

**ABOUT THIS  
MANUAL**

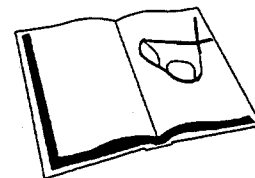
## II. ABOUT THIS MANUAL

### A. THE APEX TRAINING SERIES

ASPIRA is proud to share its new APEX training series. Organizing and Working With Parent Groups: A Manual for APEX Facilitators is a companion book to The APEX Workshop Series Manual.

#### 1. The APEX Workshop Series Manual

The APEX Workshop Series Manual contains useful workshops which teach two processes: (a) the process of becoming aware of the importance and the many dimensions of parents' rights and parent involvement in education; and (b) the process of facilitation and formulation of parent groups to discuss and decide on-going educational issues. The initial workshops (**Self Esteem, Why is Education Important?, What Does Parent Involvement Really Mean?, School Structure, The Importance of Communication, The Home Connection, Involvement with Schools**) address the importance of education and issues which were identified by Latino parents as concerns of particular interest. The remaining workshops (**Organizing Parent Networks, Group Dynamics, and An Effective Facilitator**) build upon the parent groups' participation to foster self-guided parent group leaders.



#### 2. Organizing and Working with Parent Groups: A Manual for APEX Facilitators

Organizing and Working With Parent Groups: A Manual for APEX Facilitators will help you to organize parent groups and conduct meetings more effectively. If you are already meeting with other parents, you know that parent groups can be very helpful. They can remind you that you are not alone in the problems you face. Parent groups are extremely good places for sharing information and ideas. Getting together with other Latino parents can give you a chance to discuss ways to improve education and schools. If you are not meeting with other parents, it might be time to start!

This manual will help Latino parents organize and work with other parents who want to become more effectively involved in their children's education. It provides useful information for developing important skills in defining goals, setting agendas, and conducting meetings and workshops to address issues of concern to Latino parents.



This manual will show you ways to get parents together. As a group, you can begin to talk about problems and issues within your schools. The goal is to enable Latino parents to improve their children's chances of educational success by becoming

informed and involved. This manual is written with an eye to the unique sensibilities and strengths of the Latino culture.

**Through readings and exercises designed to build the leadership skills of Latino parents, you will work with other parents on issues such as:**

- **organizing new and existing parent groups**
- **group dynamics**
- **the role of a group facilitator**
- **developing parent groups**
- **preparing agendas**
- **group problem solving**
- **speaking skills**
- **conflict resolution**
- **decision-making styles**
- **representing one's community**
- **dealing with school decision-making bodies**

Together you can learn how to become better advocates for your children's education. As you learn these leadership skills, you can define how you want to address educational issues and what you want to do about improving education.

## **B. HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL**

This manual is intended to be used as a reference book for parent facilitators who want to conduct meetings and workshops. It is hoped that the manual will stimulate thinking, investigation, and action. To that end, exhibits and worksheets are included. These will provide the group's facilitator and members with an opportunity to become aware of their community and to determine what they can do to become involved and improve it.

As a facilitator, there are a number of good reasons to have and use this manual.

- \* It includes a wide range of topics to assist you in formulating effective groups and conducting productive meetings.
- \* It is flexible in that you can choose which topics you are most interested in learning about.
- \* It provides a general background from which discussions can result. With it, you can put to use what you and the group are learning.
- \* It helps make learning easier and faster through practice from using the checklists and worksheets provided.

- \* It provides sections that can be copied easily and given to others.
- \* It encourages the facilitator to make discoveries and suggestions.

Please remember the manual does not provide all the information there is on organizing groups and how to make them skillful. It is designed to give parents and community activists some of the information they need to become facilitators and to do their job well. There may well be easier, quicker, or more effective ways to accomplish what the manual sets out to do.

It is up to you, the facilitator, to use, evaluate, and add your own experiences to this manual, so that it can guide you and inform you on how to do your job well. Once you have done this, please send the ASPIRA National Office your thoughts on how it can be improved on the FEEDBACK SHEET provided in the APPENDICES section of this manual. This is a working manual that will be refined and published again in the coming years.