

HOW CAN A SCHOOL ACHIEVE HIGH LEVELS OF PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?

The following Keys to Success were compiled and written by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE). They are based on information from actual school programs.

- Assess family's needs and interests about ways of working with the schools;
- Set clear and measurable objectives based on parent/guardian and community input to help foster a sense of cooperation and communication between families, communities, and schools;
- Hire and train a parent/family liaison to directly contact parents/guardians and coordinate family activities. The liaison should be bilingual as needed and sensitive to the needs of family and the community, including the non-English speaking community;
- Develop multiple outreach mechanisms to inform families, businesses, and the community about family involvement policies and programs through newsletters, slide shows, videotapes, and local newspapers;
- Recognize the importance of a community's historic, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural resources in generating interest in family involvement;
- Use creative forms of communication between educators and families that are personal, goal oriented, and make optimal use of new communication technologies;
- Mobilize parents/families as volunteers in the school assisting with instructional tasks, meal service, and administrative office functions. Family members might also act as invited classroom speakers and volunteer tutors;
- Provide staff development for teachers and administrators to enable them to work effectively with families and with each other as partners in the educational process;
- Ensure access to information about nutrition, healthcare, services for individuals with disabilities, and support provided by schools or community agencies;
- Schedule programs and activities flexibly to reach diverse family groups;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of family involvement programs and activities on a regular basis.

NCPIE is dedicated to developing relationships between schools and families. The coalition's members include the major education associations and advocacy groups in this country. This makes them a great resource for a broad range of publications, training and other services that are available to promote community involvement, family education, family support, and school and family partnerships. For more information, including guidelines on creating a school policy for parental involvement, visit their web site at <http://www.ncpie.org/> or call NCPIE's Director, Dr. Sue Ferguson at (703) 359-8973.