

One Dozen Parental Involvement Ideas That Really Work

Welcome environment

1. Know the secret to getting parents to attend meetings at school—make sure they know they're **genuinely** invited.
2. Focus on the strengths of families – they know their children better than anyone else. Find ways to get that information to teachers, other school staff
3. Involve parents in goal-setting for their children. It promotes working as a team.
4. Provide training and lots of school information for parent volunteers. They are powerful goodwill ambassadors.

Communication

5. Provide a **brief** parent newsletter. One sheet of paper is best.
6. Remember "**30-3-30**" in writing school newsletters. Eighty percent of people will spend just **30 seconds** reading it. Nineteen percent will spend **three minutes**. One percent will spend **30 minutes** (your mother).
7. Remember the dollar bill rule for newsletters. A dollar bill placed anywhere, at any angle, on any page should touch some element of graphic interest -- headline, box, screen, bullets , **bold type**, picture—or it's too dull for most people to read.
8. Write for parents at 4th to 6th grade level. Use a computer to check the reading level.
9. Understand one key reason for parent non-involvement: **Lack of information**. One memo won't do. Try letters & notes & signs & calls & newspaper & radio & TV. Repetition works & works & works.

Inspiring Parent Involvement

10. Know why parents say they are not involved: 1) Don't have time, 2) Don't know what to do, 3) Don't know it is important, 4) Don't speak English.
11. Take heart from the "one-third rule." Research says if you can get *one-third* of a school's parents involved, you can begin to make significant improvement in student achievement.
12. Don't make judgments about parents' lack of interest in their children's education. You'll probably be wrong. "Walk a mile in their shoes" and understand that what looks like apathy may be exhaustion.

—This information was prepared by [Dr. John H. Wherry](#), President, The Parent Institute, "Education's #1 Source for Family Involvement Information," P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474, 1-800-756-5525. The Parent Institute publishes a wide range of parent involvement materials for schools to distribute to parents, including newsletters, booklets, pamphlets and videotapes as well as an automatic service providing daily-updated parent involvement information to parents through schools' own websites. For details, visit The Parent Institute website at www.parent-institute.com.