



## Ten Strategies for Involving Parents in Health Promotion

There are a variety of strategies that schools can use to engage parents in health promotion (Mangham, 1992; Hahn, 1996; Woody, 1985; Burch, 1985; Lontos, 1992; Bond & Wagner, 1988).

1. Reach out beyond white, middle class families to include blue collar parents, single parents, families of minority cultures, families in rural areas, inner-city families, foster families.
2. Rely less on experts and more on parents to determine the goals of programs and to rate the success of programs. Involve parent volunteers in activities by having them lead sessions, serve refreshments, do administrative tasks.
3. Don't focus solely on changing parental behaviours. Seek changes in public policy, social norms and allocation of economic resources. Organize inservice sessions for school staff.
4. Identify specific barriers to participation such as travel, weather and hours of operation. Consider public transportation routes and times. Organize carpools. Offer baby-sitting services with student volunteers.
5. Offer different forms of involvement to parents, individual and collective, ranging from receiving information to participating in decision-making.
6. Affirm the importance of family and parents through public awareness campaigns. Communicate with parents in a variety of ways including mailings, telephoning, etc. Involve students in the process and ask them to tell their parents about the activities.
7. Shape public policy to support families and the role of parents in health promotion. Encourage parents to join advocacy groups and service organizations.
8. Implement programs with consideration of parents' needs and convenience. Include social aspects.
9. Link parent education with community education and awareness programs.
10. Advocate for a continuum of family services by linking parent-education with support services, social support and a healthy physical environment. Invite community agencies and organizations to participate in planning events.

### References

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