

# How to Reach Parents and Prevent Problems Before They Happen

# 1

*The greatest inheritance parents and teachers leave, are children.*

—Maryln Appelbaum

## **THE CHANGING FACE OF FAMILIES**

Educators tell me that students have changed. They say that children today are often disrespectful, irresponsible, and rebellious. I tell them that children have not changed, but childhood has changed. I believe that is the same with parents. Parents have not changed. They still love their children and want the best for their children, but parenthood has changed.

The face of the typical family unit has changed. When I was raising my two children, it was a mostly two-parent family world. People got married in their early twenties and had an average of two children. Most women stayed home and raised their children. Men went to work and were the breadwinners. Slowly over the years, this picture changed. More and more women joined the workforce. I vividly remember my own reentry into the workforce. I worked and still was in charge of taking care of the home activities, such as dishwashing, cooking, cleaning, getting the children ready for school, and finding adequate care for the children after school. I was exhausted at the end of the day. I still cared about my children and their teachers and school, but I had less time available to go to their schools and be involved. This is often the case with today's parents.

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I saw many instances of diverse types of parenthood in my career as a teacher and administrator. There were some two-parent families raising children. More and more, I found that I had single-parent families in which mothers or fathers had custody as well as parents with shared custody. I had grandparents who had either temporary or permanent custody. There were many blended families, and sometimes those blends changed in the course of the child's being in my schools. Parents married, divorced, remarried, and divorced. There were parents, stepparents, and step-grandparents coming to conferences and open houses. There were two-parent families in which both parents were same-sex parents. And there were parents who were separated not because of divorce but because of work. These were parents who were serving in the armed service and parents or stepparents whose spouses were working in another city, state, or even country.

Increasingly, there were parents who spoke little or no English. My own family growing up was like this. I entered kindergarten speaking absolutely no English. I did not even know that my name was Maryln because my name was said in a different language at home. Working with parents who speak little or no English presents its own challenges because many parents are like my parents and embarrassed to come to school even though they want to know what was going on. My own parents were not only embarrassed that they spoke no English but that we were living below the poverty line. When parents with little English-speaking ability do come to school, they may not understand what they hear. They may, in fact, hear something in such a way that that they get upset, and soon a situation can develop in which they become angry and the school perceives the parents as "hard-to-handle."

There are also parents with different parenting styles (Rudney, 2005). There are parents who are authoritative and always having to be in control. Their children rarely get to have a voice in decisions or choices. At the other end of the spectrum, there are parents who are so permissive that their children are in charge. These parents may be passive with their children, but often they may be aggressive in defending their children, refusing to see that their children have done anything wrong even when it is flaunting them in the face. There are parents who are nurturing, and there are parents who are neglectful.

There are parents who desperately wanted to have children, and there are parents who resent that they have children. There are parents who are good listeners, and there are parents who have no idea how to listen to their children. There are families that are TV families whose only time together is gathered around the television. They eat in front of the television. They talk on the phone while watching television, and they make all their important decisions in front of that television. At the other end of the spectrum, there are families who do not even own a television or a computer. There are parents who are physically ill, mentally ill,

alcoholic, or drug addicted (Rudney, 2005). Every parent is different. They are different even when they look alike. That is because every individual is different. Regardless of their differences, it has been my experience that all parents, in their own way, love their children.

Think about this. There is training to do most work, but for the most important work of all, to be a parent, there is absolutely no training. There is only the experience that each person has had growing up. Parents often vow to be different from their own parents, but without training, many fall back into patterns that they learned from their role models. Their parents also loved them and did the best they could do. Parents love their children and are doing the best they can, but without training, most parents are fated to repeat what they learned growing up, like it or not.

Throughout this book, whenever I speak of parents, I will be speaking about all types of family units and all types of parents.

## **WHAT PARENTS WANT FROM TEACHERS**

### **Teachers Who Know and Care About Children**

The number one thing all families want for their children in school is teachers who know and care about their children (Rudney, 2005). Mrs. Green was Jordan's mother. Jordan was an only child. The Greens had tried to conceive for four years when they finally had Jordan. Jordan was very tiny for his age and had had a series of childhood illnesses that had left their mark on this little family. Mrs. Green was concerned about Jordan's new elementary school. I asked her what she wanted for Jordan. She told me that she wanted to be sure that his teachers liked him. She said that if his teachers liked him, he would like them. She said he was so special to her and her husband, and she wanted him to be special to his teachers too, not just one of many students in the class.

Ali was a high school student. She had good grades and was one of those students who worried when assignments weren't turned in on time. Her parents never came to school. I often wondered about that. Ali got really ill and was hospitalized. When I visited her in the hospital, I met her mother and realized that she spoke limited English. An uncle was there who spoke really good English, and he was our interpreter. He explained to me that Ali was embarrassed to have her parents come to school, and that is why they did not come. They cared very much for Ali and were very proud of her good grades. Ali was like many other teens, who prefer that parents do not come to school even when they *are* fluent in English.

The point of these stories is that all parents want their children to be noticed and to be cared for. They want their children treated fairly and respectfully (Rich, 1998). It doesn't matter if their children are preschoolers,

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elementary students, or secondary students. They know their children will be part of a larger group, and they want to ensure that their children are not just a number, but someone who is special. They want teachers who care—*really care*—about their children. They want teachers to be knowledgeable, but first and foremost, they want to know that their children are cared for by their teachers.

### **Caring, Calm Classrooms**

Parents want their children to be in classrooms in which teachers know and care about teaching (Rich, 1998). They want teachers who encourage their children to learn, teachers who set attainable learning goals, teachers who understand how to teach, and teachers who know how to reach students. They become upset when they hear that other children in the classroom disrupt the class and that children are not paying attention and learning.

### **Safety**

Safety is another major concern of parents (Rich, 1998). Almost every parent at some time or another has seen video clips of school shootings. Parents fear that this can happen. Recently, in the Houston area, where I live, there were two terrorist threats. People who knew about these threats were worried. Some parents did not feel safe sending their children to school.

Parents also fear that their children will be victims of bullies and gangs. They want to know that their children are safe on their way to school, at school, and at the end of the day. That means that they are concerned for their children's safety not only while they are at school but also while they walk or ride the bus to or from school.

### **Communication With Parents**

Most parents want to communicate with teachers (Rich, 1998). They want to hear how their children are doing. They do not like to be surprised. Mr. Kentrall told me a story about his son, Lanny. Lanny had Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). It was not diagnosed until Lanny got into middle school. The differences in middle school—which meant changing classes, walking through crowded hallways, having different teachers for different classes—contributed to Lanny's having problems focusing and paying attention. Mr. Kentrall took Lanny to a psychiatrist who diagnosed his son and started him on medication to help alleviate symptoms. When Mr. Kentrall attended the open house at the beginning of the school year, he met Lanny's teachers. They were very busy, but

Mr. Kentrall came away with the impression that Lanny was doing fine. When the first report card came out, Lanny was failing math and history. Mr. Kentrall was stunned and angry. He wished he had known earlier so that he could have worked together with Lanny's teachers to help his son. He could not understand how Lanny's progress could change so quickly. Lanny's teachers did not communicate after the open house. If they had communicated, Mr. Kentrall would not have become so angry.

The ideal way to have prevented Mr. Kentrall from getting upset would have been for his teachers to stay in touch with him throughout that first grading period. At the school open house, his teachers could have told Mr. Kentrall positive points about Lanny and then also added any concerns about math and history. Later on during the same grading period, Lanny's teachers might have contacted Mr. Kentrall and updated him on Lanny's progress. Together, they might have worked out a plan so that Lanny did not receive failing grades. If they did not have time to call, they could have sent him an e-mail telling him options that were available to help Lanny.

## **REASONS PARENTS DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL**

### **Too Much to Do Barriers**

It's difficult to reach and establish relationships with parents who do not come to school. There are many reasons that parents choose to not come to school. The most pressing reason is that they simply are so busy. They have great intentions but then have to work late, have to travel out of town for work, or may have so many other responsibilities that they just cannot come to school.

### **Language Barriers**

There are parents who have limited English who sometimes do not come to school. This is often misinterpreted as lack of concern for their children (Yan, 2006). Cantu's parents came from another country. They spoke very little English. When they came to school and met with her teachers, they did not understand what was being said. They felt out of place and embarrassed. It seemed to them that everyone else knew what was happening. Even though they loved Cantu very much, they eventually stopped going and instead, asked her to tell them what was happening.

### **Single-Parent Barriers**

More than thirty percent of all children in the United States live in single-parent homes (Lee, Kushner, & Cho, 2007). The single parent has

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increased responsibilities within the home. In an intact family, there can be a division of responsibilities. In the single-parent home, the responsibility belongs exclusively to that one parent. These responsibilities can be extremely time-consuming to the point of lack of parental involvement in the school. Students from single-parent families do not do as well in school academically as those from intact families (Lee et al., 2007). This may be because the single parent is so tired at the end of the day that it takes a lot of effort to ensure homework is done. It is just often easier to take the child's word that everything is fine.

Mrs. Carter has three children ages, fourteen, ten, and two years old. Her husband left when she was pregnant with the third child. She has not heard or received any financial support from him since he left. She has a great job as an executive secretary, and she is terrified of losing her job. When her company asks her to work longer hours, she does. Each night when she finally arrives home, she is exhausted but still has to deal with cooking dinner, getting the kitchen cleaned, packing lunches for the next day, doing emergency loads of wash, and trying to find time to be with each of her children. She wants more than anything to just put her feet up on the sofa and "veg out" for a few hours watching TV, and some evenings she feels lucky when she actually gets to do that. It's a huge sacrifice for her to come to school. It isn't that she doesn't love her children; it's just that she is so preoccupied with survival that it is difficult.

### **Negative Experiences Barriers**

There are some parents who don't come to school because their own experiences in school were negative. I remember one parent telling me, "I hate being here. It reminds me of when I was a child." This parent went on to tell me that when he was a child, he was always in trouble. He was in and out of the principal's office. He said that now, he just doesn't want to go anywhere near the school.

### **Diversity Barriers**

Parents may not come to school because they feel like they are a minority and are not sure if they will be valued or respected (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Sadly, in some cases this may be true. Parents who are different in any way from the majority of teachers and the school population may feel that their opinions do not count, so why bother to go to school. These parents along with all parents and family types need to be valued for their diversity, and their voices need to be heard.

I told you earlier about my own parents who spoke almost no English. They were embarrassed to come to school for many reasons. Because we were living in a very low-income area, they were very aware that their clothing was different. We all wore the hand-me-downs from other family members and friends. In our community, stories had been shared of other parents who tried with their limited English to stand up for their children in school and were not well received.

Diversity even in these modern times plays an important role in whether or not families feel included. I have one family member who is Native American. He is a “gentle giant.” He has been stopped at different times by the police for suspicious activity simply because he looks different.

Parents with physical or mental handicaps also feel different and may fear coming to school. These include parents in wheelchairs, parents missing limbs, parents with visual impairments, and parents with disorders like depression, anxiety, and Asperger’s Syndrome which can impair effective communication.

### **Student Preferences**

Students in elementary school generally have no preference about whether or not their parents come to school. Once they get into middle and high school, this sometimes changes. Their parents want them to be more independent, and the students want this independence. These parents become less involved and give their children the opportunity to handle things themselves. Some students carry this need to be independent quite far and become embarrassed or even resentful when their parents come to school. Parents who are struggling to maintain a relationship with their teens may find it easier to stay home.

### **PREVENT PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN**

The best way to prevent problems before they happen is to establish caring relationships with parents. It is very important to create situations in which parents want to come to school and want to be involved. This will affect all aspects of learning for their children including their achievement. Student achievement is higher when parents and educators work in partnership to help children (Lee et al., 2007). In Chapter 8, you will learn many strategies to create those partnerships. The partnership is the “marriage.” Courtship comes before marriage, and the remainder of this chapter is filled with strategies to help you “court” parents so that they want to come to school, and they want to be in a partnership. Pick and choose the ones that work best for your school and your situation.

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### **Start in the Neighborhoods**

If parents won't come to the school, bring the school to them! Hold meetings in nearby churches in the parents' neighborhoods. Tell them about events happening in the school. Ask local clergypersons to help by making announcements at services and to encourage family members to attend meetings.

Have translators available for neighborhoods where English is limited. Train the translators to be motivational and inspiring. Ensure that they are individuals who are excited about motivating parents to become involved in school. Have them tell parents all the options open to them with English as their second language.

Make the meetings fun. Get food and door prizes donated from local vendors. Have fun activities for the whole family like face painting and games. Assign parent pals who can be translators for those with little or no English-speaking skills.

### **Make Home Visits**

Home visits are an excellent way of building bonds between families and the school. They are time-consuming because it means meeting only one family at a time, and sometimes, it can even be potentially dangerous depending on the neighborhood. I made home visits when I had difficult students whose parents would not come to the school. The first time I ever did this was with the family of a student who was extremely defiant. I had invited the parents to come in to talk to me. They did not show up. I had phoned to speak to them, and they were always busy and going to call me back but never did. Finally, I sent a letter that I would be coming to visit. I followed it up with several messages on their voice mail. I believe that they were stunned when I showed up on their doorstep to talk to them about Jason. The first thing that I remember about that visit was the noise coming from their home. Their windows were open, and there was shouting and the sounds of chaos. They had three sons. The mother opened the door looking totally exhausted. Behind her, two of the boys were chasing each other through the house dressed in their dad's business clothing with shirts dragging over the floors. Two dogs were barking and chasing the boys. Jason, the oldest of the boys, was standing near his mom in total shock. He was stunned to see his teacher in his house. It reminded me of when I have bumped into any of my students at the supermarket or other stores, and they look at me as if to say, "What are you doing here? You are supposed to only be in the classroom!"

Jason's mom, Mrs. Donnelson, invited me into the house. We sat down in her kitchen while the boys and dogs were running around the house.

She told me that she felt like a total failure. I learned that she was a medical doctor who had given up her career to be a stay-at-home mom. She said she didn't come to school conferences or functions because she was terrified she would hear bad news about her boys. She talked and talked. I think she had been holding in her feelings for a long time. I gave her some tips on setting boundaries with the boys, and together, we came up with a plan for Jason. I also recommended some books that would help her manage her boys better. When I left, the house was still chaotic, but she was calmer. She had a plan. Jason's behavior slowly and steadily improved at school.

That was the first of many home visits I made. Almost all of the families I visited were embarrassed about some aspect of their lives, and that appeared to be what had prevented them from coming to school. There were families in which one of the parents was in jail, families in which both parents disappeared and the grandmother was raising the children, families living in extreme poverty. There was one family living in a two-room small home with no electricity and seven family members. This family spoke no English, so I took an interpreter with me. In every case, when families saw my efforts to reach out to them, they became more involved in the academic lives of their children, and it was reflected in their children's academic achievement.

### **Make Phone Calls**

At the beginning of the school year, take time to call each family. Introduce yourself by telling them a few characteristics about yourself. Include your goals for the school year for each child. Have a smile on your face and enthusiasm in your voice. Invite them to share with you their concerns as well as their goals for their children. When you connect in a positive way at the beginning of the school year, it tells parents that you are upbeat and positive in nature. It also helps if you can tell them something positive about their children. It paves the way for a good school year and helps foster parental involvement.

If you call a family that does not appear to speak English, call again with a translator. I have used translators who are other teachers or trained parents to do this. They enjoy helping parents become connected.

### **Send Introduction Letters**

An introduction letter can serve several purposes. It tells the parents a little bit about you and your goals for the coming school year. It also can be used for the purpose of getting parents involved. Be sure to get the letter translated for those families that cannot read English (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Figure 1.1

**Sample Introduction Letter (Elementary School)**

Dear family of \_\_\_\_\_,

I am your child's teacher. I am very excited about this new school year. I am looking forward to a wonderful year working with your child.

I would be glad to have your help this year. Please look at the bottom of this letter and let me know if you have any of the following interests, and have your child return the letter to me.

Working together as a team, we will ensure a wonderful school year for your child.

Sincerely yours,  
Teacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Parent) My child's name is \_\_\_\_\_  
My name is \_\_\_\_\_  
You can reach me during the day at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
and evenings at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
My e-mail address is \_\_\_\_\_

I can help in the following ways:

- Class trips
- Volunteering as a mentor for students who need extra help
- Baking or buying treats for the class
- Paperwork
- Making materials
- Contacting other parents
- Speaking to the class on \_\_\_\_\_
- Serving as a translator for parents who do not speak English

I speak the following languages: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other ways I can help:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Figure 1.2

**Sample Introduction Letter (Secondary School)**

Dear family of \_\_\_\_\_,

I am your child's teacher. I am very excited about this new school year. I am looking forward to a wonderful year working with your child.

I would be glad to have your help this year. Please look at the bottom of this letter and let me know if you have any of the following interests, and have your child return the letter to me.

Working together as a team, we will ensure a wonderful school year for your child.

Sincerely yours,  
 Teacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent) My child's name is \_\_\_\_\_  
 My name is \_\_\_\_\_  
 You can reach me during the day at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 and evenings at (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 My e-mail address is \_\_\_\_\_

I can help in the following ways:

- Volunteering as a mentor for students who need extra help
- Making telephone calls to other parents when needed
- Paperwork
- Making materials at home
- Coming to school and making materials for the classroom
- Helping during parent nights
- Community actions that benefit the school
- Serving as a translator for parents who do not speak English

I speak the following languages: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Other ways I can help:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Family-Friendly Welcoming Atmosphere

Help families feel welcome when they come to school. Have you ever been invited to a large party at someone's home? There are some homes where you feel great about being there even before you walk in the door. There are other homes where you count the hours and minutes until you can safely leave. The difference is typically in the genuineness and welcoming atmosphere of the homes. It is the same with schools. The more parents feel welcome, the more they will be happy that they are there and involved on behalf of their child.

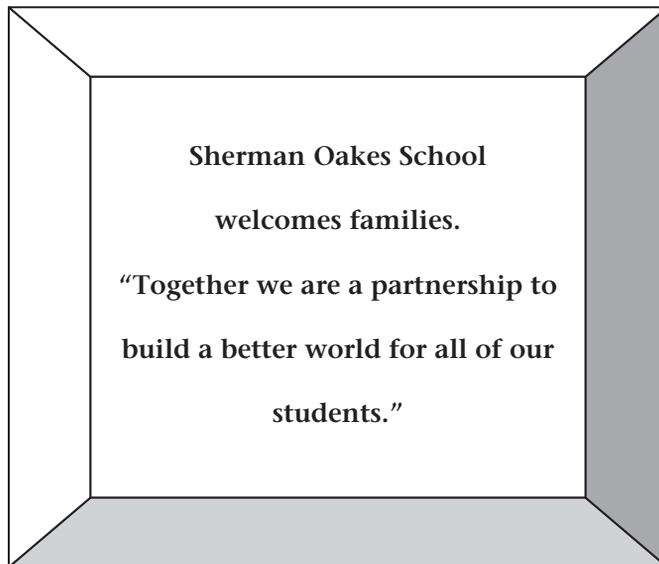
### Welcome Signs

Start by helping families feel welcome as soon as they pull up to the school. Have signs in the parking lot that designate a special area for families to park their cars (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). Add welcoming words in different languages that reflect the diversity of the school, as in Figure 1.3 (Bergmann, Brough, & Shepard, 2008). When they enter the building and classrooms, have more welcoming signs.

Figure 1.3

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#### Sample Parent Welcome Sign in English



## The Faculty

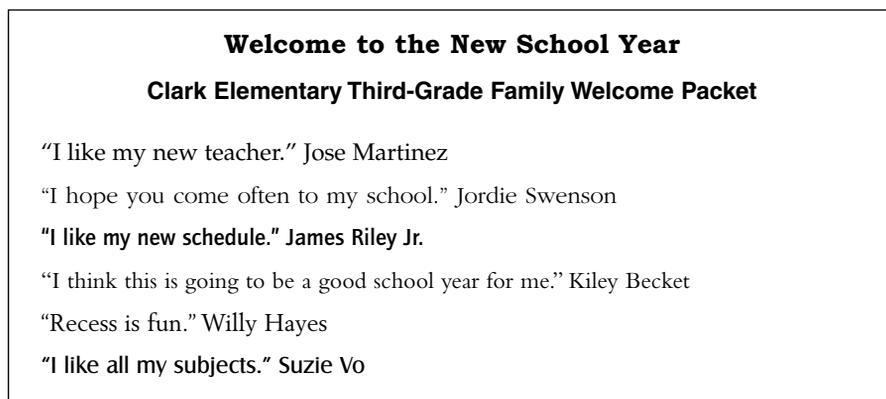
I remember going into my grandson's school for the first time. His mother was ill, and I was the one who was in charge of getting him enrolled. It was a large high school. Even though my background was an educator, I felt intimidated. I entered the building and walked into the office. Everyone was busy, but someone immediately looked up, smiled, and said, "Hi, how can I help you?" I immediately felt better. Everyone at that school made me feel welcome. When I called on the phone, the same thing happened. It was a pleasure to become involved in my grandson's education with that school.

When parents walk into your school, ensure that they are welcomed warmly by faculty. Parents can feel if they are welcome, and that helps to ensure that parents want to come back.

## Welcome Notes From Students

Make welcome notes for all families (Boult, 2006). Have the students participate in making them. The students each write several sentences telling parents about their new schedule or something about their class. Include a few drawings by students. Make sure that each student contributes to this project so that parents can look for their child's work and name beside it. It's a great way to start the school year involving both students and parents. Figure 1.4 has some sayings that were included in one elementary school's welcome notes. Students in secondary schools can also write welcome notes to their parents.

**Figure 1.4**



## **MAKING DIVERSE GROUPS FEEL WELCOME**

At one time, I owned several private schools. I made it a requirement that when parents wanted to enroll their children, they had to first visit and observe the classrooms. I often heard comments afterward about the diversity of the students. The truth is that I never thought about it. For me, a student was a student. I looked more at how diverse the individual students were in terms of learning needs than in terms of a child's appearance or socioeconomic status.

While that was my perspective, it is not necessarily the perspective of parents. Parents look for children who are similar to their own children. They look for other parents who are similar to them. They fear that their children will stand out in a negative way. It is important to make all parents and all children feel welcome. Here are some ways to welcome diverse populations and make them more comfortable.

### **Translation Buddies**

Use parent volunteers to help translate information for parents who speak little or no English (Boult, 2006). Have them translate all letters to the parents' native tongue and also have them contact parents by telephone and speak to them in their native language.

My company does seminars throughout the United States. Sometimes, we are notified ahead that there will be an individual attending who is hearing impaired and has requested a sign-language interpreter. We always accommodate this need. It is interesting to me that while people think about making accommodations for those who are hearing impaired, people don't typically think of making accommodations for people who speak very little English, and do not understand what is being said. When you have parent nights, make sure that there is someone to greet parents in their own native language and translate for them things that are said.

At the beginning of the school year, identify the families who have second-language strengths. Use this information to pair up families based on language ability. For example, a family bilingual in Chinese and English would be paired with another family who spoke Chinese but little or no English. The bilingual family could then translate important school information into Chinese for their school buddies.

For matters of confidentiality, identify other faculty members who have strengths in other languages and have them serve as interpreters. The most important thing is to look for people who parents will trust when they are interpreting for them.

### **Telephone Tree**

Have bilingual parents contact other parents who are not fluent in English to tell them about events occurring in the school and to invite them. Parents sign up for this at the beginning of the year, and then you contact the volunteers when you need help. This is a great strategy to get all parents to come to school, not just for parents who have limited or no English. It is especially effective for passive parents who do not attend functions. It benefits both the volunteers who make the calls because they can do it on their own time at home, and it is a benefit to parents who receive the calls. You can have a prepared script for parents to use when making the calls to ensure there is no miscommunication.

### **Books**

Books are a great resource for parents. Some parents are passive and have a hard time coming to school but enjoy reading and learning. Refer them to books on different topics that are relevant to your school. Secondary schools may offer books on occupations, colleges, and obtaining scholarships. Both elementary and secondary schools can have a recommended list that includes books on communicating with children, getting children to do their homework, and other relevant topics. Find books in languages other than English that bilingual parents can read and share with their children at home.

### **Wish Lists**

Create a wish list for your class and have it translated into the languages of each of your families. Send it home with students. Knowing what teachers need for their classrooms can help build communication between all parties involved. It is a great way for more passive parents to be involved. They may not want to come to school, but they can still feel like they are contributing.

### **Parents Share Cultures**

Find ways to include diverse parents in your classroom. Parents come and share about their holidays. They can also come and share about objects and artifacts from their cultures. It is a great way to open the door to teaching a social studies, geography, or history lesson. You can tie it in to other lessons too in other subjects. It makes parents feel welcome while also benefiting the class. Keep in mind that in secondary school, students whose parents are speaking may be absent that day. Mrs. Rawana was excited about speaking at her son's social studies class. She had signed up

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when she went to his conference. When the day came for her to go to his school, he said he didn't feel well. She went and spoke to his class. When she came home, he was magically feeling better. He told her several days later that he just didn't want to be there. He was afraid of what his peers would say. Fortunately, they all spoke highly of his mom and what she had shared. This is not always the case. Children can be critical and even cruel about the parents and families of their peers.

### **OPENING THE DOORS TO THE SCHOOL FOR ALL FAMILIES**

#### **Picnics**

Picnics are great ways for families to get many parents to the school. It is a safe, easy way to have fun and help parents feel comfortable with school. Depending on the budget, schools can provide the food or families can bring their own food.

#### **Fashion Shows**

Fashion shows are a fun way of getting families to come to school. Get local stores involved to provide the clothing. Parents will come to schools to see their children participate in a fashion show. Involve the parents and have them also be models. They will tell their friends, and the more the entire neighborhood realizes that your school is a warm and friendly school, the more it will encourage further family participation.

#### **Thoughts for the Day**

I send out daily a thought for the day that is a strategy or inspiration for teachers. Teachers have told me that they pass these thoughts on to their parents. That is another way of helping family members better understand both how important they are in the lives of their children and also gives them strategies for handling childhood issues. You are welcome to subscribe to my thought for the day at [www.atiseminars.org](http://www.atiseminars.org) or to come up with your own saying or thought for the day. This can be posted on the wall for parents to see, or better still, copied and sent home on a special colored paper every day. Another option is to forward it through e-mail to parents.

#### **Helping Hand Projects**

It has been my own experience that even parents who typically do not come to school or get involved in other ways will help others in times of