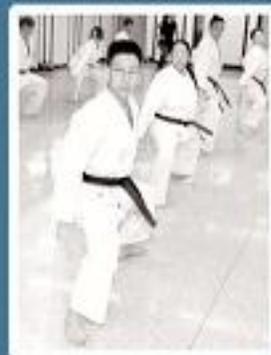


TASCO

THE AFTER-SCHOOL CORPORATION



Increasing Family and Parent Engagement in After-School

www.tascorp.org

The After-School Corporation 925 Ninth Avenue New York, NY 10019 212-547-6950

Dear Site Coordinator,

Involving parents, family members, and guardians in children's school lives is critical to their success in school. TASC encourages sites to actively engage and support parents and families in the after-school. Engaging parents increases students' success in the day school, provides parents and family members with needed programs and services, as well as a connection to their children's lives and schools. Parents also help after-school programs to better serve their students through volunteering, advising, and other program enrichment activities that parents provide.

After-school programs are able to attract parents that may feel alienated from the day school or who do not have the time during the regular school day hours. The sense of community and inclusion that your after-school program creates is what makes parents and families feel welcomed.

Thanks to a grant from *The New York Times* Foundation, TASC has been examining how sites can successfully engage parents in after-school programs. We talked with parents, site coordinators, and line staff about the difficulties and successes in engaging parents and family members in their programs. In addition, the grant provided



funding for mini-grants for University Settlement and Henry Street Settlement to create and pilot new strategies to engage and support parents in their programs. The programs the mini-grants supported are documented in this guide.

The following pages will explain why engaging parents is important, provide tips and outreach materials on effective ways to involve parents, and illustrate through fifteen examples the ways in which site coordinators and staff are successfully engaging and supporting parents at their after-school programs.

We hope you find this guide helpful. We look forward to hearing about other ideas you have tried and whether or not you adopted some of those described here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lucy N. Friedman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Lucy N. Friedman
President
The After-School Corporation



TABLE OF CONTENTS

What does parent involvement mean?	6	
What are the benefits to children and families when parents are actively involved in the after-school program?	6	
How does parental involvement benefit the after-school program?	8	
Do parents want to be involved?	8	
What do I do if I don't have a parent liaison on staff?	10	
How can I work with my school's Parent Coordinator?	10	
Does it take a lot of work to get parents involved?	12	
How do I start?	12	
Tips on improving parent and family involvement	14	
Examples from TASC Sites	15	
Welcome Parents	15	Parent Volunteers
Parent Open House & Orientation		Parent Mentors
Queens Child Guidance Center		SCAN
PS 24		CES 53
Parents as Advocates	16	Homework Specialist*
Advocacy Training		University Settlement
Children's Aid Society		PS 137
Multiple Sites		
Parent Handbook	16	Parent Focused Programming
Parent Involvement Requirements		Parent Focus Groups
Police Athletic League		New Settlement Apartments
PS 118		C.E.S. 64 Bronx
Parents as Employees	18	Fun and Educational Classes
Hiring Parents		Children's Aid Society
YMCA		New York City Mission Society
PS 95		



Parents as Advisors	23	Parents as Teachers	26
Advisory Board		Art Teacher	
University Settlement House		YMCA - Jamaica Branch	
PS 137		PS 95	
Information Exchange	23	Parents as Learners	26
Parent Newsletter*		Parent Workshops	
Henry Street Settlement		New York City Mission Society	
PS 134		CES 28	
Service Referrals / Supporting Families and Children at Home	24	Family Literacy	
Single Stop		Project Reach Youth	
CAMBA, St. Christopher Otilie,		PS 230	
Children's Aid Society, New Settlement Apartments			
Parent Resource Center			
University Settlement			
PS 63			
Appendices	29		
Volunteer Recruitment Letter to Parents			
School-Linked Services Parent Survey			
Parent Interest Survey			
Parent Involvement Survey			
Welcome letter to parents			
Useful Resources and Contact information			

** projects supported by the New York Times Foundation*



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

„ What does parent involvement mean?

Parental involvement is not a one-size-fits-all practice. Parental involvement includes many types of contacts parents have with after-school programs. Parent involvement includes parents who regularly inquire about their children at pick-up, those who write letters in support of after-school funding, and those who volunteer their time.

We want to make it clear that although we use the term "parent involvement" in this document, the activities discussed are not limited to parents - every activity we mention should be open to non-family caregivers or other family members who actively and positively participate in the lives of the students.

This guide includes ideas from parents, site coordinators, and TASC staff who have extensive experience with this issue. We encourage you to use this information to develop your own approach to involving parents as you create opportunities for them to voice opinions, learn, contribute, and engage with their children, other adults, and staff. Please experiment, innovate and let us know what works.

„ What are the benefits to children and families when parents are actively involved?

Study after study has documented that when families are involved in school, their children do better. Children receive higher grades, attend more frequently, get better test scores, show improved behavior, and graduate at a higher rate. After-school programs are an extension of the school day, and parental involvement in after-school can produce similar benefits. As importantly, site coordinators agree that after-school programs are a gateway to the day school for many parents who do not and would not otherwise feel





connected to their children's school. Parents who feel connected to their after-school program are more likely to have contact with teachers and day school staff.

Parents also benefit from engaging in after school programs. Most parents are busy with work, family, and other responsibilities. Others are very isolated. Parents enjoy activities that offer a chance to socialize, and in particular to discuss common concerns with other parents. After-school programs are also an important forum for identifying and integrating resources and services that strengthen families. Many CBOs, like CAMBA, address the whole family by matching them with other agency services. Similarly, sites offer skill building workshops including employment readiness, ESL, GED, and learning how to help a child with homework. Site coordinators also try to help parents have fun through dance, cooking, and exercise programs.

Many sites provide referral information for social and financial services provided by their CBOs that may be of interest to parents. Some sites are running a Single Stop program that provides parents and community members free legal and financial services and social service referrals. By providing services to parents and family members at the after-school site, a relationship is established between the family and the after-school program.





„ How does parental involvement benefit the after-school program?

All site coordinators can describe those moments when they need more hands and eyes than their staff can provide. During those moments, parents can assist you as chaperones for trips, helpers at special events, or someone to coordinate a holiday celebration. However, parents can play other important roles.

Many programs have parent advisory committees that meet regularly to review the program and to develop new and innovative ideas. Other site coordinators rely on a core group of parents in a less formal way - bouncing ideas off frequent volunteers or holding periodic meetings open to any parents who are able to attend. Creating a program that reflects the ideas and desires of the parents involved leads to program improvements, increased program satisfaction and attendance, and additional parental investment.

„ Do parents want to be involved?

Yes. When asked, parents tell us that they care about their children and the quality of their education. They say that if they did not have other responsibilities they would want to spend more time with their children in the after-school hours. But, parents also report that they have little free time, busy lives and some are under enormous stress. Parents should be made aware of the benefits their involvement have to them-





selves, the after-school program, and especially to their children. Most parents become involved with their school programs when they feel welcomed and appreciated. Parents come in large numbers to the baking and sewing classes that the Children's Aid Society runs at P.S. 152. The New York City Mission Society at CES 28 offers workshops and classes based on parent surveys that identify topics of interest.

Some parents do not know how to get involved. The experience of the Shorefront YMCA at P.S. 253 is instructive. Faculty and administrators were frustrated by the lack of parental involvement in this school with a predominantly immigrant population. When their efforts to contact parents failed, they concluded that parents were not interested in their children's academic success.

Further investigation by after-school staff revealed that parents did not respond to the school's traditional approaches - phone calls, conferences, response to notices. Many parents work, don't have phones, or cannot communicate in English. In turn, the parents felt that the school was ignoring them and did not understand their concerns.

The after-school program mounted a very successful effort to improve communication with parents through training and hiring appropriate staff, increasing and improving communications at dismissal, and inviting parents in on their own terms.





„ What do I do if I don't have a parent liaison on staff?

It does not matter whether you have a full time staff member devoted to parent engagement. TASC's research suggests that sites with a parent liaison are not necessarily more successful than those without. The key factor is how committed the site coordinator is to engaging parents. When every staff member feels that it is part of his or her job to build trusting and respectful relationships with parents - parents turn out.

An experienced site coordinator stated that parents feel welcome when staff accept them for who they are. If the program understands parents' interests and limitations, and is willing to help them, parents will begin to participate and ultimately become more engaged.

„ How can I work with my school's parent coordinator?

All schools have a Parent Coordinator hired by the Department of Education. Parent Coordinators are responsible for encouraging and promoting active involvement by parents in their children's education. Coordinators work to make schools more welcoming to parents. In addition to principals and teachers, Parent Coordinators are an important point of contact for parents at their children's schools. Parent Coordinators are trained to help parents find answers to their questions and concerns.





The relationships between Parent Coordinators and after-school programs have the potential to promote parent engagement in a meaningful and significant way in after-school. Given the time and scheduling constraints that may exist in your school, we encourage after-school programs to work closely with parent coordinators. At the beginning of the school year, make an effort to meet with your school's parent coordinator to establish a plan for the year on how to work collaboratively to engage, educate, and inform parents. PS 42, Education Alliance invites their Parent Coordinator to staff and parent orientations.

For example, at Sunnyside PS 199Q the school's parent coordinator is also on the after-school program staff, handling all sorts of administrative and programmatic responsibilities. The Parent Coordinator has been a critical link between the school and the after-school program. The Parent Coordinator is beloved by staff and students and has an extraordinary knowledge of the school and surrounding community. She also has several children who attend PS 199 as well as the after-school program and a son who works as a youth worker in the program.





„ Does it take a lot of work to get parents involved?

It doesn't have to. Successful site coordinators repeatedly give the same advice, "If you treat parents right, they will come."

Unanimously, they recommend hiring staff that reflect the cultural diversity of the students. Training is also key. Focus on how to make parents feel welcome, helping staff become sensitive to cultural diversity, developing skills for diffusing conflicts, and setting a positive tone. Some sites devote a day of its new staff training to these issues. Review the enclosed list of ways to involve parents. Some of them take more time than others, but many are quick, easy and low cost.

Working collaboratively with school administrators and the PTA is also a proven practice. Principals, PTA officers, and site coordinators can join together to create one school-wide forum for parental engagement. Partnering reduces duplication and decreases demands on parents' already limited time.

„ How do I start?

Learn about your families' interests, abilities, other commitments and needs. Talk to people about the social and educational needs in your neighborhood. Hold a focus group one afternoon a half-hour before pick up time, or try distributing a survey (remember to have it translated as needed) and ask the students to bring it home.





Offer an incentive to those who return it. Feel free to use examples of surveys and questionnaires at the end of this document.

Foster a culture of parent involvement at the beginning of the school year. The Shuang Wen Academy Network at PS 184 has families sign a school compact agreeing to support their child in both the day and after-school programs. Parents are asked to volunteer four afternoons throughout the year.

Use other informal moments of conversation with parents to build relationships that can grow. Notice points of contact that can be transformed into invitations for further involvement. For example, phone calls about absences, meetings regarding behavioral problems. Be patient. Getting parents to partner with you takes time. Start slowly and build a core group of parents. Ask them to reach out to friends and neighbors.

Each day brings a new chance to build collaborative strategies to promote parent engagement with the day school. Talk to the principal, teachers, the parent coordinator as well as the parents who are already involved in your program. Your common mission, your program's experience with parents, and your shared commitment to the children and families in your school make you natural partners. Share these tips with them as you work towards this common goal.



HELPFUL TIPS

The following are some simple start up suggestions for improving parental attendance at activities and workshops.

1. Make sure the topics are of interest to your parent body by using surveys to generate ideas and instill ownership. Assign parents jobs at the meetings
2. Use the children to draw the parents in. When the children really want their parents to attend -- they will respond
3. Develop and distribute meeting agendas in advance of meetings
4. Conduct outreach and meetings in the languages of families
5. Schedule events and meetings on consistent dates so people can plan in advance
6. Think about the lives and schedules of the parents before you select a meeting time
7. Serve food
8. Provide carfare
9. Provide childcare
10. Invite siblings or other children
11. Offer incentives like small stipends or donated gifts
12. Make all events fun
13. Make time so parents have an opportunity to get to know one another
14. Take a moment to appreciate the parents who are taking the time for this important work and acknowledge their dedication in a meaningful way
15. Work with your school's Parent Coordinator to gauge parental interest and increase outreach
16. Make sure your staff is trained to deal with or refer out for any issues facing parents at your program or refer them to other resources
17. Celebrate accomplishments with a culminating event



IDEAS ON HOW TO IMPROVE PARENTAL AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



Examples from TASC sites

WELCOME PARENTS

Make sure from the first day of the after-school program parents know that they are important and that their involvement is critical to the success of the program and to their children. Post signs that show parents ideas and assistance are welcome - make sure signs and materials are printed in the appropriate languages. Host a regular telephone hour when parents can ask questions or offer suggestions. Have an Open Door policy that encourages parents to visit and meet the site coordinator and staff. Make sure materials are translated when necessary.

Parent Open House & Orientation

Queens Child Guidance Center

PS 24

PS 24 holds a variety of events for parents throughout the year, but kicks off the year with a parent open house. The open house gives parents the opportunity to participate in program activities with their children. By providing parents the opportunity to become acquainted with what their children actually do during the day and to see their children as learners, parents feel more involved and connected to the program. Thorough outreach and recruitment is conducted at PTA meetings, through the distribution of flyers, telephone calls, and personal invitations to ensure a good turnout.





An open house is also a good opportunity to ensure that parents are aware of other programs and activities available to them through the after-school and CBO and gives you a chance to review your program's rules, regulations and expectations. Stress to the parents how important their involvement is to their children's success.

PARENTS AS ADVOCATES

Train parents to educate policymakers, legislators, the media, and community members about the importance of after-school programming. Parents can write letters, sign petitions, and garner support from other organizations in which they are involved.

Consider offering a training to help parents take on this new role, understand the issues, and master the skills of effective advocacy.

Advocacy Training
Children's Aid Society
Multiple Sites

Parents are trained by professionals (ASPIRA, EPIC) in advocacy skills - with a focus on education issues. The same parents are trained to train other groups of parents. When an important bill needs support, parents and families are ready to make phone calls and write letters on behalf of the program.

PARENT HANDBOOK

Make sure your Parent Handbook covers everything you want parents and family members to know about your program. Make sure





families feel welcome and stress the importance of family involvement in the program. Feel free to use TASC's Parent Handbook as a guide for your own Handbook - include any and all elements that seem important to your program and families. Tap parents' or guardians' skills and resources, ask parents what talents they can bring to the program. In your parent handbook, you may want to include a Volunteer Recruitment Letter that will inform you how parents would like to be involved. You can also ask parents to sign an Involvement Commitment Letter that is included in the handbook. (examples in appendix)

Parent Involvement Requirements Police Athletic League PS 118

The site coordinator promotes parent involvement in their children's education, by "requiring" parents/guardians of after-school program participants to attend at least two parent workshops every year. Held several times during the year and sponsored jointly by the school and the PAL after-school program, the workshops focus on a range of topics, including the new curricula being used in the school (which typically require, in the area of homework, significant parent/guardian oversight and involvement). According to the site coordinator, the number of parents attending workshops has increased dramatically since last year in part because of this requirement.





PARENTS AS EMPLOYEES

The next time you have a job opening, consider notifying parents or family members. In addition, you can train parents to fill job openings you may have in the future. Mentor and train parents who are interested in future employment with your agency or other child serving organizations.

Hiring Parents
YMCA
PS 95

PS 95 noticed that a parent of one of their students is also the president of the Parent Teacher's Association and very active and engaged in the after-school program. The site coordinator decided to use funds to hire her as the after-school program's parent coordinator. By hiring a parent who is already connected to the day school allows a unique advantage to the after-school program to work more collaboratively with school as well as build relationships with other parents of the after-school program.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

If parents are unable to volunteer during the day, consider asking them to perform tasks that can be done off-site such as stuffing envelopes, contacting businesses for donations or support, or typing a newsletter. In addition, ask parents what they are interested or able to provide, perhaps they can be a special guest in the classroom for a day. If available, you may want to offer parents a small stipend for their time or offer awards or donated gifts. Develop a





volunteer bank-create list early on and call as needed. Ask parents who come early for pick up to stuff envelopes, make phone calls.

Feel free to use the Parent Interest Survey in the appendix to find out how your parents would like to be involved. It is important to delegate projects where parents can see the positive impact of their work - the initial success and positive feedback will bring them back again.

Parent Mentors

SCAN

CES 53

CES 53 uses a structured parent mentoring program to help meet his staff-to-student ratio and to get more parents involved in the program on a regular basis. Parent mentors arrive 15 minutes before program start-up to help with the transition from the day to after-school. This allows for staff members who work during the day to have a short break before starting their after-school duties. Parent mentors are paired with the same group leaders each day and assist them with activities. Mentors are also trained to assist with homework help and offer one-on-one assistance to students. Parents receive a weekly stipend and are promoted to group leader after two successful years in the program. Parent mentors are interviewed and carefully selected for the program and receive continual on the job training.

Homework Specialist*

University Settlement

PS 137

** funding provided by New York Times Foundation*





The after-school program trained parents to become literacy and homework coaches providing individual help to the most needy students. The goals of the program were to:

- „ Increase parent visibility to help demonstrate to all parents, students and stakeholders that parents are a valued and essential part of the program.

- „ Establish a supportive peer group of involved parents so that parents, especially those parents with limited work experience, don't feel that they are doing this alone and will hopefully pursue work opportunities in the after-school field after this experience.

- „ Help underachieving students improve their study skills or academic performance and provide needed extra attention.

A six-hour workshop was organized for a group of 10 to 15 parents, and delivered by Learning Leaders, an organization with proven expertise in parent literacy training and an existing relationship with the after-school program. Targeted participants had limited employment experience and gained skills that were valuable in entry-level after-school jobs. Following this workshop, participating parent coaches were matched with children and youth who had been identified by their day school teachers as needing help, and worked in the classroom with their student a minimum of two days a week, for two hours, for a period of 12 weeks.

Coaches received a financially meaningful incentive (approx. \$100 per week) for a successful period of service. Coaches came together over pizza every other week to discuss challenges, accomplishments, and strategies for working with students. The site coordina-





tor also checked in regularly with group leaders and schoolteachers to discuss how and if the program was helping.

PARENT FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

Create programming that meets the needs of the parents and make sure you create programs that will interest the parents you serve. For example, survey your parents or hold a Parent Focus Group to find out what parents are thinking and wanting from the program. Parents will not show up for an event that does not relate to their needs or the needs of their child. In addition, do not expect parents to show up just because you pick a date and a workshop. It takes time to build relationships and trust to the point where parents feel committed and connected enough to show up, but it pays to be persistent and be sure to continue to send the message that their involvement and ideas are important.

Parent Focus Groups
New Settlement Apartments
CES 64 Bronx

New Settlement's after-school program decided that parent focus groups would be a good way to elicit information and initiate a strong platform for parent decision making in the after-school program. To attract participants, flyers in Spanish and English were posted around the school and community. When the response was minimal, the site coordinator realized that this was not reaching her families. Since many parents had a history of feeling unwelcome, she had to take a different approach. She began direct outreach





with a few parents, who in-turn, gave her the names of others who may want to participate. She spoke to them individually, explaining the mission of her program and the need for parental input. Fifteen parents signed on to participate in the focus group sessions. The following elements contributed to a successful session:

1. Include an ice breaker activity
2. Ask parents to brainstorm what they wanted for their child's program and why
3. Divide parents into small discussion groups
4. Establish curriculum connections to real life
5. Conduct all communications in Spanish and English (or whatever languages are appropriate at your site)

Fun and Educational Classes

Children's Aid Society

New York City Mission Society

Parents come in large numbers to the baking and sewing classes that the Children's Aid Society runs at P.S. 152. The New York City Mission Society at CES 28 offers workshops and classes based on parent surveys that identify topics of interest. Parents can often lead these classes as well - just ask!





PARENTS AS ADVISORS

Ask parents and other caregivers to act as advisors to your program. Advisory groups or committees help build support, invest parents with some responsibility for program success, and teach valuable skills. Consider involving parents in program design and decision-making, fundraising initiatives, and in developing strategies for outreach to other parents.

Advisory Board
University Settlement House
PS 137

University Settlement holds a monthly advisory board meeting with parents. Staff tries to recruit parents who reflect the cross section of children in the program. By including parents in this ongoing way, they feel more invested in the program and in the end you create a program that more likely meets their needs.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Be creative and insightful about the kind of information you convey to parents about their child and the program. Develop mechanisms for ongoing and frequent communication about program activities, schedule, and volunteer opportunities through newsletters, web site, phone tree, or parent buddies. Think about new methods to help parents feel connected. Take into consideration literacy and cultural barriers. Consider offering or hosting classes and workshops that increase parent comfort in guiding homework, reading, research, and writing assignments.





Try providing information on tutoring, enrichment activities, and other fun family activities.

Parent Newsletter*
Henry Street Settlement
PS 134

**funding provided by New York Times Foundation*

As part of a larger strategy to increase parent involvement, Henry Street decided to produce a parent newsletter that was written by after-school staff, the school's Parent Coordinator, and parents. A special invitation was made for parents to submit articles for the newsletter. The newsletter was sent home with students and distributed to the entire school thanks to assistance from the Parent Coordinator. The newsletter highlighted the program's activities, listed job openings, and announced any parent events that were scheduled.

Although this is a time intensive project, if given the right volunteers and support, it can be an inclusive and exciting project to get parents and involved and keep them informed.

SERVICES REFERRALS - SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AT HOME

Many parents or family members of after-school students are not engaged in their community or receiving services they need or are entitled to either because they are not aware of them, or feel ashamed or isolated. Some successful site coordinators suggested





developing lists of local agencies that provide services, establishing a Parent Resource Center, compiling a Resource Book to help parents locate information and services and partnering with other CBOs that can deploy informed staff at dismissal and special events. The after-school program can represent a "safe" place for parents and family members to learn about services and programs they are interested in.

Single Stop

New Settlement Apartments/St. Christopher Otilie/The Children's Aid Society/CAMBA

PS 64/MS 35/PS 152/PS 269

In an effort to provide needed financial and legal services to parents of their after-school program, these four sites are running Single Stop one afternoon per week. Single Stop provides free financial, social, and legal advice to anyone who comes through the door. Not only does Single Stop provide free services and referrals on the spot, but it serves as an entry point for parents to become involved in their children's after-school program.

Parent Resource Center

University Settlement

PS 63

University Settlement established and operates an after-school Parent Resource Center that provides parents with information about health, housing, and employment. By referring parents to services they need, you not only provide them with an entry to





helpful services, but you create another avenue that supports their relationship with the after-school program.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Find out what skills parents and families have to offer, whether they give a presentation about their culture and heritage, read to small groups, or conduct a cooking demonstration. Many parents or family members may not realize that their skills can be useful in the after-school classroom - it is up to you to let them know. Use the parent surveys and ask specific parents if they are willing to share their time and skills.

Art Teachers
YMCA - Jamaica Branch
PS 95

Twice a week parents of after-school students get together to teach quilting and arts and crafts to other parents and family members. This project has been extremely successful at increasing parental engagement in the after-school, teaching skills, building self-confidence and creating an informal support group and sense of community.

PARENTS AS LEARNERS

Recognize how you can engage parents by supporting their needs as learners. Consider offering or hosting adult education classes and workshops on ESL, GED, literacy, parenting, employability skills, healthy child development and discipline, and substance





abuse and violence prevention. Notify parents of any free or available trainings in the area or given by your CBO that may be of interest to them.

Advocates for Children has an weekly updated postings of local training opportunities - check out - www.insideschools.org/home/IScalendar.php. These trainings include children's behavior issues, understanding the public school system, and learning how to access other regional and local resources.

Parent Workshops
New York City Mission Society
CES 28

New York City Mission offers workshops on immigration, parenting, health, teen issues, gangs, and substance abuse. New York City Mission provides programming and services targeted towards the needs of the students' parents so that the after-school program naturally becomes a program built on trust and community.

Family Literacy
Project Reach Youth
PS 230

The Family Literacy program addresses the particular needs of the school's multilingual community. The program targets non-English speaking families and provides resources to improve their English





and strengthen parents' involvement in their child's education. It is a new model of programming designed to help parents become their child's first teacher.

Through the Family Literacy Program, adult ESL classes are offered to the parents twice a week during after school hours. Many parents in the program would not really be able to take an English class if it was not offered in their child's school and part of their world already.

Once a week the adults attend parenting workshops followed by an interactive arts and literacy experience with their child. Parents often don't realize how involved they can be with their child's homework. The parenting workshops teach parents ways to check homework and share a book even if they are just learning English. Parents also learn basic teaching techniques to help them turn simple activities like laundry and grocery shopping into learning opportunities.



SAMPLE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT LETTER TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

One of the reasons our after-school program is great is because of the concern and involvement of many parents and families.

Research has shown again and again that students with involved parents are successful. Even though they might not admit it, students want their parents to be concerned and involved with their education and life. This gives them a sense of security because they know that their parents care enough to go that extra mile.

As a parent, there are a number of ways you can help out at the after-school, including:

F attendance	F mailing	F classroom aide
F hall monitoring	F library	F field trip chaperone
F filing	F copying	F newsletter writer

Please note the time(s) and day(s) that work for you.

F 2-4 p.m.	F 4-6 p.m.	F 6-8 p.m.		
F Mon	F Tues	F Wed	F Thurs	F Fri

Contact me, the site coordinator, or your son or daughter's teacher to talk about how you'd like to volunteer. Become involved in monthly activities or a newsletter, attend school's productions or other programs. Your attendance says a lot about how much you care. Whether you have two hours a week or two hours a year, we'd love to hear from you! If you'd like to help out but aren't quite sure how, just let us know and we'll figure something out. Thanks for your help!

Sincerely,

Site Coordinator



SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN/ FAMILY INTEREST SURVEY

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please take a few minutes to fill out the questionnaire below. This information will help us figure out how we can best meet your needs. Please return the form with your son or daughter. Research shows that children take learning more seriously when parents show an interest in their education.

1) There are several types of parent involvement. Please check the ones that interest you.

- F Communication (conferences, school programs, contact via phone, note, meetings, newsletters)
- F Parenting (evening parent meetings, short seminars of interest)
- F Volunteering (helping at school or home)
- F Parent/student afternoon at school

2) Please check any possible seminar topics that would be of interest to you - and add any others that come to mind.

- F Homework hassles
- F Discipline
- F Spending/saving money - financial issues
- F Bully control
- F Family changes
- F Dealing with teens/pre-teens
- F Health issues
- F Home/school communication
- F Fun and education games and things to do with children
- F How to help your children with homework
- F Making sure your kids understand the importance of education



- F Violence prevention
- F Peer pressure
- F Helping a dyslexic child or children with other learning difficulties
- F How to better work with children who have difficult behavior
- F Other: _____

3) So we know what works for you, please fill in below:

A. About how long should seminars last?

- F 1 hour
- F 2 hours
- F 3 hours

B. How many sessions for seminars

- F 1 evening
- F 2 evenings

C. What evening of the week would be best?

D. What starting time?

- F 5:30 p.m.
- F 6 p.m.
- F 6:30 p.m.



SAMPLE OPENING NOTE OF PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Family Member:

You are your child's most valuable asset. It is important that you, as a parent/guardian, become involved in the educational process, to ensure a successful learning experience for your child. To help you become involved, we invite you to read and discuss this handbook with your child. It is very important that you and your child understand the policies of the after-school program.

To help us serve your child well in after-school, we need your help and input. To be successful, we want to establish a collaborative relationship between after-school and your home. We have found that receiving support at school and at home is important to the educational, mental, and physical growth of our students.

We look forward to a very exciting year and to getting to know you. We encourage you to become involved by volunteering in the school.

Our staff is committed to the growth and development of every student. We encourage you to support them and to let us know if you have any concerns or questions. Our after-school program is a family business.

Thank you for your support.

Best wishes,

Site Coordinator



SAMPLE PARENT COMMITMENT AGREEMENTS

(additional examples are in the parent & family handbook)

Homework

As a parent / guardian of a child in the _____
After School Program, I agree to:

1. Check my child's homework with him / her to make sure it is completed.
2. Support my child with unfinished or difficult homework or other related issues if necessary.
3. Talk with the After School Coordinator about homework or other related issues if necessary.
4. Be on time every day to receive my child at dismissal time or designate another adult to do so.

Parent / Guardian

Signature _____

Parental Involvement

As a parent / guardian of a child in the _____
After School Program, I agree to:

Attend at least 2 parent or family workshops per school year. These workshops are typically held following the after-school program or in the evening. Topics will vary throughout the year. We encourage you to participate in the selection and development of these workshops.

Parent / Guardian

Signature _____



