

GETTING PARENTS INVOLVED

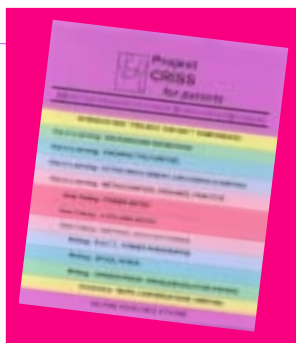
Project CRISS® for Parents

By Jenny Martin

In a perfect world, homework would return to school each morning complete and signed by a parent. A continuous flow of enthusiastic parent volunteers would converge on the classrooms each day to help provide students with one-on-one instruction. There would never be a last minute scramble to find volunteers for the bake sale, field trip, or holiday pageant. Unfortunately, most of us are painfully aware that we don't live in that world. So how do we encourage parents to become actively involved in their children's education? There are several steps we can take beginning with improving communication between schools and parents and continuing with providing parents the tools they need to help their children become better learners—*Project CRISS® for Parents!*

It is no surprise to educators that great benefits arise when parents participate in their children's educations. Research has found that student behavior, attendance, and student achievement are all positively affected by parent involvement (The Center, 2005). Parents can contribute in many ways, from helping with homework and discussing school events at home to volunteering and attending functions at school.

Unfortunately, it's not that easy; many parents don't know how to get involved in the schools. Some may hesitate due to their limited English or because of a lack of time. Some may hold negative stereotypes from their own school experiences. Oftentimes, teachers aren't trained in strategies for commu-



nicating effectively with parents. All of these hurdles leave both parents and teachers wanting to participate but unsure of what the first step might be.

It begins with an invitation. *Project CRISS® for Parents* is a program committed to teaching parents strategies they can use to help their students become better learners. Parents will find the two to three hour program engaging

and enjoyable and often times much different from the way they were taught in school. The program is flexible, inviting, and user friendly. CRISS encourages parents or sponsors to bring their children with them. All families receive a *Project CRISS® for Parents* booklet (also available in Spanish), that outlines the skills to be learned in the workshop and more. A team of teachers—along with a CRISS certified trainer—can quickly and easily organize and facilitate a workshop for interested parents in their district.

CRISS sees parents as partners in the learning process. *Project CRISS® for Parents* gives parents power and confidence to help their children succeed. Parents leave the workshop with specific tools to use and a first step to becoming active participants in their children's education.

Resources

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. (2005, August 1). *Meeting the Challenge: Getting Parents Involved in Schools*. Retrieved August 16, 2005, from www.centerforsri.org.

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