

Parental Involvement Title 1, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.pdf>

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc>

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## Introduction

While parents are mentioned over 300 times in various part of the No Child Left Behind act, this Action Brief will concentrate on Section 1118, Title I of the Act. It is the only section in the Act devoted solely to parental involvement, and if implemented effectively, provides the core elements that incorporate many of the other parental involvement provisions of NCLB. As you become familiar with NCLB through the various other PEN/NCPIE Action Briefs, you will find parental involvement roles defined throughout. These are important for you to know as well, but Section 1118 provisions are the core around which all of the other parental involvement provisions revolved.

More specifically, Section 1118 requires that every school district and every schools receiving Title I dollars must have a written parent involvement policy, as well as build school capacity to effectively implement the parent policy provisions. This policy must be developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents of participating children and the local community. It must ensure that strong plans for parental involvement are in place in every Title I school, and should be designed to encourage and sustain active parental involvement.

The policy is the "plan," and requires both parents and schools to write down procedures and elements believed to constitute the most effective partnership between the school and families. Since Section 1118 does not contain enforcement provisions (for instance, nothing happens to a school if it does not have a policy, follow the provisions of the law, or fails to implement the polices), school districts and schools often over look this provision, or fail to make it an educational priority. In that case, parents need to take the lead in assuring the development of an effective parental involvement policy. This Action Brief will help you do just that by providing a review of Section 1118 and what the law requires.

## Did You Know...

- That parents must be consulted by their state in developing their Title I plan. The plan must indicate how each level of the school system in the state will support parental involvement, and how Title I parental involvement is coordinated with other programs under NCLB, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the Head Start Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

- That a school district does not qualify to receive Title I funds until it implements the parent involvement requirements found in Section 1118, but very few schools lose their funding if found to be in non-compliance with Section 1118 provisions.
- That every Title I school district and Title I school is required to have a written parent involvement policy developed jointly with, and approved by parents.
- That NCLB provides funds for Title 1 schools to use to help parents better understand standards, assessments, and report cards.
- That Title 1 schools are responsible for holding meetings to discuss parent involvement policies, programs and activities with flexible hours designed to accommodate working parents.
- Parents must be involved in deciding how Title 1 funds are allotted for parent involvement programs and activities.
- That monies from Title 1 schools can be used to provide support to parents for transportation, childcare, or home visits, in cases where these things prevent a parent from becoming involved in their child's school.

## **Defining Parental Involvement and Building School Capacity and Leadership**

### ***Defining Parental Involvement***

For the first time in the history of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) the law contains a definition of parental involvement. This definition should guide the development and implementation of parental programs in your school and school district, but should not limit additional parental involvement initiatives that may exceed the NCLB definition. The law defines parental involvement as, "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including:

- Assisting their child's learning;
- Being actively involved in their child's education at school;
- Serving as full partners in their child's education and being included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
- The carrying out of other activities such as those described in section 1118 of the ESEA" Section 9101(32).

### ***Building the Capacity for Parental Involvement***

Section 1118 also requires that school districts work in cooperation with their Title I schools to build the capacity of parents and school staff for strong parental involvement, which in turn will improve academic achievement. This section recognizes that not all schools have the same experience, expertise, resources and training in building school-parent-community partnerships, and is designed to address those "capacity" needs. Do not overlook the importance of this provision: it is a key requirement for those school districts and schools that do not have the school structure, teacher or principal expertise, leadership, or understanding in how to develop effective school-family connections and partnerships.

## **What the Law Says About School District Parent Involvement Policy Statements**

### **Every school district receiving Title 1 funds is REQUIRED to:**

- Develop, for the school district at large, a written parent involvement policy jointly with parents, agreed on with parents, and distributed to parents and incorporated in the school district's Title I plan that it must submit to the state in order to qualify for Title I funding under section 1112\*.
- Submit to the state at the time that the school district forwards its Title I plan, any comments of parents who find that in their view, the school district's Title I plan is not satisfactory.

- Include parents in the development of the school district and individual school improvement plans.
- Conduct an annual evaluation and review of its parent involvement programs that involves parents in an organized, ongoing and timely way that will lead to the:
  1. Evaluation of the content and effectiveness of parental involvement policies,
  2. Assessment of their effectiveness at improving the academic quality of schools served under Title 1,
  3. Identification of barriers to increased participation in activities that are provided for parents paying close attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English ability, with limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background, and,
  4. Designing more effective strategies for parental involvement, based on the results obtained by the evaluation, which should lead to the revision of the current policy.
- Provide coordination, technical assistance, and other support necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement activities.
- Assist individual schools in building greater capacity and expertise in developing strong parent involvement programs.
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with the parental involvement strategies of other programs such as Head Start, Reading First, Even Start, Parents as Teachers, and other school programs.
- Reserve no less than 1% of its Title I allocation for the implementation of parent involvement programming, which includes the promotion of family literacy and parenting skills. However, if 1% of the agency allocation under the written policy for the fiscal year will be \$5,000 or less, then no money is required to be reserved.

*Note: Section 1112 pertains to the requirement related to local school district development of Title 1 plans, which stipulates that parents must be consulted in the development of the plan*

### **Title I School Districts and Title I Schools are Jointly REQUIRED to Ensure Effective Involvement of Parents by:**

- Supporting partnerships among each Title I school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement.
- Providing assistance to parents of Title I children served by the school or local educational agency in helping them to understand such topics as:
  - The state's academic content standards and state student academic achievement standards,
  - State and local academic assessments, and
  - How to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children;
- Providing opportunities for full participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including information and school reports, to the extent practicable, that parents can understand.
- Providing materials and training to help parents to work with their children at home to improve their children's achievement.
- Educating teachers, personnel, principals, and others, with the assistance of parents, on the value and utility of parental contributions, and how to reach out and communicate with parents as equal partners, implementing and coordinating parent programs, and building ties between the home and school;
- Coordinating and integrating parent involvement programs and activities with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, the Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool and other programs, to the extent practicable
- Conducting other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in participating more fully in the education of their children;

- Sending information to parents relating to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities.

*Note: Section 1112 pertains to the requirement related to local school district development of Title I plans, which stipulates that parents must be consulted in the development of the plan*

### **School Level Title I Parent Involvement Policies**

In developing a local school parent involvement policy, each school that receives Title I funds is REQUIRED to:

- Jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating Title I children an agreed upon written parental involvement policy,
- Notify parents of the policy in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents can understand.
- Make the parental involvement policy available to the local community and update it periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.
- Hold an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend. The purpose of the meeting is to:
  - Inform parents of their school's participation in development of the parent involvement policy;
  - Explain to parents their rights in the development of the policy; and
  - Inform parents that they can be involved in approving the parent involvement policy.
- Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;
- Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs for parental involvement, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the school wide program plan.
- Provide parents of participating children:
  1. Timely information about programs.
  2. A description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet; and
  3. If requested by parents, opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children, and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible;
- If the school wide program plan under the Components of School Wide Program Plan under Section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency .

### **Title I Schools and Local Education Agency's are encouraged, but not required to assure the following:**

- Involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training;
- Provide necessary literacy training from funds received under this part if the local educational agency has exhausted all other available sources of funding for such training;
- Pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions
- Train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents

- Arrange school meetings at a variety of times, and if necessary in places other than the school building, or conduct in-home conferences between teachers or other educators, who work directly with participating children, with parents who are unable to attend such conferences at school, in order to maximize parental involvement and participation
- Adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement
- Establish a district wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section;
- Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities; and
- Provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities as parents may request .

## **Taking Action**

The rights and responsibilities of parents under Section 1118 are not meant to be punitive or inflexible, but are designed to benefit the academic and social progress of the student, and strengthen the work and mission of the public school. However, parents and communities need to know the provisions of NCLB and Section 1118 before they can take the actions required to implement effective programs.

## ***Potential Challenges to Parent Involvement***

Many parents face obstacles in becoming involved with their schools. In developing parent involvement programs, school, parent and community leaders need to take these barriers into consideration:

- Differing ideas among parents and teachers on what constitutes involvement,
- A less than welcoming atmosphere toward parents and other visitors in schools and classrooms,
- Negative or neutral communication from schools,
- Insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to both mothers and fathers,
- Lack of parental education and parenting skills,
- Time and job pressures
- Language barriers

## **ACTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS**

- Ask to be involved in developing the SEA Title I plan. If the SEA already has a plan, find out who represented the community and parents in its development.
- Disseminate the plan to community members and parents. After it has been disseminated, find out if it meets the needs and concerns of the parents in your community.
- Ask the SEA to appoint local representatives to the state committee of practitioners. Review the selection criteria. Get clarification of the term "representative" and of the process by which community members will be selected for the committee of practitioners.
- Organize a statewide effort, in conjunction with representatives from community service agencies and parents, to help the broader community understand the state's curriculum content standards, student performance standards, accountability and assessment system, and student achievement requirements.
- Ask to see what criteria and what process the SEA will use to review district parent involvement policies, to determine whether LEA plans are adequate, and to enforce LEA parent involvement requirements. Determine what recourse is available should LEA noncompliance occur.

- Ask the LEA to consult with community-based leaders as it develops its Title I plan.
- Work with parents and school leaders to develop model district- and school-level parent involvement policies that can be used as guides for LEA compliance with NCLB requirements.
- Offer to provide the following services to SEAs and LEAs either on a voluntary or a contractual basis:
  - Professional development training for teachers in working effectively with parents
  - Training in ways that schools and parents can work together more effectively
  - Training and skill-building activities for parents, e.g., how to negotiate with schools when adopting parental involvement policies, how to monitor compliance with policies, how to understand and analyze achievement and report card data distributed by SEAs and LEAs, and how to use the data to increase student achievement.
- Work with LEA officials to outline and implement the role the non-parent community can play in support of student achievement, diversity training and skill building for educators and parents, and stronger links between community services and the schools most in need of support.
- Work with schools to provide translators, offer community language ombudsman programs, break down bureaucratic language into meaningful terms, and determine the most effective way to reach out to parents and the community.
- Ensure that the plan addresses how SEAs and LEAs will design and implement training for teachers and other school staff that focuses on how best to work with parents care providers , and limited English proficient parents.
- Be sure to collaborate with and utilize the services and expertise of your state parent information resource center ([www.pirc-info.net](http://www.pirc-info.net)).
- Find out and suggest what types of technical assistance will be provided to schools that are having trouble implementing parent involvement practices.
- Find out how the state will use education technology and innovative approaches to foster parent involvement.
- Ask as many questions as you need to find out whether your district and school are doing what they say they will do to involve parents.
- Find out how Title 1 dollars are being used to support parent involvement and also find out if there is other money available to support parent involvement.

## **ACTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENT LEADERS**

The law requires that parents and school personnel write each parent involvement policy statement **together**. This requirement allows parents to be at the table with school administrators and educators to help write a policy that addresses how every school, through partnership with parents, will promote the **social, emotional, and academic growth of children**. Parents are now required to be a part of the discussion about how schools will help all children meet the state's challenging content and student performance standards. This policy is the beginning of the formation of **home-school partnerships** and should address the full range of family and student needs that impact learning. It should be specific and should articulate how parents will be assured adequate and meaningful involvement. Below are some actions steps and questions you can ask to ensure that your policy statement meets the needs of your community.

- Ask to be involved in developing the SEA Title I plan. If the SEA already has a plan, find out who represented the community and parents in its development.
- Disseminate the plan to community members and parents.
- Find out how the state plans to review LEA parental involvement policies to determine whether LEA plans are adequate. Determine what recourse is available should LEA noncompliance occur.

- Find out what assistance the state is ready to provide to LEAs and schools having difficulty implementing parental involvement policies. If there does not appear to be any assistance available, work with your LEA and other community agencies to develop them.
- Work with the LEA to educate parents about state curriculum content standards, student performance standards, accountability and assessment system, and student achievement requirements.
- Determine if your school has a meaningful parent involvement policy and if one exists, volunteer to become part of the team to help implement and evaluate it. If a policy does not exist, become an active participant in its development, implementation and evaluation.
- Make sure that the parents included in its development represent the school community. Provide translators, if needed.
- Survey the families in the school community to assess their needs and expectations for parent programs that the policy can reflect. And then follow up to make sure these programs are implemented and effective.
- Make sure the parental involvement policy includes a school improvement monitoring team that serves as a watchdog to ensure that the Title I strategies and activities in the school's Title I application are being implemented. The team should include community representatives and should meet with teachers and school staff on a periodic basis to identify areas of progress and need. Feed information back to parents and school staff.
- Find out what, if any, professional development activities are planned to strengthen the partnership between families and schools. Assist the administration or staff in determining the resources and programs available for such training.
- Find out how Title 1 dollars are being used to support parent involvement and also find out if there is other money available to support parent involvement.
- Ask the LEA to go beyond the NCLB parental involvement requirements and include the following options in their plans:
  - A review committee, including parents and community representatives, to monitor LEA parental involvement plans and their implementation
  - Approval criteria for LEA parental involvement policies; specific assistance to help parents, schools, and communities develop their programs and a complaint process parents can employ if the LEA does not comply with the law
  - A coalition of parent organizations representing a diverse cross section of the school district and the student community to work with the LEA in developing the parental involvement plan
  - A model parental involvement policy to give schools and parents a guide for tailoring a policy suited to their needs
  - Model parental involvement programs and practices; a parental needs assessment; professional development to help teachers and principles engage parents more effectively; LEA and school plans to evaluate the success of LEA and school policies
  - A parent resource center at the district and school level to ensure that parents become full partners in their child's education

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT CHECKLIST**

**NOTE:** The full checklist may be accessed at [www.ncpie.org/nclbaction/parent\\_involvement.html](http://www.ncpie.org/nclbaction/parent_involvement.html)

Title I parents and community leaders must be attentive to their school and school district parent involvement policies, which should be aligned with Section 1118 of the NCLB law. This checklist involvement requirements designed to serve as a tool to help you determine whether schools and school districts are on the right track when it comes to involving parents, in the way Section 1118 of NCLB requires.

### State Department of Education Responsibilities (SEA)

- Did your SEA adopt criteria for selecting providers based on a demonstrated effectiveness in increasing student academic achievement? Was the criteria widely disseminated to school districts and to the local community?
- Did your SEA consult with parents, teachers, school districts and other interested members of the public as they developed the criteria and made the final selections of eligible providers?
- Did your SEA evaluate and publicly report on the quality and effectiveness of services offered by the provider to parents and school districts?
- Has your SEA notified potential providers annually and provided the application procedures for obtaining approval?
- Has your SEA widely disseminated and made available the approved list of providers that can be selected by parents in each eligible school district?
- Did the state select providers that are able to meet the special needs of children who are disabled and/or do not speak English as their primary language?

### Local School District Responsibilities

- Has your local school district notified eligible Title I parents that they may select a supplementary service provider if their child's school does not meet AYP for the second consecutive year?
- Has your school district provided a list of eligible service providers to parents, and set up procedures and timelines that guide parents in their selection of a provider?
- Has your school district provided assistance to parents in choosing a provider if the parents request it?
- Has your school district ensured that the providers advertise the correct information about their services, without restricting services provider from marketing their services?
- Has your school district taken the required steps to assure that the privacy of the students who take supplementary services is protected?
- Has your school district collected and reported information about parent and student satisfaction with the services, and forwarded that information to the state?
- Has your school district evaluated the provider's ability to increase the student's ability to meet AYP expectations in reading and/or math, and integrate supplementary services with the state's academic standards and the school district's curriculum and program?

### Parental Role, Rights and Responsibilities

- Did the SEA consult parents during the selection of service providers at the state level?
- Were eligible parents informed by either the state or their local school district of the providers approved by the state for their school district?
- Were eligible Title I parents notified that their children must be offered the opportunity to select a supplementary service provider if their child is in a school that does not meet AYP expectations for the second consecutive year?
- If the school district notified parents, was this notification by letter only, or did the school district employ other means to contact parents such as special meetings, a phone call home, Internet, school newsletter, or through the school's parent organization?
- Were parents provided objective and truthful information about the quality and performance of the service provider? Was this information in a language and format that parents could readily



## **TIPS FOR DEVELOPING A SCHOOL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

### **What is a Policy?**

A policy commits a school to certain goals and actions. A family involvement policy describes what effective partnership between the school and its families looks like, and lays out how and when that will happen, and who will do what.

Here are some things that the policy needs to cover:

- A vision statement that says what the school community believes about the importance of family-school partnership to high student achievement.
- Specific steps that the school and families will take to work as partners to improve achievement, such as a school-family compact, family learning activities, personal learning plans, and student support teams.
- Terms of engagement – such as times for parents to observe in classrooms, availability of interpreters and translation, principal office hours, opportunities for parent-teacher communication, and so on.
- Information about standards and assessment, and how to monitor student progress.
- Who will be responsible for carrying out the policy, including school staff, parents, and community members.
- Resources, such as funding, space, equipment, and staff time and positions.

The policy also needs to lay out how it will be developed, promoted and assessed:

- How parents, school staff, community members and students will be involved in developing and approving the policy.
- Guidelines for measuring whether the policy is working, such as increased parent involvement in school activities and improved student attendance.
- How parents, school staff, and community members will learn about what the policy says.

### **Steps to Develop a Policy**

1. Bring together an action team that represents the people who will carry out the policy, including parent leaders who reflect the diverse families in the school.
2. Find out how families and school staff want to work together to improve achievement. What they are interested in doing and learning about? What supports do they need? Focus groups, surveys and interviews are good ways to do this.
3. Revise the existing policy to respond to current needs and interests. Focus on action – what needs to happen and when.

### **What Should a Policy Cover?**

First and foremost, the policy must focus on improving student achievement. The research on family involvement and student achievement strongly suggests the following:

- A school that is family-friendly: warm, helpful, and welcoming to families of all backgrounds.
- Activities and programs for families that are clearly linked to improving achievement. (Checklist: How will they help families understand what their children are learning, what good work for their children's age and grade level looks like, and how to help their children at home?)

- Close, personal relationships between staff and families, through one-to-one and small group contact.
- Information, workshops and other activities for families on how to help their children's learning,
- Bridging cultural differences, by understanding families home cultures, identifying their strengths and assets, making sure all have chances to contribute.
- Encouraging families to be effective advocates for their children: help them take more challenging classes, and plan for post-secondary education and a career.
- Opportunities for families to volunteer or contribute both at home and at school.
- Building the capacity of teachers, parents, and other school staff to work together through training and professional development.

### **Sample of an elementary school policy:**

**Vision:** Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Research tells us that parent involvement makes a big difference. When schools welcome families, establish personal relationships among families and staff, help parents understand how the system works, and encourage family-staff collaboration to improve student achievement, students do better in school - and the schools get better.

Our school is committed to being family-friendly and to working as partners with our families to help ALL our students learn to high levels.

Our school encourages families to be:

- teachers of their children at home
- supporters of our school and of public education
- advocates for their own and other children, and
- decision-makers in school policy and practice

To be fully family-friendly, our school will provide:

1. A welcoming environment
  - Friendly signs welcome visitors and explain how to get around the building.
  - Standards of welcoming behavior apply to **all** staff, including front office staff, bus drivers, security guards, custodians and cafeteria workers.
  - Visitors and callers are greeted politely and right away and can get information easily.
  - A comfortable family resource room is a place for parents to meet, and lends books, games, and educational information for families to use at home.
2. Programs and activities to engage families in improving student achievement
  - Current student work is displayed throughout the building, so that visitors can understand the purpose of the work and the high standards it is to meet.
  - Programs and activities help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards.
  - Workshops, learning kits, and other activities show families how to help their children at home -- and respond to what families say they want to know about.
  - The school reports to parents about student progress and how teachers, parents and community members can work together to make improvements.
3. Strong relationships between teachers and families
  - The school welcomes new families, offers tours, and introduces them to staff and other families. Bilingual speakers are available to help families.

- Teachers and families can meet face-to-face and get to know each other, through class meetings, breakfasts, home visits, and class observations.
  - Teachers or advisors make personal contact with each family at least once a month.
  - A family liaison helps teachers connect to families and bridge barriers of language and culture.
4. Opportunities for families to develop their skills, self-confidence and contacts
    - Families are involved in planning how they would like to be involved at the school.
    - School committees and the PTA/PTO reflect the diversity of the school community and actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds.
    - The school is open and accessible – it is easy for parents to meet with the principal, talk to teachers and counselors, and bring up issues and concerns.
    - Parents develop school improvement projects and do action research – survey other families, observe in classrooms, review materials, and visit other schools and programs.
  5. Professional development for families and staff on how to work together productively
    - Families learn how the school system works and how to be effective advocates for their children.
    - Teachers learn about successful approaches to working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds.
    - Families and staff can learn together how to collaborate to improve student achievement.
    - The school reaches out to identify and draw in local community resources that can assist staff and families.

This policy was developed by a committee of parents, teachers, support staff, and community members. Here is what they did:

1. They conducted focus groups with families, staff and community members, and did a school climate survey to find out what was important to them.
2. They drafted a policy and distributed it widely for comment.
3. They revised the policy using the comments and had it ratified by the school council, the parent organization, and the faculty.

The policy should be reviewed every year and updated or revised as needed using the process described above.

## **KEYS TO SUCCESS**

A family involvement program can serve as a forum for discussion and a conduit for change. Based on information from ongoing family-involvement programs, it's important to keep in mind the following points:

- **Remember, there is no "one size fits all" answer to partnerships.** Identify, with families, the strengths, interests and needs of families, students, and school staff and work from there.
- **Set clear and measurable goals** based on family and community input.
- **Develop a variety of outreach mechanisms** to inform families, businesses, and the community about family involvement policies and programs. These can include newsletters, flyers, personal contacts, slide shows, videotapes, local newspapers and cable TV, web sites, and public forums.

- **Provide a varied menu of opportunities for participation** geared to the diverse needs of families, including working families. Schedule programs and activities flexibly. Recognize that effective family involvement takes many forms that may not necessarily require parents' presence at a workshop, meeting, or school.
- **Ensure that families and students have complete information about the standards students are expected to meet**, examples of student work that meets these standards, and understanding of how students will be assessed. For example, hold curriculum nights to feature the standards and exhibit student work. Provide workshops about the state's testing program, with a chance for parents to take the test.
- **Ensure that families and students have access to information about nutrition and health care**, after-school programs, and community service agencies.
- **Recognize how a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural resources can generate interest in family-community participation.**
- **Hire and train a family coordinator** to act as a liaison between families and schools and to coordinate family activities. This coordinator should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of families and the community, including the non-English speaking community.
- **Use creative forms of communication between educators and families** that are personal, goal-oriented, and make optimal use of new communication technologies. One idea might be telephones in every classroom with voice-mail capacity.
- **Find positive messages to send to all families** about their child on at least once a month.
- **In addition to parent-teacher conferences, offer regular opportunities for families to discuss their children's progress**, raise concerns, and work as partners with school staff to solve problems that arise. To promote student success, create a support team for each student and include a family member.
- **Make sure that family members acting as volunteers in the school have opportunities to help teachers** in meaningful ways such as assisting with instructional tasks and administrative functions. In addition to being tutors and classroom aides, family members might speak to students about their careers, explain customs from their cultural traditions, or demonstrate a special skill.
- **Provide professional development opportunities** for educators and families to enable them to work together effectively as partners in the educational process.
- Involve families in evaluating the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities on a regular basis and use this information to improve them.

## RESOURCES

- [Center for Law and Education](#)
- [Connecticut's Parents Plus](#)
- [National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education Parent Involvement Policy Guidelines](#)
- [A Compact for Learning](#): gives parents, educators and other interested members of a school community overall guidance and specific worksheets to identify their school's need and strategies for high achievement by all students and the compact or agreement that parents and educators can sign which describes how they will work together.
- [Parent Information Resource Centers](#)
- [National PTA](#)
- [Public Education Network](#) website for detailed information on various sections of the law
- [Region VII Comprehensive Center](#)