

**PARENT
INVOLVEMENT**

WHAT DOES PARENT INVOLVEMENT REALLY MEAN?

THEME This workshop addresses the many ways parents can get involved in their children's education

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Prior to conducting this workshop, the facilitator should:

- ✓ Read:
 - Overview of the APEX Program
 - Facilitator's Manual
 - Reading Materials provided for this workshop

- ✓ Gather:
 - Flipchart
 - Magic markers
 - Chairs
 - Tape

- ✓ Do:
 - Set chairs in a circle

WORKSHOP TIMELINE

ACTIVITY A:	Introductions	20 minutes
ACTIVITY B:	Icebreaker Exercise--What is Parent Involvement?	20 minutes
ACTIVITY C:	Guided Discussion--Ways in Which Parents Can Get Involved	40 minutes
ACTIVITY D:	Wrap-up	<u>15 minutes</u>
Total Time		95 minutes (1 hour, 35 Minutes)

ACTIVITY A INTRODUCTIONS

TIME LIMIT ⌚ 20 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To welcome the group back and introduce new members to the group
 - To answer any questions not answered during the last workshop
 - To provide an overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted

**FACILITATOR
DIRECTIONS**


1. Welcome everyone back who attended the last workshop. Welcome new members to the group and have them say something about themselves if they feel comfortable doing so. Then, have each group member briefly introduce himself/herself to the new parents.
2. Briefly go over what was discussed at the last workshop. Be sure to include the importance of education, purpose of the APEX Program and objectives of the APEX Workshops. You may want to ask the group members who attended the last workshop to assist you in explaining what they learned.
3. Announce that new group members should get in touch with a person who attended the last workshop in order to get a copy of the reading material provided.
4. Provide a two minute overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted. Your overview may contain the following:

"During the last workshop, we discussed the importance of education. In this workshop, we will discuss what is meant by parent involvement and the many ways parents can be involved in their children's education. To help discuss these issues, we will be doing two exercises -- an 'icebreaker exercise' and a 'guided discussion'."

ACTIVITY B ICEBREAKER EXERCISE: WHAT IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

TIME LIMIT  20 minutes

OBJECTIVES ■ To discuss the many aspects of parent involvement

PREPARATION  Prior to the beginning of the workshop, write out some "true and false" statements about "parent involvement" on the flipchart (see paragraph #2 below for some suggestions)

FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Have a group member who attended the last workshop explain what an **icebreaker exercise** is meant to accomplish. Once the person is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.


Remind the group that an important component of the APEX Program is to "teach the process of facilitating" so group members will acquire the skills to facilitate their own meetings and workshops.


2. Display the list of the "true and false" statements about parent involvement you wrote on the flipchart. Some ideas are:
 - *Teachers are the most important influence on a child's education.*
 - *To be involved, parents have to understand everything their child is learning in school.*
 - *Parents must wait for the school to invite them to get involved.*
 - *Education does not take place at home.*
3. Ask the group to decide whether each statement is either true or false and encourage them to explain why. They should have fun with these statements!

ACTIVITY C GUIDED DISCUSSION: WAYS PARENTS CAN GET INVOLVED

TIME LIMIT  40 minutes

OBJECTIVES ■ To identify ways parents can become involved

PREPARATION  Make sufficient copies of the Reading Material for this workshop entitled "**What is Parent Involvement, and Why Should I Get Involved?**" to hand out to group members at the end of the workshop

 Prior to the beginning of the workshop, write out at least five ways to look at parent involvement on the flipchart (see paragraph #3 below for suggestions)

FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Have a group member explain what a "**guided discussion**" is meant to accomplish. Once the group member is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Ask for ideas as to how group members can be involved with their children's education and list them on the flipchart. Tape the list of ideas on the wall.
3. Using the group's suggestions which you listed on the flipchart, explain that parent involvement can mean many things. Share your list of "**FIVE WAYS TO LOOK AT PARENT INVOLVEMENT**" and begin a discussion with the group.

FIVE WAYS TO LOOK AT PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- *Giving a child a stable, loving home*
- *Supporting education at home*
- *Getting involved in the school*
- *Working with other parents to get involved and improve education*
- *Being an advocate for school reform*

4. Ask the group if this gives them any more ideas to add to their list of how parents can be involved in their children's education. Discuss any new ideas.

ACTIVITY D WRAP-UP

TIME LIMIT  15 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To summarize what was discussed during the workshop
 - To invite group members to participate in all workshops
 - To announce/schedule the next workshop
 - To obtain feedback

FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Have a group member explain what a "wrap-up" is meant to accomplish. Once the group member is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Summarize accomplishments of the workshop. Ask the group what they learned. Be sure to include:
 - *There are many ways that parents can get involved in their children's education*
3. Invite the group to participate in all workshops. Announce that the next workshop will focus on "**How to communicate with your child**"--an important first step in becoming involved.
4. Announce (or collectively schedule) the next workshop date, time and place. Be sure to advise group members of the method by which everyone will be contacted to confirm their attendance.
5. Provide parents with copies of the Reading Materials for this workshop entitled, "**What is Parent Involvement, and Why Should I Get Involved?**"

READING MATERIAL FOR WORKSHOP FIVE

What is Parent Involvement, and Why Should I Get Involved?

A. WHY SHOULD PARENTS GET INVOLVED?

Everyone involved in the schools--parents, students, concerned teachers, members of educational groups--knows youth from all backgrounds, including Latinos, can have difficulties succeeding in school.

What are some of the reasons why these young people are not succeeding? It's one thing to know that you, your family, or some of the people you know are having trouble achieving success in education. It's quite another thing to find out that you are not alone because your entire school district has the lowest reading and math scores in your city.

It is important to identify the causes of educational problems, to understand why they are happening, and to find out how to improve the situation.

Almost everyone agrees that if parents become involved in the schools, the education of their children will improve. But some factors may hinder parents' attempts to insure a quality education for their children.

Language barriers, lack of familiarity with the education system, unresponsiveness of schools, and limited time and resources available to "work the system" are just a few of the many areas where efforts to increase the home-school connection can break down.

And not everyone agrees on what the best role is for parents and overall parent involvement.

B. WHAT IS PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

What does "parent involvement" really mean? It means the many things that you can do that will have a positive influence on your child's education.

When your child was small, he or she needed guidance from you on just about everything. Now that your child has been in school for a number of years, he still needs you. *Did you know that what happens in the home is one of the biggest influences on how well a child does in school?* It is true. Studies have shown that parent involvement makes a difference. Even as your child gets older you can do a lot to contribute to his or her success at school.

The school needs your help too. You know your children better than anyone--you can give their teachers important guidance. You can help their teachers develop school policies and practices that better meet the needs of the Hispanic community.

No, you cannot do all this at once! The first step is to work on those things that are the most important concerns for you now. The important thing to keep in mind is that families and friends working *together* for our children can make a difference.

Creating a better education for Hispanic youth will require the involvement of many people. It will be a long, and sometimes difficult process, with lots of little successes along the way. Someone may have already talked to you about the fact that today over 50% of Hispanic youth will not finish high school. You are probably already concerned about doing whatever you can to make sure that your child succeeds in school and in the world of work. If your child is getting bad grades, acting up at school, hanging around with a rough crowd, losing interest in learning, you are especially concerned. However in today's complicated world, all children are in some way at risk of not reaching their potential. Even children who seem to be doing all right will face difficult challenges. They need your guidance. *Remember, learning not only happens at school, but at home.* This process never stops. You are the most important teacher in your child's life!

Parent involvement means creating a good learning environment at home and working with the school to assure that your child is getting the best education there too.

Yes, parent involvement means creating a good home environment that supports learning and volunteering for school activities, but it also means being in a parent group or participating in the schools.

Examples of different forms of parent involvement in education are in Exhibit #1.

EXHIBIT #1: TYPES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

- bringing your child to and from school daily
- talking about school teachers and experiences with your kids, and/or informally with other parents
- helping with homework
- encouraging learning in your home by creating a helpful environment
- talking with the teacher when there's trouble
- talking with the teacher when there's no trouble, to improve your child's learning
- volunteering for school activities
- joining a parent/teacher association
- joining a parent association or ASPIRA parents club
- participating in the schools, e.g., becoming a parent aide or paraprofessional
- getting involved in school board elections
- going to school board meetings and being active politically
- getting elected or appointed to the school board