

**SOME ADVICE FOR
FACILITATORS**

IV. SOME ADVICE FOR FACILITATORS

A. UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE AND TASKS

In your first meeting, there are eight tasks that only you, the facilitator, can do.

1. Be aware of your role, where you fit in the context of this task, and how this context influences you.
2. Offer a number of reasons why parents should come together and stay together.
3. Help members set goals for the group.
4. Encourage and organize parents to describe their present relationship with their schools, and their role in their children's education.
5. Help the group to focus on what they consider real problems.
6. Summarize the relationship parents and children have with their schools, and explaining it graphically and dramatically, to move them to study and understand their situation better.
7. Guide their start in research and analysis -- their data collection, readings, meetings with other parents and teachers -- that will provide them with a history of education, an understanding of the dropout situation, and how each relates to the Latino community.
8. Encourage their excitement and sense of accomplishment.

This may seem like a lot to do, but it works. Be patient. Good things do not always happen overnight. And hope for luck, which you will always need.

B. SET GROUND RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION

Get to know the personalities of group members. This means two things--knowing them as individuals, and knowing them as they play their roles in the context of a meeting.



*Take time.
Get to know and work with
the various personalities in your group.*

There are three roles people play in meetings--the facilitator, the recorder, and the participant.

GROUND RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION:

Getting the group's agreement about how they are going to talk with each other is important to making it their meeting. It prevents problems because, if participants have agreed to behave in a certain way, they will help the moderator enforce the rules if someone is going astray.

Describe the following roles:

Moderator (Facilitator):

- is neutral, does not evaluate others' ideas or contribute own ideas
- makes it possible for everyone to participate
- suggests methods and processes
- helps the group stay focused
- uses questions to draw out, probe, and clarify so that everyone's views are understood
- protects individuals and their ideas from attack

Recorder:

- is neutral, does not evaluate or contribute own ideas
- provides legible and visible group memory on flip cards
- summarizes and organizes comments, using speaker's words

Participants:

- all participate, no one dominates
- contribute views, ideas, and feelings to discussion
- realize it is okay to disagree, that everyone has a right to their views
- listen actively, do not interrupt
- if uncertain of others' meanings, ask questions
- help moderator and recorder stay in their roles and make sure ground rules are observed

Reprinted from "Hard Talk: A Discussion and Process Guide for Moderators of Forums on Education and the Community" by the Kettering Foundation, 1988.

Getting a sense of how well you work as a group is very important for continued success in your efforts. WORKSHEET #1, SELF-REFLECTION, and WORKSHEET #2, IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS AND WANTS OF A GROUP, found in the Appendix, will help you see how you interact and how you might improve.