
Chapter 9 At-a-Glance

Chapter 9 is dedicated to the important topic of how to form meaningful partnerships with the parents of migrant students who often feel as though they are strangers in a strange land. The linkage between parental support and their children's success in school is well documented. This chapter will provide you with insights into some reasons why it is often difficult to communicate with and enlist the support of language-minority parents across cultural and linguistic divides. It is particularly difficult at the middle and high school levels where a student has so many different teachers.

In this chapter, you will also find many practical strategies for reaching out to migrant parents who may feel intimidated in a school setting. It is particularly crucial to keep the lines of communication open with parents who may depend completely on their children for translations. They need to know when their children are doing well and when they are not doing well so that they can lend their support. Too often, if a student is struggling academically and/or socially, the parents are the last ones to know.

Toward the end of the chapter, you will find some documents translated into Spanish. The document entitled "Parental and Student Responsibilities" (in English and Spanish on page 184) is a comprehensive list of things that parents need to know about U.S. schools and what is expected of parents and students. This list also contains specific tips on what parents should do to ensure that their children do not lose precious partial or full credits as they move from school to school. The document in Spanish entitled "Sugerencias Para Los Padres" (p. 188) does not have an English version. It addresses the rights that parents have to ask for translators and spells out some important expectations of U.S. schools, such as attending parent meetings, where failing to appear may be interpreted as lack of interest.



In the spring, Goyo Vargas, the mayordomo from the farm in Minnesota came to ask Papa if we would sign up to go north again. Of course we would go. As he had every other year, the mayordomo asked if Papa would be willing to go in early May and stay until October. Papa answered as he did every other year. We would go the day after school ended and we would return the day before school started. Papa told Goyo again how important it was to him that his children finish high school. Goyo smiled, shook his head at Papa's stubborn dreams, and agreed.

—*Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child*
by Elva Treviño Hart

CHAPTER 9: Fostering Home-School Partnerships

We know that parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and parental participation in schools and classrooms positively influence achievement. Moreover, it seems that the most useful variety of parent involvement is contact between parents and their children in the home, which encourages and aids school achievement.

For the growing numbers of limited- or non-English-proficient parents, parent involvement of any kind in the school process is a new cultural concept. The overwhelming majority of language-minority parents believe that the role of the family is to nurture their children, while the role of the school is to educate them. They believe that the schools might construe their personal involvement as interference. To involve language-minority parents in their

children's education, we must acculturate them to the meaning of parent involvement in their new social environment.

While most language-minority parents do not have the English language proficiency to engage in many of the school's typical parent activities, they may be very successful at parent-school collaboration at home. These parents can learn to reinforce educational concepts in the native language and/or English. At the secondary level, parents who are not able to assist with content-area lessons can at least participate in a homework checking system that has been negotiated with the teachers. Whenever possible, bilingual community liaisons should help bridge language and cultural differences between home and school.



1. Categories of Involvement

Epstein (1995) has been one of the principal researchers of parental involvement and its effect on student achievement. She identified six categories of parent involvement in the education of children:

1. Providing for children's basic needs

By seeing that children are fed, clothed, have enough sleep, and enjoy a secure, loving environment, parents contribute to the well-being a child needs to focus attention on learning both at home and at school. One school-related example is ensuring that children have necessary school supplies and a place to study at home.

2. Communicating with school staff

All schools seek to communicate with parents in one form or another during the school year. Parents' understanding of such communication depends in part on their literacy level and proficiency in the language (usually English) used to send communications home. When schools can provide written communications the parents can understand and can provide a person who speaks the parents' native language(s), cooperation between schools and language-minority parents improves greatly.

3. Volunteering or providing assistance at their child's school

This kind of involvement was traditionally expected, particularly of mothers at the elementary school level. However, in Epstein's study, such involvement rarely includes more than a few parents in any school. More than 70 percent of the parents surveyed had never assisted school staff. As more and more parents work outside the home during school hours, this traditional form of parent involvement has diminished.

4. Supporting and participating in learning activities with their children at home

Epstein looked, in particular, at parental activity that related directly to the children's work in class. She discovered the following:

More than 85 percent of parents spend at least 15 minutes helping their child at home when asked to do so by the teacher; most said they would spend more time if they were told what to do and how to help.

5. Participating in governance and advocacy activities

"Governance" and "advocacy" refer to the avenues by which parents and the community can influence decision making in a school system. Epstein distinguishes the two in the following way: governance activities occur under the auspices of the school system (for example, school-appointed advisory committees). Advocacy activities are organized and conducted independent of the school system: one example would be a citizen's group formed to lobby the school board on changes in the curriculum. Each type of participation requires a certain level of understanding of the school's programs and confidence on the part of the parents. Each also requires a willingness and commitment on the part of educators to include families in the decision-making process in meaningful ways.

6. Collaborating with the community

Parents encourage partnerships with community resources and services. This aspect of parent involvement is particularly important at the secondary level. Community organizations and churches often sponsor extended-day and/or enrichment activities that provide needed academic and social support.

Stages of Adjustment for Newcomers

Most of our language-minority families are still adjusting to the mainstream culture and language of the United States. The lives of these families changed radically when they moved to this country. Relationships with kin and community were disrupted, as were culturally valued ways of connecting families to community life.

It helps to recognize that different stages of adjustment may elicit different responses from parents with respect to their willingness and/or availability to be

actively involved in their children's education. For example, all newcomers to the school system need basic information about school requirements, routines, schedules, and the like. For language-minority newcomers, such information may need to be given in the home language and in a setting where there can be personal, face-to-face exchange and clarification. As families become more settled in the community and feel more familiar with how the school system operates, they may be more willing to participate in governance and advocacy activities.

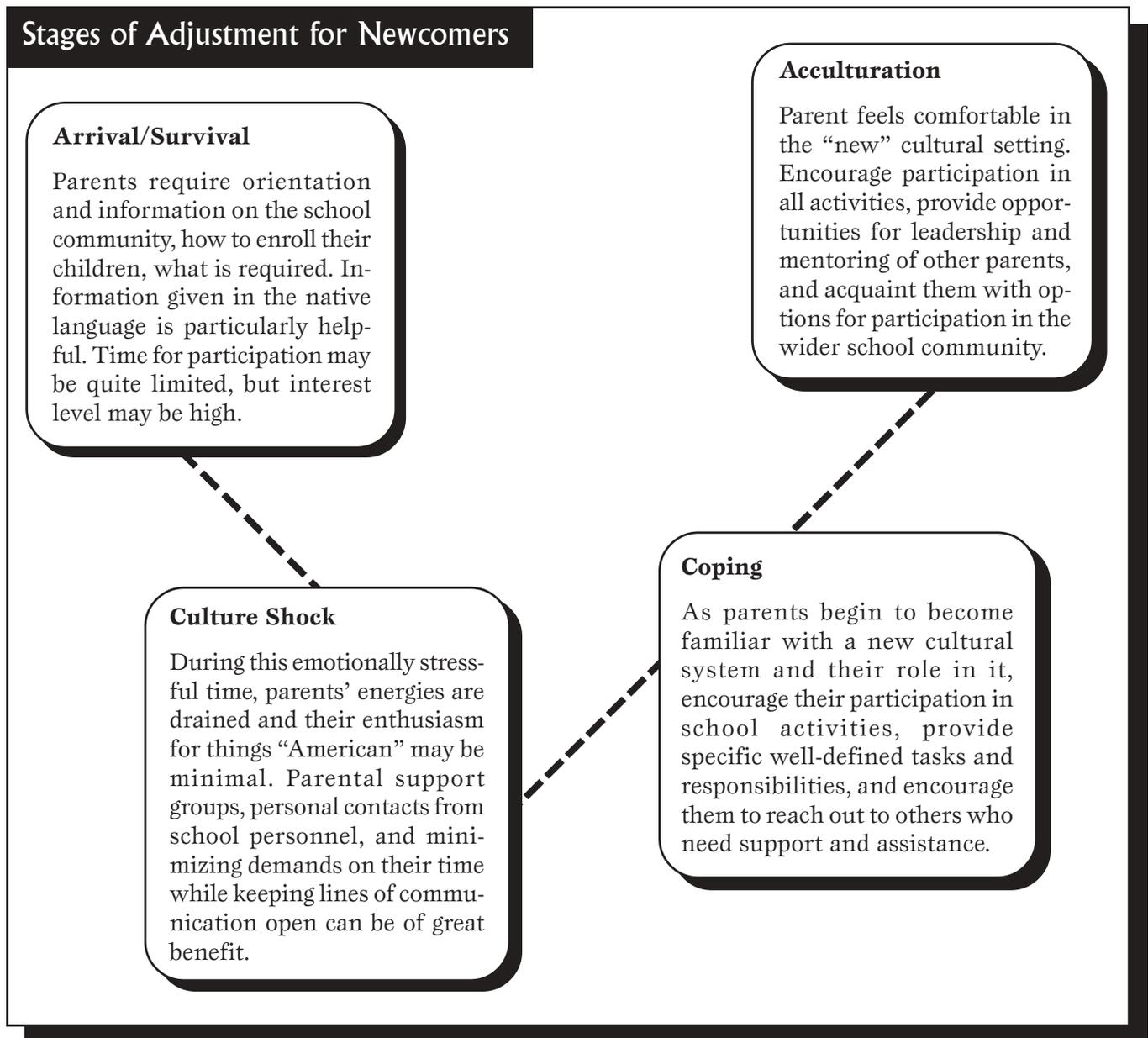


Figure 9-1

Implementing a Participation Model

How can a local school system encourage the participation of parents who are newly arrived and/or whose English proficiency is limited? Experience shows that these parents do care about their children's education and want to be involved in their local schools. When a school system provides caring, sensitive, and enlightened avenues for these parents, they become active partners in education. Migrant farm workers often have a low level of literacy in their native language (usually Spanish) and a limited amount of schooling in their native country. Some of the adults from rural areas of Mexico and Central America speak an indigenous language that may limit their ability to communicate orally in Spanish. These factors make including migrant parents even more of a challenge because sending written materials home in Spanish (or in the indigenous language) is often not helpful.

Factors that Affect Parental Involvement

In designing appropriate support systems for parents in general, the experiences and resources of language-minority parents should be acknowledged and respected. Although every family entering the school system is unique, some generalizations can be helpful. Differences in levels of involvement may be influenced by the following factors:

1. Length of residence in the United States

Newcomers to this country will most likely need considerable orientation and support in order to understand what their child's school expects in the way of participation and involvement. Native language communication, cultural orientation sessions, and the support of others who have been newcomers can be extremely helpful during what may be a stressful adjustment period.

2. English language proficiency

Parents whose English proficiency is limited may find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or to help in school activities without bilingual support. These parents can, of course, participate successfully and can help their children at home, so take care to see that they receive information and that their efforts are welcomed and encouraged.

3. Availability of support groups and bilingual staff

Native language parent groups and bilingual school personnel can make a crucial difference in fostering involvement among parents. Friendly, courteous front office staff and a bilingual telephone system encourage parents to feel welcome at school and to make phone contact when necessary. Bilingual community liaisons can also translate the information provided to parents. These services ensure that information is understood and demonstrate to parents that the school wants to involve them actively in the life of the school and in their children's academic development.

4. Prior experiences

Language-minority parents differ widely in the extent to which they are familiar and comfortable with the concept of parental involvement in schools. Some newcomers may have been actively involved in their children's education in their native country, while others may come from cultures where the parent's role in education is understood in very different terms. Others, as indicated in Epstein's study, may need only some specific suggestions on how to "help" in order to participate more actively in education at home and at school.

5. Positive attitude

According to a study of high-achieving migrant students (Center for Educational Planning, 1989) parents of high achievers could list the ways the school helped their children. These parents held positive attitudes about the school. Parents of low achievers, on the other hand, were more negative and could not list anything the school was doing on behalf of their children. Even though no migrant parents in this study helped their children with homework, parents of high achievers reported that they spent time communicating with their children and giving them educational experiences.

6. Economic need

Parents who are barely surviving economically find that their children's school attendance is a hardship. Children could improve the family's income by working in the fields if they did not have to go to school.

2. How Can We Promote Home Language Use?

In school

1. Provide ongoing staff development opportunities that increase awareness of the key role that native language literacy plays in a student's English language development.
2. Encourage educators to use a curriculum that reflects the culture, values, interests, experiences, and concerns of language minority children.
3. Help children feel pride in their home language and cultural heritage.
4. Introduce all students to the joys of cultural diversity and the desirability of learning more than one language.
5. Promote two-way bilingual programs.
6. Hire and develop culturally experienced and bilingual staff.
7. Raise teacher expectations of students who have a limited grasp of English.
8. Empower parents and communicate with them in their home language.
9. Provide students with interesting reading material in their native language. There are many websites in Spanish (for example, www.latinolink.com).
10. Give students the opportunity to write in "journals" using their native language.
11. Invite guest speakers who represent a variety of cultural groups to address the entire class or student body.
12. Ensure that educators promote communication in the family's home language, rather than sending a strong "English only" message to language-minority students and their families.

In the home

1. Develop supportive program practices that strengthen family bonds and the parents' role in their child's development and education.
2. Educate parents about the importance of using the home language with their children and that the continuing development of the home language strengthens—rather than impedes—their child's ability to learn English.



3. Cultural Considerations for Language-Minority Parents

One of the greatest sources of conflict in the acculturation process is what many parents consider to be a crisis of authority and the pressure they feel to adopt different standards and methods of discipline. In many traditional Hispanic families, the children are taught that the needs and desires of the individual are secondary to those of the family unit. Rather than satisfying personal needs, ELL students are often asked to fulfill roles that benefit the entire family, such as working, babysitting, or translating. In direct conflict is the perception of many parents of ELL students that U.S. schools tend to foster individualism and independence to the extent that children fail to learn social responsibilities toward the family.

Parents of ELL students may often feel that U.S. schools seem to produce self-centered individuals who aggressively vocalize their rights and who arrogantly defy their parents' values. The development of these attitudes undermines the norms of the native culture that consider parents, and adults in general, as people to be respected and obeyed without question.

The role of family and its members, as well as child-rearing practices may directly conflict with expectations of U.S. school personnel. Parents of ELL students tend to experience difficulty with “democratic” ideals to the extent that such ideals are reflected in U.S. classrooms and schools. Non-U.S. schools and school systems tend to be highly authoritarian and are closely connected to their respective governments. Mexico is an example of a country where the federal government dictates education policies.

Parents of ELL students tend not to participate in PTA/PTO and other parent-school groups. This is not due to lack of concern or interest; parent-school groups are often not a part of their cultural experience. In addition, if no provisions are made to make meetings accessible and/or comprehensible to language-minority parents, they are unlikely to participate.

In some countries, parents play an important role in their children's schools by assisting with fundraising activities to help secure needed equipment such as computers, which are not provided by the government. Thus, when given a clear need and manner in which they can realistically contribute, and when such activities are planned around parents' work schedules, parents may become active participants in school initiatives.

Regarding providing input into school regulations and policies, many parents of ELL students genuinely believe that it is the role of the school/district personnel to decide policies and procedures without their intervention. Parents who have limited schooling do not consider it appropriate to question a teacher's or administrator's decisions or try to intervene in school matters on behalf of their children.

By establishing trust and a positive relationship with family members, educators can help them to see that they do have rights, responsibilities, and input into the educational system in the U.S. Efforts should be made to provide parents with clear, ongoing communication (in their native language) regarding their children's progress, needs, and specific ways they can help their children be successful in school. It is very important for children to see their parents as partners with their teachers. When students are the only ones in the family who know the regulations, expectations (“No, I don't have any homework”), progress, and difficulties, this may create a potentially damaging rift and loss of parental authority within an otherwise strong family unit.

4. Involving Parents of High School Students

Orienting parents to the ins and outs of the high school experience

Parents of entering ninth-graders and newly enrolled students should be invited to school for an orientation that will inform them about the purpose of high school, the different academic choices that their child has, the rules of conduct, and the supportive role that they'll be expected to play in key areas such as attendance. Parents should be provided with information regarding appropriate procedures for dealing with school and district personnel (ways of diffusing potential problems), as well as how to solve problems that arise. They should also be informed of the school's grading system and how it differs from the system in their home country.

From the very beginning, the parents should be made to feel welcome (in their native language) and to feel that they can ask for help at any time. Many of the parents haven't attended high school and have little idea as to why schooling at this level is even necessary when their child could be earning a paycheck.

Importance of the bilingual home/school liaison (often a role taken on by migrant and/or ESL staff)

Bilingual home/school liaisons guide school staff, provide inservice training for educators, offer services to parents, and perform other tasks that promote partnerships. They can help to inform parents of their rights and responsibilities. They are able to create a bridge across languages and cultures and facilitate the communication between the classroom teachers and their ELL students' parents.

Encouraging parents to take an active role at home

Many schools are finding that much can be done to assist families in working with their own children at home to help them to do better in school. Once considered the most difficult type of involvement, this is becoming the most relevant kind of involvement for families, schools, and student learning.

Promising efforts using technology

- Teaching family members how to use computers (by loaning out laptops and/or inviting parents to school for computer training)
- Using video and audio tapes to supplement instruction
- Starting a homework hotline
- Using bilingual voice mail recordings that have instructions and/or bulletins

Importance of including teachers as major players

Teachers are too often left out of the loop when it comes to parent involvement efforts. Home/school coordinators are key people who can encourage meaningful communication between the teacher(s) and the parent(s). At the high school level, students have many teachers, which makes forging these partnerships more challenging. Some possibilities for increasing the dialogue include the following:

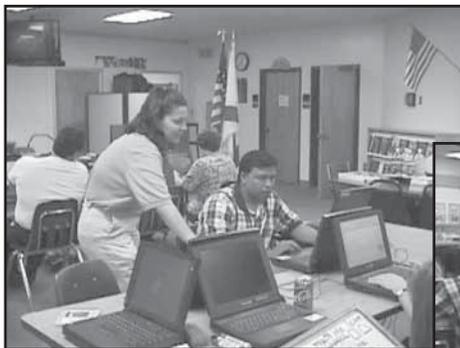
- Arranging homework and report card checking systems
- Helping parents schedule visits to every teacher in order to find out how they can help
- Inviting teachers to accompany a home visitor in order to meet a family
- Hosting open houses when parents can come to meet with all teachers and pick up their child's report card
- Providing teachers with ongoing staff development focused on cultural diversity and parent involvement

Helping with homework

Many schools (and migrant programs) sponsor afternoon resource periods that are designed to help students complete their homework. Are there ways that parents can be more involved in these efforts?

Parent centers

Parent centers show a great commitment by a school to making parents feel welcome. They can be the focal point for many valuable parent involvement efforts, such as training and discussions on the many issues and challenges that arise during their children's teen years. Videos, bilingual materials regarding secondary and post-secondary concerns, and laptop computers can be made available to families on a check-out basis. Parent center staff could also help with the complex process of applying to a college and finding financial aid. Many grants are available for the formation of parent resource centers.



Mobile resource centers

For areas with pockets of families residing in isolated rural areas, educational systems can provide outreach services by using buses outfitted with lending libraries and computer stations. Buses retired from the school system's transportation fleet can be outfitted for educational activities by combining local and federal funds or by securing donations from business partners. Parent groups or student service clubs might adopt such an effort as the focus of their fund-raising activities. Playing an active role such as this in their children's education, with clearly visible results, may be a positive springboard to meaningful parent involvement.

Parent "compacts"

A meaningful activity can be helping parents to identify personal goals for themselves that will increase their commitment to developing and maintaining a dialogue with their children and the school staff. An example might be committing to the goal of visiting each of their child's teachers once a year. Another goal might be to meet with a guidance counselor to help map out what they need to do in order to ensure that their child can go on to college. These "compacts" can be a tool that will spell out for parents how they can play a more active role in advocating for their children.

4. Teacher Tips for Using an Interpreter

Tips for any interpreted situation

- Arrange the seating so that you are facing the parent. Continue to look at the parent throughout the conversation even if you feel that the parent is not understanding you. Most parents will understand at least a few words of English—but more importantly—they will notice if your attention is not focused on them. Be aware of what message your body language is conveying.
- Address the parent directly using “Mr.,” “Mrs.,” or “you.” Try to avoid a tendency to say to the interpreter “Tell him/her...”. Again, the parent needs to feel that you are communicating directly with him/her.
- Speak clearly and at a normal rate. Enunciate fully. Be cautious of speaking fast and running words together.
- Use a standard vocabulary. Avoid slang and idioms. If you must use a technical or complicated term, provide a brief explanation.
- Be straightforward. Plan and state the basic points you want to communicate. Keep your phrases and sentences short and concise. Pause often to allow for high-accuracy interpretation.
- When the parent speaks, continue to watch him or her. Observe non-verbal communication.
- Practice good rules of conversational turn-taking. Give time for the parent to speak. Listen.
- Be patient. Interpretation requires more time than single language communication.
- Do not make assumptions. Many parents have limited experience with educational requirements, expectations, programs, and services. Provide details and concrete examples to illustrate your points.

Tips for parent-teacher conferences

The first step toward successful communication is understanding that your goals as teacher and those of an immigrant parent for a parent-teacher conference often differ. In general, Latino parents view as their responsibility sending their child to school clean, well-clothed, and fed and ensuring that they are “bien educado,” respectful, mannerly, well-behaved. You as the teacher are the educational expert and instruction is your responsibility. This means that the first question in a Latino parent’s mind as he or she begins a conference is: “Has my child been well-behaved?”

- Begin with positive information, especially regarding behavior, respectfulness, attitude, cleanliness, attentiveness, and good attendance. Compliment the parent on their influence in these areas.
- Encourage the use of the family’s native language at home. Place value on the parent’s contribution to building the child’s character, general knowledge, and (when feasible, according to parent literacy) literacy skills through interactions in the native language. Do not encourage a family to speak only English at home.
- In addressing academic issues, choose only one or two key points to discuss. To discuss too many academic problems can give the impression that you are scolding the parent for not doing his or her job sufficiently or can imply that the child is less capable of learning.
- Have a few samples of the student’s work available to support your praise or affirm your concerns.
- Ascertain that parents understand the grading scale and dates of report card distributions as well as attendance, testing, and graduation requirements.
- Many parents may be illiterate in both English and their native language. Enlist their assistance by suggesting concrete ways they can support their children’s education, such as establishing a daily study routine; asking to see homework, test scores, and report cards; assigning a place in the home that serves as a study area; and trying to help children juggle academic responsibilities along with their household tasks.

5. Handouts for Parents

5A. Parental and Student Responsibilities

Many students in today’s mobile society attend several schools throughout their secondary education, with rules and expectations varying from school to school. Listed below are some of the issues families with secondary-aged students should be aware of.

Attendance

- School attendance is mandatory for all young people below the age of 16 (may vary from state to state). A student may not be kept home from school to work, babysit a younger sibling, translate, or attend to family business. Parents can be legally prosecuted for truant children.
- Students should enroll in school on the first day of the school year, regardless of their location or how long they intend to stay there, rather than waiting until they return “home” to enroll.
- Daily attendance is expected, unless there is an excused absence.
- Many schools have attendance policies requiring teachers to fail students with excessive absences, regardless of the actual grade earned.
- When students do have excused absences, it is their responsibility to make up missed assignments, depending on a teacher’s make-up policies.
- The school should be notified of absences by a phone call or written note from a parent.

Transferring

- A variety of documents may be required from state to state. Be prepared to provide the following: immunization records, physical exam, transcript or most recent report card, withdrawal grades, proof of domicile (for school zone assignment).
- Notify the school you are leaving, preferably in advance, but if not, when you reestablish residency.
- Generally on the last day before a student withdraws or transfers, all books are returned to each class, and teachers assign withdrawal grades based on the work the student completed while enrolled in the class. Try to get copies of these grades to carry with you to the next school.
- Schools may attempt to withhold withdrawal grades if the student does not return all books or owes the school money.
- The grades received at time of withdrawal are extremely important. They help the staff in the next school the student enters to enroll him or her in the appropriate courses and reduce the risk of losing precious credits.
- Families should attempt to travel to new destinations on weekends to minimize the number of school days missed.
- Even if it is close to the end of the school year or near vacation time or the time expected to be in a location is short, children should still be enrolled in school every day possible.

English version continued on page 186

5B. Responsabilidades de Los Padres y Alumnos (Spanish version)

Asistencia escolar obligatoria

- Asistencia a la escuela es obligatoria para niños y jóvenes de 6 a 16 años. (La edad obligatoria varía de un estado a otro.) No se permite que jóvenes de edad escolar falten a sus clases por razones de trabajo en la casa, para cuidar a hermanitos menores o para hacer traducciones para familiares que no dominan el inglés. Los padres pueden ser enjuiciados en caso de que uno de sus niños o niñas falte habitualmente a sus clases.
- Cada estudiante debe matricularse en la escuela más cercana a su domicilio actual en el primer día del año escolar. Si al iniciarse el año escolar la familia se encuentra temporalmente lejos de su domicilio permanente, los padres no deben postergar la matrícula. En esta situación, los niños aún pueden ser matriculados en la escuela más cercana.
- Los estudiantes deben asistir diariamente a la escuela, y sólo se permiten ausencias que se han justificado con anticipación.
- El reglamento de muchas escuelas obliga a los profesores dar notas desaproboratorias a estudiantes con un número excesivo de ausencias injustificadas.
- En caso de ausencia, el estudiante tiene la responsabilidad de completar las tareas asignadas en clase.
- Para justificar una ausencia, un familiar debe notificar a la administración de la escuela por teléfono o por escrito la ausencia anticipada del estudiante.

Procedimientos para cambiar de escuela (Transferencia de matrícula)

- Los documentos necesarios para cambiar de escuela varía de un estado a otro. La familia debe tener disponible los siguientes documentos por cada hijo para tramitar una nueva matrícula:
 - libreta de vacunas contra enfermedades contagiosas
 - prueba de examen médico reciente
 - libreta de notas ('report card') o certificado ('transcript') de las clases que se completaron en la escuela anterior
 - una prueba de notas parciales ('withdrawal grades') recibidas en clases que se atendieron en la escuela anterior

(para estudiantes que cambian de escuela antes de la clausura del año escolar)

- prueba del domicilio nuevo (para determinar la zona escolar de matrícula)
- Antes de salir de la escuela que se está atendiendo, la familia debe notificar con anticipación a la administración que sus hijos se trasladarán a otra escuela.
- Generalmente, los deberes en el último día de clase que se atiende son los siguientes:
 - devolver todos los libros de texto a cada profesor(a)
 - pedir a los profesores una prueba de notas parciales ('withdrawal grades'). recibidas en sus respectivas clases. Se presenta una copia de dicha prueba a los profesores en la próxima escuela.
 - pagar las deudas escolares, por ejemplo, multas por libros devueltos con retraso a la biblioteca, pagos por derechos escolares, etc.
- En el caso de que no se devuelvan todos los libros de texto o los libros a la biblioteca escolar, o si no se paguen todas las deudas escolares, es posible que la administración de la escuela no proporcione las notas parciales ('withdrawal grades') o las notas finales por los cursos en que se matriculó.
- Es muy importante recibir una prueba de las notas parciales ('withdrawal grades') de la escuela anterior. Se usan estas notas para matricular al/a la estudiante en las clases que le corresponden según su edad y las asignaturas que cursó en su escuela anterior. Estas notas verifican las asignaturas que se completaron en la escuela anterior. Si se falta esta verificación de notas, sus hijos corren el riesgo de perder los créditos académicos de las asignaturas de la escuela anterior.
- Las familias deben planear su viaje al nuevo domicilio o destino durante los fines de semana; así se reducen las ausencias escolares.
 - Las familias deben maximizar el tiempo en que sus hijos están matriculados en el colegio más cercano a su lugar de trabajo, no obstante la clausura inminente del año escolar o una jornada corta de trabajo.

Véase la página 187 para la versión española.

Student Code of Conduct

- Each school has a handbook detailing the school rules and expectations for students. Students usually receive this at time of enrollment. It is the student's and parent's responsibility to be familiar with the required code of conduct.
- While each school's code of conduct is unique, regulations regarding the following issues are usually addressed: dress code, illegal substances, firearms, cheating, leaving campus without permission, inappropriate physical contact, fighting, etc.
- Generally, a scale of punishment is dealt out, depending on the offense.
- Students may be required to attend detention after school or on Saturdays. Transportation is generally not provided.
- They may perform work duty in the cafeteria or around campus.
- They may be asked to write a paper, do community service, or attend special counseling groups.
- Parents should be aware of school regulations and have high expectations for their children's behavior as well as academic performance.

Safety / Discipline

- It is important—for each student's safety—for the school to be notified of the reason for his or her absence from school. The school recommends that parents call or drop by the school with the reason for the absence. Spanish-speaking parents may call and ask to speak with a bilingual contact.
- The United States has strict guidelines for disciplining children. If a child is physically, emotionally, or sexually abused at home, the child may be taken away from the parents by a local child protection agency.

The guidelines for disciplining are as follows:

- (a) No child may be hit with a closed fist.
- (b) No child may be struck with an object such as a belt, wooden stick, etc.

It is essential that parents provide the school with a reliable emergency contact number so that the school can contact someone during the school day in case of an accident or other emergency.

In Case of Illness

If the school recommends medical treatment for a student, the parents must do what is required (for example, visit a doctor and/or obtain a certain medicine). If, for some reason, parents cannot fulfill this obligation, they should notify the school and/or a home-school liaison for assistance with accessing medical care.

Códigos estudiantiles de buena conducta

- La administración de cada escuela proporciona una guía de buena conducta a cada estudiante nuevo cuando se matricula. La guía especifica las normas que reglan la conducta y delinea como los estudiantes deben comportarse. Los estudiantes y sus familias deben familiarizarse con estas normas de buena conducta.
- Aunque la administración de cada colegio escribe su propia guía de buena conducta, generalmente se incluyen las siguientes normas: código de vestimenta apropiada, una lista de los productos ilícitos cuyo uso se prohíbe en el recinto escolar, la prohibición de portar las armas de fuego o los cuchillos, las penalidades que se aplican si un estudiante copia en un examen o ayuda a otro a copiar (**cheats**), sale del recinto escolar sin pedir permiso, o pelea con otro estudiante. También se prohíbe el contacto íntimo entre los estudiantes en el recinto escolar.
- La guía de buena conducta indica los castigos que se aplican cuando se violan las normas. Por cometer un delito, un estudiante puede incurrir castigos similares a los siguientes:
 - quedarse en el salón de detención fuera del horario normal de las clases o en el día sábado. En este caso, la administración del colegio no tiene la responsabilidad de proporcionar servicio de transporte al estudiante detenido. La familia tiene la responsabilidad de recoger al estudiante después de su período de detención.
 - trabajar como ayudante en el comedor escolar o hacer limpieza en el recinto escolar por un período determinado.
 - escribir un trabajo escrito para explicar cómo se modificará su conducta en el futuro
 - proporcionar servicios a la comunidad por un período determinado: hacer limpieza de plazas o áreas públicas,
 - tomar parte de grupos de discusión para estudiantes quienes han cometido delitos.

- En general, las familias pueden colaborar con las escuelas en la formación de sus hijos por medio de familiarizarse con las normas escolares. Pero las familias rinden su mejor y más valioso apoyo a sus hijos cuando demuestran confianza en la capacidad de sus hijos de comportarse como es debido y demuestran la fe que sus hijos pueden lograr altos niveles de éxito académico.

Seguridad / Disciplina

- Es importante—para la seguridad de cada hijo—que los padres avisen la escuela cuando un hijo se queda en casa. La escuela recomienda que los padres llamen o pasen por la escuela para decirles por qué su hijo no está.
- En los Estados Unidos hay reglas estrictas sobre las maneras aceptadas de disciplina. Si un niño es abusado físicamente, emocionalmente, o sexualmente en casa, el niño será quitado de los padres por una agencia local de protección de niños.

Las reglas de disciplina son:

- (a) No se permite pegar a un niño con puño cerrado.
- (b) No se permite pegar a un niño con un objeto como cinturón, palo, etc.

Es muy importante que los padres den a la escuela un número de teléfono que se puede usar durante el día escolar en caso de emergencia.

En Caso de Enfermedad

Si la escuela recomienda un tratamiento médico para un niño—los padres deben seguir el aviso, por ejemplo: visitar a un doctor o comprar una medicina. Si—por alguna razón—los padres no pueden cumplir con el tratamiento sugerido, deben avisar la escuela para que puedan ayudarles.

5C. Sugerencias para los Padres

Idioma.

Si los administradores escolares no hablan su idioma, puede hacer lo siguiente: Asegúrese antes de llegar a la escuela de sus hijos, que habrá alguien presente que hable el idioma indicado para así facilitar la conferencia entre el padre y los maestros. Siempre sería recomendable llamar antes y pedir una cita con la Directora de la escuela o el maestro de sus hijos. También sería recomendable pedir información escrita en el idioma de uno, para así comprender más a profundidad como es el manejo de la escuela y de las clases. Estos informes le darán una idea de los procedimientos, reglamentos, y requisitos del sistema escolar.

Diferencia en el Sistema Cultural.

En los Estados Unidos se requiere que los padres se comuniquen con los maestros para discutir el progreso, el comportamiento, y las calificaciones de sus hijos. El romper citas o simplemente no acudir a las mismas, se interpreta como una falta de interés por parte de los padres.

Derechos y Responsabilidades.

Ustedes tienen derecho, como padres, a ser informados sobre todos los procedimientos, exámenes, calificaciones, y decisiones que afecten a sus hijos. A la misma vez, ustedes tienen responsabilidades—todo no puede ser por parte de la escuela sin la cooperación de los padres.

Conferencias.

Discutan con los maestros de sus hijos asuntos tales como horas en que puedan tener conferencias y transporte a las mismas—siempre existen alternativas—y los maestros de sus hijos estarán dispuestos para recibirlos.

Estado de Inmigración.

Las escuelas NO son extensiones del gobierno federal. Aunque las mismas reciben fondos del gobierno NO son lugares políticos donde se discuten asuntos de inmigración. Hacer esto es ilegal.

Nuestra Cultura.

Aprendan todo lo que puedan sobre la cultura norteamericana—pero nunca se olviden ni dejen la suya. Es sumamente importante que sus hijos se sientan orgullosos de su cultura y que se sientan así porque sus padres se los han inculcado. Estos valores y costumbres son los que nos destacan como latinos y debemos de estar orgullosos de eso.

Recuerde que:

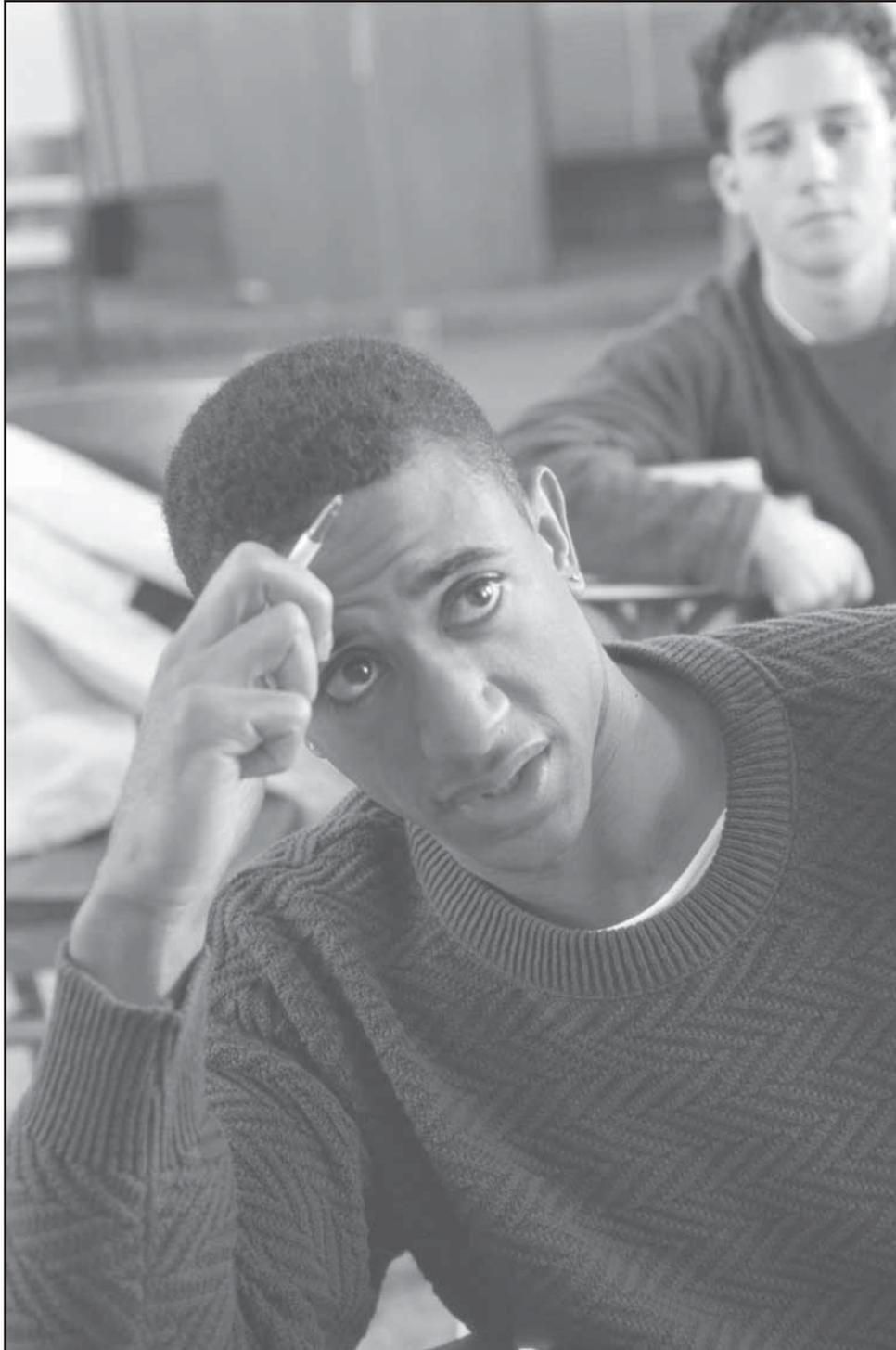
Ustedes son la extensión de los maestros en la casa.

Manténgase siempre en contacto con la escuela.

Tienen derechos y responsabilidades.

“Here in the U.S., I get help from the tutors. It is hard because it is another language and another country, but the time is passing, and we are each day better.”

—Antonio, 9th-grade migrant student





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