

The Link

Connecting Parents and their School Community



*Building a
Parent, School,
and Community
Network that
supports
student success*



Staff

Debra Vizzi, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer

Milady Murillo
NJPIRC Program Manager

Colleen Deisroth
Statewide School and
Community Outreach

Brian Rawls
Coordinator of Partnering
Schools

Carl Shaw
Coordinator of Partnering
Schools

1-800-CHILDREN



Parent Involvement: Paving the Road for Student Success

Want to help improve your public school district? Interested in promoting academic success for the students you know and love? Find a way to get families involved in the educational process and you're sure to accomplish both of these goals! Research has consistently demonstrated that when schools regard parents as partners in the education of their children, students have stronger test scores, attendance rates, graduation rates, and overall, better attitudes towards school and learning.

But how can a parent's involvement in the school really make this much of a difference? First, it is important to understand how the definition of parent involvement has evolved over the past 20 years. Historically, involvement was perceived as a fundraising or supportive role. It was achieved through bake sales, sporting events, and inviting mom as a chaperone on a class trip. With the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, the U.S. Dept. Of Education established a new definition. Parent involvement was newly charged as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student's academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that

parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning." In summary, parents need to be partners in every aspect of their child's education.

According to Dr. Joyce Epstein, Director of the Center for School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, "the nation's schools must improve education for all children, but schools cannot do this alone. More will be accomplished if schools, families, and communities work together to promote successful students." Epstein emphasized that schools must be willing to incorporate families into ALL school processes and urged parents to rise to the challenge of working with schools, especially those that have historically struggled for achievement.

Parent involvement works when schools have a comprehensive, well planned, and long lasting commitment to parents and students. Parents in these schools should feel that they are respected as decision makers, capable of contributing and wanted by the school and their children! For tips and ideas about how to get involved in your child's education or information about parent involvement in education, visit www.NJPIRC.org today.

10 Ways to Partner with Your School

that affect children.

- Voice your support or concerns on any issue that will affect your family.
- Serve on school task forces that examine such things as school dress codes or bully prevention policies.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to develop a parent involvement policy.
- Encourage and support children to serve in student leadership positions.
- Help your school create a student's rights and responsibilities guide for families.
- Become part of a school-based management team with teachers and principals.
- Attend PTA, school board, and/or town meetings and speak to issues of concern.
- Attend workshops on problem solving, conflict resolution, and public speaking to improve your advocacy skills.
- Vote in local, state, and federal elections for public officials who support education.

Adapted from "100 Ways to Help Your Child and School Succeed", National PTA



TERMS EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

No Child Left Behind -- The No Child Left behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President Bush. The Act represents the President's education reform plan and contains the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965. NCLB changes the federal government's role in K-12 education by focusing on school success as measured by student achievement. The Act also contains the President's four basic education reform principles: » stronger accountability for results, » increased flexibility and local control, » expanded options for parents, and » an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

Title I — This is the part of *No Child Left Behind* that supports programs in schools and school districts to improve the learning of children from low-income families. The U.S. Department of Education provides Title I funds to states to give to school districts based on the number of children from low-income families in each district.

State Assessments — This refers to the tests developed by your state that your child will take every year in grades 3-8 and at least once in high school. Using these tests, the state will be able to compare schools to each other and know which ones need extra help to improve. Contact your child's school or school district to find out more details about your state's tests.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to explain that your child's school has met state reading and math goals. Your school district's report card will let you know whether or not your child's school has made AYP.

School in Need of Improvement — This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to refer to schools receiving Title I funds that have not met state reading and math goals (AYP) for at least two years. If your child's school is labeled a "school in need of improvement," it receives extra help to improve and your child has the option to transfer to another public school, including a public charter school. Also, your child may be eligible to receive free tutoring and extra help with schoolwork. Contact your child's school district to find out if your child qualifies.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) — This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses to refer to the tutoring and extra help with schoolwork in subjects such as reading and math that children from low-income families may be eligible to receive. This help is provided free of charge and generally takes place outside the regular school day, such as after school or during the summer.

Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) — This is the term *No Child Left Behind* uses for a teacher who proves that he or she knows the subjects he or she is teaching, has a college degree, and is state-certified. *No Child Left Behind* requires that your child be taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher in core academic subjects.

Adapted from "Facts and Terms Every Parent Should Know about NCLB" from the U.S. Department of Education

Helpful Parent Websites

- www.family.go.com
- www.kidsource.com
- www.funbrain.com
- www.kidshealth.org
- www.familyeducation.com/home
- www.pbs.org
- www.menusformoms.com

Parents are Important:

How many words can you find?

E Z A I E K Q Q R S W E S I I
 R T M D S C R K F S T C H W E
 A N A J V I I Z O U N N O E M
 Z V A C B O C O B Z F E M Z K
 M R Q K I O C I V Q V I E E U
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- ADVOCATE
- COMMUNICATE
- CONFERENCES
- CONTRIBUTE
- EXPERIENCE
- HOMEWORK
- PARENTS
- READING
- VOICE
- VOLUNTEER