

## Creating a Friendly School Environment

School environment can play a big role in how parents perceive an educational institution for their child. It has an impact on the relationship between parents and the school. The following are some tips for creating a friendly school environment.

### Welcoming parents means that we:

- Assume that parents want their children to succeed in school and want to help their children succeed.
- Understand that many parents have been excluded from the dialogue surrounding education and are unclear about school terminology and how they can support classroom instruction.
- Begin with a group of parents (no matter how small) and work with them to devise a plan for increasing parent involvement.
- Provide a parent room or center, facilities for child care, some basic amenities (like coffee), and a way of dealing with language differences.
- Understand that a parent's time is of equal value to a teacher's time. Perhaps a parent meeting at 9:00 A.M. is convenient for teachers, but not at all convenient for parents. In other words, is there any accommodation for parents' schedules?
- Do not necessarily assume that parents don't care simply because they are not present at school. There are many ways for parents to become involved in their children's education, and it is what parents do to encourage learning in the home that is most crucial.

More tips on this topic in the next issue...

Fresno County Office of Education  
Parent Services Center (PSC)



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Fresno County Office of Education  
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*Newsletter*

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## What's New in Fresno County Schools?

Parents at Lane Elementary in Fresno Unified School District and West Fresno School District benefit greatly from PSC's training. In our Parenting Skills workshop series, parents were asked to write a letter to their spouse and a child and to share with the class. One parent from West Fresno Unified wrote:

*"My husband is a great father. I love him very much. He works a lot and I feel respect for him and he respects me as well. He loves me very much and he is a loving, caring, and responsible with me and my children."* - Manuela.

Some of our parents at Lane Elementary School shared their experience and the valuable lessons they attained by attending our workshops. Parents expressed the importance of establishing a home environment conducive to learning.

When asked what she learned, Eva responded:

*"What I have learned from the training is to create a better environment in my home. Also, participate more in my children's daily activities and include my husband as well. Then, help my children at school by participating, attending school meetings, and volunteering at school activities."* - Eva

When asked about what workshop other parents should attend, a parent responded:

*"I would suggest Session II of the Parenting Skills because it was about drugs. I felt that the presentation was very interesting because it helps you understand what families go through with drugs. Also, that particular presentation helped me because my self esteem was low and after the presentation I felt better and my self esteem went up. Therefore, any workshop that we attend helps us be a better husband, mother, sons, and daughters."* - Hermilla

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## What's New at the Parent Services Center?

The Parent Services Center provided a workshop for teachers at West Fresno Elementary School on December 18, 2008. The focus of the workshop was to provide tips on ways to conduct an effective home visitation amongst minority families. On the same day, the parent trainers from Parent Services Center joined Clovis Elementary School staff to present parents with Family Literacy information with reading activities they can share with their children. In this presentation, parents learned about paired reading and the importance of reading with their children at home. Parents at Lane Elementary School in Fresno Unified School District also received Family Literacy workshop-reading sessions held on January 16, 2009. In addition, Lane parents received Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Fatherhood workshops in January. 2009 has been a great year for our parents!

## Healthy Tips for Parents

### Healthy Lifestyle: Diet and Nutrition, Exercise and Fitness

February is National Heart Month and Valentine's Day is a great time to remember those you love. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts, and it's easier than you think. As you make daily food choices, simply base your eating pattern on these recommendations:

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1% fat, and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day (or less than 1,500 mg if you are in a higher risk group for high blood pressure).
- Keep an eye on your portion sizes.
- Aim to get some physical activity into your daily routine each day!

For more information and fun tips for your family, call the Fresno County Office of Education's Wellness and Nutrition Program at 559-443-4832.

\*\*Source: Center for Disease Control



## Useful Information for Parents

Technology can be useful for us in many ways. On the other hand, it can be harmful if we don't use it right. Almost all of us are familiar with internet, cell phones, and some other electronic devices, however, teenagers now use their cell phones as a primary means to connect with friends via phone calls or text messaging. When it comes to electronic communication, teens may be more experienced than many adults, and many times teens use codes for text messaging or chatting on internet with friends. The following are some text messaging acronyms and their definition that parents should be aware of:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>ADR</b> — Address                     | <b>AFK</b> — Away from Keyboard        |
| <b>ASL</b> — Age/Sex/Location            | <b>GTG</b> — Got to Go                 |
| <b>GYPO</b> — Get Your Pants off         | <b>IWSN</b> — I Want Sex Now           |
| <b>KFY</b> — Kiss for You                | <b>KPC</b> — Keeping Parents Clueless? |
| <b>LMIRL</b> — Let's Meet in Real Life   | <b>MorF</b> — Male or Female           |
| <b>NIFOC</b> — Nude in Front Of Computer | <b>P911</b> — Parent Alert             |
| <b>PAL</b> — Parents Are Listening       | <b>PAW</b> — Parents Are Watching      |
| <b>PIR</b> — Parent in Room              | <b>POS</b> — Parents over Shoulder     |
| <b>TDTM</b> — Talk Dirty to Me           | <b>WYCM</b> — Will You Call Me?        |



**Notes:** If you have a computer with internet access at home, you may want to put it in a common area so that you can better monitor your child's internet activities.

## Parent Involvement

### Middle and High Schoolers Need Parent Involvement More Than Ever

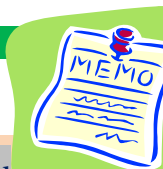
Teenagers often say to parents, "Please don't come to school!" but the truth is, they need (and want) their parents' involvement more than ever, just in different ways than they did in elementary school. Here are some things parents can do to support a middle or high school teenager:

- Tell your teen often you care about his/her education.
- Let your teen know you expect him/her to do well in school.
- Find out about homework, discipline, and other school policies and rules.
- Keep up-to-date on your teen's progress in school.
- Talk to your teen about school regularly.
- Know your teen's schedule.
- Be aware of what your teen is learning.
- Help your teen deal with problems as they arise.
- Listen to your teen's concern.
- Be available to take care of problems and reassure your teen.
- Stay in contact with teachers and others at school.
- Talk to counselors about courses your teen should take to prepare for college and career.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Review report cards.
- If your teen isn't learning, get extra help.
- Promote good study habits.
- Limit your teen's TV and telephone time.
- Provide adequate after-school supervision.
- Join the parent-teacher association.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents.



Source: adapted from "What's Working in Parent Involvement"

## Ongoing & Upcoming Events in Fresno County Schools



Clovis Unified School District, Clovis Elem School

### ELAC/IDAC Parent Meetings

All meetings will be held in the library at 6:00 PM.

### California School Standards:

March 26, 2009...(CST and STAR testing)

### Summer Activities:

May 28, 2009.... (We will have a potluck dinner after the meeting).

For more information,  
contact Ms. See Thao at 327-6100.

Clovis Unified School District

### District Migrant Parent Advisory Council Meetings

January 23, 2009.....10:00 AM PDB RM 3  
February 19, 2009.....10:00 AM PDB RM 3  
March 24, 2009.....10:00 AM PDB RM 3  
April 16, 2009.....10:00 AM PDB RM 3

Fresno Unified School District, Lane Elem School

### Parent Trainings/Workshops

January: Family Literacy (Reading)  
Substance Abuse (Drug & Alcohol Prevention),  
Fatherhood  
February – March: Parenting Skills  
April: Leadership Skills,  
Summer Activities

West Fresno Elementary School District

### Parent Trainings/Workshops

January: CAHSEE  
February – April: Parenting Skills,  
PASSport to Success

**April 24, 2009:** 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Harry Specht Memorial  
Child Welfare Symposium

**"Southeast Asian Children & Families Today:  
Culturally Sensitive Policies & Services"**

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