (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; McCaleb, 1997).

Link to NCLB:

- ▶ To the extent practicable, all information sent to parents should be in a format and language that the parents can understand.
- ▶ Parents should be notified about many aspects of their child's education, including the reasons for identification as a limited English proficient student, the method of instruction used in the program, and how the program will meet the educational strengths and needs of their child.
- ▶ All schools that receive Title III funds shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of ELLs, including sending notices of opportunities for regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents.

Objectives:

1. Provide clear, accurate and understandable written translations.
2. Build effective communication and increased understanding between school staff and the parents of ELLs.
3. Comply with NCLB.

Resources involved:

Expenses: Varies. In many cases, districts and schools have staff who are designated to providing translations. In other cases, someone will need to be hired to do this work.



Materials: Schools will need to be prepared to provide the paper necessary to produce translations.

Staff time and skills: This strategy requires staff time as well as experience and skills related specifically to translation.

CAUTION (Lessons learned from experience):

- ✓ It is important that the time and skill that this task takes not be underestimated. In some schools, for example, any bilingual staff person is expected to be able to provide written translation and oral interpretation. If this staff person does not possess experience or skill specific to this task, this could result in poor translations and parental misunderstanding.
- ✓ It is also important to not assume that a person with a high level of formal education is the most appropriate person for the task. In many cases, for example, these translators assume that they must use formal language and grammar in order to be “most correct and accurate.” Yet, these kinds of translations are often foreign, unfamiliar and not clear to the majority of parents of ELLs, who have often had limited experience with formal education.²

² Not all parents of ELLs have low levels of formal education, yet translations that are written in a more colloquial format will be understandable to all, whereas translations written at a higher level will not.

- ✓ It is also important that translations are not simply added on to a staff person's job, above what she/he is already expected to do. This often results in a lack of quality in one aspect of his/her performance because providing accurate and clear translations requires time and cannot be added on without creating a sacrifice of attention to other commitments.

Volunteer time: It is recommended that a few parents be asked to volunteer to help read a translation before it is sent out, when possible. These parents can give feedback about the vocabulary used and the clarity of the content. If consistent staff are providing the translations, they will also benefit from hearing this feedback. The feedback will give them a general understanding of the kinds of words and grammatical structures that are most familiar and clear to the majority of parents.

Steps toward implementation:

1. Designate someone to be responsible for providing translations of all information sent home to the parents of ELLs.
2. Ensure that this person has sufficient time available in his/her schedule and sufficient experience with providing written translations for non-English speaking adults with limited experience of formal education.

3. Create a clear system for that process, including attention to how much advance notice should be given for each request; who will be responsible for assuring that this same information has not already been translated; and who will be responsible for approving that time should be spent translating this particular information.
4. In the translations, be attentive to using a level of vocabulary and grammatical structure that closely reflects the way that most parents speak. This will be an effective guide for producing written communication that will be clear and understandable to the majority of the parents of ELLs, including those with more as well as less experience of formal education.
5. Be attentive to the format of the translations as well: Use larger font and do not put too much text on a single page, utilizing white space and graphics to support the message being conveyed.
6. Specifically support the translator by having some parents of ELLs available to read the translation and provide feedback, at least occasionally.



2. Initial Parent Meeting

Description: This is an initial meeting involving all parents of ELLs. (In some schools, all parents in the school could be invited.) This strategy is primarily an open-ended meeting intended to give parents and school staff a chance to present and discuss questions, specific points of information, and experiences and/or concerns. This meeting could also be used as a way to introduce important information schools are required to share and discuss with parents, such as the school's Title I plan and use of Title I funds and the proposed Parent Involvement plans and policies. Another primary goal of this meeting could be gleaned information about what topics would be most meaningful for *Regular Parent Meetings* and *Skill-based Workshops* (see pp. 31–38).

Research base: These meetings are valuable because they allow the parents of ELLs an opportunity to ask whatever questions they may have, emphasize the positive aspects of their child's experience in the school, and/or express concerns. This is important because many immigrant parents have questions or a response to their children's experiences of which school staff may not be aware (Valdés, 1998; Waterman, 2003). These meetings are also important because they allow principals and key schools staff an opportunity to present information to parents that they believe parents may not understand, especially because of language barriers or unfamiliarity with U.S. schools (Ruiz de Velasco & Fix, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Ultimately, the opportunity for dialogue between parents and school staff is vital toward building understanding and future collaborative efforts (Waterman, 2003).

Link to NCLB:

- Involvement with Title I planning: Conduct an annual meeting with parents to discuss program plan, implementation and suggestions.
- Decide with parents how Title I funds allotted for parent involvement activities shall be used.
- Identify barriers to greater participation of parents of diverse backgrounds and look for solutions together.

- Conduct annual evaluations, together with parents, of such topics as parent involvement plans and policies related to student achievement and school performance.

Objectives:

1. Provide parents and school staff an open-ended time (not constrained by a full, pre-set agenda) to: ask questions; learn new information about each other as well as school policies and programs; give feedback about positive experiences; and discuss concerns.
2. Promote understanding and relationship between schools and families.
3. End the meeting by having both parents and school staff commit to specific tasks as a result of what was communicated at the meeting. Some examples of this form of collaboration could be: parents signing up to volunteer at the school; parents committing to read to children at home; schools offering to provide skill-building workshops for parents; and teachers offering to try to ensure that all ELLs and parents understand what is asked in the homework assignments.
4. Comply with NCLB

Resources Involved:

Expenses: There are no monetary resources necessary for this activity. If funding and space were available, however, parents and school staff would benefit from having child-care available. This could cost approximately \$10–12/hour per person, and the number of people necessary would be dependent on the number of children expected.

Materials: A large flip chart with blank paper, markers, crayons and paper and books (for the small children present).

Space: A large room, such as the cafeteria, available for approximately 90 minutes (including time for set-up and clean-up). Considerations should be the ability to accommodate the expected number of families and the possibility of offering simple refreshments.

Staff time: A school staff person will need to prepare and send out a flier. School staff involved may want to meet ahead of time and

prepare for the meeting. A school staff person will need to be available to facilitate the dialogue during the meeting and some school staff will need to be present at the meeting—especially the principal. Those present at the meeting will need to take time to discuss the results of the meeting.

Skills:

- Ability to provide written translation and oral interpretation, Spanish–English and/or any other if a different language group will be represented;
- Familiarity and experience in working with ELLs in order to know what topics to introduce or understand the topics that parents may bring up;
- Ability and willingness to hear all comments and concerns with an open-mind. Parents will rarely be demanding—primarily they appreciate being heard and receiving more information. But school staff also need to be willing and able to hear critiques without being defensive or blaming of parents.

Suggested components of an inviting environment:

- A bilingual greeter to meet all parents and make them feel welcome.
- Crayons and paper for the children who accompany their parents so that the children can entertain themselves while the parents are meeting.

Steps toward implementation:

1. Send out a flier inviting all parents to attend. Be sure to advertise it as an open-ended meeting, for the purpose of asking questions and receiving information, and not, for example, an invitation to participate in PTA or PTO. The elementary schools most successful with this activity have offered it either in the morning, at the time the parents drop children off, or in the afternoon, just before school gets out. Middle and high schools have had greatest success with evening meetings.
2. If possible, have all involved staff meet in advance in order to discuss the possible topics that may come up, as well as the

major points that the principal would like to present.

Some common topics that parents have brought up are:

- Concerns/questions related to reading books in Spanish in the home;
- Difficulty in understanding how to help children with homework;
- Concerns with a child's lack of English language ability and appropriate expectations as a child progresses toward becoming bilingual;
- Language barriers that prevent more involvement in the school and available opportunities for parents to learn English as a Second Language (ESL);
- Unfamiliarity with school resources and special school staff, such as the counselor;
- A need for information about the instructional programs offered for ELLs at that particular school;
- Types of school and home involvement expected of parents.

Principals have commonly spoken about:

- Health office paperwork and rules;
 - Forms sent home that require a parent's signature;
 - What parents can do to help children be ready for CSAP;
 - ELL instructional methods used at the school;
 - The importance of reading to children in their native language;
 - How to best support their children's literacy development, even when a parent is not bilingual;
 - Available resources in the school;
 - Explanation of the school's PTA/PTO.
3. The day before the meeting is to be held it is best if elementary schools have (bilingual) staff members and parent volunteers who are available at the beginning and end of the

school day to remind parents about the meeting and encourage their participation. Another flier could also be given to parents. At high school and middle school level, it is recommended that a staff member, and/or parent volunteers, make phone calls to as many parents as possible, explaining the purpose and value of the meeting and encouraging their participation.

4. The day of the meeting, have a quiet space available that can seat all parents and allow for people to hear one another. (For example, if the meeting must be held in the cafeteria, make all kitchen staff aware of the importance of being quiet for that time.)
5. Have a flip chart in the front and designate a staff person to record major points of discussion.
6. As parents arrive, offer them an opportunity to write down any questions or concerns they would like discussed and put these in a bowl or a box. This will help ensure that even those parents who may be uncomfortable speaking up in groups will be able to have their question or comment discussed.
7. Designate one staff person to facilitate the meeting. This person should introduce the meeting, explain that the purpose is to have a chance to hear about important information as well as offer parents an opportunity to ask questions, speak about positive experiences with the school, and express any concerns. Explain that an end goal of the meeting is increased communication and collaboration—both school staff and parents will be making new commitments to work together to best support the success of the children.
8. At that point, the facilitator should make sure that all school staff are introduced or introduce themselves. Then, the principal can then share the information that she/he has prepared. It is also helpful if the principal begin by expressing her/his value of parents and parent involvement—as a way to frame the meeting and convey a positive value of parents and parent involvement to those who have attended.

9. Then, the facilitator should open up the discussion, again reminding parents of the central purpose of the meeting. **IMPORTANT:** Keep in mind the potential issues and questions that parents may have. If they do not emerge from the parents, the facilitator should mention them (in a general manner), in a way that may provoke a parent to elaborate. The facilitator should also be sure to read the comments that parents wrote down at the start of the meeting and facilitate a discussion of these points.

10. Have a recorder take notes on the flip chart. At the end of the meeting, tell parents that school staff will discuss what they have heard and evaluate the best way to follow up.

11. **IDEALLY:** At the end of the meeting, there should be also be an opportunity to suggest specific tasks or commitments that both school staff and parents could offer toward the good of the children, the parents and the school. Formal commitment should be made to at least some of those tasks at that time.

Some examples in the past have been:

- Interested parents sign up to be volunteers for specific tasks in the school
- Parents sign up to participate in the school's parent-teacher organization
- School staff offer to hold the PTA meeting at a more convenient time
- School staff offer to investigate how to support parents' desire to better help children with homework
- School staff offer to explore the possibility of offering adult ESL classes at the school

Demonstration Sites:

(See Appendix C for contact information)

- Kenton Elementary School (Aurora Public Schools)
- Ft. Logan Elementary school (Sheridan Public Schools)

3. Regular/Monthly Parent Meeting.

Description: The primary goal of these meetings is providing a regular opportunity for contact with parents, an exchange of information, discussion between parents and staff, and an introduction of school staff and school and community resources. In many ways, these meetings build on the exchange of information that should have emerged in an *Initial Parent Meeting* (see pp.28–30). These meetings need only be for an hour, and monthly or bi-monthly can be sufficient to accomplish many goals. *Regular/Monthly Parent Meetings* are distinct from in-depth workshops aimed at developing parent skills related to children’s academic achievement. (See pages 35–38 in this Handbook for guidance about *Skill-based Workshops*.)

Research base: It is of great benefit for the parents of ELLs to have regular opportunities to receive information and guidance regarding their children’s schools and all aspects of their children’s education. It is also of great value that parents, teachers, parent liaisons and administrators have regular opportunities to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise in relation to parents’ and children’s experience of schools and the information school staff convey to parents at meetings, conferences or in written notices (McCaleb, 1997; Valdés, 1998).

Link to NCLB:

- ▶ If requested by parents, schools provide regular meetings for parents to offer suggestions and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
- ▶ Conduct activities that encourage and support parents to more fully participate in their child’s education.
- ▶ Identify barriers to greater participation by parents of diverse backgrounds and look for solutions together.
- ▶ Parents are given notification in a timely manner, in a format and language that parents can understand.
- ▶ Ensure the development and distribution to parents of a school-level Title I policy

that reflects input from parents of students participating in Title I programs.

- ▶ Decide with parents how Title I funds allotted for Parent Involvement activities will be used.

Objectives:

1. Provide information about U.S. schools, in general, as well as information about specific resources available in individual schools.
2. Provide parents with any information that the school would like to convey to parents and/or get their input, focusing on what parents may not understand as well as topics emphasized by NCLB.
3. Provide opportunities and guidance related to creating partnerships between schools and parents, toward the shared goal of the academic and personal success of all ELLs.
4. Offer parents guidance regarding understanding and accessing available resources and how to best understand and respond to the information that school staff send home.
5. Introduce parents to some of the skills they may need to enhance their ability to support their child’s academic success and offer initial guidance toward developing those skills.
6. Glean information about what skill-based workshops should be offered to parents in order to best support their ability to help their children succeed in school.
7. Comply with NCLB.

Resources Involved:

Expenses: There are no monetary expenses necessary for the success of this program, although some funding would be helpful to cover possible, minor expenses. Primarily, if funding and space were available, parents and school staff would benefit from having childcare available. This could cost approximately \$10–12/hour per adult hired. Teenagers could also be hired to work as assistants, if the number of children would necessitate this. Secondly, providing simple refreshments (such as coffee and sweet

bread) would be appreciated and enjoyed by many parents. However, this should not be considered an essential part of promoting successful parent meetings.

Materials: It is essential to distribute an advertising flier, passed out at the door at release time or sent home with the children. It is also important to record what is being said at the meeting. It may be valuable to do this on a large flipchart or on a whiteboard so that parents can see what is being recorded as it is presented and discussed.

Space: It is important to have a room available for this meeting. If childcare will not be offered, it is also helpful that this room be large enough so that there is sufficient space where pre-school children could play or draw in a corner, or comfortably sit with their parents.

Staff time: Staff time is one of the most vital resources necessary for the success of this program. If there is a parent liaison, this person should be designated to devote significant time and skills to promoting and

organizing these meetings. However, this person should not be expected to be able to present the content of the meetings. She/he should solicit the participation of other school staff members, or those who work with community-based programs to bring their expertise related to the specific topic of the meeting.

Volunteer time: It would be of great value if some parents volunteered their time to help promote and organize these meetings. In fact, having parents help promote these meetings can often be the most significant factor ensuring their success. These parents could: call other parents to inform them of the meeting and encourage their participation; help set up the room; they could contribute to any follow-up work that would be necessary, such as calling parents who expressed an interest in volunteering, attending a specific meeting or workshop, or attending an ESL class. This kind of follow-up and support could happen primarily over the telephone, although occasional home visits could also be valuable.



Skills:

- ▶ Knowing which parents may be willing and able to help promote the participation of other parents, and establishing a relationship with these parents to interest them in being involved.
- ▶ Knowing the general ELL parent population and the school goals sufficiently to be able to establish what topics would be of greatest interest to these parents and what resources are available for parents in relation to these topics of interest.
- ▶ Knowing what time and day would draw the greatest number of parents.
- ▶ Successfully advertising the meeting including: knowing what to put on a flier; what vocabulary to use that is inviting and clear (vs. language that may be unfamiliar and too formal); and understanding when and how to get this information out to parents.
- ▶ Being familiar with school and community resources and knowing how to invite the participation of experts in the relevant topics.
- ▶ Guiding all those who present the topic at each meeting to not dominate with too much talking, and to effectively engage the participation of the parents.
- ▶ Effectively facilitating a discussion/dialogue as questions emerge. This would involve being able to elicit parent questions, experiences, opinions and concerns. Some parents will offer these freely, others would need to be encouraged or specifically called on to express their questions or comments.
- ▶ The skills of a bilingual staff person would be essential, in order to translate written invitations or notices and interpret at the meeting if the facilitator or presenter is not bilingual.

Steps toward implementation:

1. Begin with a welcome to all parents and staff. Convey the value of parent-school communication and collaboration and the fact that everyone's participation is a vital part of making this happen.

2. Introduce the topic/agenda of the day.
3. Allow the principal, ELL Coordinator and/or designated school staff person to share any information or announcements that have been deemed valuable for the parents to know at that time.
4. Allow parents to ask any questions about this information while these staff members are present.
5. After that point, present the primary topic of the day.
6. The time for *presentation of information* should not dominate or be exclusive. On one level, it is likely that some parents bring prior information about the topic. On another level, it is more engaging to a participant to have an opportunity to ask questions or make comments, and not simply be listening to a speaker for an extended period of time.
7. Therefore, significant time should also be allowed for *questions and parental input*. **The facilitator of the meeting should actively solicit questions or input, as not all parents will readily speak out.**
8. At the conclusion of the meeting, the facilitator should actively solicit thoughts about what other topics would be of value for the parent meetings, as an awareness of new ideas or needs could have arisen during this meeting or within the time between this meeting and the previous one.

Suggested Meeting Topics:

It is most important that the topic be one that has emerged from prior parent meetings or an assessment of what parents have asked about. Therefore, the following topics are suggestions only, to be used as a guide. Specific information related to each school and group of parents should also be considered when selecting meeting topics. **NOTE:** These topics are aimed at an exchange of information and introducing basic skills and strategies. Other topics that require an in-depth, hands-on approach will be presented in the following section entitled "Skill-based Workshops."

1. **Parent–Teacher conferences—What questions to ask? What can I expect?**
2. **The CSAP exam: What is it and how can I support my child’s success?**
3. **Supporting your child to become bilingual.** (Related: Information about instructional methods for ELLs and the role teachers and parents need to play.)
4. **Who works at our school?** An introduction to the staff at the school, the roles that they play and the services that they offer. How to access these staff members and the services they offer.
5. **Understanding the report card.** (i.e., How the report card and other written reports of student progress can be a way to understand and respond to children’s progress or problems.) **NOTE:** This particular meeting should be one where school staff ask many probing questions and pay close attention to how well the report card is actually functioning as a form of communication between parent and school. Research now shows that the U.S. report card is often not a clear form of information for many immigrant parents. Therefore, it is also recommended that school staff give careful consideration to making any changes that may seem valuable only after hearing parent questions and comments.
6. **Available health care.** This meeting could include a focus on any of the following information: health insurance; health care options for the uninsured; how to obtain health insurance; affordable dental care; dental insurance options; and specific guidance re: filling out relevant forms.
7. **Community resources.** Focus specifically on those resources that surface as necessary for the health and well-being of the family.
8. **Educational opportunities for parents.** **NOTE:** The vast majority of parents of ELLs are interested in adult ESL classes. (See specific information about this parent involvement opportunity described in this Handbook on pp. 33–37 and Appendix B, Section IV.) This topic could also include

information about: GED classes, in Spanish or English and post-high school opportunities and non-credit educational workshops. Parents should also be given information about financial assistance, criteria for qualifying and how to apply.

9. **Post-high school opportunities for ELLs.** This meeting could present information about available opportunities and resources. This topic should also provide information about financial aid and scholarship and the criteria for qualifying and how to apply.

Demonstration Sites:

(See appendix C for contact information)

- Montview Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools
- Fletcher Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools
- Boston Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools
- Ft. Logan Elementary School, Sheridan Public Schools



4. Skill-based Workshops for Parents

Description: These are workshops intended to introduce and develop skills necessary for supporting children's academic success. In most cases, they are related to literacy or math skills. These workshops are intended to be more in-depth than an informational parent meeting, providing more time to present and discuss a particular topic and an opportunity to practice the skills being introduced. These workshops can be offered as often as schools have the time and resources to offer them, such as once or twice a year or as part of a four-week series.

Research base: The vast majority of parents of ELLs are very committed to supporting their children's success in school. But these parents often need some support and guidance, as well as an opportunity to practice and develop new skills. Many of these parents also need information about available resources for their children and themselves in relation to supporting their children's success in U.S. schools (Shirley, 1997; Valdés, 1997). Therefore, providing parents with opportunities to develop their skills and receive information about available resources could be the vital key to aiding these parents and their children to reach their potential (Waterman, 2003).

Link to NCLB:

- ▶ Schools help build parent capacity for strong involvement.
- ▶ Provide coordination of district activities to build capacity for parent involvement in schools.
- ▶ Schools will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy and technology training.
- ▶ Aiding accessibility: Schools will provide opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency.

Objectives:

1. Recognize the strengths, skills and information that parents have to support their

children's academic success, and effectively building on those.

2. Balance this—through approach and content—not assuming (and conveying) that parents do not know anything. This would perpetuate a deficit view of parents, and would not be the most effective and meaningful way to engage parents and develop their skills.
3. Carefully identify the most essential skills and contributions parents can make in order to support their children's education.
4. Provide parents with information that best equips them to help all family members reach their potential.
5. Deliver the workshop so that it is interesting, engaging and an effective learning experience for the parent participants.
6. Comply with NCLB.

Resources Involved:

Expenses: The monetary resources necessary will vary. In some cases, these workshops could be offered throughout the school year for little or no extra expense if school staff could facilitate some of the workshops and community-based program staff could facilitate others.

Some possible monetary expenses to be considered, however, are the following:

1. *Workshop presenters and materials:* If there are resources available and a school deems it valuable, schools could pay for an outside facilitator to come in or pay to purchase materials for the workshop.
2. *Childcare:* A common expense is providing childcare. This costs approximately \$10–\$12/hour for each adult caring for the children. Young adults could also be hired (at a lower rate) to assist a supervising adult when a large number of children are anticipated.
3. *Refreshments:* Providing some form of food and drink is a possible expense, although this expense could be very minimal. Simple refreshments, such as cookies and soft drinks and coffee, are all that

are necessary in many cases to extend a welcoming gesture to participating families. Evening workshops offered during the dinner hour, however, may require that a simple dinner be provided because of time constraints. A caution is offered, regardless, that it can be demeaning to assume that parents of ELLs are primarily motivated by food and not by a genuine interest to learn skills related to supporting their children. In fact, research and practice have demonstrated that if the topic is of genuine interest to the parents, many parents will attend the workshop regardless of whether any form of refreshments is offered.

Materials: Schools should distribute fliers with information about the workshop. This information must be in the native language of the parents and use a vocabulary and grammar structure that is clear and understandable to parents who may have low levels of formal education. Materials used during the workshop will vary according to workshop. They should be selected and obtained by the school staff promoting the workshop.

Space: The school will need to provide space for the workshop. Also, if childcare is offered, the school will need to provide space that is adequate for the care of the number and ages of the children involved.

Staff time: There will be a need for staff time during several stages of promoting and offering these workshops:

1. Initially, staff will be needed to help determine what workshops the parents might be most interested in and what time of day most parents could attend.
2. There will also be a need for staff and some parents to help inform and motivate parents to attend.
3. Some staff will also need to devote time to preparing the room and materials on the day the workshop will be held.
4. Beyond that, there is a need for staff time devoted to presenting the workshop content. School building staff may actually facilitate the workshop or the school may decide to bring in an outside

facilitator/speaker. This will also determine the need for a translator.

5. At the workshop, it is always ideal to have a staff person present who has been involved with the parents and can speak the language of the majority, such as a parent liaison. This person is able to help parents feel welcome and comfortable.
6. And even if only a small number of possible participants speak a language other than English, it is important that someone be assigned to translate so that all parents feel welcome and included.

Volunteer time: Parent volunteers can perform many functions necessary for these workshops:

1. They can contribute to initial outreach and notification;
2. They can help make follow-up phone calls to encourage participation and make clear what the purpose of the workshop is;
3. They can help greet parents as they arrive to the workshop;
4. They can help facilitate a workshop, when appropriate; and
5. They can help with follow-up and evaluation by assessing the parent response as well as parent interest in future workshops or other related parent involvement opportunities.

Skills: There are a number of skills that help schools to successfully offer these workshops.

The following are some examples:

1. Initially, these workshops require an ability to relate to parents and solicit their interest and needs for skill-based workshops.
2. It is also important that involved staff can recognize the strengths parents already have (that may be built on in a workshop).
3. Staff should have some skills related to eliciting the input of parents, including their questions as well as their previous

experiences with the topic and the knowledge they may have about the topic.

4. It is also important that some staff possess skills pertaining to planning and offering a workshop, such as:
 - ▶ Accurately determining what topics are of interest to parents;
 - ▶ Accurately assessing the time and day that the majority of parents would be available to attend a skill-based workshop;
 - ▶ The ability to effectively reach out to and involve parents;
 - ▶ Knowing when and how to follow-up with a phone call;
 - ▶ Providing information about the workshop that is clear to parents;
 - ▶ Understanding what is necessary for reserving school building space after hours;
 - ▶ Understanding all that is involved in offering safe and adequate childcare; and
 - ▶ Following-up on all details related to providing childcare.
5. And finally, some staff involved should be able to effectively follow-up and build on the workshop experience, including conducting an evaluation of parent interest and learning, the effectiveness of the approach and the materials used, the time and day it was offered, and how to best respond to the results of this evaluation in the future.

Steps toward implementation:

1. Incorporate input from parents, teachers and administrators to determine what would be some valuable workshops to offer parents. This input could come from a large parent meeting, or if this is not possible, a survey filled out at Back-to-School night or sent home with the students. If this is not possible, consult with the staff at other schools that have successfully offered workshops to parents.

2. Have all involved staff and volunteers meet to plan the workshop. Discuss the topic, the specific content, who will facilitate, if there will be division according to target age of children, how long will it last, where will it be held, whether childcare be offered, whether refreshments will be offered, what form of outreach and advertisement will be used and who will be responsible for coordinating the outreach.
3. Give careful consideration to staff and volunteers needed, the necessary division of labor, as well as a time line for preparation. Designate one person to be responsible for the workshop. This person will help ensure that tasks are completed on time.
4. Discuss how the workshop will be facilitated: Will there be opportunities to practice the new skill, and if so, in what manner?; When and how much discussion will be included?; and Will parents be involved in presenting the content? etc. Also, give careful consideration to the optimal time and day to offer the workshop (acknowledging that there will be no one time perfect for all potential participants).
5. Send out an informational (and invitational) flier to parents approximately 4–10 days before the workshop will be offered. (Talk with other schools about this timing, and also be prepared to experiment with your own experience of how much advance notice is optimal with your parents.) Include enough information to let parents know the basic content, while also being encouraging of their participation. Be careful to make sure the flier is clear: use simple language, more similar to the way people speak as opposed to using more formal language and grammar; leave white space; and put the most crucial information in very large letters. Mixing handwritten words with typewritten words has proven to be very effective.
6. If there is volunteer or staff time available, follow up with phone calls to parents. This is an opportunity to have a

conversation that could help clarify any questions or misunderstandings that may be a barrier to participation. This is an ideal task to assign to a parent. Also, ask every parent you speak with to encourage the participation of other family members or neighbors.

7. On the day/evening of the workshop, have staff and/or volunteers available to prepare the room and the childcare space and activities (if this will be available). Have someone greet all participants. Be sure to have all participants sign in with name, address and phone number. It can also be helpful to ask for grades of their children and what schools their other children attend (if applicable). All parents leaving children in childcare should also sign in each child (including the name of at least one parent).
8. It may also be helpful to recruit some parents to serve on an evaluation team. In this capacity, they could contribute to an evaluation of the current workshop as well as discuss the possibility of, and content for, future workshops. **Solicit the participation of parent volunteers before the end of the workshop** and give them an idea what they would do in this capacity as well as an idea of when they would be meeting. Have them sign up immediately, asking for their name and phone number, and offering a specific time during the next 3–5 days for the evaluation meeting. It is always best to time such parent meetings in relation to when they drop off or pick up their children.

Possible Workshop Topics:

1. Making Homework Manageable
2. Loving to Read, Loving to Learn
3. Parent–Teacher Meetings, As Easy as A-B-C
4. School–Home Links (Activities to help support children’s literacy at home)
5. Supporting Writing in the Home
6. Understanding School Math (**Note:** Research and practice show that many parents of ELLs find that math is taught very differently in the U.S. than it was

taught to them in their home country. It is important, therefore, to assess meaningful ways to elicit parents’ questions on this subject and support any need for more information and guidance regarding how parents are expected to support their children’s ability to successfully learn math.)

Demonstration Sites:

(See Appendix C for contact information)

- South Middle School, Aurora Public Schools
- Thornton Elementary School
- Jefferson County Public Schools, HIPPIY Program
- Centennial Elementary
- Community Resources, Inc., offering workshops in Denver Public Schools

Available Resources to Support this Work:

(See Appendix A for contact information)

- Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC)
- Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition



5. English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes for Parents:

Description: This program consists of adult ESL classes offered to parents in the school that their children attend. Many classes are offered two times a week, for two hours each session. Unlike other adult ESL classes, the curriculum and instruction for these classes is contextualized in specific parent involvement information and skills that are of particular value to the parents and the school staff.

Research base: These programs are based on research that demonstrates that this form of ESL actively promotes effective English language acquisition at the same time as it promotes increased parent involvement in the school and home (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson & Soler, 2000). This program is also based on the fact that a primary barrier to immigrant parent involvement is a lack of English skills, as well as familiarity with U.S. schools and programs (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Valdés, 1996). It is also based on immigrant parents' motivation and interest in participating in quality adult ESL instruction. Therefore, responding to this parental desire, and directly addressing barriers to parent involvement, it is a particularly effective use of school resources.

Link to NCLB:

- Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs with other school programs.
- Encourage and support parents to more fully participate in their child's education.
- Identify barriers to greater participation of parents of diverse backgrounds.
- Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve children's achievement.
- Provide reasonable support for Parent Involvement activities, as parents may request.

³ The *Parent–Teacher–Student Compact* is a specific, formal agreement made between parents, students and school staff. NCLB requires that schools generate this Compact with parents.

- Provide parents with a description and explanation of the school's curriculum.
- Promote an understanding and shared commitment of the *Parent–Teacher–Student Compact*.³
- With the assistance of parents, educate staff in: the value and utility of contributions of parents; how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; and how to build ties between parents and school.

Objectives:

1. Increase parent involvement skills and behaviors
2. Increase English skills for parents
3. Increase parental understanding of aspects of their children's school such as: who the staff are and their roles; the instructional programs utilized; the resources available and how to access them; and expectations of parents and development of skills necessary for parents to fulfill these expectations.
4. Increase staff understanding of parents such as: the strengths parents bring to supporting their children's education; aspects of parents' own experience of education that influence their behaviors and values; and what prevents and supports parents to be involved in their children's school and education.
5. Increase communication and collaboration between principals, teachers and parents
6. Comply with NCLB

Resources Involved:

Expenses: Currently, adult ESL teachers are often paid approximately \$22/hour⁴, and are paid for one hour of planning for every two hours of instruction. It is recommended that ESL teachers also receive on-going training, for approximately two hours/month, and that they are paid for this time. Childcare is often

⁴ This amount is current for Fall 2005, but should increase over time. Schools could also choose to pay adult ESL teachers according to the rate that licensed teachers are paid for extra hours worked.

a need for day-time ESL classes, and it is recommended that an experienced, skilled adult is hired for this position. Depending on the ages and number of children, a childcare assistant may also be needed. These staff are often paid between \$10–\$12/hour. These staff should also be paid for planning if they are expected to prepare educational activities.

Materials: While adult ESL teachers should be skilled at creating their own materials, most adult ESL students also like having a textbook that they can use. This text can cost between \$10 and \$15 and it is common practice to ask that the students pay for their own books. The ESL teachers should also be given access to a copying machine and supported in their need to make copies for the students as they create instructional materials where copyright laws permit.

Space: There is an essential need for an appropriate instructional space, for the time that the class is held. At a minimum, this includes a board for writing, chairs and desks or tables. It also needs to be a quiet space (i.e., not in the cafeteria where there is much background noise as staff prepare lunch). It is also very helpful if adult ESL teachers are given a space where they can store instructional materials, in their classroom space or elsewhere in the school building. If childcare is offered, there is also a need for an appropriate and safe (for pre-school age children) space for the time period of the class.

School staff time: In order to best support increased parent involvement and increased communication and collaboration between school staff and parents, **it is ideal if a school staff person is allocated a small number of hours toward being a liaison between the ESL class and the school.** This person could do such things as: help establish the space for the class; set up meetings between the principal and select teachers and the class; organize events involving teachers and the students; and notify the parents of all parent involvement opportunities and needs, such as school-based meetings, school activities.

Volunteer time: It is best when parents interested in participating in the class support the class through some volunteer hours. These hours could be devoted to helping: recruit stu-

dents; register new students; organize parent involvement events aimed at partnering with and communicating with school staff; and support consistent student attendance by conducting outreach to students who miss class; etc.

Steps for getting started:

1. Establish a staff person at the school to be responsible for organizing and supervising the class, or to serve as a liaison to the non-profit group that is funding the class.
2. Seek information about possible financial resources to pay the ESL teacher.
3. Solicit parent volunteers to help plan and promote the class.
4. Discuss, with interested parents, possible tuition for the class to help provide funding.
5. Survey the parents about the optimal time and days for the class, and number of hours per class.
6. Survey the parents about the need for childcare and possible funding sources to support this.
7. Discuss with school principal possible space for the adult instruction and childcare.
8. Solicit resumes from interested and qualified adult ESL teachers.
9. Hire a qualified ESL teacher. This is very important! Give particular attention to ensuring that this person has sufficient time to prepare lessons plans and consistently teach the class.
10. Hire a qualified childcare person, if childcare will be offered.
11. Prepare a registration session for the class, including conducting an assessment of student ESL levels, if possible.
12. Discuss with the principal, the school-contact person, the adult ESL teacher, and parent volunteers, and the non-profit agency involved (if relevant) what forms of on-going support will exist for the ESL teacher, the parents and the childcare.



Steps to Develop the Program:

1. Ensure that the adult ESL teacher receives training and on-going support regarding integrating parent involvement into the ESL class and instruction.
2. Ensure that a school staff person is aware of the status of the class—student attendance; childcare; appropriateness of available space; and ESL teacher access to quality and effective materials; etc.
3. Establish communication with building principal re: existing parent involvement programs—strengths and limitations. Incorporate this information into the ESL class and instruction.
4. Facilitate opportunities for dialogue between parent ESL students and the building principal, at least 3 times a year.
5. Create opportunities to provide parent ESL students with information about U.S. schools and skills related to supporting children’s academic success.

Emphasize the following topics:

- How to help with homework;
- How to understand the report card;
- How to have an effective parent–teacher conference;
- How to access books and read with children in a way that supports literacy development;

- What resources exist in the school, such as special education, ESL tutoring and after-school programming;
- What resources exist to encourage children to want to graduate and go on to college; and
- How to develop a meaningful *Parent–Teacher–Principal Compact*.

Demonstration sites:

(See Appendix C for contact information)

- Harrington Elementary School (Denver Public Schools)
- Garden Place Elementary School (Denver Public Schools)
- Valdez Elementary School (Denver Public Schools)

Resources available to support this work:

(See Appendix B, Section IV, for a listing of all resources available to support school-based adult ESL or family literacy programs.)

- **Title I:** Funding to schools that could be used to pay for this program.
- **CDE/ Adult Education and Family Literacy:** Offers training to adult ESL teachers and information about available instructional materials, for teachers and students. www.cde.state.co.us/index_adult.htm

6. Organized Parent–Teacher Meetings (i.e., PTA/PTO/BPAC*5)

Description: These are organized, regular meetings between parent representatives and teacher representatives. The parent representatives should reflect the demographics of the school community. They could take the form of a group such as a PTA or PTO, but in order to be inviting to a culturally and linguistically diverse parent population, they should not be defined or guided exclusively by conventional expectations for these groups. Instead, they should be approached with a more open attitude regarding the value and goals of an organized meeting between teachers and parents. Therefore, while these meetings may need to cover specific agenda topics, they also need to allow time for an open-ended exchange of questions and discussion of topics of interest or concern at the time of the meeting.

Research base: Creating opportunities for communication and discussion between school staff and parents is vital to overcoming existing barriers to parent involvement (McCaleb, 1997). Many existing parent–teacher meetings are not as effective as they need to be, however, because they can be constrained by agenda items that are not engaging to parents, such as fundraising projects or one-time activities, and they often do not involve a representative group of parents. Attention should be given to overcoming these barriers, because the structure and general goals of these parent–teacher groups offer the potential for meaningful and effective communication and involvement with the parents of ELLs (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). Many parents of ELLs desire opportunities for genuine dialogue with school staff that serves to inform them about such vital topics as: instructional practices used with ELLs; special support programs available at the school; parent involvement opportunities and expectations in U.S. schools; and how to interpret the U.S. report card. Parent representatives are also capable of educating and

informing school staff about such things as ways to involve a diverse group of parents, how to best understand aspects of working with ELLs and what meeting and workshop topics might be most interesting to other parents (Waterman, 2003).

Link to NCLB:

- ▶ Schools will develop a written parent involvement policy. This policy must be developed jointly with, agreed on and distributed to parents.
- ▶ Schools will assist parents in understanding the State’s academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessment.
- ▶ Identify barriers to greater participation by parents of diverse backgrounds and work with parents to find solutions.

Objectives:

1. Create opportunities for a regular exchange of information and ideas between parents and teachers.
2. Involve parents (who represent the demographics of the school) in school-wide decision making.
3. Provide school staff with regular opportunities to inform parent leaders about parent involvement expectations and opportunities as well as aspects of student academics relevant to parents.
4. Provide school staff representatives with regular opportunities to hear from parents about how to improve parent involvement outreach and programming, as well as aspects of how to best work with ELLs.
5. Comply with NCLB.

Resources Involved:

Expenses: None

Materials: None

Space: A classroom or a teacher’s lounge would be sufficient.

Staff time: Organizing and supporting this kind of parent–teacher meeting requires the attention of a staff person who can devote

⁵ PTA: Parent Teacher Association; PTO: Parent–Teacher Organization; BPAC: Bilingual Parent Advisory Board.

time to conducting outreach to parents as well as generate parental support to help with this outreach. This staff person would also need to spend some time coordinating with other staff in order to generate staff participation—at the meetings as well as in determining potential topics for discussion.

Volunteer time: Ideally, this effort requires that some parents volunteer their time to promote parental participation and give some attention to determining potential topics for discussion.

Steps toward implementation:

1. The principal should designate a staff person to help coordinate this effort, including supporting that person to devote a small number of hours each month to this work. This person should be bilingual or otherwise skilled regarding building relationships and communication with culturally and linguistically diverse parents.
2. School staff should think of potential parent leaders/volunteers who could help conduct outreach and promote parent participation. They should specifically aim to include parents of ELLs in order to help promote the attendance of other parents of ELLs.
3. The staff person designated to help coordinate these meetings should call these parent leaders and ask for their help with outreach, as well as ask them to share their ideas as to what topics parents might want to discuss or receive more information about.
4. All parents in the school should also be surveyed—even if just informally—about what time of day would be best for this kind of meeting.
5. Designate a day and a time for the first meeting.
6. Send home fliers that make the purpose of the meeting clear. **It is strongly advised that it not be advertised as a PTA meeting, as this will NOT be clear to the majority of immigrant parents.** Instead, it is advised that the flier convey that there will be a meeting between parents and teachers, where parents will have an opportunity to ask questions and be informed about topics related to their children's school and education.
7. Include the building principal and a few select teachers (i.e., an ELL teacher, a counselor, a literacy coach) at the first meeting, and solicit information from the participating parents about how to include more parents, if this would be desired.
8. Decide, as a group, whether these will be small meetings involving only parent representatives, or if they will aim to include a broader base of parents.
9. Elect parents to fill the role of president, vice-president, secretary and possibly treasurer (if fundraising will be involved). Discuss the function of each of these roles. Have the staff person designated to support these meetings provide mentoring and on-going guidance to these parents as they develop their understanding of these roles.



Demonstration Sites:

(See Appendix C for contact information)

- Kenton Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools
- Fletcher Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools

7. Parent Volunteer Program

Description: This is an organized program that supports and guides the use of parents as volunteers in the school. It involves initial input and guidance from the principal and teachers as to viable volunteer possibilities. It then involves staff attention to this effort, primarily having one person organize parent and teacher orientations and training as well as offer on-going supervision of all volunteer efforts.

Research base: There are many capable and skilled parents of ELLs who are interested in contributing to the education of their children (Shirley, 2002). Many schools with high numbers of ELLs would benefit from the help that their parents could provide, as these parents would offer cultural and linguistic skills that could supplement and complement the skills that teachers bring (Valdés, 1996). Also, immigrant parents benefit greatly from being in their children's schools and classrooms, as this gives them an opportunity to learn important information about how their children are being taught and how they can best extend that learning in the home (St. Pierre, Swartz, Gamse, Murray, Deck & Nickel, 1995). Therefore, teachers, ELLs and parents would all benefit from schools finding effective and meaningful ways to utilize parent volunteers.

Currently, however, most schools do not devote staff resources toward guiding and structuring the use of parent volunteers. For this reason, many parent motivations and skills are under-utilized. In some cases, isolated attempts are made for parents to volunteer in individual classrooms, but without sufficient guidance, these efforts are often not as effective or enduring as they could be (Waterman, 2003).

Link to NCLB:

- With the assistance of parents, educate staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents. Include skills related to how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; implementing and coordinating parent involvement programs; and building ties between parents and school.

- Schools will generate a *Parent-School Compact*⁶, and it will address parents having reasonable access to school staff, opportunities to volunteer and observe classroom activities.

Objectives:

1. Supplement the skill and attention devoted to the education of ELLs, especially in schools that are still adjusting to an increase in ELLs.
2. Develop parent awareness of content and skills taught in the classroom so that they can better understand how to support their child's academic success and enjoyment of school.
3. Build the relationship, communication and understanding between parents and school staff.
4. Comply with NCLB.

Resources Involved:

Expenses: The expenses related to this program can vary from school to school. Some possible monetary expenses would be involved with the cost of informing parents of the program and then providing childcare and refreshments at a training of potential volunteers. Another could be additional staff time devoted to this effort. (This is not a necessary expense, however, because schools could decide to shift the focus of an existing staff person's job in order to give attention to organizing and supervising this program.)

Materials: Fliers promoting participation; basic forms and hand-outs utilized at initial volunteer training; permanent name badges for committed volunteers; and classroom materials (borrowed for the volunteer training) for training specific to volunteer work in classrooms.

Space: Room for initial volunteer training; room for childcare offered at the time of the initial training; room for monthly volunteer meeting/training; and a place for volunteers to leave coats and purses (optional).

⁶ The *Parent-Teacher-Student Compact* is a specific, formal agreement made between parents, students and school staff. NCLB requires that schools generate this Compact with parents.

Staff time:

- ▶ Staff to participate in evaluating where and how volunteers could be best utilized;
- ▶ A staff member to assess teacher interest in utilizing parent volunteers and in what specific capacity;
- ▶ Staff to participate in basic informational session for parent volunteers;
- ▶ Staff to train parent volunteers in specific areas;
- ▶ A staff person to be the parent volunteer contact person and facilitate monthly meetings of all parent volunteers. (This would serve as an opportunity for on-going training and communication between volunteers and school staff.)

NOTE: Most of these needs for staff participation require only a one-time offer of input and participation, except for the work of the contact person and that of the facilitator of regular parent volunteer meetings.

Skills:

- ▶ Bilingual (speaking English as well as the language of the majority of the parents of the school's ELL population);
- ▶ Bi-cultural understanding;
- ▶ Ability to relate well to parents, affirm their strengths, build on those skills and listen to their questions and concerns;
- ▶ Ability to coordinate and maintain an organized program;
- ▶ Ability to encourage teachers to involve parents in the classroom and help them determine what ways parent volunteers could do meaningful work;
- ▶ Ability to train teachers and parents in necessary insights and skills.

Suggested component of an inviting environment:

- ▶ Bilingual (Spanish-English and/or other dominant language of parents) staff or volunteer working at front desk.
- ▶ Informational fliers and follow-up phone calls that convey the purpose of the volunteer program, the basic requirements

of volunteers and the school's need for and value of parents.

- ▶ Administrators and teachers who are open to utilizing parent skills as well as aware of some of the strengths parents bring.

Steps toward implementation:

1. Designate a school staff person to be the person to be the parent-volunteer contact person and supervise the program. This person should feel comfortable with the language and culture of the volunteers. She/he should also have the support of the principal to devote time to this work.
2. At a general parent meeting, explain the basic purpose and individual requirements of a parent volunteer program. (Research and practice reveal that this is a foreign concept to many parents of ELLs and they will not respond, in spite of legitimate interest, if the program is not explained to them.)
3. Follow-up with a flier inviting parents to an initial orientation to the program.
4. If your school is not offering a parent meeting where the program can be explained, send out a flier inviting parents to an informational meeting about the volunteer program and the specific roles parents could play. Be sure the flier conveys that the parents are needed in the school and that their help would be of benefit to their children.
5. Prepare for this orientation/informational session by organizing a meeting involving the school principal and any others she/he determines a valuable part of the discussion. Other schools have often involved the assistant principal as well as an ELL teacher and at least one bilingual staff member (i.e., a paraprofessional or a secretary).
6. At this meeting, determine the ways that the school would like to utilize parents as volunteers.

Most schools have chosen to utilize parents in the following manners:

- ▶ Parent-to-parent outreach, primarily through phone calls;

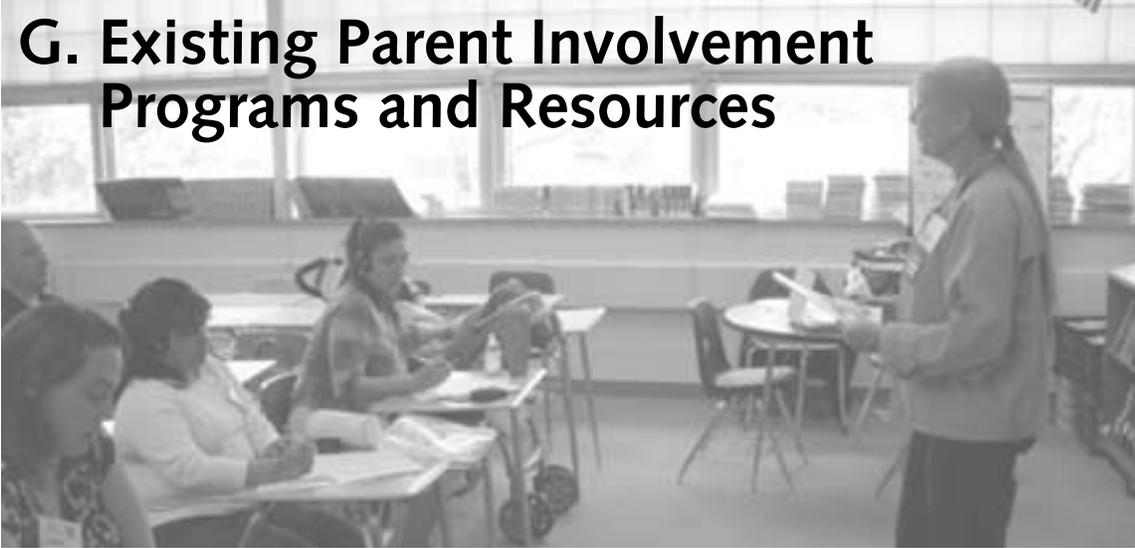
- g. Create a schedule for the volunteer, based on what work the volunteer would like to do and/or is capable of doing and what times and days this task is being requested.
 - h. Explain the volunteer contract and have the parent and the program supervisor sign it.
 - i. Explain that all volunteers need to contact the staff person responsible for the program if they cannot come at the assigned time/day. Also explain that the volunteers need to sign in when they arrive, either with this point person or at a designated place at the front office.
 - j. Explain that the staff “point person” will also offer monthly meetings for all volunteers. This will be an opportunity for volunteers to receive on-going training and support.
- 15. Prepare for a monthly meeting for all volunteers. All school staff that utilize volunteers should give input to the supervisor of the volunteers to help him/her prepare for what he/she will cover during these meetings, OR, they should participate in one of the meetings. Provide childcare during these meetings. Offer basic refreshments, if possible, as a way to express gratitude for the volunteer support.
 - 16. Provide all volunteers with a permanent name-tag to help establish that parents are an official and sanctioned volunteer in the school building.
- Demonstration Sites:**
(See Appendix C for contact information)
- ▶ Montview Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools
 - ▶ Sable Elementary School, Aurora Public Schools





G. Existing Parent Involvement Programs and Resources

G. Existing Parent Involvement Programs and Resources



1. Staff Development:

As parent involvement is best expressed when there is effective communication and collaboration between parents and school staff, it is essential that parents are not the only people receiving support and guidance. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that school staff also receive opportunities to be trained in effective parent involvement approaches and strategies.

Link to NCLB:

- ▶ Develop written materials and training for staff so that they can help parents work with students to improve student achievement.
- ▶ With the assistance of parents, educate staff in the value and utility of contributions of parents; how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; how to implement and coordinate parent involvement programs; and build ties between parents and school.
- ▶ Each school will develop, with parents, a *Teacher-Parent-Student Compact*⁷ that outlines how parents, school staff and students will share responsibility for improved student academic achievement.

⁷ The *Parent-Teacher-Student Compact* is a specific, formal agreement made between parents, students and school staff. NCLB requires that schools generate this Compact with parents.

Existing Resources to Support this Work: (See Appendix A for more information about each of these organizations and the resources and programs they offer to districts and schools.)

- a. Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC)
- b. Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition (CSPC)

(Both offer training opportunities for district and building level staff regarding parent involvement.)

2. District-level Parent Leadership Classes:

Weld County School District 6 (Greeley) is in its 12th year of offering a series of **Parent Engagement classes**. These classes cover topics such as Communication, Culture and Knowing your Child's School. These classes also draw from a parent-created handbook that covers topics such as "How We Support our Children's Education," "Parents' Rights," and "Inviting and Uninviting Schools." The primary goal of these classes is promoting parent-school partnerships through developing parent leaders. These classes started with the support of a parent liaison, whose primary emphasis was cultivating parent leaders who could continue to develop the program.

The existing program is now led by parents, and the topics presented in each class are developed within a dialogue between parents. The final classes then involve the participation of district-level staff and efforts to create dialogue and collaboration between these staff and participating parents. Ultimately, the parents prepare to present what they have learned to other parents.

Link to NCLB:

- Districts must build schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement
- Districts must provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.

For more information about this Program, please contact:

Kevin Antuna, (970) 348-6255
Director, Equity, Diversity, PE and Health
Coordinator, Weld County District #6

3. Parent Leadership Institute

This program was supported and implemented through a collaborative effort within Aurora Public Schools office, drawing upon the resources of the Diversity Education, Title I, Migrant Education and Refugee Education offices.

Workshops were also offered by community agencies, such as the Community College of Aurora, Migrant Education and Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition.

It is designed to support and encourage parental leadership as defined by NCLB. The institute provides parent leaders, volunteers, school family liaisons, teachers, administrators and support staff with information about leadership development and concrete strategies for increasing parental involvement.

During an all-day workshop, parent, community and school-staff participants attended workshops related to the following themes:

- **How to set up a parent volunteer program and provide meaningful opportunities**

- **School-Improvement Plan: What are they and how can we support them?**
- **What is the role of the Accountability Committee vs. PTO/PTA?**
- **Post-secondary opportunities**
- **Parent rights re: Gifted Education and Exceptional Student Services**

For more information, please contact:

Cookie Hansen, Title I office, 303-326-1284
or cookieh@hline.aps.k12.co.us

4. Parent Workshops and Staff Development Specifically for Latino Parents:

A. Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition Programs.

CSPC offers the following staff development and parent workshops specifically for Spanish-speaking families:

Los Padres/Las Madres

A 36-hour training program designed to better connect fathers and mothers with their families, and to engage them in their children's education and social development.

- **Communication Skills**
- **Child Growth and Development**
- **Leadership Skills**

Engaging Mexican Immigrant Parents in their Children's Education

This training is designed to:

- **Help teachers who work with English-language learners understand the differences between the education systems in Colorado and Mexico.**
- **Help teachers develop culturally sensitive strategies to effectively engage parents in for the purpose of improving the academic achievement of English-language learners.**



School-Home Links: Parents Helping Their Children Master the Reading and Writing Standards

- ▶ Training and materials available in Spanish and English at www.coloradoliteracy.net/parents.html#school-home
- ▶ Provides 100 reading activities, per grade, for children in kindergarten through third grade, to encourage greater family involvement in helping children improve reading skills and achievement.
- ▶ The School-Home Links activities are aligned with the Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing.

For further information about how to access these resources for your school or district, please contact:

Patsy Roybal, Director Education Programs
 (720) 890-0123 or patsy@coparent-coalition.org or go to www.coloradoliteracy.net

B. Parenting for Academic Success: Curriculum and Training of Trainers

The Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA) has designed the Parenting for Academic Success (PAS) curriculum to teach Latino families skills they need to:

- ▶ Provide their children with a home environment that promotes learning
- ▶ Effectively monitor the performance of their children's schools,
- ▶ Take a more active role on their children's educational team, and
- ▶ Empower themselves to participate in the school decision making process

The PAS curriculum is a series of ten 2-hour lessons that focus on interactive, practical activities that are effective for all families. LARASA staff conducts Train-the-Trainers workshops to prepare potential instructors to teach the PAS curriculum. PAS instructors can be parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, and other interested community members. Once trained, PAS instructors organize, find funding, and conduct PAS classes in their home communities. The curriculum alone (in English and Spanish) can be purchased for \$500. Training of trainers range from \$1500 to \$2000.

For more information, please contact:

Miguel Barragan, (303) 722-5150
larasa@larasa.org or community@larasa.org



H. References

H. References



- Conchas, G. (2001). Structuring Failure and Success: Understanding the Variability in Latino School Engagement. *Harvard Education Review*, 71 (3), 475–504.
- Crawford, J. (2000). *At War with Diversity: US language policy in an age of anxiety*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Crawford, J. (1991). *Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice*. LA: BES.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The Power of Community*. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1990). *Literacy for Empowerment: The role of parents in children's education*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Diaz Soto, L. (1997). *Language, Culture and Power: Bilingual Families and the struggle for quality education*. NY: State University of NY Press.
- Epstein, J. (1987). What Principals should know about parental involvement. *Principal*, 66 (3), 6–9.
- Epstein, J. (2001). *School, Family and Community Partnerships*. Westview Press: Boulder, CO.
- Epstein, J., Coates, L., Salinas, K., Sanders, M., Simon, B. (1997). *School, Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action*. Corwin Press: California.
- González, N, Moll, L., Floyd-Tenery, M., Rivera, A., Renden, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (1993). *Teacher Research on Funds of Knowledge: Learning from Households*. Tuscon, Arizona: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, University of Arizona.
- Goldenberg, C. (2004). *Successful School Change*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is critical to student achievement*. National Committee for Citizens in Education.
- López, Gerardo. (2001). The Value of Hard Work: Lessons on Parent Involvement from an (Im)migrant Household. *Harvard Education Review*, 71 (3), 416–437.
- McCaleb, S.P. (1997). *Building Communities of Learners*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Moll, L. & Ruiz, R. (2002). The Schooling of Latino Children. In M. Suárez-Orozco & M. Páez (Eds), *Latinos. Remaking America*. Berkeley: U. of Calif. Press.
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., Gonzales, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, vol XXXI (2), 132–141.

- Noguera, P. (2001). "Transforming Urban Schools Through Investments in the social capital of parents" in Saegert, Thompson & Warren, (eds) in *Social Capital and Poor Communities*. Russel Sage Foundation.
- Purcell-Gates, V, Degener, S., Jacobson, E. & Soler, M. (2000). *Affecting Change in Literacy Practices of Adult Learners: Impact of two dimension instruction*. Cambridge: NCSALL Report #17.
- Ramírez, D. (1992). Executive Summary: Longitudinal study of a structured English immersion strategy, early exit and late exit transitional bilingual education programs for language minority children. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 161 (1& 2), 1–62.
- Rioux, W. & Berla, N. (1993). *Innovations in Parent and Family Involvement*. NJ: Eye on Education.
- Ruiz, R. (1997). Empowerment of Language Minority Students. In A. Darder, R. Torres & H. Gutierrez (Eds. *Latinos in Education*. NY: Routledge.
- Ruiz-de-Velasco, J. & Fix, M. (2000). *Overlooked and Underserved. Immigrant students in US secondary schools*. Calif: PRIME.
- Shirley, D. (1997). *Community Organizing for school reform*. Austin: U. of Texas.
- Shirley, D. (2002). *Valley Interfaith and School Reform*. Austin: U. of Texas Press.
- St. Pierre, R., Swartz, J., Gamse, B., Murray, S., Deck, D., & Nickel, P. (1995). *National Evaluation of Even Start Family Literacy Report*. Cambridge, MA: Abt. Associates, Inc.
- Suárez-Orozco, C & Suárez-Orozco, M., (2001). *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Swap, S. M. (1993). *Developing Home-school partnerships: From concepts to practice*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Trueba, H. (2002). From Failure to Success: The Roles of Culture and Cultural Conflict in the Academic Achievement of Chicano Students. In Valencia, R. (ed). (2002). *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, present and future*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Valencia, R. (2002). *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, present and future*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Valencia, R. & Black, M. (2002). "Mexican Americans don't value education!"—On the basis of myth, mythmaking and debunking. *Journal of Latinos and Education I* (2), 81–103.
- Valdés, G. (1996). *Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools*. NY: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Valdés, G. (1998). The World outside and inside schools: Language and immigrant children. *Educational Researcher*, 27 (6), 4–18.
- Valladares, M. R. (2002). The Dropouts. *Hispanic*, December, 36–42.
- Villenas, S. (2001). Latina Mothers and Small-town Racisms: Creating narratives of dignity and moral education in North Carolina. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 32 (1): 3–28.
- Waterman, R. (2003). *Breaking down barriers, creating space: Re-evaluating Latino immigrant parent involvement in schools*. Qualifying paper. Harvard Graduate School of Education.



Appendices

Appendix A: State-wide Resources



1. Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC)

Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center
3607 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Denver, Colorado 80205
Phone: 303-355-5387
Fax: 303-321-2959
www.cpirc.org

CPIRC is a state-wide nonprofit organization funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. Its work is to build partnerships between schools and families with a special emphasis on schools that have been identified as “In Need of Improvement” under the No Child Left Behind Act or those that are “low performing” or “unsatisfactory” according to state standards. It offers training and technical assistance that supports parent involvement in children’s academic achievement, including:

- ▶ Workshops for Parents (in English or Spanish) on the following:
 - Making Homework Manageable
 - Loving to Read, Loving to Learn
 - Parent–Teacher Meetings, As Easy as A-B-C
 - CSAP—Helping Kids Get Ready
- ▶ Training of Trainers (in English or Spanish) for our ‘Workshops for Parents’

- ▶ Workshops in understanding the parental provisions of “No Child Left Behind”
- ▶ Technical assistance to schools and districts to develop parent involvement policies and plans
- ▶ Professional development workshops for educators to build successful partnerships with parents
- ▶ Dissemination of parent involvement information to families, school administrators, teachers and the general public through our office and partnering organizations

2. Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition:

7150 Hooker St. Suite B
Westminster, CO 80030
Phone: 720-890-0123
Fax: 720-540-8455
www.coparentcoalition.org

Mission and Purpose:

The Coalition’s Mission is to “promote equitable educational opportunities for all children and their families.” Its purpose is to provide training and technical assistance to parents and educators and enhances their abilities to establish effective home/school partnerships in order to increase student achievement. The primary goal of the CSPC is to close the achievement gap and increase graduation rates for students who come from historically under-represented families.

A. Staff Development and Technical Assistance:

Teacher Quality Enhancement:

Provide training and technical assistance to schools in order to build *School-based Parent Engagement Leadership Teams* through a **Teacher Quality Enhancement/Parent Involvement Model**. These teams are comprised of the school principal, teachers and parents. The teams are taken through a comprehensive process of understanding the requirements of section 1118 under Title I-A of the No Child Left Behind Act. These teams look at developing their school level Parent Involvement Plans for the purpose of increasing academic achievement.

- Understanding State and Federal expectations as stated in No Child Left Behind
- Align their plans with other state and federal mandates
- Parental role in the “Shared Responsibility for Academic Achievement” under NCLB
- Parental role in “Building Capacity” for Parent Involvement under NCLB

Engaging Mexican Immigrant Parents in their Children’s Education

This training is designed to:

- Help teachers who work with English-language learners understand the differences between the education systems in Colorado and Mexico.
- Help teachers develop culturally sensitive strategies to effectively engage parents in for the purpose of improving the academic achievement of English-language learners.

B. Workshops and Training for Parents:

The CSPC has developed numerous trainings to strengthen the capacity of families to be effectively engaged in their children’s education. All training modules are developed in English and Spanish.

Parent Leadership Training: The Power of One

Designed to help parents:

- Identify their strengths and recognize their individual and collective power.
- Develop their leadership skills and identify ways to contribute to their school.
- Get to know each other and recognize that they can be a powerful influence in children’s lives.

Home Learning Support Strategies

Designed to provide parents with information on how to:

- Develop a positive home learning environment
- Help their children develop positive homework habits
- Communicate effectively with their children and their children’s teacher

CSAP: What’s it all about?

This workshop focuses on how parents can help their children prepare for the CSAP assessment.

School-Home Links: Activities Parents Can Use at Home to Help Their Children Master the Reading and Writing Standards

Provides 100 reading activities, per grade, for children in kindergarten through third grade, to encourage greater family involvement in helping children improve reading skills and achievement. The school-home links activities are aligned with the Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing.

Los Padres

This 36-hour training program is designed to connect fathers with their families in a more meaningful way than previously, and to engage them in the process of their children’s education and social development. The curriculum emphasizes 3 areas:

- **Communications**—The fathers are taken through a series of sessions that emphasize positive communications that

include positive listening, wait-time and inter and intra personal communications.

- ▶ **Child Growth and Development**—Most fathers agree that learning how to observe and understand how their children are growing and developing is a skill that some fathers learn on the job training while others simply emulate how their fathers reared them. This section takes dads through some of the developmental areas that children go through and focuses on the cognitive development of the children. The curriculum uses Howard Gardner's theories and practices of Multiple Intelligences.
- ▶ **Leadership**—In this section the fathers learn how to advocate for their children with other adults that come in contact with their children. Emphasis is placed on the father's participation in school and other children's activities.

Las Madres

Based on the same curriculum as Los Padres and was developed upon requests from numerous mothers whose husbands had participated in the Los Padres Program.

40 Developmental Assets

The assets philosophy offers a strengths-based approach to working with young people that gives parents and teachers a common language and framework to inspire young people to achieve their full potential. The developmental assets are the essential building blocks identified by search institute that all children and adolescents need to succeed. The program can vary from a basic presentation to a comprehensive approach in implementing the assets framework.

Flores Indígenas

A powerful Assets presentation that incorporates narration, dance, song and *dichos* (cultural wisdoms) delivered by grassroots mothers to convey the message of what children and adolescents need to succeed.

Presentation that incorporates dance, *dichos* (cultural wisdom), song and narration to illustrate the power of the 40 developmental assets in transforming lives and giving parents the tools to raise successful children.

Latino School Readiness

The CSPC provides professional development to ECE providers to enhance school readiness for Latino children.



Appendix B: RESOURCES— Publications, materials and websites



I. General Parent Involvement:

1. Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE)

www.crede.edu

Central to its mission, CREDE's research and development focuses on critical issues in the education of linguistic and cultural minority students and those placed at risk by factors of race, poverty and geographic location.

2. Creating Family Friendly Schools: A Guidebook for Trainers

This guide has 12 modules for training district staff and parents. The modules include training scripts, handouts, transparencies and references for developing a comprehensive program of school–family partnerships, understanding and respecting all families and all cultures, examining communications skills for developing a family friendly culture in schools reaching all families and much more.

The guide is available for a cost of \$250 from:
RMC Research Corporation
Denver, CO
800-922-3636

3. The Education Trust

www.edtrust.org

This website offers the following resources related to parent involvement:

Tools for Parents and Community Members:

- ▶ *Parent and Community Newsletter*
- ▶ *Parent and Community Data Guide*
- ▶ *African-American Parent Guide*
- ▶ *Latino Parent Guide*
- ▶ *Guía Para Padres Latinos*

4. FINE Network

Family Involvement Network of Educators @ Harvard Family Research

- ▶ FINE is a national network of over 4,500 people who are interested in promoting strong partnerships between children's educators, their families, and their communities

FINE offers the following resources online:

- ▶ What's new—monthly announcements of current ideas and new resources
- ▶ Resources—research, evaluation, and training tools
- ▶ E-newsletter (*FINE Forum*)—program models and perspectives on family involvement
- ▶ Member insights—opinions about topics of interest

Contact Information:

Harvard Graduate School of Education

3 Garden Street

Cambridge, MA 02138

(617) 495-9108

hfrp@gse.harvard.edu

www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/contact.htm

5. National Center for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

www.ncpie.org

NCPIE is dedicated to developing effective family/school partnerships throughout the U.S. Their mission is to advocate the involvement of parents and families in their children's education and to foster relationships between home, school, and community that can enhance the education of all of our nation's young people.

6. Strengthening Parent Involvement: A Toolkit

This toolkit is a comprehensive document designed to help schools and districts comply with the regulations for Parent Involvement as prescribed in NCLB. It provides information about NCLB, parent involvement research, ideas re how to implement Title I Parent Involvement requirements, a discussion of the parent involvement planning process and a substantial listing of available resources.

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/download/pi_toolkit.pdf

II. No Child Left Behind:

1. No Child Left Behind official website and information at www.ed.gov

- ▶ Powerful new tools to help your child learn and achieve
- ▶ Learn about supplemental services, charter schools and testing
- ▶ Know the basics of NCLB

2. Parent Supplements to Explain NCLB and Parent Involvement

Parent Supplements in English and Spanish, developed in conjunction with CDE. The brochures are designed to help families understand the importance of parental involvement in education, as well as their options under No Child Left Behind.

If you would like copies, please contact:

Nancy Hernandez, Trainer/Translator
Colorado Parent Information & Resource Center (CPIRC)
3607 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Denver, CO 80205
303-355-5387 x.330
HernandezN@gwclayton.org
www.cpirc.org

III. Parent Involvement for Latino families:

1. The ASPIRA Association

www.aspira.org

This association promotes the empowerment of the Latino community by developing and nurturing the leadership, intellectual and cultural potential of its youth so that they may fully contribute their skills and dedication. The ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence program was developed to train parents to become more effective educational advocates for their children

2. Assets for Colorado Youth

www.buildassets.org

A Review of Literature on Latino/Hispanic Parent Involvement in K-12 Education
By Barry Tinkler, University of Denver

3. Bilingual (Spanish/English) Materials for Parents:

www.morenoed.com

- a. Parents, Teach your children to learn before they go to school
- b. Preventive discipline and positive rewards for all children
- c. Parents, your school and home involvement can help your children learn
- d. Teaching ideas for parents to use with their Teenagers
- e. Help your children become strong readers and effective learners
- f. Questions and answers about college

And more than 30 more!!!

4. Colorin Colorado:

www.colorincolorado.org

This is a bilingual (Spanish/English) website providing information, activities and advice for Spanish-speaking parents and educators of English language learners.

For **Spanish-speaking parents**, it offers information, tips and resources for

- ▶ Helping children at home
- ▶ Helping children at school
- ▶ Reading tips

For **educators**, it offers information, tips and materials for

- ▶ Outreach to Hispanic families
- ▶ Teaching reading
- ▶ Teaching content areas

5. Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

The IDRA Newsletter and IDRA Projects offer short research-based articles about parent involvement strategies and approaches for effective work with Latino parents.

<http://www.idra.org>

6. The National Council of La Raza

www.nclr.org

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is the largest national constituency-based Hispanic organization and the leading voice in Washington, DC for the Hispanic community.

On its website, you can find information about the following education-related topics:

- ▶ Center for Community Educational Excellence (C²E²)
- ▶ K–16 Programs Team
- ▶ Early Care and Education (ECE) Team
- ▶ Education Funding
- ▶ Hispanic Education Coalition (HEC)
- ▶ DREAM Act



IV. English as a Second Language (ESL) and Family Literacy Programs:

1. Information:

Center for At-Risk Education
Colorado Department of Education
201 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203
Adult Education and Family Literacy Office: 303.866.6884
www.cde.state.co.us/cdecare/index.htm

2. Publications and Websites:

- a. **Assessment Guidelines for Adult Education and Family Literacy Funded Programs**
Denver: CDE, 2005
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/AssessmentGuidelines05v3.pdf
- b. **Colorado Department of Education, Adult Education and Family Literacy Services and Resources and Grant Information:**
www.cde.state.co.us/index_adult.htm
- c. **Colorado Family Literacy Consortium**
www.coloradoliteracy.net
- d. **The Family Literacy Answer Book**
Louisville: National Center for Family Literacy, 1997
- e. **Intergenerational Literacy Activities Notebook**
Denver: CDE, 2004
www.cde.co.us/cdeadult/iglindex.htm
- f. **Sustainability Guidebook for Colorado Family Literacy Programs, by L. Jordon**
Denver: CDE, 2005
www.coloradoliteracy.net/download/FamilyLiteracy_SustainabilityGuidebook.pdf

3. ESL Instructional Materials:

- a. **Practitioners Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners**
Louisville: National Center for Family Literacy, 2004

A comprehensive guide for adult ESL teachers including ESL lesson plans related to integrating family literacy and parent involvement into ESL instruction. Also includes guidance re setting goals and student assessment. This Toolkit can be downloaded for free from the following website:

www.famlit.org/Publications/Practitioner-Toolkit-ELL.cfm

- b. **Civic engagement and leadership curriculum for adult ELL students:**

Instructional materials applicable to parent advocacy and leadership skills, in general and as related to school environments.

www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/ELCivics.htm



c. FLASH: Families Learning at School and Home

A series of adult ESL instructional materials, including four levels of adult ESL/literacy lesson plans and corresponding student handouts. There is also a School-based Life Skills Assessment System for the adult ESL student, which includes a placement test and a scoring sheet for each level of the ESL Curriculum.

For more information, contact:

Delia C. Garcia, Ed.D.
Director, FLASH Program
Florida International University
University Park, ZEB 341-B
Miami, FL 33199
(305) 348-2647
www.fiu.edu/~flash

d. Parenting for Academic Success:

This is an adult ESL curriculum consisting of 12 units which can be implemented comprehensively or as separate learning experiences for parents.

The Curriculum aims to help adult ESL teachers achieve the following:

- ▶ Integrate English language instruction and parenting skill development.
- ▶ Support English language acquisition for parents through specific listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.
- ▶ Provide concrete interactive learning experiences that help create a bridge between school and home.

For more information or to order these materials: www.delta-systems.com

Or, go to the National Center for Family Literacy website (www.famlit.org) and look for information about these materials via the link to “products.”

e. Navigating the American School System (NASS):

A guide for integrating parent involvement and an understanding U.S. schools into adult ESL instruction.

Go to the following website to download the curriculum:
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/ELCivics.htm

f. From Home to School: Stories and Activities for Parents

This is a series geared to parents of school-age children that serves as a supplement to an adult ESL program

For more information:
New Reader Press
800-448-8878
www.newreaderpress.com

g. A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook

These are materials for use with higher proficiency ESL learners. They do not blend ESL lessons with the Parent Involvement content.

Available in English, Arabic, Bosnian, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese:
www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/resources1.htm
Scroll down to *Parents, Prof Dev and Lang Info Resources*. Click on the language you prefer.



Appendix C: Demonstration site contact information



Aurora Public Schools:

Kenton Elementary
303.364-0947
Principal: Linda Harvey
Parent Involvement Contact person:
Leeann Gott

Fletcher Elementary
303.343-1707
Parent Liaison: Tracy Gallegos

Montview Elementary
303.364-8549
Principal: Patty Capps

Sable Elementary School
Parent Coordinator: Elizar Pagán
303.340-3140 x23829

South Middle School
Parent Liaison: Myra Paredes
303.365-7623 Ext. 25853

Boston Elementary
303.364-6878
Principal: James Scott

Denver Public Schools:

Garden Place Elementary
303.295-7785
Principal: Beth Morganfield

Harrington Elementary
303.333-4293
Principal: Sally Edwards
ESL class contact person: Karine Pitts

Valdez Elementary
ESL class contact person:
Susan Cotton, Even Start Coordinator
303.458-8063

Sheridan Public Schools:

Ft. Logan Elementary
Parent Liaison: Lina Gomez
720.833-6721

Weld County District #6

Greeley Public Schools
Kevin Antuna, Director, Diversity Programs
970.348-6255

Jefferson County Public Schools

Michelle Brown
HIPPIY Coordinator
303.982-0014

Adams 12 Five Star Schools

Thornton Elementary
Barbara Martinez—Teacher
720.972-5670

Centennial Elementary
Shannon Miyasaki
720.972-5280



Appendix D: Using Title I Money for Parent Involvement Activities

(Compiled by CPIRC, 2005)

Total amount that must be spent on parent involvement activities

If the district receives:

- ▶ More than \$500,000 in Title I, Part A funds—the district must use at least 1% of those funds for parent involvement activities.
- ▶ Less than \$500,000 in Title I, Part A funds—the district is not required to spend any specific amount or percentage on parent involvement activities.

However, all school districts, regardless of funding, must carry out the required parent involvement provisions of NCLB. This total amount of parent involvement spending is (A).

Amount reserved for private school children from low income families

Once the district determines the total amount set aside for parent involvement activities (A), it must reserve a proportionate amount for parent involvement in private schools that serve children that are low income and reside in the district (B). The remaining amount is to be used for parent involvement activities in the district (C).

For example, if the district sets aside \$1,000 for parent involvement activities and there are 490 students that attend Title I schools or programs and 10 private school students eligible for Title I programs, the district must set aside \$20 for parent involvement activities for the private school students (reserving the remaining \$980 for parent involvement activities in the district).

Amount distributed to schools

After the amount for private school children (B) is deducted from the total amount the district will spend (A), the district knows its remaining amount to be used for parent involvement activities in the district (C). Ninety-five percent (95%) of (C) must be distributed to district schools. The remaining 5% can be used at the district level.

Amount remaining for use at the district level

The balance remaining (5%) is reserved for parent involvement activities at the district level. Districts have flexibility regarding how to use the funds reserved for parent involvement activities at the district level. For example, the district can use these funds to support:

- ▶ Staff development related to working more effectively with parents.
- ▶ Training for parents in how to better support their students' learning needs.
- ▶ Annual Title I meeting expenses, including childcare and transportation.

Overview

A (total) – B (private school students) = C (remaining amount)

95% of C → schools

5% of C → district

Appendix E: NCLB Checklist for Districts and Schools

(Compiled by CDE, Title I, 2005)

District Parent Involvement Policy Compliance Checklist Colorado Department of Education					
		Yes	No	Requires Documentation	Requires Evidence of Effectiveness
1	The district develops, jointly with parents, a written parent involvement policy, updates it periodically with input from parents and distributes policy to parents			✓	
2	The district helps schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities to improve student academic achievement and school performance			✓	
3	The district promotes family literacy and parenting skills			✓	
4	The district decides, with parents, how Title I funds will be used for Parent Involvement activities			✓	
5	<i>Each school and district receiving assistance under Title I, Part A must ensure effective involvement of parents and support a partnership among the school, the parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through training, information, and coordination activities. The district helps build schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement:</i>				
5.a	Assist parents in understanding the State's academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessments, including how to monitor their student's academic progress, and how to work with school staff to improve the achievement of students, including written materials and training for staff.				✓
5.b	Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, to foster parent involvement.				✓

**District Parent Involvement Policy Compliance Checklist
Colorado Department of Education**

		Yes	No	Requires Documentation	Requires Evidence of Effectiveness
5.c	Educate school personnel, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach, communicate and work with parents.				✓
5.d	Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other organizations such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers, etc.				✓
5.e	Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in a format and language that parents can understand.				✓
5.f	Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.				✓
6	Coordinate parent involvement strategies with other programs, such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers, etc.			✓	
7	For districts that must set aside 1% of the Title I allocation for parent involvement, distribute 95% of this set aside to schools receiving Title I funds.			✓	
8	Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools			✓	
8a	The evaluation identifies barriers to greater participation by parents of diverse backgrounds			✓	
8b	The evaluation findings are used to design more effective strategies for greater parent involvement			✓	
9	Inform parents and parent organizations of the existence and purpose of the Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center			✓	

**School Parent Involvement Policy Compliance Checklist
Colorado Department of Education**

		Yes	No	Requires Documentation	Requires Evidence of Effectiveness
1	The school jointly develops with, and distributes to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed on by such parents, that describes the means for carrying out the stated requirements. Parents are notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. The policy is made available to the local community and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.			✓	
2	The school convenes an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to explain the requirements of the written parent involvement policy.			✓	
3	Meetings are offered to parents at varying times, e.g. morning and evening.			✓	
4	Parents are provided with timely information about parent involvement programs.			✓	
5	Parents are provided with a description and explanation of the school's curriculum.			✓	
6	Parents are provided with a description and explanation of the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and an explanation of the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.			✓	
7	If requested by parents, schools provide regular meetings for parents to offer suggestions and to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.			✓	
8	<i>School jointly develops, with parents, a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, school staff and students will share responsibility for improved student academic achievement:</i>				
8.a	The compact describes the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction, and parents' responsibility for supporting their children's learning.			✓	
8.b	The compact addresses the importance of communication between teachers and parents through conferences and reports to parents on children's progress.			✓	

**School Parent Involvement Policy Compliance Checklist
Colorado Department of Education**

		Yes	No	Requires Documentation	Requires Evidence of Effectiveness
8.c	The compact addresses how parents have reasonable access to staff, are provided frequent reports on their children's progress, and have opportunities to volunteer and observe classroom activities.			✓	
9	<i>The school helps to build parents' capacity for strong parent involvement:</i>				
9.a	Assist parents in understanding the State's academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessments, including how to monitor their student's academic progress, and how to work with school staff to improve the achievement of students, including written materials and training for staff.				✓
9.b	Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, to foster parent involvement.				✓
9.c	Educate school personnel, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach, communicate and work with parents.				✓
9.d	Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other organizations such as Head Start, Parents As Teachers, etc.				✓
9.e	Ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in a format and language that parents can understand.				✓
9.f	Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.				✓
10	The School informs parents about the Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center.				✓

