

Archived Information

U. S. Department of Education

Richard W. Riley

Secretary

Acknowledgments

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The principal authors of the *Compact for Reading Guide* are Mary Russo, Director of the Boston Annenberg Challenge; Gary Kosman of Northwestern University; and Alan Ginsburg, Susan Thompson-Hoffman, and Julie Pederson of the U.S. Department of Education.

The *School-Home Links Reading Kit* was developed by teams of teachers at the kindergarten through third grade levels. One team was coordinated by Mary Russo and Jonna Casey of the Boston Annenberg Challenge that included Margaret Sands, Kathleen Baron, and Crystal English of the Mason School in Boston. Another team was coordinated by Ellie Topolovac, Superintendent of the Solana Beach School District in California, which included Susana Baum, Janet Brice, Jaime Crowley, Rhona Grant, Deborah Hays, Cristy Maxcy, Marla Sammuli, David Topolovac, and Patricia Totina. Selected activities were adapted or reprinted with permission from *How To Tutor Your Child In Reading and Writing (1998)*, published by the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication at Indiana University and the Family Learning Center, and *Spelling for Writing (1998)*, by Carl Smith, published by ERIC and the Family Learning Center. Shira Herman, Alex Campbell, Sandra Richardson, and Azalea Saunders provided editing and formatting assistance. Alan Ginsburg and Susan Thompson-Hoffman coordinated the overall effort.

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These materials were extensively reviewed by teams of parents, teachers, and administrators and by participants at the 1998 Improving America's Schools Act and Title I Parents' Conferences.

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A Compact for Reading Guide

A Reading Partnership Action Kit



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Compact Legislation

Section 1188 (d) (Parental Involvement) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, “Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance”:

“...Each school served under [Title I, Part A] shall jointly develop with parents for all children served... a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State’s high standards.

Such Compact shall—

- (1) describe the school’s responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under [Title I, Part A] to meet the State’s student performance standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children’s learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child’s classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and
- (2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum--
 - (A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child’s achievement;
 - (B) frequent reports to parents on their children’s progress; and
 - (C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child’s class, and observation of classroom activities.”



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Foreword

All across America, communities are pulling together to strengthen education. More and more parents, teachers, and community and business leaders are creating compacts to build and strengthen partnerships for improved student learning.

The improvement of reading is increasingly the focus of efforts among families, schools, and community organizations for better education. A Compact for Reading can help bring people together to improve reading. Compacts are written agreements among families, teachers, principals, and students that describe how all partners can help improve the reading and other language arts skills of kindergarten through third-grade children, including those with disabilities and with limited English proficiency.

The *Compact for Reading Guide* is a user-friendly handbook designed to walk your family-school compact team through the steps of building and implementing a Compact for Reading. It provides information, strategies, examples, and checklists to help parents, educators, and community members develop effective, workable compacts that can improve your school, increase family involvement, and increase student skills and achievement in reading. The handbook is intended to help and guide partnerships in forming compacts, without adding requirements. Associated with this *Guide* is a *School-Home Links Reading Kit*, which includes activities for children from kindergarten through the third grade that teachers can provide to families for at-home reinforcement of in-school reading and language arts activities. The School-Home Links Program is one way to put your Compact for Reading to work.

The *Compact for Reading Guide* and the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* are parts of a series of continuous improvement materials that highlight key issues of interest to teachers, parents, principals, tutors, and community members who want to make their schools better and work toward standards of excellence. These materials are available on the U. S. Department of Education home page at <www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading>.

We welcome your comments and examples of how you implement the Compact for Reading and the School-Home Links Program in your community. We also welcome your ideas to improve these materials. Please mail your ideas or copies of your compact to the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, c/o U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

Findings from the U.S. Department of Education's *Prospects Study* (1993) reveal that students in schools with Compacts in place perform better than children in similar schools without them because of greater reinforcement of learning at home. Furthermore, effects of the Compact on student learning were stronger than effects from other forms of school-home interactions.



A Compact for Reading

Committing to Improvement

Why a Compact for Reading? Success in helping many more children read well often depends on a partnership among families, principals, teachers, and students. A Compact for Reading is a written agreement among these partners that describes how each partner can help improve the reading and other language arts skills of children from kindergarten through third grade, including those with disabilities and with limited English proficiency.* Tutors and other community members can also be partners in a Compact for Reading.

Research shows that some 38 percent of fourth-graders in America cannot read at the basic level of proficiency. Furthermore, reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) have remained basically flat for 30 years (NAEP, 1998). Although there has been some improvement between 1994 and 1998 (NAEP, 1998), disadvantaged and minority students have the greatest difficulty with reading. In high-poverty schools, 84 percent of fourth-grade students do not read at the basic level of proficiency (NAEP, 1996). In addition, some high-poverty students lose as much as three to four months of academic progress over the summer while their higher-income peers are gaining at least a month of progress.

We know from the comprehensive report of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), that we have enough research right now to be able to turn these statistics around if we put our best research into practice. We can help children learn to read who have not read before, and we can

increase significantly the proficiency of children who already know how to read.

The NAS report not only describes what works in a school environment for reading instruction, but it plainly shows that family members—mothers, fathers, grandparents, older sisters, and brothers—play a major role in helping children learn to read and in improving their reading ability.

Therefore, if families:

- Read to and with their children,
- Read themselves, and encourage their children to read,
- Keep a variety of reading materials in the home,
- Have high expectations for their children's reading achievement, and
- Help teach their children to read and respond to their children's interest in books, without a doubt their children will be better readers than children from families who do not participate in these activities (NAS, 1998).

*While special assistance may be needed to serve limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, the vast majority of these students are not severely impaired and can be included with minimal accommodations.

Family involvement is such a strong predictor of reading and other academic success that Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—an Act that supports local efforts to help children in high-poverty communities meet challenging standards—includes provisions for the development of a family-school compact. Every school that receives Title I, Part A, funds must develop a family-school compact that describes the responsibilities of families and schools in helping children reach high academic standards.

This *Compact for Reading Guide* and the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* form Volume II in the series of *Compact* guides from the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning at the U.S. Department of Education.

The *Compact for Reading Guide* walks school communities serving children in kindergarten through third grade through the process of forming a family-school compact, as one way to help meet the requirements of Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in these schools. The Guide can be used as a stand-alone manual to help partners in your school community form a Compact (see the example following), and to identify and make a full range of commitments to improve the reading and other language arts skills of children from kindergarten through the third grade. Or the *Guide* can be used with Volume I of this series, the *Compact for Learning*, to focus attention on literacy within an overall plan

to improve learning through family-school partnerships. This Guide is not intended to add to existing requirements, but rather to be a helpful guide to forming compacts for reading.

The companion *School-Home Links Reading Kit* contains around 400 activities that teachers use may as one way to encourage home support of school reading activities for children in kindergarten through the third grade. Each *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity helps to develop skills that correspond to the National Academy of Sciences' "Accomplishments in Reading" for children from kindergarten through third grade (see Appendix A). These School-Home Links may be sent home three to four times a week. A simple key at the bottom of each page provides the appropriate grade for each activity, as well as the type of reading accomplishment each activity supports.

The *School-Home Links Reading Kit* contains School-Home Links and Book Links. The School-Home Links are take-home activities that allow practice in reading across a range of skill areas. The Book Links are activities teachers can use to support the reading and analysis of "take-home" books. Through the Book Links component, families are encouraged to read to and with their children every night for 30 minutes, in addition to working with their children on developing skills associated with reading books. (Book Links are described more fully in the discussion of Step 3 below.)

All Compact for Reading products are also available through linkages on the U.S. Department of Education Web site (<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/CompactforReading>) and in hard copy from the Department's toll-free publications number (1-877-576-7734 or 1-800-USA-LEARN), as long as supplies last.

Key Players and Their Roles

Everyone has a role in the Compact, and everyone benefits from the partnerships formed when compacts are developed.

Through the Compact for Reading:

- **Students** are provided with many opportunities to practice and improve their reading skills, by families, learning partners, and teachers in schools.
- **Teachers and school administrators** get support for in-school reading activities, by motivating families and other learning partners in the community to extend these activities at home for children who most need help in reading. They can clearly describe what the school expects of students to families, students, and the community.
- **Families** will find out what is expected from the schools to read well, and what they can do to help their children succeed. For families who cannot come to the school, the Compact explains how they can help at home. Regardless of their own reading skills, parents have opportunities every day to build on the learning that takes place at school. Reading just 30 minutes a day to or with their child, for example, significantly increases the child's reading ability.
- **Tutors and other learning partners in the community** are invited to volunteer time to read to and with children, and support teachers and families by engaging children in extended-learning activities, including the School-Home Links.



Sample Compact for Reading

We, the _____ School community, establish this Compact for Reading in order to foster the improvement of reading and other language arts and to support the success of our students, so all may read well and independently. We believe this can be done with the planned partnership of parents, families, students, teachers, principals, and community members.

Parent's and Family's Responsibilities

We will:

- Make sure that our child attends school regularly, is on time, and is prepared to learn, with homework completed.
- Know what skills our child is learning in reading and other language arts classes each day.
- Do activities at home, like the School-Home Links, that continue our child's classroom learning at home.
- Read with or to our child for 30 minutes each day, five days a week.
- Get a library card for our child, and encourage our child to bring reading materials from the library into the home.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and communicate frequently with our child's teacher, through notes and conversation, about how well our child is doing.

Student's Responsibilities

I will:

- Come to school on time and be ready to learn.
- Pay attention to my teachers, family, and tutors, and ask questions when I need help.
- Ask my family to read to me or with me for 30 minutes each day, five days a week.
- Complete my homework on time in a thorough and legible way.
- Welcome help from my family on my homework and papers.
- Return signed homework and papers to school.

Teacher's Responsibilities

I will:

- Provide quality teaching and leadership to my students and their families.
- Communicate frequently with families and tutors about my students' progress in reading and show them how they can help.
- Coordinate with other programs to make sure nightly assignments do not exceed time limits.
- Recognize that students are accountable for every assignment.
- Participate in meaningful professional development in how to teach reading, how to communicate with families, and how to work with tutors.
- Hold at least two parent-teacher conferences a year.

Principal's Responsibilities

I will:

- Set high standards in reading and other language arts by providing a challenging curriculum.
- Report publicly on schoolwide reading scores, and help teachers and parents to understand how adopting high standards can lead to the improvement of scores.
- Allocate resources to ensure that high standards are met.
- Hold workshops on standards in reading and ways to set the standards into practice at school and at home.
- Provide reading materials and training so that parents can help their children learn to read.
- Establish training workshops for tutors and families to work with children on home activities like School-Home Links.
- Provide special benefits to teachers who meet with families and tutors in extended-learning programs.
- Welcome and involve all families, especially those with low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, or those who have not been involved in the school before.

Community Member's Responsibilities

I will:

- Make a commitment to help all children learn to read.
- Keep informed about the reading standards and the performance of schools in my area.
- Find out more about my school's literacy and reading standards.
- Contact business and other community organizations that can donate resources to local schools to help them meet high standards in reading.
- Volunteer to tutor students who need help in reading and other language arts skills or support and participate in training for tutors and other partners.
- Help to open other facilities where children can go after school to read with someone or to do their homework.
- Build a community network of concerned adults, consisting of community leaders, writers, journalists, and others who can be helpful to discuss and publicize local literacy issues.



The Compact for Reading's Simple Five-Step Process

The Compact's simple process for developing and implementing your Compact for Reading through family and community involvement has five steps:

Step 1: Get Started

Step 2: Write the Compact

Step 3: Put Your Compact for Reading to Work

Step 4: Evaluate Your Compact

Step 5: Strengthen Your Compact

What to Expect as You Develop and Implement Your Compact

Writing a Compact for Reading provides an opportunity to create new partnerships in your community for better education. An effective partnership recognizes that a team can accomplish together what each partner could not accomplish alone. That is why it is the goal of a family-school partnership to connect learning at school with learning at home.

As you begin to develop a Compact, Steps 1 and 2—building your team and writing your Compact—will help parents and teachers come together to strengthen their relationship through improved communication. Parents may feel that educators talk down to them or use educational jargon they do not understand. Teachers may feel that parents need to talk more about education with their children. The Compact encourages effective, frequent communication among families, schools, and students in a language everyone can understand. And communication is essential to building partnerships.

Step 3—using the Compact to move the partnership from planning to action—is a critical next step. All the partners need to know

about the power of the Compact—what it is, how they can get involved, what their responsibilities are, and what improvements and results they can expect to see. Launching the Compact is a great opportunity to reach out to families and community members who have not been involved at the school before.

Once the Compact is launched, Step 3 will help you face one of the biggest challenges—sustaining interest in and commitment to the Compact over time. Your partners may need frequent reminders of how their daily activities—whether working with a child at home on Home Links activities, reading to a child for 30 minutes, or as teachers taking the time to contact families to discuss how they can work together to help their students progress—fulfill their commitment to the Compact and are essential for meeting the goal of improving children's reading.

When spreading the word about the Compact and gaining support for it, be patient. Identify and seek out those who are essential to making the Compact work—teachers, tutors, families, students. Remind your partners that the Compact is more than words on a piece of paper. It is an action plan for student success and school improvement.

Once your Compact is up and running, Step 4 will help you evaluate how well the Compact is working. Evaluation can show you what you are doing well and what areas need improvement. Evaluation also sends a signal that your schools and families are serious about making their Compact work. This information is needed to help all of the partners reach their highest potential.

Finally, Step 5 will help you look at your Compact to identify what you have done well and where you need to do more work. This kind of continuous improvement in the Compact process will keep your Compact powerful to meet the reading needs of your community and its children.

Archived Information

GET STARTED



The Core Compact Team

The first steps in developing a Compact for Reading are to form a Core Compact Team if you do not already have one, and identify people who can serve on a Compact Invention Team—the Team that will actually develop the Compact for Reading.

The Core Compact Team oversees the development, implementation, and evaluation for your school-family-community partnership. The Core Team includes as members at least one principal, teacher, parent, and another community member.

The basic responsibilities of Core Team members are as follows:

- Define and present the purpose of the Compact for Reading;
- Recruit members for the Compact Invention Team (if the Core Team is not going to write the Compact);
- Identify the school’s literacy needs and resources;
- Analyze the current reading standardized test scores;

- Organize and facilitate Invention Team meetings;
- Present and explain the Compact to the wider group of teachers, parents, and community members, once the Compact is completed;
- Monitor your school’s progress toward achieving the Compact’s goals; and
- Update and strengthen your Compact in accordance with your review of progress.

Team members should be knowledgeable about reading and family involvement, know the school and its broader community, and be willing to take a leadership role in overseeing the school Compact process.

In forming your Core Compact Team, you may want to use an existing team to take on these responsibilities. For example, look at the membership of an existing Compact Team, a school-based management council, a family-school advisory group, a working team of the Parent-Teacher Association or Organization, or business-school partnership, or a similar group that works closely with the school, families, and communities on educational matters.

The Compact Invention Team

One of the responsibilities of the Core Compact Team is to identify people in the school and community who will brainstorm, strategize, and develop the Compact.

In some cases, the Core Compact Team may want to take on these responsibilities. In other cases, the Core Team will need to form another team—the Compact Invention Team—to develop the Compact.

Among representatives reflecting the make up of your school community, who could be considered for your Compact Inventory Team, include:

- Teachers from each grade level,
- Parents from each grade level,
- Parents of students with limited English proficiency (LEP),

- Parents of students with disabilities,
- School administrators,
- Reading specialists or literacy coordinators,
- Representatives of the school's business community or university partners, and
- Members of local community organizations, librarians, literacy groups, cultural or arts associations, or senior citizens groups dedicated to improving education.

The members of the Compact Invention Team are responsible for developing and writing the Compact; for working to ensure that the school staff, parents, and other community members understand the Compact; and for obtaining continuing commitment from the school community to fulfill it, once it is adopted.



Assisting Participants

Parents, teachers, and community members who may be interested in participating in the development and writing process may not be able to attend meetings because they cannot afford child care, do not have transportation, or have time constraints that make it impossible to attend.

There are several ways your team can take into account the time pressures and responsibilities facing parents, teachers, and community members when scheduling a meeting.

Teams can assist families by:

- Asking interested individuals to respond with a list of times most convenient for them to meet;
- Providing early notices of meetings and activities, allowing time for people to adjust their schedules;
- Offering transportation and child care services; and
- Holding meetings near families' homes (e.g., at community or public housing centers);

Teams can assist teachers by:

- Providing stipends for teachers' transportation and child care services, and
- Providing substitute teachers if the meetings are held during the school day.

This attention sends a strong message to teachers and parents that the core team is serious about involving others in the writing process.

Team-Building Checklist

Directions: Use this checklist to make sure you have completed all necessary activities to form a strong Compact Team.

- ✓ Does your core team include:
 - The school principal?
 - At least one teacher?
 - At least one parent?
 - At least one community member?
- ✓ Has the core team written a letter inviting administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to participate in writing the Compact?
 - Yes No
- ✓ Does the invitation include:
 - The purpose of the Compact for Reading?
 - The time and place of the first meeting *or* a response card asking individuals the best time for them to meet?
- ✓ Has the invitation been translated into the languages parents and community members speak at home?
 - Yes No
- ✓ Does your Invention Team include:
 - Teachers from each grade level?
 - Parents representing each grade level?
 - Parents of LEP students?
 - Parents of students with disabilities?
 - School administrators?
 - Your school's reading specialists or literacy coordinators?
 - Representatives from your school's business community or university partners?
 - Members of local community organizations dedicated to improving education?
- ✓ Have arrangements been made to accommodate the time, transportation, and/or child care needs of the Invention Team members?
 - Yes No
- ✓ Have arrangements been made to provide a translator for non-English-speaking team members at the meetings?
 - Yes No

Addressing Language Differences

To create a Compact Invention Team that truly represents your school community, it is crucial that the invitations and meeting notices be translated into the languages spoken by your parent and community populations. If members of these communities do not respond to the notices, your Core Team should try to personally recruit individuals to be on the team. The team needs to represent all segments of the community.

Moreover, it is vital to provide a translator for these individuals during the Compact Invention Team meetings. Ask other parents, teachers, and community members whether they will serve as translators for these parents and community members. If this is not possible, check to see if a translator can be hired from a private agency.

Taking an Inventory of Your School's Literacy Needs and Resources

Two important responsibilities of the Core Team are to evaluate student achievement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and to take an inventory of the school's resources that support reading. Thus, the Core Team:

- Looks at student test scores over a period of several years for the whole school, as well as for subgroups (for example, students in various grades, racial/ethnic groups, and special populations like Title I, special education, and bilingual education), and speak with a sample of teach-

ers, reading specialists, and parents about whether students are meeting or exceeding expectations.

- Looks at the adequacy of funding allocated to literacy resources over a period of several years. Literacy resources include books and instructional materials, professional development that provides a forum for presenting new research on teaching and assessing reading, as well as workshops for parents on how they can help their children become independent readers and writers.
- Looks at the availability of special programs or services at the school, such as the use of after-school volunteer tutors from local high schools or universities, books donated from business or community groups, and discounted photocopying services.

The information gathered in this literacy inventory will help your Core Team write your Compact.

Before the first formal Compact Invention Team meeting, Core Team members can use *Activity Sheet 1A* to take stock of the school's literacy efforts, as shared by principals, teachers, and families.

1 GET STARTED

Activity Sheet A: Taking Stock of Your School's Reading Standards and Activities

Before your first Compact Invention Team meeting, the Core Team can use the following activity sheet to begin to assess your school's reading program, literacy resources, and family-school partnerships.

| | Ask the Principal | Ask Teachers | Ask Families |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shared Responsibility for Learning | <p>What are the reading standards in place at your school?</p> <p>Are special subgroups of children (ethnic/racial groups; special populations like Title I, special education, and bilingual education students) performing at expected levels?</p> <p>How do your reading scores compare to those at similar schools in your district or state?</p> <p>What trends do you see in your reading scores over the last 5 years?</p> | <p>How do teachers address the reading standards in their classrooms?</p> <p>What kinds of reading programs and special assistance exist, such as tutoring or after-school programs, to help students meet higher reading standards?</p> | <p>What have your child's teachers explained about the role that reading standards play in determining classroom work and their expectations for your child's performance?</p> <p>Have the teachers given you examples of outstanding student work?</p> <p>Are there activities you can use at home with your child to support classroom work?</p> <p>Do you regularly attend parent-teacher conferences?</p> |
| Shared Responsibility for Communicating | <p>Are there clear school policies about the availability of the principal and teachers to meet with families?</p> | <p>Do you talk with families on a regular basis about who can help their children with school assignments?</p> <p>Are you asking families to attend parent-teacher conferences so that you can show them new ways they can help?</p> | <p>Is there an open line of communication between your family and your child's teachers and the principal, and vice versa?</p> <p>Are you responsive to your child's teachers' concerns and suggestions?</p> |
| Shared Responsibility for Building Capacity | <p>What resources are available to provide extra literacy support for students?</p> | <p>Do you have the necessary training (past and ongoing) to teach reading and work with families?</p> | <p>What kind of training/support do you need and have to help you work with your children?</p> |



Notes



WRITE YOUR COMPACT

2

The goal of the second step of the Compact process is to write your school's Compact for Reading so that it addresses the shared responsibilities of students, families, school administrators and teachers, and learning partners in the community in meeting the needs of the student in reading.

The First Meeting of the Compact Invention Team

The Core Compact Team facilitates the first meeting with the Compact Invention Team members. The facilitator, who is designated by the Core Team, leads the meeting. During the meeting the facilitator:

- **Invites members** of the Core Team and the Compact Team to introduce themselves.
- **Hands out a general outline or agenda** of the meeting. This can be distributed prior to or at the beginning of the first meeting.
- **Provides a team roster** of the Compact Invention Team. All team members are encouraged to speak with each other about the Compact during the writing process.
- **States the overall purpose** of the Compact process and discusses the process by which the Invention Team will write the Compact for Reading.
- **Establishes the ground rules** for this and all other meetings, such as, "respect each other's ideas" and "only one team member may speak at a time," as a way to show that everyone's participation is welcome and desired. These ground rules will be reviewed at each meeting.

MEETING CHECKLIST

Directions: Use this checklist to make sure you have completed all necessary steps in organizing the initial meeting. Has the Core Team:

- ✓ **Conducted and distributed an inventory of the literacy needs and resources of the school?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Prepared a meeting outline or agenda?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Prepared a team roster?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Established the ground rules for the meeting?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Determined the process by which the team will write the Compact for Literacy?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Provided a translator for non-English speaking team members?**
 Yes No
- ✓ **Provided easel boards, paper, tape, and markers for each break-out group?**
 Yes No

Getting Down to Work

Explaining the Results of the Literacy Inventory

The first item on the work agenda is for the facilitator to report and explain the findings of the inventory of literacy resources and current levels of student achievement. The facilitator provides a handout that describes in detail the Core Team responses to the Literacy Inventory and that summarizes student achievement data.

Identifying Partner Commitments

Once the results of the literacy inventory are understood, the facilitator asks the larger group to form small break-out groups, with parents in one group, teachers in another, principals and administrators in another, and community members in a fourth group.

Using *Activity Sheets 2A* through *2D*, the facilitator hands out each sheet to the appropriate group (*2A* to parents, *2B* to teachers, and so forth). Members of each group are told that they are going to brainstorm ideas on how they, as a special constituency in the school, can make a commitment to achieve the goal of the Compact—so that the school, its families, and community members can all work together to improve students' reading achievement.

Remind each group that in brainstorming, no idea is a “dumb” idea. All ideas should be written down for later consideration, without judgment from the group. Provide easels, large sheets of paper, marker pens, and tape for each group, so that pages of ideas can be hung up at the front of the room.

Ask each group to identify one person to present the small group's ideas to the larger group. Have each group look over its individually tailored Activity Sheet.

Then ask each group to write its partnering name (“Teachers,” “Parents,” “Administrators,” “Community Members”) at the top of a piece of easel paper, and look through the list of commitments on the page. These are commitments that can help to form a strong Compact for Reading.

Arrange the commitments in order of priority, keeping in mind the school's resources that were identified by the literacy inventory. Team members may add new items to the list as desired.

Reconvene the break-out groups and ask each group to present its list of top priorities for commitments that should be added to the school's Compact for Reading. Make sure to reserve enough time to evaluate and edit each group's findings in line with the school's needs and resources.

Writing the First Draft of the Compact

Reconvened as one team, the Compact Invention Team should now choose 5 to 10 key commitments for each partner to be included in the school's Compact for Reading. These may be chosen by:

- Reaching a consensus through discussion (those who disagree usually “agree to disagree” if the majority of members take an opposing view).

2 WRITE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet A: How Parents Can Improve Children's Reading Achievement

Look at the following sample list of commitments that parents can make to form a strong Compact for Reading. Rank in order of importance each of the following commitments that you want to add to your Compact for Reading. You may add new commitments to this sample list as desired.

| Student Learning | Communication | Capacity Building |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do activities at home that continue my child's classroom learning at home. | <input type="checkbox"/> Know what is expected of my child, by grade, in reading and other language arts skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for workshops on how children learn to read and write and how parents can help. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor my child's progress and sign completed homework. | <input type="checkbox"/> Know what my child is learning about reading and other language arts skills each day, and what the teacher is teaching. | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend workshops on how parents can help children learn to read and write. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with my child the importance of being a strong, independent reader and writer. | <input type="checkbox"/> Actively participate in back-to-school events and parent-teacher conferences. | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact my child's teacher or reading specialist when my child does not understand an assignment or needs special help. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read at home with my child at least 30 minutes a day. | <input type="checkbox"/> Set up special meetings with my child's teachers when I cannot attend back-to-school events or parent-teacher conferences. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask local businesses or community groups to provide the resources (books, tutors, etc.) that my child's school needs to meet its reading standards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for home learning activities in my primary language. | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact the teachers when I am concerned about my child's progress or have a question about the school's literacy standards. | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with the school to ensure that workshops have translators or equipment for translations for non-English-speaking parents. |



2 WRITE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet B: How Teachers Can Improve Children's Reading Achievement

Look at the following sample list of commitments that teachers can make to form a strong Compact for Reading. Rank in order of importance each of the following commitments that you want to add to your Compact for Reading. You may add new commitments to this sample list as desired.

| Student Learning | Communication | Capacity Building |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expect students to learn basic <i>and</i> advanced literacy skills and do challenging work. | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide ongoing communication with families about the literacy skills their children are learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> Guide parents to help their children with home learning activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teach to challenging school standards. | <input type="checkbox"/> Inform students, families, and the community about the school's high literacy standards, and ways they can help children reach these standards. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for and attend workshops to learn about research-based methods for teaching literacy skills. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide meaningful learning activities, with clear directions for parents to use at home, that reinforce school standards and classroom learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage parents to read with their children at least 30 minutes per day and to get a library card for their child. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for and attend workshops to learn how to work effectively in partnership with families. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Offer special assistance and provide more time to accommodate students' individual learning needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Give families timely reports of their children's progress in reading and the school's overall performance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet frequently with other teachers to discuss effective teaching strategies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking; students' needs; and school resources. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the student and the family to discuss the student's progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a system of continuing communication with families such as regular phone calls or notes on progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> Hold frequent parent training workshops to improve the help parents can give their children at home in reading. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Link teacher instruction with after school and summer reading programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with tutors about individual students' needs for extended learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> Hold workshops for tutors on effective methods for helping students with literacy activities. |

2 WRITE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet C: How Administrators Can Improve Children’s Reading Achievement

Look at the following sample list of commitments that administrators can make to form a strong Compact for Reading. Rank in order of importance each of the following commitments that you want to add to your Compact for Reading. You may add new commitments to this sample list as desired.

| Student Learning | Communication | Capacity Building |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set high standards in reading and other language arts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Report publicly on the schoolwide reading scores. Help teachers and parents understand how adopting high standards can lead to the improvement of scores. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Allocate adequate resources to ensure that high standards can be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Hold workshops on the standards in reading—what they are, what they mean by grade, and how to set the standards into practice at school and at home. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide activities in reading that can be done at home or after school to support schoolwork in reading. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with teachers and parents about the role of extended-learning activities in improving children’s and school achievement records. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Work with teachers to use these activities with families, and encourage families to use these activities at home. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide special benefits to teachers that meet with families and tutors in extended-learning programs for children. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate the school’s commitment to extending learning time for students needing special help in reading. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Train tutors and families to work with children on home activities, like the School-Home Links. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Start or expand after school, weekend, and summer reading programs for students who need or who want to expand their skills. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build community partnerships with libraries, literacy and cultural groups, colleges and universities, senior citizens, and state and local government to help provide quality after school, weekend and summer efforts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out provide staff development opportunities to link reading teachers with after school staff and tutors. |



2 WRITE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet D: How Community Members Can Improve Children’s Reading Achievement

Look at the following sample list of commitments that community members can make to form a strong Compact for Reading. Rank in order of importance each of the following commitments that you want to add to your Compact for Reading. You may add new commitments to this sample list as desired.

| Student Learning | Communication | Capacity Building |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keep informed about the literacy standards and the performance of your local school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Call the school and attend open houses to find out more about the school’s reading standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Businesses and other community organizations may donate age-appropriate books, photocopying services, or other resources the school needs in its efforts to meet high standards. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer to tutor students who need help with reading. Read with each student at least 30 minutes once a week. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Build a community network of concerned adults—community leaders, journalists, writers, librarians, cultural professionals, college and university staff, and others—to discuss and publicize local literacy issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Organize workshops for tutors on effective tutoring methods. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Open other facilities where students can go after school to read with someone or to do their homework. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in ongoing communication with the school staff about how volunteer tutors can meet students’ learning needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss often with school staff how volunteer tutors can meet students’ learning needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Colleges and universities may offer workshops for teachers on new, research-validated methods for teaching literacy skills. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a community “culture” and broad-based support to highlight the need to improve students reading skills and abilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage community leaders to serve as spokespeople for areas where they can make a difference in helping schools and families improve reading outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Train whole organizations in ways to improve student learning in reading, such as high-quality tutoring or employee parent training. |

- Taking a vote. If you call a vote, each team member uses a marker to check his or her top three commitments from each group's list. The 5 to 10 items with the most checks are incorporated into the first draft of the Compact.

Time is an important consideration during your team meetings. Creating the first draft of the Compact may take more than two hours. If you run out of time, schedule the next meeting time and place before the participants leave to ensure that most of the team members will be available to continue writing the Compact.

Writing the Final Draft

I. Wide Review and Feedback

It is vital that members of the school community who did not serve on the Invention Team have an opportunity to voice their opinions about the content of the draft Compact that has been developed and make suggestions. Once the draft is completed, the Core Team should distribute it to the Invention Team members, all school staff, parents, and other interested community members for written feedback by a set date.

The team member distributing the draft for wide review should remind readers of the needs the team is addressing, the resources available to meet those needs, and the process used to create the first draft. As with other school communications, the letter should be translated into relevant foreign

languages. Special outreach meetings should be held to reach busy people who might not respond to written requests for feedback.

2. Revision

Core Team members compile the feedback and incorporate the relevant comments into a revised draft. As result of this process, there may be more than the recommended 5 to 10 commitments in each category.

3. The Final Compact for Reading

The Compact Invention Team then reconvenes. The Core Team shares the feedback they and the Invention Team have received. The Invention Team discusses the revisions (this may be done in break-out groups), goes through the voting process again to identify no more than 10 commitments in each category, and approves the school's Compact for Reading. Completing the Compact may take more than one meeting.

Finally, the Core Team develops a letter of introduction and explanation to the Compact for Reading . This letter can summarize the current status of literacy in the school community, including areas of success and areas needing improvement, the roster of Core and Invention Team members, the process used to develop the Compact, and a statement of support by the team members for the widespread implementation of the Compact.



Making the Compact a Part of the School Community

Now that the Compact for Reading has been written and printed in final form with a letter of introduction and explanation, the next step in making the Compact a part of school life is to talk to the entire school community about the Compact. There are several ways the Core and Invention Teams can accomplish this:

- Teachers can learn about the Compact at regular staff meetings, grade-level meetings, or individual meetings with members of the Invention Team, and discuss how they can implement the Compact in their daily work.
- Parents can be told about the importance of their role in the Compact at special parent meetings, during open houses, or by their child's classroom teacher during parent conferences. Translators should be provided for those parents who do not speak English, so that all clearly understand their responsibilities. Parent leaders in the school should make special efforts to spread the word about the Compact in their communities.
- To open discussions on how they can be helpful in implementing the Compact, community members may be informed about the Compact at town hall meetings, special community open houses at the school, in local churches and faith communities, in library and literacy groups, and in cultural and neighborhood associations, or at the monthly meetings of your local chamber of commerce or business association.
- Students can be introduced to their responsibilities and commitments in the Compact, as well as those of their teachers, principals, and other community members, through special discussions in school and at home.



PUT YOUR COMPACT FOR READING TO WORK

3

The goal of the third step of the Compact process is to ensure that the Compact, once written and accepted by the community, is actually used to improve the reading and other language arts skills and achievement of children.

The Core and Invention Teams should meet periodically with the partners signing the Compact, to review the commitments in the Compact. Status reports can be provided on the extent to which principals, teachers, families, and their children are meeting their commitments in the Compact for Reading. The teams, for example, may want to make a checklist of all the commitments made on the Compact and rewrite each commitment as a question— “Have you... (conducted workshops, sent home learning activities each night, obtained a library card for each child)?”—to use at these meetings (*see Activity Sheet 3A*).

These meetings can be excellent opportunities for identifying and documenting:

- What is going well,
- Which commitments have been hard to meet and need further attention,
- Which new needs partners want addressed, and

- Which resources are needed to fully implement the Compact.

As report cards go out to the students each grading period, the Core Team provides summary reports on important progress made by partners to fulfill the Compact responsibilities, resources that are needed to implement the Compact, and any new Compact activities that are scheduled to be kicked off during the next term.

The School-Home Links Reading Kit: A Launching Activity for Your New Compact

Launching your new Compact for Reading with an activity that involves all the partners who signed your school Compact highlights the importance of the Compact as a tool to drive improvement.



3 Put Your Compact for Reading to Work

Activity Sheet A: Putting Your School's Compact Into Action (Continued)

Teachers

- ✓ Do you regularly teach to the standards in reading?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you send home three to five times a week learning activities, such as School-Home Links activity sheets, that parents can use to reinforce classroom learning?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you check to see whether students complete the activities and follow up when students fail to turn them in?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you use student performance on home activities to help guide classroom reading instruction?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you encourage parents to read 30 minutes a day with their children and get their children a library card?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you send home monthly calendars informing parents of the reading skills that their children will be learning on a weekly or daily basis?
 Yes No
- ✓ Have you helped to set up extended-learning programs in your school for children who most need help in reading?
 Yes No
- ✓ Have you led or participated in training sessions for families as well as volunteer tutors in the community?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you expect children to perform at basic, then increasingly advanced, levels of reading in your classroom?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you link classroom instructions with after school and summer reading programs?
 Yes No
- ✓ Do you communicate regularly with parents of your students, by telephone or notes?
 Yes No

To improve family involvement in education, the Mason School in Boston, Massachusetts, launched a School-Home Activities Program. This program offered learning activities for families and their children at home to reinforce the teachers' work in school. The principal and teachers at Mason School developed the take-home materials. Families were asked to work with their children on these simple reading skill builders four times a week. When families were unable to work with children at home because of language or reading barriers, volunteers from the community helped. When all the members of the learning community—students and their families, principals and teachers, and community volunteers—became involved, a critical mass of support was developed for the school, and all partners learned there were clear and simple ways they could help improve the achievement of students.

Working with teams of teachers from the Mason School in Boston, Massachusetts, and Books and Beyond in Solana Beach, California, as well as researchers from the University of Oregon and multiple consultants from the reading and education communities, the Department's Family Involvement Partnership for Learning has developed a kit of materials called the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*. This kit is available as a companion volume to this *Compact Guide*, and can be used to launch your family-school-community Compact for Reading effort.

Two teams of teachers developed one-page reading activities for children in kindergarten through third grade, with approximately 100 activities for each grade level. These easy-to-use activities align with the major "Reading Accomplishments" for children in kindergarten through third grade published by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in its report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (see Appendix A). The NAS report represents a consensus of national reading experts on some of the important accomplishments students can achieve within a particular grade in reading. Researchers from the University of Oregon further examined state and district standards for reading, as well as research summaries of reading skills and activities by grade, to enhance the NAS "Reading Accomplishments" and ensure that the School-Home Links activities are comprehensive.



Sample Reading and Literacy Focus Areas from the National Academy of Sciences Report

Kindergarten

- Knows the parts of a book and their functions.
- Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Correctly answers questions about stories read aloud.

First Grade

- Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade 1.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.
- Has a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 words (sight words and easily decoded words).

Second Grade

- Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- Rereads sentences when meaning is not clear.
- Suggests possible answers to how, why, and what-if questions.

Third Grade

- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text that is appropriately designed for grade three.
- Asks how, why, and what-if questions when interpreting nonfiction texts.



How the School-Home Links Reading Kit Is Used

The Principal's Role

1. Hold a Meeting For Reading Coordinators and Teachers

The first step in using the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* is for the principal to hold a meeting with the school's reading coordinator and teachers who work with children in kindergarten through third grade.

The principal should discuss the school's reading scores and talk with staff about how the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* can be used to implement the Compact for Reading and to help to raise the reading skills and achievement of children.

Before convening this meeting, the principal should have a thorough knowledge of how to implement the School-Home Links Reading Program and what roles the teachers, children's families, and volunteers from the community can play.

2. Convene a Meeting of Families and Community Volunteers

With the reading coordinator and teachers of children in kindergarten through third grade in attendance, the principal convenes a meeting with the families of their students to inform them about the Compact for Reading and their partnering role. At this meeting, all parents or families can be asked to sign the Compact

for Reading as their commitment to work with their own child or children at home to support school work.

The principal introduces the School-Home Links Reading Program as a first step toward implementing the Compact by increasing family involvement in education.

The principal or the reading coordinator discusses the research about the necessary and important role that family involvement in reading plays in students' reading skills and achievement. Plain talk should be used when describing results of studies on parent involvement in reading, so that everyone understands what the research says. (See Appendix B for Reading Fact Sheets that summarize key facts on reading achievement and success).

The principal or the reading coordinator describes how the School-Home Links Reading Program works, and what roles the principal, teachers, families, and community volunteers can play in implementing the program.

The principal states that in the next week, the first School-Home Links Calendar (see Appendix C) and School-Home Links will be sent home.



The Teacher's Role

1. Review the School-Home Links Reading Kit

In a meeting with the principal, teachers should review the *School-Home Links Reading Kit*; suggest how best to introduce the kit to children, families, and other community members who may use the kit for tutoring; and tailor the kit to meet classroom needs. Many teachers will want to supplement or replace some of the activities with their own activities, and they should be encouraged to do so.

2. Participate in School Meetings to Prepare Families to Use the School-Home Links

- Go over a few School-Home Links and Book Links with families, permitting them to practice with a partner who plays the child. Show the difference between a School-Home Links and a Book Links activity.
- Discuss the importance of daily reading with their children. Explain that one of the books a child reads during the week will be reported on the one-day-a-week Book Links activity.
- Discuss book-lending opportunities in the school and at the local library. Talk about checking out and returning books as the child's responsibility. Encourage all parents to get a library card for their child.

3. Prepare and Send Home a School-Home Links Calendar

Once a month, teachers will prepare and send home a School-Home Links Calendar (Appendix C). This calendar will inform parents of school and classroom literacy

events. It will show the days on which home reading activities (School-Home Links and Book Links) are due. It could show the dates of parent workshops, the days that the school or classroom library is open for children to select books to take home, the visit of a children's author to the school, or the days children visit the public library to take books out. At the bottom of each calendar is the teacher's contact information and a list of times the teacher is available to speak with families. This availability reinforces the essential, open line of communication that your school's Compact for Reading encourages.

4. Send Home the School-Home Links Three or Four Times a Week

In the first week following the school training meeting with the families, send home the first School-Home Link, with two letters attached to the activity sheet.

The first letter (see the sample on the following page) is from the student asking the parents or family to help him or her with the assignment using the method discussed at the family workshop.

The second letter is from the teacher (see the sample on page 21) to the family discussing possible sources of books for weekly reading. Some schools have or may want to set up a lending library of books. Rules for borrowing from this lending library and returning books to it should be included in this letter. Typically, children may borrow one or more books for a week, and must return the book or books when the Book Link is handed in.

3 Sample Letter from Child to Parents

Dear Parent:

Today, I am bringing home my first *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activity. Several times a week, I will be working on these activities with you. Will you help me with these things?

1. Help me find a quiet place where I can complete my School-Home Links activity sheet.
2. Read the instructions with me. I want to do my best work.
3. Help me if I have difficulty understanding.
4. Help me to remember to bring my work to school every day.

When I bring a book home from school:

1. Let's look at the book together. Let me tell you about the pictures.
2. Read the book with me.
3. Help me find a place where I can keep my book so it will not get lost or damaged.
4. Remind me to use a plastic bag when I carry my book home and back to school each week.
5. Help me complete my Book Links activity about the book.

Thank you for helping me. It's a lot of fun to share my work with you.

Love,

Parent's signature: _____

Comments:

3 Sample Letter from Teacher to Parents

Dear Family:

Attached is your child's first **School-Home Links** activity. Please go through this activity with your child. If your child is young, you may need to read the activity and help your child fill in the necessary information. If your child is older, encourage your child to read the activity and work on it with your involvement. When your child finishes the activity, please have your child sign the bottom of the page. We would like you to sign the paper also to show that you have gone over the activity with your child.

Later this week, we will begin a new program for our students called **Book Links**. The program will work as follows:

- Once a week, your child will choose a book to read from our classroom library, the school library, or your local library.
- If your child takes a book from school, your child will sign a book check-out card and put it in our class's Book Links check-out chart. He or she will put the book in a resealable plastic bag to take home.
- Your child will read the book at home with you, complete the Book Links activity sheet that goes with the book, and bring the book back to school the next day in a plastic bag.

The book may be one your child has heard before in class. Whether your child has heard the story before or not, he or she should read the book to or with you. You will need to read some of the books to your child, particularly if your child is just learning to read. Many people at home can be part of this book sharing by listening to or reading the stories with your child.

When reading with your child, please remember to:

- Introduce the book before you read it by letting your child flip through the pages—left to right—to look at the pictures.
- Ask your child to describe the beginning, middle, and end of the story after you read it together.
- Ask your child if he or she enjoyed the story and why. Talk about your favorite parts of the story and interesting characters.

Your child is responsible for the care of the borrowed book. Books should not be written in or torn. If a book is lost or damaged, the family is responsible for replacing the book. A child will not be allowed to borrow a new book until the first book is returned or replaced.

As you can see, we need your support and assistance to help your child continue learning to read, listen, and comprehend, as well as to become a responsible book borrower.

Finally, please remember to visit your public library's Children's Book Department to get a library card (if your child does not already have one), borrow, and read other books with your child.

Have fun reading!

Sincerely,

Mr. Bookman, First-Grade Teacher

Three to four times a week, select activity sheets from the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* that directly support instruction in school. Teachers have the ultimate flexibility in selecting *School-Home Links Reading Kit* activities that best meet the needs of individual children. Within any one classroom, some children already know the particular skill being taught and do not need further practice, some have some knowledge but need further practice, and others are unfamiliar with the skill and could benefit from a lot of practice. For every grade, multiple skill areas are addressed, with multiple activities for most skill areas. Over 100 activity sheets have been developed per grade. If

certain children are performing below or above grade, the teacher should pull activities from lower or higher grade levels as needed.

Teachers can use the coding system at the bottom of each page that shows the typical grade for the activity and the skill that activity sheet supports and develops in the child. For example, if a kindergarten teacher is teaching her students about upper- and lowercase letters, she chooses from the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* an activity that is coded “Kindergarten/Recognizes and Can Name All Uppercase and Lowercase Letters” (see next page).



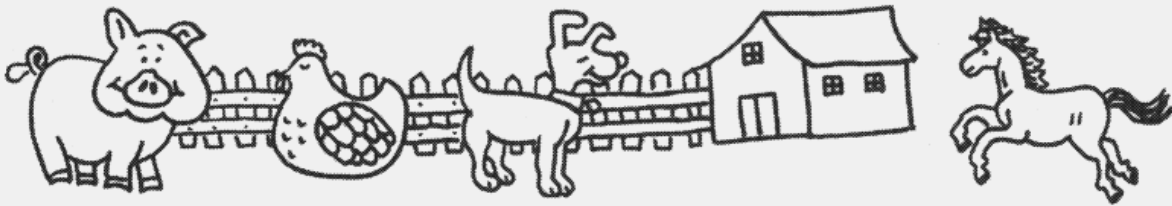
3 A Sample School-Home Links Reading Kit Activity

Child's Name: _____

Dear Family, Your child is learning what a letter is and how to find letters on a page.

- Circle a letter in the story below.
- Circle a "p."
- Circle all the "m's" in the story.

The Farm



I saw a pig on the farm.
I saw some chickens on the farm.
I saw a dog on the farm.
I saw a horse on the farm.
I liked the farm.

Child's signature _____

Parent's (Learning Partner's) signature _____

K/Recognizes and Can Name All Uppercase and Lowercase Letters/1

5. Send Home One Book Links Activity a Week

In addition to doing the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* at home, teachers should encourage families to read to or with their children five days a week, 30 minutes a day. One of those days teachers will send home a School-Home Links **Book Links**

activity, a special type of School-Home Links that directs the child to think about a special aspect of book reading (see next page). Every Book Links activity asks the child to record the title and author of one book the child has read during the week with the family, as well as to complete an activity relating to literature.



3 A Sample Book Links Activity

Child's Name: _____

Dear Family, Your child is learning to listen to a story and answer questions.

- Read a book with your family. Write the title and author of the book below.

Title: _____

Author: _____

- Where does this story take place?

- Who is the main character in the story?

- How are you like or different from the main character?

Child's signature: _____

Parent's (Learning Partner's) signature: _____

K/Correctly Answers Questions About Stories/1

6. Arrange for Children to Borrow and Take Home Free Books

Because many children do not have enough of grade-appropriate books at home, teachers need to arrange for sources of books for children in their classroom. The librarian from the local public library could come to the school and provide a library card for each child, with a map showing the libraries in the town or city. Schools could open their school library to children once a week for book selection. Or teachers may want to set up a Book Links Lending Library Program—a collection of grade- and ability-appropriate books that have been selected for the children in the classroom and are housed in the classroom—so that all students have the opportunity to borrow and read books each week.

In either case, teachers send books home with children once during the week and, if available and desired, on the weekends. Teachers can give each child a large reusable, plastic, resealable bag to keep the book safe and clean. The bag should have the child's name on it and be used again and again.

7. Encourage Families and Children to Read 30 Minutes a Day

The child reads the book with a family member, completes a Book Links activity sheet about the book, and returns the book to class the next day. Because research shows that reading at least 30 minutes a day helps children become strong readers, it is suggested that all

Book Links reading activities be planned so that the students will read for at least 30 minutes. At the third-grade level, teachers may assign part of a chapter book, instead of a full book, to encourage children to read longer and more complex books.

8. Keep a Record of Home Book Reading in the Classroom

A classroom check-out chart should be displayed in the classroom so that each child can enter the date a book is checked out and returned to the classroom. A child typically does not check out a new book until the first one is returned.

9. Help Students Track Completion of School-Home Links and Book Links

Each morning, when students arrive in the classroom, they will hand in their School-Home Links or Book Links activity. You may want to develop a simple School-Home Links Chart where children can post a sticker for every day they complete an activity. The chart is posted in the classroom for the entire school year.

- Students use the chart as a tool for self-evaluation and feel a sense of accomplishment by seeing a row of stickers grow next to their name.
- Parents use the chart to see how their children are doing on completing and turning in School-Home Links/Book Links activities.
- Teachers use the chart to quickly identify students who are completing their activity sheets.

10. Help Families Who Do Not Speak English or Are Disabled

Teachers are encouraged to help provide the necessary support to families who do not speak English or are disabled. Students whose parents speak other languages should turn in their assignments just as regularly as those with English-speaking parents. If these students do not turn in correct, completed assignments, teachers may arrange to:

- Translate the directions of the assignment in the relevant languages, or
- Help students complete the activity before or after school.

11. Help Families of Students Who Do Not Complete Their Assignments

When students do not complete their assignments, teachers should continue to emphasize the family's role in implementing the Compact for Reading. This includes working with the children at home and making sure that students complete the assigned home activities. Teachers may use the monthly calendars

to remind parents to ask their children about the assigned home activities.

Such reminders do not eliminate the need to develop ways to work with children who do not complete their home assignments. Here is a list of ways to work on this issue:

- **For students who occasionally miss an assignment**

Have the student complete the assignment with a teaching assistant, parent volunteer, or the teacher before school or during recess.

- **For students who regularly do not complete assignments**

Call home or meet with the parents one-on-one, and work together to establish a plan to ensure that the student's assignments are completed. The key is to find better ways the teacher, parent, and student can work together to meet the expectations outlined in the school's Compact for Reading.



The Parent's Role

1. Attend a School Training Workshop and Sign the Compact for Reading

The principal, reading coordinator, and teachers of children in kindergarten through third grade will convene a meeting with families of their students to inform the families about the Compact for Reading and their partnering role. Each parent or a family adult should sign the school's Compact for Reading as their commitment to work with their own children at home to support school work. The principal and the reading coordinator will describe how the *School-Home Links Reading Kit* program works.

2. Ask Your Child to Show You the Monthly School-Home Links Calendar and Display It in a Prominent Place in Your Home

Once a month, families will review the **School-Home Links Calendar** to keep up-to-date on school and classroom literacy events. This calendar will show the days on which home reading activities (School-Home Links and Book Links) are due. It could show the dates of parent workshops, the days the school or classroom library is open for children to select books to take home, the visit of a children's author to the school, or the days children visit the public library to take books out. At the bottom of each calendar are the teacher's contact information and a list of times the teacher is available to speak with families. This availability reinforces the essential, open line of communication that your school's Compact for Reading encourages.

3. Work with Your Child, or Ask the School for a Volunteer to Work with Your Child, on the School-Home Links, and Sign Each School-Home Link

Three to four times a week, School-Home Links will be sent home, and once a week Book Links will be sent home. Most activities are addressed to the child, but families of very young children will need to read the sheets for the child.

Families should ask their child to fill out his or her name at the top of the page, then read the boxed area that includes a message just for the family. It tells the family what the child is learning in school and lets the family know why the activity sheet has been assigned as homework for the child.

Families should ask their child to complete the activity in the middle of the sheet that reinforces work done in school that day or week. Finally, the family should ask the child to sign his or her name at the bottom of each page when the activity is done. The responsible family member will also sign each sheet at the bottom of the page.

If families ever need extra help to complete an activity, they should call the teacher and ask for help, or send a note at the bottom of the activity sheet asking the teacher to help the child that day.



The Role of Community Volunteers

Your school's business and nonprofit community partners can play a major role in the success of your School-Home Links program and, subsequently, your school's Compact for Reading.

- **Tutors**

Personnel in local businesses and nonprofits can be approached to serve as tutors for children who most need help in reading. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers are currently tutoring children at lunch time or in after-school tutoring programs. If your school needs volunteer tutors, ask your community organizations to help you locate them.

- **Book donations**

Many schools do not have the resources to set up lending libraries of age-appropriate books in each classroom. In such cases, administrators, teachers, and parents may call on their local businesses and community agencies to help. School staff members might attend local chamber of commerce meetings to inform the business community of the literacy initiatives being implemented at your school, and ask for donations of gently used or new

books, or funds to start classroom lending libraries.

- **Photocopying Services**

Schools that do not have access to a photocopying machine or the extra funds to support the copying of the School-Home Links and Book Links activities, parent letters, and so on might also ask local businesses to help fund these services that support literacy.

Other Types of Activities to Implement the Compact for Reading:

Building a Lasting Capacity

The School-Home Links program is only one suggested activity to fulfill your reading Compact. It is an unusually effective partnership builder, as well as an effective tool to improve students' learning and achievement, because it calls on multiple partners to improve student learning, communication, and capacity building. However, there are many other activities that can and should be conducted to meet the requirements of your Compact.



EVALUATE YOUR COMPACT

4

Agreeing On the Results to Measure

The goal of the fourth step of the Compact process is to evaluate your Compact. Evaluation offers your school community an opportunity to determine the strength of your Compact in improving student learning, communication, and capacity building.

The first step in evaluation is to develop a list of questions about the impact of your Compact on student learning, communication, and capacity building. You may want to know, for example:

- **Student Learning**

Has there has been any upward movement in students' skills and scores in reading or in other student outcomes, such as more library usage, more pleasure reading done, more time spent reading each day, or less TV time at home?

- **Communication**

Have lines of communication among school staff, families, and community members been strengthened?

- **Capacity Building**

Has the capacity of families to help their own children grown, and has this family involvement helped students learn more and better?

Continually evaluating your Compact allows you to check on whether the Compact is working as you intended it to work. This evaluation process enables you to catch problems early, so that you can correct your course for stronger and more effective outcomes. Also, as students, parents, and teachers see the progress that is being made, they have a greater incentive to keep working, with tools that help them work better. Moreover, evaluation sends a signal that the activity you are examining is important.

After basic questions are developed, you will want to develop performance indicators that can give you information on factors that may be associated with the success of your Compact. For example, an indicator of "upward movement in students' skills" would be increases in student test scores in reading (see the section following on "Individual Student Performance"). An indicator of "strengthened lines of communication" would be increases in the numbers of families who report that they are informed about the school's reading standards. An indicator of "a growing capacity of families to help their children in reading" would be increases in the percent of families that help their children complete the School-Home Links activities. See *Activity Sheet 4A* titled "Evaluating the Quality of the Compact Process" for more performance indicators that can be used to collect such information.

4 EVALUATE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet A: Evaluating the Quality of the Compact Process

| Schools | Families | Students |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shared Responsibility for Supporting Learning | | |
| <p>Knowledge of reading standards</p> <p>___% of families report that they know what the school's reading standards are. (survey)</p> <p>___% of families report that the school shows them examples of actual work at different levels of reading performance. (survey, observation)</p> | <p>___% of families and ___% of teachers report that families have high expectations of their children and expect them to be able to read independently by the end of the third grade. (survey)</p> | <p>Teachers report that ___% of students are highly motivated, ask questions to clarify what is expected of them, and seek help when there is something they do not understand. (survey)</p> |
| <p>Attendance</p> <p>___% of teachers were absent more than ten days. (admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of families and ___% of teachers and school staff report that families monitor their children's attendance. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of students were absent 10 or more days in the past year. (admin. records)</p> |
| <p>Quality of reading instruction and support</p> <p>___% of families and ___% of students indicate that the instructional program is challenging and that it is tailored to students who progress at different rates. (survey)</p> <p>___% of teachers have credentials/training to teach their subject. (admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of parents indicate positive attitudes toward reading with their child. (survey)</p> <p>___% of parents read a book or story with their child at least 30 minutes most days. (survey, admin. records of completion of Book Links activities)</p> | <p>___% of students show a positive attitude toward reading. (observation, survey)</p> <p>___% of students show that they read a book or story for at least 30 minutes most days. (survey, admin. records on Book Links activities)</p> |
| <p>Completion of school-home activities</p> <p>___% of families and ___% of students report that meaningful activities are assigned and returned promptly with teacher comments. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of families and ___% of teachers report that families supervise completion of home activities and sign completed assignments. (survey, admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of teachers report that students come to school with home reading activities completed. (survey)</p> |

4 EVALUATE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet A: Evaluating the Quality of the Compact Process

(Continued)

| Schools | Families | Students |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shared Responsibility for Communicating | | |
| <p>Communicating on student progress</p> <p>___% of teachers have access to phones in their classroom to communicate with families. (admin. records)</p> <p>___% of families report that the school holds parent-teacher conferences at convenient times and locations. (survey)</p> <p>School translates information and materials into all relevant languages. (admin. records)</p> <p>___ Yes ___ No</p> | <p>___% of families regularly attend parent-teacher conferences. (admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of students talk with their families about school. (survey, observation)</p> |
| <p>School climate</p> <p>___% of families and ___% of students indicate that they feel welcome at the school and that the school respects their opinions. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of school staff and teachers indicate that families are responsive to their concerns. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of teachers report that students are respectful of one another and of teachers. (survey, observation)</p> |
| Shared Responsibility for Building Capacity | | |
| <p>Training and resources</p> <p>___% of participating teachers and school staff have received training in the Compact for Reading. (admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of families participate in workshops to learn how they can help their children learn to read and do well in school. (admin. records)</p> | <p>___% of students trained to tutor peers is reading. (admin. records)</p> |
| <p>Volunteering</p> <p>___% of families report that the school provides high-quality, well-organized opportunities to volunteer at the school. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of families volunteer at the school, including helping students learn how to read. (admin. records)</p> <p>___% of volunteers report that they actively recruit new families to help out at the school. (survey)</p> | <p>___% of students volunteer at the school or in the community, including helping each other learn to read. (admin. records)</p> |



A word of caution: Gathering and analyzing data can be expensive and time-consuming. Therefore, your school should measure only what is important and, make certain that what is important is measured. While some data can be collected and analyzed quite easily by members of the Core Team, other information can be more difficult to get and may require the help of your district or state evaluation staff, or university partners who specialize in research and evaluation.

Assessing How Well Your Students Are Reading

The ultimate goal of your Compact for Reading is for more students to be reading at higher levels of proficiency. Basic readers should be developing into proficient readers, and proficient readers should be acquiring the skills of advanced readers.

You need to look at your students' reading progress on two levels:

- How are individual students performing in reading?
- How is the school as a whole (all the students) performing in reading?

Individual Student Performance

Many different kinds of information can be obtained on student performance in reading, ranging from very informal measures of progress, like skills checklists, to more formal measures of performance, such as standardized reading tests administered by the school, typically for the district or state. Each of these measures has particular strengths as well as weaknesses. There is not simply one good test of reading ability.

To measure performance in your school for your students, a range of informal and formal assessments is most useful. Some quick-to-administer, informal assessments enable teachers to easily gauge student progress in early literacy skills and get immediate feedback to guide further instruction. More formal group assessments provide an overall picture of where groups of children stand in reading ability and achievement.

Informal Checklists of Skills

Informal checklists of skills that most children have by grade, developmental, or proficiency level can indicate very quickly which skills the child has or needs further work on, and can show at what level a child is reading.

Informal Reading Inventories

These quick-to-administer reading tests, such as the Running Record and the Informal Reading Inventory, permit teachers to determine students' reading strengths, weaknesses, readability levels, and fluency. The Running Record, for example, requires that each child read 100 words of text out loud to the teacher. The teacher notes the time it takes the child to read the passage, and the accuracy with which the child reads the passage. Teachers can administer Running Records multiple times during the year to note progress in fluency as well as accuracy in reading.

Student Home Reports

Several times a year, teachers develop grades or scores that reflect students' performance on classroom reading, written work, and classroom tests. Grades are very broad indicators of performance and are more likely to be subjective than other assessments.

Direct Observation

Observations of individual students' reading behaviors and attitudes can be helpful in determining reading progress. Observations that obtain information on students' enthusiasm for reading, confidence in reading, and recognition that reading requires hard work and practice can be strong indicators of reading success.

Formal Standardized Reading Assessments

Many states and most large districts administer formal assessments in which performance in reading and other language arts is assessed in one section of the overall assessment. Some examples are:

- **Norm-referenced tests**, such as the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition; California Achievement Test (CAT); and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS); or standardized state reading tests;
- **Criterion-referenced tests** developed to measure a state's core curriculum such as Texas' Test of Academic Achievement Skills (TAAS) or Georgia's Curriculum-Based Assessment Program; and
- **Performance-based measures** such as Vermont's portfolio assessment system or the multiple assessment system being used in Kentucky.

School Performance

Your school's performance in reading is determined by adding up the progress made by individual students in reading. A good way to understand your school's reading progress is to chart your students'

scores at the school level and across a number of subpopulations in the school (e.g., by grade, ethnicity/race, special populations such as Title I, limited-English-proficient, and disabled students).

When reviewing student scores before and after the implementation of the Compact for Reading, your Core Team should ask about:

- **Continuous improvement**

Do your results show that students are reading better than before? Are they doing better than in prior years? Are they doing better than in the earlier grades?

- **Comparative performance**

Do your results show that your students are doing as well as students in the best-performing schools that serve similar types of children?

- **Absolute performance**

Do your results show that your students are reaching your school's desired level of performance?

- **Small-group performance**

Do your results show that different groups of students (racial/ethnic groups of students; Title I students with disabilities; limited-English-proficient students) are making substantial progress?



Supporting Learning, Communication, and Capacity Building

Your Core Team should also look at the extent to which the Compact has led to improved support of learning activities, to improved communication among the partners who signed the Compact and are responsible for improvement in reading in your school, and improved capacity to advance the effective teaching and learning of reading.

At least once a year, the Core Team should conduct an evaluation of how well your school-family partnership is working to fulfill the commitments made in your Compact for Reading.

Activity Sheet 4A provides indicators your school may use to summarize the quality of your Compact's implementation. *Activity Sheet 4B* provides a worksheet for detailing what the Compact partners are doing well and what areas need further improvement.

To determine how well your Compact is working, (1) ask participants how it is working (i.e., conduct surveys); (2) review routinely collected information (i.e., examine administrative records); (3) observe students, staff, and parents (i.e., keep anecdotal notes); and (4) conduct in-depth discussions (i.e., hold focus-group sessions).

Surveys

Surveys ask school staff, parents, participating community members, and students their opinions about and experiences with reading and learning. Survey responses tell about partner expectations, provide judgments about the quality of learning experiences and materials, and address whether the partners are communicating well and respectfully with each other. Make sure that your surveys are truly representative of your school's population by language,

race, and parents' educational level. Remember that everyone's views count. In general, companies strive to have at least half of their questionnaires returned. High-quality surveys receive at least 7 out of 10 returned.

Administrative Records

You may use the records your school routinely collects. Routine records may cover students' attendance rates and completion of home learning activities; amount of training for teachers, parents, and volunteers; and levels of participation in the Compact. Such data should be reviewed periodically for accuracy and completeness.

Observation

Direct observation provides rich information that cannot be obtained through surveys or written records. Observations reveal student attitudes and behaviors and are often part of the informal reading assessments previously described.

When observing students, observers must have set criteria for what to look for and what criteria indicate success or quality. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to review the materials themselves, to assess their quality and value.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are small-group discussion sessions to test and review materials, such as the School-Home Links activities. A group of parents and teachers sitting around a table assume the role of market testers who assess the clarity, appropriateness, and usefulness of materials. Focus groups are also useful for discovering and addressing barriers to communication. Focus groups should be representative of your school's population or, upon occasion, targeted to groups of families who are harder to reach.

4 EVALUATE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet B: A Final Tally of What We Are Doing Well and What We Can Improve (Continued)

Directions: For each major focus area, determine what you are doing well. Then describe what areas can be improved.

| Area | What We Are Doing Well | What We Can Improve |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Shared Responsibility for Supporting Learning | | |
| Knowledge of reading standards | | |
| Attendance | | |
| Quality of reading instruction and support | | |
| Completion of school-home activities | | |

4 EVALUATE THE COMPACT

Activity Sheet B: A Final Tally of What We Are Doing Well and What We Can Improve

Directions: For each major focus area, determine what you are doing well. Then describe what areas can be improved.

| Area | What We Are Doing Well | What We Can Improve |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Shared Responsibility for Communicating | | |
| Communicating on student progress | | |
| School climate | | |
| Shared Responsibility for Building Capacity | | |
| Training and resources | | |
| Volunteering | | |

STRENGTHEN YOUR COMPACT

5

The goal of the last step in the Compact process is for your Core and Invention Teams to strengthen your Compact by building on successes documented during Step 4 (Evaluation) and improving in areas documented as needing improvement.

During this step, you will develop solutions to challenges, determine action steps, and revise your Compact as needed. You can use *Activity Sheet 5A* to develop an improvement plan.

This last step is extremely important because it allows partners to step back and praise themselves for what is going well in your school community to help children improve their reading skills and achievement. It is also a time to look at what has not been going well and to seek new solutions. These new solutions will provide information for revising your Compact for Reading, if necessary. Ask yourself: Are the right partners making the right commitments? Do new commitments need to be made? Are there enough people with the right training and expertise to make this work? Are there sufficient funds to support the commitments in the Compact? Fine-tuning your Compact is essential if everyone is to know what needs to be done and do the best job.

Generating Solutions for Thorny Challenges

Every school community faces challenges. Compact Teams can use the following approaches to generate solutions for these challenges:

- **Brainstorm** at your school Compact meetings. The collective wisdom of a team is far greater than that of each member. Use your team to look around your school for opportunities to operate better and more efficiently. You might start by asking a series of questions: Do some strategies seem to be working for certain students, families, and teachers that could be applied throughout the school? Are there better ways to allocate resources? Are staff schedules arranged to support learning and home-school communications? What types of training are helpful to staff and families in teaching or reinforcing reading? Are some school staff and parents particularly effective at overcoming difficulties? Answers to these questions can help guide school improvement throughout the school.
- **Review the reading research.** The recently published National Academy of Sciences' report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, is an outstanding summary of an enormous body of reading research on "what works" in reading. The U.S. Department of Education is supporting nontechnical summaries of this report that can guide you through the findings.
- **Look for solid reading models.** Some of the best ideas in teaching reading have been packaged into model programs. Some models with a clear emphasis on reading include the New American Schools Corporation models, Success for All, Early Literacy Learning Initiative, Family Literacy, and Books and Beyond. There are others that have similar emphases.

5 STRENGTHEN YOUR COMPACT

Activity Sheet A: Your Improvement Plan

Directions: Make a list of your successes (strengths) and a list of areas needing improvement below. Use the following worksheet to design an improvement plan for each area identified.

Area identified for improvement: _____

Why improvement is needed (based on progress toward standards and local, state, and national comparisons):

Improvement Strategies. How will you strengthen your actions in this area? What specific actions will you take with reference to learning, to communication, and to volunteering and training? How will each partner contribute to the effort?

1. _____

2. _____

Do you need to make any specific changes to the Compact document itself?

Before deciding on one model, ask its creators for their research evidence of effectiveness. Consider models that have a strong parent involvement component.

- **Visit successful schools.** Find the time and resources for school staff and parents to visit neighboring schools. Seeing how other schools successfully tackle the same problems you have provides solid training and reinforces continuous improvement.
- **Obtain outside advice.** Experts in the field can cut through the jargon and help you understand the different reading approaches and strategies for assisting families and involving communities. Your school district, state education agency, and local colleges and universities are good places to start for advice on effective practices. At the national level, the U.S. Department of Education supports Comprehensive Assistance Centers and ERIC clearinghouses that can be of help (see Appendix D, Key Resources).
- **Look on the Web.** The World Wide Web is a new resource that is available on any day and at any time (see Appendix D, Key Resources for sites that can be helpful).

Sample Challenges and Solutions

Challenge #1: My school has a sound Compact but it is not used.

Solutions:

- Give your Compact Core Team clear responsibility for setting guidelines and monitoring use.

- Put the Compact on the agenda of every major school meeting relating to improvement.
- Consider including School-Home Links as one part of student report cards.
- Provide resources that are targeted specifically to implementing Compact responsibilities.
- Hold staff accountable for implementing their Compact responsibilities as part of their annual performance assessment.
- Publicize the Compact through signs, posters, and newsletters, and at parent meetings—it is said that it takes many reminders before people remember something new.
- Recognize Compact successes through newsletters, end-of-year parent achievement awards, and thank-you notes.
- Use the school calendar as a reminder about Compact events and obligations.

Challenge #2: School staff want to do more to fulfill the Compact, but they simply do not have the time.

Solutions:

- Assign to each school staff member—including the principal, other school administrators, and teacher specialists—a group of families with whom they are to keep in regular contact. Sharing communication responsibilities among all the school staff, not just the homeroom teachers, reduces the requirements on any one teacher.
- Give staff access to the telephone, preferably a telephone in the classroom, to facilitate family communication. In this age of modern electronic communications, schools remain one of the last places where a professional does not typically have easy access to the telephone.

- Use Title I resources to help pay for a parent coordinator to contact families. In districts receiving \$500,000 or more, Title I reserves at least one percent for parental involvement activities.
- Ask parent volunteers to help get parents involved.
- Use paraprofessionals or student teachers to relieve teachers of noninstructional duties, such as lunch room, study hall, and recess, allowing them to spend greater time on supporting core activities in your Compact.
- Provide a recorded message informing parents of classroom and school activities. Allow parents to leave messages detailing their reactions and concerns.

Challenge #3: Although a few parents have been very supportive of the Compact, many others are uninvolved.

Solutions:

- Conduct a survey or focus group to find out why certain parents are having difficulty in fulfilling their Compact responsibilities and how the school can help.
- Send home information translated in the family's home language and adapted to the needs of parents with disabilities. Non-English-speaking families may want to use School-Home Links as a way to improve their own English, once they understand its purpose.
- Have frequent teacher-family calls to improve home-school relationships.
- Provide transportation for evening meetings.

- Hold Compact meetings in nonschool settings, such as local community centers or churches, where parents may feel more comfortable.
- Conduct home visits to demonstrate the willingness of school staff to go more than halfway to involve all parents in their children's education.
- Provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere by offering food at school meetings, sending home letters, and making a call to each parent introducing yourself at the start of the year.
- Reinforce the importance of family involvement by posting meeting dates for special family events in local restaurants, churches, and other meeting places.

Challenge #4: Our children are making reading progress during the school year, but many lose those gains during the summer.

Solutions:

- Participate in America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! school and community reading programs that team students with reading partners and require students to read at least 30 minutes a day.
- Offer extended summer school programs, like those in Chicago and Washington, D.C., to rigorously reinforce reading.
- Work with voluntary organizations, such as AmeriCorps or college and high school students, to obtain summer volunteer tutors.

Challenge #5: The School-Home Links examples are very helpful, but my school would like to add some activities to the Kit.

Solutions:

- The School-Home Links provided in the Compact for Reading are only examples of activities that can be developed to reinforce classroom learning. Your reading coordinator or teachers can supplement these examples with others.
- Match the School-Home Links against your state or local reading standards and identify topics that need additional activities.
- Survey parents to determine if the School-Home Links are working particularly well or are too difficult or not worth doing.
- Ask the publisher of your school's reading materials whether they have already developed parent activities to supplement your School-Home Links.
- Go to the U.S. Department of Education Web site for more School-Home Links (<http://www.ed.gov>).



Challenge #6: My school needs more reading resources to provide the effective instructional program envisioned in our Compact for Reading.

Solutions:

- Ask for Federal Work-Study Program volunteers from your local college or university to help with tutoring, because they can obtain federal student aid assistance to help in your school.
- Contact your local Corporation for National Service representative who can tell you more about coordination and tutoring help from AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, VISTA, Foster Grandparents, and other corporation-funded programs.
- Ask employers to support your school's reading program by providing books and other reading resources to support the Compact. Encourage employers to provide flexitime or leavetime so employees can volunteer in the school, or distribute information throughout the community on the need for resources. Integrate their assistance into your school's systemic improvement.
- Review all state and federal programs—such as Title I, Even Start, Reading Is Fundamental, special education, or bilingual education—for possible reading support.
- Extend reading time and assistance through your school's after-school program, including those receiving 21st Century school grants.
- Use your school's computers to reinforce reading.

Notes



Archived Information

Appendixes

Appendix A: The National Academy of Sciences’
“Accomplishments in Reading”

Appendix B: Reading Fact Sheets

Appendix C: School-Home Links Calendar

Appendix D: Key Resources

Appendix E: Partnership for Family Involvement
in Education Information





The National Academy of Sciences' "Accomplishments in Reading"



Excerpt from the National Academy of Sciences' *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*

Table 2-2 Accomplishments in Reading

Kindergarten Accomplishments

- Knows the parts of a book and their functions.
- Begins to track print when listening to a familiar text being read or when rereading own writing.
- Reads familiar text energetically, i.e., not necessarily verbatim from the print alone.
- Recognizes and can name all uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Understands that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds (phonemes) in a spoken word (alphabetic principle).
- Learns many, though not all, one-to-one letter sound correspondences.
- Recognizes some words by sight, including a few very common ones (a, the, I, my, you, is, are).
- Uses new vocabulary and grammatical constructions in own speech.
- Makes appropriate switches from oral to written language situations.
- Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense.
- Connects information and events in texts to life and life to text experiences.
- Retells, reenacts, or dramatizes stories or parts of stories.
- Listens attentively to books teacher reads to class.
- Can name some book titles and authors.
- Demonstrates familiarity with a number of types or genres of text (e.g., storybooks, expository texts, poems, newspapers, and everyday print such as signs, notices, labels).
- Correctly answers questions about stories read aloud.
- Makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories.
- Demonstrates understanding that spoken words consist of a sequences of phonemes.
- Given spoken sets like “dan, dan, den” can identify the first two as being the same and the third as different.

- Given spoken sets like “dak, pat, zen” can identify the first two as sharing a same sound.
- Given spoken segments can merge them into a meaningful target word.
- Given a spoken word can produce another word that rhymes with it.
- Independently writes many uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Uses phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently (invented or creative spelling).
- Writes (unconventionally) to express own meaning.
- Builds a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words.
- Shows awareness of distinction between "kid writing" and conventional orthography.
- Writes own name (first and last) and the first names of some friends or classmates.
- Can write most letters and some words when they are dictated.



First-Grade Accomplishments

- Makes a transition from emergent to "real" reading.
- Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehends any text that is appropriately designed for the first half of grade 1.
- Accurately decodes orthographically regular, one-syllable words and nonsense words (e.g., sit, zot), using print-sound mappings to sound out unknown words.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text.
- Recognizes common, irregularly spelled words by sight (have, said, where, two).
- Has a reading vocabulary of 300 to 500 words, sight words, and easily sounded out words.
- Monitors own reading and self-corrects when an incorrectly identified word does not fit with cues provided by the letters in the word or the context surrounding the word.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction materials that are appropriately designed for grade level.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing appropriate use of standard, more formal language registers.
- Creates own written texts for others to read.
- Notices when difficulties are encountered in understanding text.
- Reads and understands simple written instructions.
- Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories.
- Discusses prior knowledge of topics in expository texts.
- Discusses how, why, and what-if questions in sharing nonfiction texts.
- Describes new information gained from texts in own words.
- Distinguishes whether simple sentences are incomplete or fail to make sense; notices when simple texts fail to make sense.
- Can answer simple written comprehension questions based on material read.
- Can count the number of syllables in a word.
- Can blend or segment the phonemes of most one-syllable words.
- Spells correctly three- and four-letter, short-vowel words.
- Composes fairly readable first drafts using appropriate parts of the writing process (some attention to planning, drafting, rereading for meaning, and some self-correction).
- Uses invented spelling/phonics-based knowledge to spell independently, when necessary.
- Shows spelling consciousness or sensitivity to conventional spelling.
- Uses basic punctuation and capitalization.
- Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, descriptions, journal entries), showing appropriate relationships between printed text, illustrations, and other graphics.
- Engages in a variety of literary activities voluntarily (e.g., choosing books and stories to read, writing a note to a friend).

Table 2-2 Continued

Second-Grade Accomplishments

- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction materials that are appropriately designed for grade level.
- Accurately decodes orthographically multisyllable words and nonsense words (e.g., capital, Kalamazoo).
- Uses knowledge of print-sound mapping to sound out unknown words.
- Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings.
- Shows evidence of expanding language repertoire, including increasing use of more formal language registers.
- Reads voluntarily for interest and own purposes.
- Rereads sentences when meaning is not clear.
- Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.
- Recalls facts and details of texts.
- Reads nonfiction materials for answers to specific questions or for specific purposes.
- Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.
- Discusses similarities in characters and events across stories.
- Connects and compares information across nonfiction selections.
- Poses possible answers to how, why, and what-if questions.
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing.
- Represents the complete sound of a word when spelling independently.
- Shows sensitivity to using formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns at appropriate spots in own writing (e.g., oral decontextualizing sentences, conventions for quoted speech, literary language forms, proper verb forms).
- Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in written products.
- Productively discusses ways to clarify and refine writing of own and others.
- With assistance, uses conferences, revisions, and editing processes to clarify and refine own writing to the steps of the expected parts of the writing process.
- Given organizational help, writes informative, well-structured reports.
- Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products.
- Produces a variety of types of composition (e.g., stories, reports, correspondence).

Table 2.2 Continued

Third-Grade Accomplishments

- Reads aloud with fluency and comprehends any text that is appropriately designed for grade level.
- Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge and structural analysis to decode words.
- Reads and comprehends both fiction and nonfiction materials that are appropriately designed for grade level.
- Reads longer fictional selections and chapter books independently.
- Takes part in creative responses to texts such as dramatizations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.
- Can point to or clearly identify specific words or wordings that are causing comprehension difficulties.
- Summarizes major points from fiction and nonfiction texts.
- In interpreting fiction, discusses underlying theme or message.
- Asks how, why, and what-if questions in interpreting nonfiction texts.
- In interpreting nonfiction, distinguishes cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea and supporting details.
- Uses information and reasoning to examine bases of hypothesis and opinions.
- Infers word meanings from taught roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns into own writing.
- Begins to incorporate literacy words and language patterns into own writing (e.g., elaborates descriptions, uses figurative wording).
- With some guidance, uses all aspects of the writing process in producing own compositions and reports.
- Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports.
- With assistance, suggests and implements editing and revision to clarify and refine own writing.
- Presents and discusses own writing with other students and responds helpfully to other students' compositions.
- Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation.
- Produces a variety of written works (e.g., literature responses, reports, "published" books, semantic maps) in a variety of formats, including multimedia forms.



Reading Fact Sheets

B

Where American Children Stand in Reading, Nationally and Internationally

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows little improvement in reading for students in grade 4 and grade 8 since 1992, and a slight downturn for students in grade 12. Improvements in reading have been relatively flat since the early 1970s. In 1996, 38 percent of America's fourth-graders could not perform at the basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. By contrast, NAEP scores across the grade levels have improved in mathematics and science, subjects that have been the focus of national and community attention (*NAEP, 1998, U.S. Department of Education*).
- International assessments provide more positive results. American children and youth were found to be better readers than students in many other industrial nations. The literacy score of American 9-year-olds ranked second among 18 participating nations, while American 14-year-olds ranked sixth (*International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement, 1992*).
- Proficient readers remain a minority. Twenty-five percent of fourth-graders, 28 percent of eighth-graders, and 34 percent of twelfth-graders attained at least the "proficient" level in reading. Across the three grades, 5 percent or less reached the "advanced" level of reading achievement (*NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education*).
- Problems are particularly severe for disadvantaged students. Fifty percent of fourth-grade students whose parents graduated from college have "advanced" or "proficient" reading achievements, whereas only 10 percent of fourth-grade students whose parents did not finish high school read at these levels (*NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education*).
- Many low-income and minority students lose some literacy and academic abilities during the summer months. Some students lose as much as three to four months of academic progress, while children in high-income areas gain at least a month of progress during the summer (*Karweit, Ricciuti, and Thompson, 1994*).

- Across the nation from 1992 to 1994 , significant declines in average reading proficiency were observed for fourth-grade Hispanic students (*NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education*).
- More than one child in six has problems learning to read during the first three years of school (*NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education*).
- Children who do not learn to read comprise over 50 percent of the special education population, and 35 percent of these learning disabled children drop out of school (*National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 1996*).

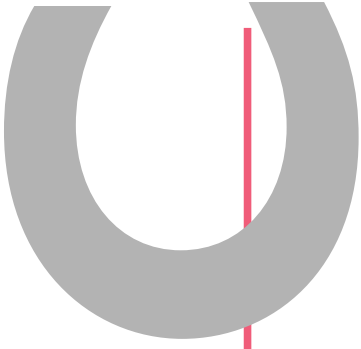


Achieving Success in Reading

- Between 60 percent and 70 percent of parents and teachers agree that reading is the most important subject for students to learn (American Federation of Teachers, 1994). Reading is the gateway to all other knowledge. Students who do not learn efficient reading skills are blocked from every other subject in their schooling (*The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996*).
- Reading, unlike speaking, is a learned behavior that must be taught and repeatedly reinforced (*The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996*).
- It is essential that children find time to read aloud every day. This creates appreciation of the written word, helping students to become better readers (*The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996*).
- Communities ranking well in achievement tests have several key variables such as an abundance of books in public libraries, easy access to books in the community at large (libraries, bookstores), policy of investing in school library, policy of having large classroom libraries, large number of textbooks per student, frequency of book borrowing per students, frequency of silent reading by students, and time spent by teachers reading aloud (*Elley, 1992*).
- Of fourth-grade students scoring in the 90th percentile in reading ability and literacy practices, 60 percent read for fun daily or almost daily, 66 percent discussed studies at home daily or almost daily, and 63 percent read more than 10 pages each day for school or homework. Nine-year-olds who read more pages per day both in and out of the classroom perform significantly better in NAEP assessments (*NAEP, 1996, U.S. Department of Education*).
- Parental involvement in reading dramatically increases children's scores on reading comprehension testing ("Reading Literacy in the U.S.," *National Center for Education Statistics, 1996*).
- Learning to read reflectively helps learning disabled students to become better readers. When reading with children, pause for discussion about what has been read. Discuss the language, content, and meaning of the text (*The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996*).
- Above all other things, read, read, and reread (*The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators, 1996*).



School-Home Links Calendar: Example



Homelinks/Booklinks --Schedule of Events

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Connecting School and Home Reading Events

September 1999

Homelinks/Booklinks – We read so many books together this year. Let me tell you about my favorite books and why I liked them best.

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | |

School name _____
 Teacher _____
 Telephone number _____
 The best time to reach me is: _____



Key Resources



Useful advice, fine materials, and outstanding programs are available to help form and strengthen partnerships for learning, but it is important to know where to find this help.

Information About Compacts and Title I

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provides resources to schools needing extra help to strengthen programs in the basics and core academics, requires the creation of family-school compacts in all Title I schools.

Federal resources that can help:

Title I

U. S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Telephone: 202-260-7764
Web site : www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CEP

The Compensatory Education Programs Office administers the Title I Program of supplementary instruction and other services to serve 6.4 million children in high poverty schools in more than 14,000 school districts across the US. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Elementary Act (ESEA) requires the creation of family-school compacts in all Title I schools.

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D. C. 20202-8173
Web site: <http://pfie.ed.gov/>

The Partnership for Family Involvement is a partnership of over 4,400 members of school, business, religious, and community organizations that come together to increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home, and to use family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.

Organizations That Can Help

Education Trust

1725 K Street, NW

Suite 200

Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 293-1217

National Coalition of Title I Parents

1352 Q Street, NW

2nd Floor East

Washington, DC 20005

E-mail: NCTIC1P@aol.com

Publications

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc. 1997. *About Parent-School Compacts*. South Deerfield, MA.

The Education Trust. 1996. *A New Chance: Making the Most of Title I*. Washington, DC.

Macfarlane, Eleanor C. 1995. *Boost Family Involvement: How to Make Your Program Succeed Under the New Title I Guidelines*. Bloomington, IN: Family Literacy Center.

RMC Research. 1996. *Parents Ask About Compacts*. Portsmouth, NH.

1996. *Parents Ask About Parent Involvement Policies*. Portsmouth, NH.

1996. *Parents Ask About School Profiles*. Portsmouth, NH.

1996. *Parents Ask About Title I*. Portsmouth, NH.

Rogers, Mimi. 1995. *Planning for Title I Programs: Guidelines for Parents, Advocates, and Educators*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.

Information About Reading

Federal resources that can help:

Compensatory Education Programs

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/program.html

The Compensatory Education Programs office provides assistance to support the education of disadvantaged students and strengthen programs in reading, among other core academic subjects.

Even Start Family Literacy Program

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Office of Compensatory Education administers the Even Start Family Literacy Program. Even Start provides federal financial assistance for family-centered education projects to help parents learn the literacy and parenting skills they need to become full partners in the education of their young children and to help those children reach their full potential as learners.

Regional Comprehensive Assistance Centers

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Goals 2000 Office
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdFed/EdTechCtrs.html

Fifteen Regional Comprehensive Assistance Centers provide support and assistance to States, local education agencies, tribes, schools, and other recipients of funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Their Reading Success Network (RSN) provides training and support for kindergarten through third grade classroom teachers to broaden and improve their diagnostic and instructional skills.

Goals 2000 Parent Information Resource Centers

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Goals 2000 Office
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC. 20202
Web site: www.mcfarlandwired.com/pacc

Goals 2000 Parent Information Resource Centers provide support to increase parents' knowledge of and confidence in parenting activities that promote early learning. The Centers also strengthen partnerships between parents and schools to meet the education needs of children. There is one center in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Island outlying areas.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

U. S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208
Web site: www.ed.gov/offices/OERI

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) conducts research and demonstration projects to help improve education, collects statistics on the status and progress of schools and education throughout the nation, and distributes information and provides technical assistance to those working to improve education

Office of Special Education Programs

U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html

The Office of Special Education Programs provides leadership and assistance to State and local efforts to educate children with disabilities to improve results for those children and ensure equal protection under the law. Its programs assist public agencies to provide all infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities with early intervention services and a free appropriate public education which emphasizes challenging standards and access to the general curriculum to the extent appropriate.

Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs

U. S. Department of Education
MES Building - Room 5082
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA

The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs provides assistance for programs supporting the education of linguistically and culturally diverse children with limited English proficiency.

Office of Vocational and Adult Education

U. S. Department of Education
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education provides assistance for family literacy activities that include parenting, adult education, child development, and child/adult interactions under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

National Institute for Literacy

800 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006

The National Institute for Literacy is an independent Federal institute, jointly administered by the secretaries of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services. The central purpose of the Institute is to strengthen family and adult literacy.

U.S. Department of Education Materials

America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! Resource "Tool Kit"

The materials in this kit were assembled by the U.S. Department of Education to help new America Reads Challenge community sites plan and implement literacy programs for children from birth through elementary school. Unless otherwise noted below, the materials are available on the U.S. Department of Education Web page (<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/resourcekit>). Titles in italics are available in hard copy from the indicated source. Hard copy materials produced by the U.S. Department of Education can be obtained, as long as supplies last, by calling 1-877-4EDPUBS or 1-800-USA-LEARN.

- *Checkpoints for Progress for Families and Communities*
- *Checkpoints for Progress for Teachers and Learning Partners*
- *Simple Things You Can Do to Help All Children Read Well and Independently by the End of Third Grade*
- *On the Road to Reading* (Corporation for National Service, 202-606-5000)
- *A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships*
- *Learning Disabilities: Information, Strategies and Resources* (Coordinated by Campaign for Learning Disabilities, 202-326-8700)
- *Briefing Paper from National Information Center for Children and Youth With Disabilities (NICHCY) on Reading and Learning Disabilities* (202-884-8200)
- *America Reads Challenge Principles and Key Components for High-Quality America Reads Challenge National Service Program Initiatives* (Corporation for National Service, 202-606-5000)
- *Tips on Tutoring: A Guide for Committed Tutors* (The Southern Regional Council/Center for School Success, 404-522-8764)
- *Students Teaching Students: A Handbook for Cross-Age Tutoring* (The Southern Regional Council/Center for School Success, 404-522-8764)
- *Read With Me: A Guide for Student Volunteers Starting Early Childhood Literacy Programs, September 1997* (1-800-424-1616, choose menu option #3)
- *The America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! Basic Kit, 1998* (in color and black and white, English and Spanish)
- *The America Reads Challenge Early Childhood Kit: READY*SET*READ, 1998* (in color and black and white, English and Spanish)
- *The America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! Spiderman in Amazing Adventures Activity Booklet*
- *Learning to Read, Reading to Learn: Helping Children with Learning Disabilities to Succeed-Resource Guide, 1996-1997.* (Available on CEC Web site, <http://www.cec.sped.org/ericec/readlist.htm>, or request copy from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 202-205-9067)

Clearinghouses and Affiliates

Ask ERIC Question Answering Service

Located at **ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology**

(most responses within 48 hours)

Syracuse University

Syracuse, NY 13244-4100

Hotline phone: 1-800-464-9107

E-mail: AskERIC@ericir.syr.edu

Web site: <http://ericir.syr.edu/>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education

Located at the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

1920 Association Drive

Reston, VA 22091

Phone: (703) 264-9419

Phone: 1-800-328-0272 (Mon.-Fri. only, between 1:00 p.m. and 5 p.m.)

Fax: (703) 620-2521

Web site: <http://www.ericec.org>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication

Indiana University

2805 East 10th Street, Suite 150

Bloomington, IN 47408

Family Learning Association

P.O. Box 5247

Bloomington, IN 47407

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE)

1118 22nd Street NW

Washington, DC 20037

Phone: (202) 467-0867

Fax: (202) 467-4283 or 1-800-531-9347

Web site: <http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu>

Associations and Organizations Offering Information Services

International Reading Association (IRA)

800 Barksdale Road

P.O. Box 8139

Newark, DE 19714-8139

Phone: 1-800-336-7223 (ext. 265, Joan Derby) or (302) 721-1600

Fax: (302) 737-0878

Web site: <http://www.reading.org>

Learning Disabilities Association

Attn: Jean Petersen

4165 Library Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Phone: (412) 341-1515

Fax: (412) 344-0224

Web site: <http://www.ldanatl.org>

National Association for Bilingual Education

1220 L Street NW

Suite 605

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 898-1829

Fax: (202) 789-2866

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

1509 16th Street NW

Washington, DC 20036-1426

Phone: (202) 232-8777

Fax: (202) 328-1846

Web site: <http://www.naeyc.org>

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

1615 Duke Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-3483

Phone: (703) 684-3483

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)

Waterfront Plaza

325 West Main Street

Suite 200

Louisville, KY 40202-4251

Phone: (502) 584-1133

Fax: (502) 584-0172

National Education Association (NEA)

1201 16th Street NW

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 833-4000

Fax: (202) 822-7974

Web site: <http://www.nea.org>

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

P.O. Box 1492

Washington, DC 20013

Phone: 1-800-695-0285 (V/TT)

Fax: (202) 884-8441

Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)

600 Maryland Avenue, SW

Suite 600

Washington, DC 20024

Phone: (202) 287-3220

Fax: (202) 287-3196

E-mail: rifsi@si.edu

Web site: <http://www.si.edu/rif/> (note: RIF site is located under Smithsonian Institution's home page)

Additional Web Sites

Alphabet Superhighway

<http://www.ash.udel.edu>

America Reads Challenge

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads>

English and American Literature

<http://www.lib.uconn.edu/subjectareas/engweb.html>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education

<http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu>

National Council of Teachers of English

<http://www.ncte.org>

National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education at the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (U.S. Department of Education)

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ECI>

Office of Special Education Programs (U.S. Department of Education)

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP>

Strategies for teaching children with mental retardation

<http://www.central.edu/education/rex/mr.html>

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www.ed.gov>

Booklists On Line

Great Fiction List

<http://cfsd.k12.az.us/~cfhsweb/lic/LIC/gf.html>

Information About Family Involvement

Federal resources that can help:

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

U. S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, D. C. 20202-8173

Web site: <http://pfie.ed.gov/>

The Partnership for Family Involvement is a partnership of over 4,400 members of school, business, religious, and community organizations that come together to increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home, and to use family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.

Goals 2000 Parent Information Resource Centers

U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Goals 2000 Office
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC. 20202
Web site: [http:// www.mcfarlandwired.com/pacc](http://www.mcfarlandwired.com/pacc)

Goals 2000 Parent Information Resource Centers provide support to increase parents' knowledge of and confidence in parenting activities that promote early learning. The Centers also strengthen partnerships between parents and schools to meet the education needs of children. There is one center in every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Island outlying areas.

Office of Special Education Programs

U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202
Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html>

The Office of Special Education Programs provides leadership and assistance to State and local efforts to educate children with disabilities to improve results for those children and ensure equal protection under the law. Its programs assist public agencies to provide all infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities with early intervention services and a free appropriate public education which emphasizes challenging standards and access to the general curriculum to the extent appropriate. The Office of Special Education Programs funds 70 Parent Training and Information Projects across the 50 states to help parents of children with disabilities. To get a copy of A Directory of Parent Training and Information Projects and further information, telephone the National Information Center for Children & Youth with Disabilities at 1-800-695-0285.

Publications

U. S. Department of Education Publications

The following publications are available free of charge at 1-877-4EDPUBS or 1-800-USA-LEARN. Many are also available on the Internet at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs>.

Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools

This publication presents accumulated knowledge and fresh ideas on school outreach strategies to reach out to all families and help get them involved in their children's education.

Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers: Extending Learning in a Safe, Drug-Free Environment Before and After School

This guidebook is designed to help schools and community-based organizations begin the process of keeping schools open for children and families beyond the traditional school hours to provide access to valuable education resources in a building free of violence and drugs.

Employers, Families and Education

This publication explores the benefits of family-friendly policies for employers and employees focused on educational activities for children.

Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning.

This report summarizes 30 years of research showing that greater family involvement in children's learning is crucial to providing a good education and a safe, disciplined learning environment for every student. The report, released as part of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, suggests what schools, communities, businesses, government, and families themselves can do to strengthen family involvement in children's learning.

America Goes Back to School Partners' Activity Kit

This publication encourages parents, citizens, and all Americans to rally around their local schools and make a commitment to support education improvement throughout the year.

Brochures on Family Involvement

- *Team Up for Kids! How Schools Can Support Family Involvement in Education*
- *Get Involved! How Parents and Families Can Help Their Children do Better in School*
- *Be Family-Friendly: It's Good Business!*
- *Join Together for Kids! How Communities Can Support Family Involvement in Education*
- *Summer Home Learning Recipes.* Developed by the Home and School Institute, these four brochures contain reading, writing, math, and science activities that parents can do with their children by age groups.
- *Preparing Your Child for College.* This resource book is designed to help students, their parents, and others prepare academically and financially for college.
- *Getting Ready for College Early.* This booklet is designed to help parents and students in the middle and junior high school years understand the steps needed to get ready for college.

The following publications are available through the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616:

- *Overcoming Barriers to Family Involvement in Title I Schools: Report to Congress*, February 1997.
- *Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches: An Idea Book*, June, 1997.
- *Learning Partners* series.
- *Helping Your Child* series, including:

Helping Your Child Learn Math

Helping Your Child Learn to Read

Helping Your Child Become a Reader

Helping Your Child Learn Science

Helping Your Child Learn History

Helping Your Child Get Ready for School

Helping Your Child Use the Library

Como Ayudar a su Hijos a Usar la Biblioteca

Helping Your Child With Homework

Helping Your Child Succeed in School

Internet Resources

National Parent Information Network (NPIN)

Web site: <http://www.npin.org/eric>

At this Web site, you will find a collection of materials for parents and parent educators, monthly news for parents, information about the Parenting Discussion List (listserv), and instructions for using Parents' AskERIC, a component of the award-winning AskERIC project, which responds to e-mail questions on child development, child care, parenting, and child rearing.

Family Education Network

Web site: <http://www.familyeducation.com>

At this Web site, you will find information about learning at home and at school; links to school Web sites and other related sites; updates on education-related legislation; numerous activities and tips for parents; and a forum for discussion of related topics.

Organizations That Can Help

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

1444 Eye Street NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 835-3600

Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education

Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
Box 81
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: (615) 322-8080

Family Geography Challenge

National Geographic Society
1145 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 828-6686

Families and Work Institute

330 7th Avenue
14th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (212) 465-2044
Web site: <http://www.familiesandworkinst.org>

HIPPY USA

Teachers College
525 West 120th Street
Box 113
New York, NY 10027
Phone: (212) 678-3500

Institute for Responsive Education

Northeastern University

50 Nightingale Hall

Boston, MA 02115

Phone: (617) 373-2595

MegaSkills Education Center

The Home and School Institute

1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 466-3633

Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)

Community Education and Public Policy

634 South Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90014

Phone: (213) 629-0839

National Association for Partners in Education

901 North Pitt Street

Suite 320

Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: (703) 836-4880

National Association of School Psychologists

4340 East West Highway

Suite 402

Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: (301) 657-0270

National Black Child Development Institute

1023 15th Street NW

Suite 600

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 387-1281

National Center for Family Literacy

Waterfront Plaza
325 West Main Street
Suite 200
Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Phone: (502) 584-1133

The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education

1201 16th Street NW
Box 39
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 822-8405
Web site: <http://www.ncpie.org>

National Network of Partnership-2000 Schools

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: (410) 516-8818
Web site: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000>

The National PTA

330 North Wabash Avenue
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60611-3690
Phone: (312) 670-6782
Web site: <http://www.pta.org>

National Urban League

500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
Phone: 1-888-326-9688
Web site: <http://www.nul.org>

Parents as Teachers National Center

10176 Corporate Square Drive

Suite 230

St. Louis, MO 63132

Phone: (314) 432-4330

Web site: <http://www.patnc.org>

Publications

Bamber, Chrissie, Nancy Berla, and Anne T. Henderson. 1997. *Learning From Others: Good Programs and Successful Campaigns*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education and the Academy for Educational Development.

Coleman, Mick. July 1997. *Families and Schools: In Search of Common Ground*. *Young Children*, vol. 52, no. 5:14-21.

Dietz, Michael J., ed. 1997. *School, Family, and Community: Techniques and Models for Successful Collaboration*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publications.

Epstein, Joyce L. May 1995. *School, Family, Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children we Share*. *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 77, no. 9: 701-12.

Harvard Education Newsletter. September-October 1997. *Special Issue on Parent Involvement*. Cambridge, MA (1-800-513-0763).

Henderson, A. 1987. *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Rich, Dorothy. 1997. *MegaSkills: Building Children's Achievement for the Information Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

1994. *The New MegaSkills Bond*. Washington, DC: Dorothy Rich Associates.

1997. *What Do We Say: What Do We Do?: Vital Solutions for Children's Educational Success*. New York: Forge.

1997. *What Do I Say? What Do I Do? Problem Solving Handbook*. Washington, DC: Home and School Institute.

Struck, Darla, ed. 1995. *Involving Parents in Education*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publications.

Warner, Carolyn with Marilyn Curry. 1997. *Everybody's House-The Schoolhouse: Best Techniques for Connecting Home, School, and Community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Information About Standards

Local and state activities

Contact your local school district or state department of education to find out how your community and state are developing and setting higher education and occupation standards.

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act

Provides funding to help schools raise standards and improve their accountability. It encourages communities to create their own school improvement plans. For information, call your state education department or the U.S. Department of Education at (202) 401-0039.

The Education Excellence Partnership has published a booklet about standards for parents called *Strengthening your Child's Academic Future*. To get your copy, call 1-800-558-5450.

The National Urban League has a new video, *Putting Standards into Action*, to help parents understand what academic standards are and what they can do to help children reach them. For more information, call 212-558-5450.

Internet Resources

Developing Educational Standards

Web site: <http://www.Putwest.boces.org/standards.html>

This internet address takes you to an outstanding Web site run by Putnam Valley Schools, Putnam Valley, New York, which posts links to other sites with K-12 education standards and curriculum framework documents, including sites from every state.

Achieve

Web site: <http://www.achieve.org>

Achieve Resource Center on Standards, Assessment, Accountability, and Technology is home to a National Clearinghouse database that contains easily accessible information on standards-based education reform for educators, governors, and business leaders.

American Federation of Teachers, Educational Issues Department

Web site: <http://www.aft.org/edissues.htm>

Find out more about the American Federation of Teachers' campaign for high standards at the Web site, which mentions related resources and information about standards nationally and internationally.

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL)

Web site: <http://www.mcrel.org>

McREL, one of the U.S. Department of Education's 10 regional labs, maintains a database on standards and benchmarks. A number of its publications on standards also are available on-line.

Organizations That Can Help

American Federation of Teachers

555 New Jersey Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 879-4400

Web site: <http://www.aft.org>

Business Coalition for Education Reform

c/o National Alliance of Business

1201 New York Avenue, NW

Suite 700

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 289-2888

Web site: <http://www.bcer.org> and www.nab.com

Business Roundtable

1615 L Street, NW

Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20036

Web site: <http://www.brtable.org>

Council for Basic Education

1319 F Street, NW

Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 347-4171

Web site: <http://www.c-b-e.org>

Council of Chief State School Officers

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW

Suite 700

Washington, DC 20001-1431

Phone: (202) 408-5505

Web site: <http://www.ccsso.org>

Education Excellence Partnership

1615 L Street, NW

Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 1-800-382-3762

National Education Association

1201 16th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: (202) 833-4000

Web site: <http://www.nea.org>

National Education Goals Panel

1255 22nd Street, NW

Suite 502

Washington, DC 20037

Phone: (202) 724-0015

Web site: <http://www.negp.gov>

National Governors' Association

444 North Capitol Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 624-5300

Web site: <http://www.nga.org>

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Center for Workforce Preparation

1615 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20062

Phone: (202) 463-5525

**Publications available from the U.S. Department of Education
(Call 1-877-4EDPUBS or 1-800-USA-LEARN)**

Strengthening Your Child's Academic Future. 1997. Educational Excellence Partnership.

Improving America's Schools: A Newsletter on Issues in School Reform. Spring 1996. "Standards: What are They?"

Moving America to the Head of the Class. 1995. Educational Excellence Partnership.

Teachers and GOALS 2000: Leading the Journey Toward High Standards for All Students. June 1995.

Other Publications

American Federation of Teachers. 1997. *Making Standards Matter: An Annual Fifty-State Report on Efforts to Raise Academic Standards*. Washington, DC.

Council for Basic Education. 1996. *How Does Your School Measure Up?* Washington, DC.

Pritchard, Ivor. 1996. *Judging Standards in Standards-Based Reform*. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education.

RMC Research. 1996. *Parents Ask About Standards*. Portsmouth, NH.

Information About Measurement and Evaluation

Internet resources

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/eval>

Consult the Web site of the Planning and Evaluation Service, a division within the Office of the Under Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. At this Web site, you will find general resources and links related to measurement and evaluation along with summaries of major studies of federal programs undertaken by the Planning and Evaluation Service.

Publications

The Education Trust. 1997. *Education Watch: Community Data Guide*. Washington, DC.



The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

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PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education



The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

“Better Education Is Everybody's Business”
--U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

The Partnership's Mission

- To use family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.
- To increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home.

Our Partners

Thousands of partners pledge their support for student learning to high standards through this growing grassroots movement. Partners belong to one of four groups: Family-School Partners, Employers for Learning, Community Organizations, or Religious Groups.

Together, partners support efforts to:

- Strengthen family-school partnerships through good communication and mutual responsibility for children's learning;
- Adopt family- and student-friendly business practices;
- Provide before- and after-school learning activities for children;
- Make effective use of facilities—schools, community buildings, churches—for children and families; and
- Give parents the resources, training, and information they need to help children learn, and teachers and principals the tools they need to engage families.

The benefits of joining include:

- Connecting with other groups to share and learn from one another;
- Working together to strengthen and improve efforts to help children learn;
- Keeping up with the latest information and activities nationwide; and
- Receiving recognition for visible commitments at the local, state, and national levels.

Activities of the Partnership

In addition to the numerous local activities in which Partnership members are involved, many participate in nationwide activities such as the following:

- **READ*WRITE*NOW!** As part of the America Reads Challenge, this activity focuses on improving reading skills and abilities of children from birth through the sixth grade. Participating children read and write for thirty minutes every day, and teenagers and adults serve as reading partners to young children once a week.
- **America Goes Back to School.** During the months of August through October, Americans across the country go back to school to share their talents and experiences. Each makes a year-long commitment, starting in the fall, to help improve education and to help students learn.
- **Think College Early.** This initiative helps increase awareness and support for middle and high school students to take the courses needed to enter college and to be prepared financially.
- **Priority on After-School Extended Learning.** This initiative places new emphasis on the importance of providing before- and after-school activities that extend learning for children in a safe, drug-free environment.

To join call 1-800-USA-LEARN for more information. Visit the Web site at <http://www.pfie.ed.gov>.

PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Partner Registration

To register and receive your Partnership Promise Certificate, provide the information requested and submit this form to the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173, fax (202) 205-9133. You can also complete and submit this form online at <http://www.pfie.ed.gov>.

The registration must include a contact person and phone number in order to be processed. The information you provide may be made available on the Web by the U.S. Department of Education. In any event, the information is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and will be made available to requestors upon request.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning.

Name of partner group or school

Address line 1

Address line 2

City

State

Zip

Telephone

Fax

URL

Contact Information

Head of organization

Contact person

E-mail

Is your organization a(n) (Please check one.)

Family-School Partner

Employer for Learning

Community Organization

Religious Group

OMB Number: 1860-0505

Expiration Date: 10/31/2001

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0505. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-4651.