

# A Midyear Parent Involvement Checkup

The end of the winter break and the beginning of a new year is a good time for principals to examine and evaluate what they are accomplishing with parent involvement.

With research and provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act emphasizing the need to get and keep parents involved with the education of their children, here's a research-based, five-minute midyear parent involvement checkup that can help you to determine if your parent involvement program is on track or, if not, to identify things you can correct while there's still time remaining in the school year.

Rate your parent involvement program from "excellent" to "poor" on each of these questions, basing your scoring according to how you believe parents at your school would answer each question. Use the following point scale:

Excellent	4 points
Good	3 points
Average	2 points
Fair	1 point
Poor	0 points

**1. Are you making parents feel like respected partners?** Research leaves no doubt about parents' influence on learning. Making sure parents feel the school respects them promotes active support at home. A powerful indicator of that respect, parents say, is how they are treated when they visit the school. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Are you making early contact with parents before potential problems become serious ones?** Parents report that not hearing about a school problem until it's too late to fix it is one of their biggest complaints. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Do you have a list of specific things your school has identified as the most important for parents to do at home to support their child's learning?** Do your teachers agree on what parents should do? Can parents recite the list? Are you providing parents information on how to do those things? Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Are you practicing two-way communication, providing parents regular opportunities to talk with you and with teachers, and inviting their comments?** If parents and schools are to be partners, they have to stay in touch. Points: \_\_\_\_\_



**5. Are the written materials you send home parent-friendly, brief, clear, and carefully proofread?** Keeping them short and simple gets parents' attention—and frequent brief messages are more effective than occasional long ones. Points: \_\_\_\_\_


**6. Do you, your teachers, and staff make it a point to tell parents how much their efforts are appreciated?** We all know the motivational power of a well-deserved compliment. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Are you offering a wide range of ways for parents to be involved?** Do you ask parents what kinds of involvement opportunities they would like to have? You would be surprised to learn of all the skills and interests parents possess. Just ask them. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Are you working effectively with non-English speaking parents?** Finding translators for some languages can be a challenge, but making a sincere effort shows that you care. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Are you giving parents opportunities to have appropriate input into school decisions that affect them and their children?** Parents don't want to run your school, but they do want (and deserve) to be consulted regularly. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Are you budgeting adequate funds for parent involvement?** Having no budget means parent involvement is not important. NCLB requires spending at least 1 percent of Title I funds on parent involvement. Good programs require even more. Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Tally your scores for a midyear evaluation of your parent involvement efforts. And don't be satisfied with just a middling score of 15 to 25 points. Research has found that students from families with above-median parent involvement had academic achievement success rates 30 percent higher than those from families with below-median parent involvement (Fan and Chen 1999). An effective parent involvement program is well worth the effort involved. 

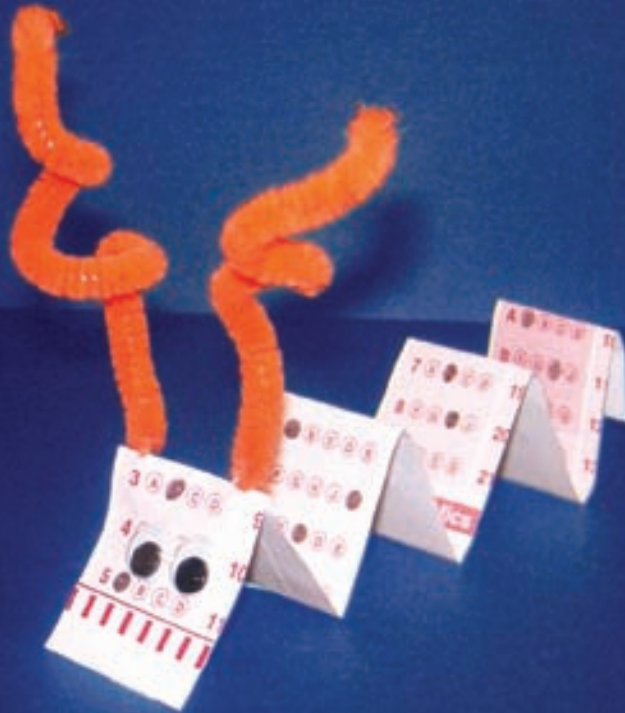
## Reference

Fan, X. and M. Chen. *Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*. Arlington, Va.: National Science Foundation, 1999.

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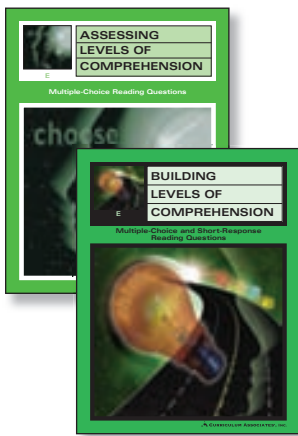
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