

**FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:**

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

*The Research Base and Policy Implications for  
Support Programs*

**HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT**

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1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Section I: The Research Base and Political Appeal of Family  
Support Programs

- A. Research on Family Characteristics and School Achievement
- B. Results of Evaluations of Family Oriented Early Interventions
- C. Lessons from Past Program Evaluations for Program Development
- D. The Political Appeal of Family Support and Education Programs.

Section II: The Proliferation and Characteristics of School-  
based Support and Education Programs

- A. Common Program Characteristics
- B. Points of Difference with Other Parent Programs
- C. Sources of Program Variation
- D. Schools and Family Support and Education programs: Compatible or Incompatible?

Section III: Advantages and Disadvantages of Schools as Homes  
for Community-based Family Support and Education  
Programs

- A. The Compatibility of Programs' and Schools' Ideology and Goals
- B. Administrative Structure and Issues
- C. Funding
- D. Facilities

- E. Curriculum and Materials
- F. Personnel and Training
- G. Program Advisory Groups
- H. Outreach
- I. Linkage and Coordination with Other Agencies

**Section IV: Questions and Considerations for the Future  
Development of School-based Family Support and  
Education Programs**

- A. The Benefits of Pilot Programs
- B. Allowing for Program Diversity
- C. Linkage with the Public School
- D. The Limitations of Narrow Parent Education Programs
- E. Universal or Targeted Programs
- F. Program Auspices Within the School System
- G. The Importance of Evaluation to Document Program Processes, Implementation, and Outcomes
- H. Creating Broader Partnerships for High Risk Families

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Family Support and Education Programs and the Public Schools: Opportunities and Challenges

Introduction:

Increasingly, state and local education agencies are considering including family support and education programs as one of the services they provide to promote early childhood development. Recently published results from The Public School Early Childhood Study reflect growing interest in these programs; the study indicated that over a third of the states include some kind of parent education activities within their early childhood programming (Marx & Seligson, 1988). (See Appendix I for a list of these state activities.) Family support and education programs, whether offered by the schools, or by the schools in conjunction with other community agencies, provide information about child development, parenting and adult development; feedback and guidance on child rearing issues; joint problem solving; information and referral services; and reinforcement, encouragement and emotional support to families with young children. Sometimes these programs also include direct services for the child through home visits or center-based activities. All these services are provided to improve family conditions and promote parental competencies and behaviors that, in turn, lead to enhanced maternal, familial, and child development. School-based programs, in particular, have stressed the importance of

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strengthening the child's early learning environment and of reinforcing the parents in their role as the child's first teachers.

By serving young children (ages 0-6), and their parents, the state education agencies and local school districts that offer these programs broadened their traditional mandate out of a growing recognition of the importance of working with families to promote early child development. Their programs also represent efforts to create new partnerships between schools and families that recognize a shared responsibility for the child's socialization and education, in order to promote the child's development and subsequent school success.

Given the increased interest of educators at both the state and local level, it is a useful time to address the question of what these programs have to offer as part of a package of early developmental services for children. Section I of this paper, therefore, examines research results and other forces that are driving the current interest in these programs; section II briefly describes and characterizes a range of current school-sponsored family support and education programs. The paper's third section, drawing on the Harvard Family Research Project's ongoing study of school-based family support programs, discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of school sponsorship of these programs, from the perspectives of the programs and their school sponsors. Some of the central issues that state and local educational agencies need to consider if they choose to develop family support and education programs are outlined in the concluding section.

## I. The Research Base and Political Appeal of Family Support Programs

Analysts of the forces driving public policy often comment on the small role that research plays in that process. At the present time, however, the accumulating results of two streams of research on families and child development have created a policy climate in which family-oriented early childhood programs are of interest to governors, legislators, school superintendents, and others (National Governor's Association, 1987). These two intertwined streams, reviewed briefly here, are: research documenting the effects of the home environment on later school performance; and evaluation research that suggests that effective programs can reinforce the home learning environment.<sup>1</sup> Americans have a long-standing reluctance to interfere in family life, but family support and education programs have been viewed as a way to reinforce the value Americans place on families. As a result, unlike other forms of intervention, they have usually garnered broad political support from policy makers intent on strengthening families. Some of the features of these programs that have quieted concern about intrusion into family life will be briefly described below.

### A. Research on Family Characteristics and School Achievement

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<sup>1</sup>. A third stream of research on child development and parenting recently reviewed by Hamburg, 1987, is beginning to suggest characteristics of parent child-interaction and interpersonal social support that are critical for healthy child development. It should be used as a resource to suggest key elements for family support programs.

Over the last three decades, efforts to understand the relationship between a child's home environment and his or her subsequent school achievement have become more and more refined. Early interest in the area was spurred by the publication of the Coleman report (Coleman, et al, 1966) which suggested that family status factors accounted for more of the variation in school achievement than did various measures of school structure and quality. The family variables examined in Coleman's study were primarily gross measures of socioeconomic status, but during the 1970s, researchers made efforts to get a more refined sense of what it was about the home environment that did or did not promote child development and result in later achievement. These studies were done partly in order to understand how to strengthen that early environment and promote children's subsequent achievement. Noteworthy in this regard was the work of Caldwell and her colleagues (Elardo, Bradley, & Caldwell, 1975), in developing the HOME, an evaluation instrument to examine specific characteristics of the home learning environment. Using that instrument, the researchers found that variables such as language stimulation and the number of books in the home at age one correlated more highly with achievement (measured by the Stanford-Binet) at three years of age than did one year scores on the Bayley, a widely used measure of early development. The research of this generation showed that while socioeconomic status is positively related to children's academic achievement, as much variation exists within as between income groups. So, as Clarke-Stewart concluded, SES is not a good predictor of individual achievement (Clarke-Stewart,

1983).

A third generation of research is now examining the relationships between parenting attitudes, values, and styles and school performance. The various studies of the relationship between such family-process variables and child achievement are difficult to compare because they employ different definitions and measures of parent behavior and child performance. However, certain types of family processes appear pretty consistently to contribute to the young child's subsequent achievement. In a recent summary review of these studies, Eastman (1988) extracts five such processes:

1: High parental educational and occupational expectations and aspirations for the child appear to contribute to subsequent school performance.

2: Warm and affectionate relationships between parents and children, and verbal praise for the child's accomplishments appear to produce better school performance.

3: Parents who exert control over their children's behavior, who are firm disciplinarians with consistent standards have higher achieving children.

4: The amount and type of verbal interaction between parents and children appears to have strong effects on children's school performance.

5: Parents who spend more time playing, talking and reading to their children, and use more advanced levels and styles of thought and language seem to have higher achieving children.

This effort to get an even more fine-tuned sense of how aspects of family process -- for example, types of parenting behavior -- affect the school performance of children is also exemplified in the work of two groups of researchers studying an older group of children. The parallels between the types of parenting that appear to facilitate the development of young and older children are striking. Dornbush and his colleagues have

been examining the relationships between parenting styles and the grades of thousands of high school students in the San Francisco area. Their results parallel the similar studies with younger children insofar as they show that parenting styles and aspects of family processes are more powerful than measures of socioeconomic status, such as parents' level of education and ethnicity, or family structure, as predictors of student achievement.

In his intensive ethnographic study of ten poor black Chicago families, five with high-achieving and five with low-achieving high school students, Clark (1983) attempted to isolate a set of family factors that distinguished the two groups, and to build a conceptual model of learning processes in family units. He found that in the homes of the high achieving students, certain patterns appeared over and over: these parents engaged in frequent dialogues with their children, encouraged academic pursuits, set clear limits, engaged in warm and nurturing interactions, and felt considerable responsibility for their child's development and academic achievement (Clark, 1983). Again, the similarity between Eastman's summary of characteristics of successful parenting and Clark's is striking. "Unfortunately," as Eastman notes, "the research on family effects on children's educational achievement is not yet sophisticated enough to even suggest whether any of these types of family processes are more important than the others. Nor can it explain how the behaviors might work together" (p. 7). Nevertheless, taken together, these mutually reinforcing studies suggest that aspects of parental behaviors and other factors in the home environment, which are perhaps more immediately and easily amenable to

change than a family's socioeconomic status, could subsequently benefit children's achievement. As noted below, evidence is also accumulating that carefully crafted interventions can reinforce certain kinds of parental attitudes and behaviors.

### B. Results of Evaluations of Family Oriented Early Interventions

The above-mentioned streams of research suggest the critical role that families play in child development. Evidence from a set of family-oriented early childhood interventions suggests that a variety of different types of programs have successfully worked with parents and their young children, and have had positive consequences for subsequent school and life performance. This research has been reviewed extensively elsewhere (Weiss & Halpern, 1988; Halpern & Weiss, 1988; Weiss, 1987) so a brief review with an emphasis on school-based programs is sufficient here.

Some of the research on family-oriented early interventions dates back to the War On Poverty, when program developers and policy makers had to make a critical choice with respect to the design of interventions to maximize the chances of school success for poor children: should they serve only the child, or involve the parents and other family members as well? A number of programs chose the latter course. These programs, largely single-site research and demonstration programs for disadvantaged families, varied in the amount of services they provided to parents. Some were primarily aimed at the parent, others at the parent and child.

Some of the early research and demonstration programs that worked directly with

parents included the Florida Parent Education Program (Gordon, 1967); The Early Training Project (Gray & Klaus, 1968); the Mother-Child Program (Levenstein, 1971); and the Ypsilanti Carnegie Infant Education Project (Lambie, Bond, & Weikart, 1974). This group of programs took as a premise the idea that the existing maternal socialization and early teaching strategies in low-income, particularly low-income black families, failed to prepare their children for school. The programs generally focused on teaching and demonstrating to these mothers how to structure the home environment, and how to talk to and play with their children in cognitively stimulating and socially appropriate ways. Evaluations of these programs found short-term gains in participating children' IQ scores; those programs that conducted longitudinal research found long-term effects on children's school careers as measured by promotion, special-education placement, and high school graduation. The effectiveness of this range of programs, which differed with respect to timing and amounts of services, educational philosophies, relative focus on parents and children, and staffing patterns suggests that a variety of approaches can produce enduring effects. It is noteworthy that even the most parent-focused of the 1960s experimental programs with low income families did some measure of direct work with children. All maintained a high degree of quality control.

In the 1970s, a set of multi-site research and demonstration programs (the Parent Child Development Centers, and the Child and Family Resource Programs), and a range of single-site research and demonstration programs, were initiated. These programs

continued to emphasize the importance of strengthening parenting attitudes and skills as part of an overall early intervention strategy. In formulating these programs, the developers addressed a wider range of obstacles to healthy parent-child interaction and child development in low-income families than had many of the experimental programs of the 1960s (Halpern & Weiss, 1988). They tended to provide a mix of child development-focused intervention and multi-faceted family support, which ranged from health and social services to meals, transportation, and adult basic education. Program developers articulated their concern with the parents' own developmental needs, and the skills the parents required to cope with the chronic stresses of poverty. A number of these programs provided assistance with problem solving and emphasized information and referral and brokerage with social services in an effort to alleviate some of the stresses associated with parenting in poor families.

During this period, and continuing into the 1980s, such programs, two generational in their form of intervention, became increasingly two generational in their assessment of outcomes. Evaluators of this period not only examined gains for the children but also changes in parent-child interaction, maternal attitudes and self-esteem, and maternal personal development. A number of these programs showed positive changes in aspects of parent-child interaction, increased maternal self-esteem, and a few showed progress toward family economic self-sufficiency.

One of the well-known research and demonstration programs of the 1970s, the

Harvard Family Research Project

Brookline Early Education Project (BEEP), was initiated through a public school system. This project, a precursor of Missouri's New Parents As Teachers Program (discussed below), was open to all parents in the community with newborns. BEEP provided three basic kinds of services: a diagnostic program to detect early health or developmental problems; parent education and support through home visits and parent groups; and direct educational services for children through play groups and a pre-kindergarten program. BEEP's evaluation found that classroom observations of children at kindergarten entry showed significant differences favoring BEEP children, especially in social skills and use of time. Teacher ratings in second grade also indicated results favoring the BEEP children. In an effort to assess changes in parent behavior, a study of parent-teacher interactions during second grade was conducted; the study indicated that BEEP participants were more likely than parents in a comparison group to initiate contact with the teacher concerning the child's progress in school.

During the 1970s and 1980s, several states initiated pilot programs and, in some cases, passed legislation creating programs across the state under the jurisdiction of the state department of education<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix II for a short description of the Missouri,

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<sup>2</sup>. Minnesota began its Early Childhood Family Education Program in the 1970s and passed legislation instituting it in community school districts statewide in 1984. Similarly, Kentucky began its two-generational family literacy program, PACE, and is testing it in a number of pilot programs throughout the state. Missouri began and evaluated four pilot research and demonstration programs employing their New Parents As Teachers Program (NPAT) in the early 1980s.

Minnesota and Kentucky Programs).

Missouri is the only state to conduct a short-term summative evaluation of a state-sponsored family support initiative, although several other states are planning to do so. Missouri's NPAT program provided monthly home visits, monthly parent meetings, periodic assessment of educational and sensory development, and a parent resource center for first-time parents of children from birth to three. NPAT staff identified children regarded as potentially at-risk and intervened, typically by making referrals to medical persons or other agencies that provide specialized services for the child or family.

The evaluation showed cognitive, language and social gains for participating children, and indicated gains in mothers' knowledge of child development. When NPAT staff rated the quality of parent participation in the program, the higher the rating of parents, the better the children performed on the various assessment measures. Interviews with participants indicated a high degree of satisfaction with NPAT. Participating parents were more likely to regard their school district as responsive to their children's needs than were parents of a comparison group. In 1984, legislation passed to implement the Parents As Teachers Program on a statewide basis; state staff are now exploring the possibility of extending their two-generational focus by including adult literacy services as part of the home visits.

### C. Lessons from Past Program Evaluations for Program Development

Despite the difficulties in comparing programs with different populations, services

and program goals, some lessons can be drawn from nearly 30 years of experience with family-oriented early intervention programs.<sup>3</sup> Programs with a clear, well formulated program model and with careful quality-control mechanisms appear to be particularly effective. Overall, however, the evidence suggests that no one program model is necessarily superior to others. In fact, at this point, a number of relatively well developed programs exist that could be adapted to the needs of various states and school districts. Experience with the development of these programs, as well as other educational innovations, suggests that adaptation rather than replication may be the appropriate strategy for family support and education program development (Weiss & Halpern, 1988). A thorough needs assessment and careful consideration of the goals of the district or state are also important prerequisites of successful programs.<sup>4</sup>

Thirty years of experience with programs for highly stressed and poor families suggests that programs that provide comprehensive, intensive and continuous education and support may ultimately be the most effective for those population groups (Halpern &

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<sup>3</sup>. These difficulties and limitations include the facts that the programs often measured different outcomes; that evaluations were not designed to distinguish the individual effects of different program elements, for example, the contributions of parent education and the early childhood program for the children; and uncertainty about whether program effects obtained for one population in one context can be generalized to other populations and contexts.

<sup>4</sup>. Evaluation research has limited usefulness to districts and states now embarking on program development on a large scale at multiple sites because past evaluation experience has largely focused on single-site research and demonstration programs.

Weiss, 1988). Specifically, in the prenatal period through infancy, it may be most appropriate to focus direct services on the parents, and on strengthening the developing parent-child relationship. Services to children during this period should focus on the provision of appropriate health care, including developmental and health screening. Parent services should reflect a balance between parents' own personal developmental needs and the parent-child relationship. When children reach the age of two, programs should provide some activities for parents and children together, if they have not already done so. In many cases, that may mean a transition in the location of program services from the home to a center. As children get older, pre-school education for them should become a critical element of the system of family support services. But the program should also maintain a family focus, promoting continuity and the parents' sense of responsibility for and involvement in their children's development.

#### D. The Political Appeal of Family Support and Education Programs

The legacy of evaluations of early childhood programs, including family-oriented programs, has played a critical role in creating new and broader interest in early childhood programming. The nucleus of those who have traditionally been interested in the well-being of children and young families has expanded, in part because of promising research results that suggest the possibility of enduring benefits for children and for society. The Committee for Economic Development, an influential group of business leaders, among others, is leading the call for family-oriented early development programs both because of

program evidence and out of concern about the preparation of an adequate labor force for the 21st century. In Children In Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged (1987), the Committee for Economic Development outlined a set of strategies for prevention through early intervention that cumulate in a comprehensive, continuous, and intensive set of programs for high-risk children. Their blueprint includes pre-natal and post-natal care for high-risk mothers, parenting education for both mothers and fathers, quality child care and quality pre-school programs for all disadvantaged three and four year olds. A few studies, which suggest the cost effectiveness of these programs, have also spurred the interest of businessmen and policy makers who welcome the possible future reductions in social welfare costs (Barnett & Escobar, 1987).

Efforts to strengthen families are emerging as a central interest across the political spectrum; one result is broader interest and political support for the public provision of family support and education programs. The importance of early preventive interventions to support families in their child rearing and human development roles (Weiss, Resnick, & Hausman, 1987) is now a dominant theme common to early childhood education reform efforts (see Boyer, 1988) welfare reform efforts (see the parent education provision in U.S. Congress, House Ways and Means Committee, Family Welfare Reform Act, HR 720), and child welfare reform efforts (see Farrow, 1988).

Underlying these various reform efforts are a strong sense of the primacy of the family, a deep concern that families are now especially fragile, and that this fragility

threatens the life chances of two generations: both children and adults. Recent historians of the family point out that Americans have been "decrying the increasing fragility of marriage, the growing selfishness and irresponsibility of parents, and the increasing rebelliousness of children" (Mintz & Kellogg, 1988, p. XX), since the Puritans arrived. Nevertheless, the current era has seen far-reaching changes in the structure and composition of families, increased mobility, and increased maternal labor force participation. The common perception is that these changes has caused a quantum leap in the stress on and the vulnerability of American families. Policy makers at all levels are calling for efforts to strengthen families to create a basis for a strong, educated and self-supporting populace, which has focused attention on new roles that major public institutions, like the schools, should play with respect to families.

For those who have been reluctant in the past to support any kind of governmental involvement in family life, the fact that family support and education programs strengthen families and maximize parent involvement in child development so that parents are the primary service-providers and advocates for their children has made this form of public involvement in family life acceptable. In addition, several states that have initiated family support and education programs, including Minnesota and Missouri, report that their programs garnered broad political support because they reflect the operational integration of conservative and liberal political perspectives about public involvement with families (Weiss, 1988). Specifically, the programs attempt to achieve the aims often expressed by

conservatives: strengthening and promoting well functioning, independent, self-supporting families, which in turn produce children who will become more independent and self-supporting adults. The programs also accord with the more liberal perspective that extra-familial and community support are critical for effective family functioning, and that public attempts to provide and enhance such support are appropriate.

This extension of public responsibilities for families beyond past boundaries is also possible because these programs are guided by a set of principles that forestall criticism that either the school or the state is dictating how individuals must parent. These principles include: respect for families and their strengths; reinforcement of both the family's and community's role in child development and socialization; partnerships between the parent and the provider; and provision for substantial community input into the design and administration of local programs.

## II. The Proliferation and Characteristics of School-based Family Support and Education Programs

Together with increased public concern about strengthening families, the two strands of research -- one documenting the contribution of family processes to subsequent school achievement, and the other, the effectiveness of carefully designed programs that work with young families -- have led to the creation of a plethora of family support and education programs. The potential payoff -- including reduced school failure and school

problems -- has caused school districts and state departments of education to reconsider their role with respect to young children and their families. Many are initiating these programs. This section will describe some of the programs that have resulted and the principles that characterize their ways of working with families. School-based family support and education programs are part of a larger family support movement, one in which many social institutions and agencies -- community development agencies, health clinics, churches, neighborhood organizations, and many other groups -- have begun to offer preventive family oriented programming to promote human development (Weissbourd, 1987; Weiss, 1988). Although schools have not necessarily taken the lead in the provision of these services, more and more districts and states are now providing these programs alone, or in conjunction with other community agencies. The Harvard Family Research Project recently undertook an effort to locate school- and community-school based programs. Through advertisements in the educational media and calls to state departments of education, HFRP has located over two hundred local programs around the country, most of which are grass-roots initiatives of individual districts.<sup>5</sup> As the listing of the states with parent education initiatives in Appendix I suggests, state departments of education also are beginning to develop and fund these services, albeit often, at least initially, on a discretionary or pilot basis.

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<sup>5</sup>. Profiles of many of these programs will be contained in a resource guide to school-based family support and education programs.

### A. Common Program Characteristics

School-based programs, like those under other auspices, have a number of features in common, including the general goal of promoting the family conditions and parental competencies and behaviors that contribute to familial, maternal and child development. To achieve this goal, programs typically provide parent education; informal networking or formal peer support; and information and referral to other community services. These services are provided through such means as home visiting, peer support groups, and parent education classes. Programs can include none, several, or many additional services, such as developmental child care or respite care, health and/or developmental screening, toy lending, adult education, and counseling.

A number of features or principles distinguish these programs from other educational and social programs. One of the most important of these is the program's attitude toward parents and, following from that, the ways in which staff relate to parents. Parents are regarded as partners. Their strengths, knowledge and experience are acknowledged as cornerstones of the program-parent relationship. Through peer support and informal networking, programs create a situation in which parents can learn from one another as well as from program staff. Hence, these programs are not unidirectional - - knowledge does not flow solely from the professional to the parent-- they are partnerships or complex multi-lateral relationships wherein both parents, professionals, and other parents exchange information and support (Weiss, 1987). Typically, the

programs are flexible enough to deal with a variety of parenting concerns, for example: discipline, maternal training and employment, and sibling relationships. Unlike their precursors in the 1960s, they rarely focus narrowly or exclusively on teaching parents how to teach their children. This broader emphasis receives some support from the research on family processes and school achievement insofar as that research suggests the importance of a home environment that is emotionally supportive as well as cognitively and socially stimulating. As noted previously, some of the programs that serve poor families also try to provide services that reduce the environmental stresses associated with high-risk parenting.

These programs, school-based and otherwise, are attempting to develop a new service delivery ideology, one premised on family strengths; on responsive and flexible programming, as indicated by the way these programs will adjust meeting times, locations, and sometimes materials in accord with parents' needs and interests; and on the reinforcement of familial roles and responsibilities. They typically do extensive outreach, both to participants and to other community agencies in an effort to facilitate inter-agency coordination and the program's information and referral work.

As noted previously, these guiding principles, including respect for the family and its strengths, reinforcement of both the family's and the community's role in child development and socialization, and partnership relationships between parent and provider, have helped to make these programs both acceptable and popular within local

communities. When school districts and states have attempted to develop larger systems of family support and education programs, many have tried to keep these principles uppermost in their minds; typically, they allow for substantial community input into the design and administration of neighborhood and community programs (Weiss, 1988).

With their preventive, family-oriented approach, these programs often fill an empty niche in the continuum of services available in communities. As a result, the more mature local programs, for example those developed through Early Childhood Family Education in Minnesota, report that they frequently get referrals from social service agencies seeking help for clients who need extra help with parenting.

#### B. Points of Difference From Other Parent Programs

To the extent that these programs are not unidirectional, didactic, nor excessively narrow in what they attempt to convey to parents, they differ from many so-called parent education programs. They are set up to work with rather than lecture at parents (Joffe, 1979); parents as well as staff are "experts" in child development. This has obvious implications for professional roles as well as staff-parent relationships. Even when they have a set curriculum, programs will typically vary it in line with parent needs (Blank, 1987; Maciuika & Weiss, 1987). Further, unlike some more narrowly didactic parent education programs, these family support programs aim to do more than simply convey information: they attempt to create a secure and accepting climate in which parents can share and explore their child-rearing goals, beliefs, and concerns.

These programs also differ from many other parent involvement programs in schools, because they work directly and in a sustained way with parents to promote the child's development. Many of them also provide for the other forms of parent involvement found in programs such as Head Start; specifically, they involve parents on advisory boards and in program decision making, and welcome parental classroom assistance.

### C. Sources of Program Variation

As the short profiles of eight local school-based programs contained in Appendix III show, the programs vary considerably on several key dimensions. This variability is a result of several factors, including the programs' efforts to be responsive to local needs and resources, and the growing recognition that just as there is no one type of family, no one type of program will necessarily be effective for all families. Even though they share a school base, the specific school system auspices, funding, target population, and other aspects of these programs vary. Within school districts, programs have been started and/or funded by community education, adult or vocational education, and early childhood education. As the profiles indicate, funding sources and amounts also vary considerably across programs. Moreover, programs often have several funding sources, including local and state education resources, fees, community agency support, and federal funding through sources such as Chapter 1. If a general funding pattern exists, it is that of a

constantly changing patchwork of funding sources and efforts to get in-kind support. Programs also vary in target population; some focus on at-risk individuals or geographic areas thought to contain at-risk families, while others are universal and will serve anyone with children in the appropriate age groups.

The fact that a program is school-based also does not necessarily mean that the services are always delivered in schools. In fact, many school-based programs provide services in alternative locations either due to limitations in available school space; or the desire to go to the family through home visits, or by locating programs in housing projects, child care centers, and the like; or as a result of joint programming with a hospital or social service agency, for example.

As noted previously, these programs also vary in the type and comprehensiveness of services they offer, and in the length of time and intensity with which they serve families. Programs also vary in terms of the providers. Some programs require certified teachers, early childhood specialists, or staff specially trained by the program; some low-budget programs operate primarily with volunteer staff. Finally, as the profiles suggest, these programs vary in the kinds of collaborations they have developed with other community agencies; however, one of the strikingly consistent features of many of these programs is their effort to develop broad local inter-agency collaborations in an effort to serve families better.

#### D. Schools and Family Support and Education Programs: Compatible or Incompatible?

Some have argued that schools traditionally exclude families (Lightfoot, 1979), or are indifferent to families (Hobbs, 1984). For those very reasons, schools might benefit from the provision of these programs, which might help them create new relationships with families to promote children's achievement. Programs that now suffer from considerable financial instability might benefit from their connection with schools, which are among the most stable and universal community institutions. Do the opportunities for schools to create new partnerships with parents to promote child development and to prevent subsequent school problems and school failure outweigh the disadvantages inherent in creating another program needing money and space? From the program's point of view, do the advantages of the financial and administrative stability and the benefits of being connected with a powerful community institution outweigh the risks of being sponsored by or connected with an institution not well known for its responsiveness to or positive relationships with parents? These issues, and other advantages and disadvantages connected with school-based family support and education programs are discussed in the next section. The discussion is based on data collected as part of an ongoing research study of school-based family support and education programs currently being conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project. These preliminary results are based on interviews with programs and with school personnel connected with two dozen school-based programs around the country.

### III. Advantages and Disadvantages of Schools as Homes for Community-based Family Support and Education Programs

Our ongoing research on schools as contexts for family support and education programs shows that these programs are in but not of the schools (Parsons, 1987). The grass-roots programs in school districts constantly struggle to survive and frequently have little visibility within the school system. Programs that are part of larger state educational efforts typically report that they have financial stability but that it takes a considerable amount of time to be incorporated and recognized by members of their part of the educational agency, and by the school district itself. As one of the directors of an established Early Childhood Family Education program in Minnesota noted, she has seen a subtle shift from bare toleration to mild approval on the school system's part. "Now that we're district wide," she said, "we're much more visible, and we hear at least token support. We attend elementary principal meetings, it's a fact of life; administrators see some benefits." However, because they are not fully incorporated into the school system, the programs have considerable flexibility in how they work with families. School system personnel are generally positive about the programs, although the school system's commitment to them remains uncertain. This situation could change if more states pass legislation making the programs an entitlement, and/or if they create more permanent funding streams to support the programs.

To examine how the relationship between these programs and schools works in

these twenty-four diverse ongoing programs, this section will discuss the compatibility of the programs' and schools' philosophy and goals, and then describe school and program views about issues related to administrative structure, funding, facilities, curriculum, staff and training, advisory groups, and outreach and linkage within and outside the school system.

#### A. The Compatibility of Programs' and Schools' Ideology and Goals

Both school and program personnel suggest that family support and education programs improve the image of the school in the community and convey a sense that the school system is both innovative and responsive to families. School personnel also note that the programs are very popular with parents. School administrators and program directors suggest that these programs lead to stronger parent/school relationships after the program ends and the children begin to attend public school. Some school personnel also report that they feel parents who have attended these programs, particularly low-income families who are "afraid" or distrustful of schools, are subsequently more likely to attend parent/teacher conferences and that these parents are more likely to continue to be involved in a variety of ways with the school. As one program director noted, "the advantages for the public school are that we are the parents' first contact. Parents are getting information about early childhood and what's appropriate for kids, which shapes what they expect and demand from the schools when they get there. Part of what we do is help parents become advocates" -- and continue their interest in their child's

development when they attend school. The results of the evaluation of Missouri's Parents As Teachers program, described previously, support the idea that school systems that provide these programs are perceived as more responsive to family needs. The fact that the programs start from the premise of a partnership model means that in some school districts that have been criticized for school sponsorship of other pre-school programs, family support and education programs have received support. As one school representative put it, "many moons ago we got criticism about our pre-school program because people thought we shouldn't be taking the place of the parent. But now with PAT it is clear that we're not replacing the parent, we're recognizing the parent as the child's first teacher."

Many of the commonly summarized benefits of having these programs under the auspices of schools are described in the words of a superintendent from a small Southern school district. The parent component he describes is paid for through community education funds.

We added the parent component in 1986. I had been wanting to...start with pregnancy and provide services as soon as they found out they were going to have a child because I believe if you want to change children's future you have to change parents. But we had to start somewhere so we went with the Head Start program for 5-year-olds.

We offered one session a week for parents -- one in the morning, one in the evening. We had pretty good attendance, about 35 to 40 per cent attended. Once

the kindergarten was fully funded we started a four-year-old program and required parent attendance for the children to participate.

We teach parents how to help them learn. We teach health care, and nutrition, how to prepare meals at the lowest cost. We help them make toys to reinforce skills they see their children learning [at Head Start] on the videotape, or if they can afford to buy toys, we tell them what to look for when selecting. We help them make Christmas decorations so the kids can have fun then.

We're building school relationships. When I was first an elementary principal, I thought the parents didn't care. They wouldn't come to conferences, wouldn't make their kids come to school, they were belligerent with us. I was just plain wrong. There was a lack of trust. But we're interested in their kids like they are. Now they're comfortable with educators, active in the school, comfortable in the school setting. We show them they really have something they can help their kids with. I believe it's the best approach to prevent dropouts and higher achievement in school.

I met with the parents at the end of last year -- I meet with them a couple of times a term -- and said, Tell me what we did poorly and what we did well. They said, We want you to tell us earlier in the year what the expectations are for first grade, so we can have more time to prepare. They wanted us to continue to meet with them this year, and I said, we don't have the personnel, but they insisted, so we said, OK, we'll meet with you once every six weeks.

These programs, however, may pose a challenge for some less responsive school systems: they empower parents and encourage them to be actively involved in their

children's school experience. In preparation for this, many programs report that they make special efforts to prepare parents for the transition into the public schools. As one program director put it, "the parents learn to be involved and assertive. We do a class on school readiness and on involvement with the school system. We even do some modeling and role playing. We talk about having different learning styles and how that can cause conflict with the school system, and about positive ways of giving advice." This program director notes that kindergarten and elementary teachers have begun to accommodate to the fact that these parents can be more demanding, and in fact appreciate the parents who have come up through the program because they are more likely to be involved with the school as well as interested in the education of their children.

Other program directors, however, note that their school systems are less comfortable with program parents. As one program director put it, "they like school participation along traditional lines: PTA meetings, biannual conferences, bake sales and volunteer classroom participation. However, you're walking a fine line," she noted, "when you encourage involvement beyond that conventionally accepted by the district." These programs, with their partnership relationships with parents and efforts to make parents become advocates for their children, pose a challenge to kindergarten and elementary personnel unused to partnership relationships with parents. The superintendent of a large Minnesota school system with an established ECFE program suggested that the presence of these newly empowered parents sets off a chain of mutual adaptation, which he hopes will ultimately

lead to more responsiveness to families in the elementary grades. Some districts, feeling under-funded and overwhelmed with respect to their regular programming, however, do not want programs that divert attention and resources from their regular kindergarten through grade 12 programming, particularly if those programs are constantly causing difficulties for school personnel dealing with newly assertive parents.

From the programs' point of view being part of the school system has a number of advantages. Several directors reported that they felt it was easier to implement a program based on a non-deficit view of families within a school system than it would be under the auspices of social service programs, for example. Program directors who run programs that are not targeted to particular population groups also noted that being part of a school system, where everyone is perceived as benefiting from education, helped to reduce any stigma that might be associated with a parenting program. The majority of program directors, however, noted that being part of the school system was not automatically an advantage with low-income families or parents who did not look positively upon their own earlier school experience (Parsons, 1987). In fact, several program directors said that one of their goals was to make low-income parents more comfortable with the school system, and make school a less intimidating place for them. Many directors also reported that being part of a school system gave them visibility and credibility within the community.

The interviews with program directors, however, also suggest that the very things that often define the strength of family support and education programs, and differentiate them

from other parent education and parent involvement programs, come into conflict with the school system's conventions. The programs' flexible scheduling, commitment to parent participation and education, and interest in hiring non-traditional personnel, for example, conflict with the six-hour day and limitations on evening meetings, with teacher certification requirements, and with the limitations school systems sometimes set on parent involvement and participation (Parsons, 1987). As the Southern superintendent quoted above makes clear, these programs can create positive and lasting partnerships between schools when the system is ready to deal with empowered parents, but in many districts these programs are still attempting to reach some kind of equilibrium with the larger school system. The Harvard Family Research Project's extensive interviews with local ECFE programs in Minnesota -- the state with the most widespread family support and education programs - - indicate that even stable, state-supported local programs are still working through many of the tensions with the larger school system described here.

#### B. Administrative Structure and Issues

As noted previously, family support and education programs are administered through several different departments in local school districts and in state departments of education. For example, the Missouri Parents As Teachers Program (NPAT) is administered through the early childhood department, Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is part of community education, and Kentucky's PACE program is administered through Adult

and Community Education with support from early childhood personnel. The auspices of the program within the educational system clearly has implications for many important program features such as the availability and amount of funding; the training and certification requirements of staff; and the understanding of both supervisory and program staff of the needs of children and adults as learners. At this point, no systematic research is available contrasting the costs and benefits of different administrative niches within school systems. However, some of the program personnel interviewed as a part of the Harvard Family Research Project study indicate that being lodged in a part of the school system that understands the needs of adults as well as young -- sometimes very young -- children has its advantages.

Program directors and school administrators each point out that family support and education programs often bump up against the school system's standard operating procedures with regard to how space is allocated, to school building hours and the like. The kinds of difficulties programs can encounter is illustrated by one program which, like many, needed to provide transportation for high-risk families. It received an offer of corporate funds for a bus, a driver, and gasoline. However, it had to turn down the offer, because school-board policy prevented individual programs from owning buses.

Program directors are frequently impatient at the slowness with which the school bureaucracy works. As another director put it, "You have to be something of a tightrope walker to preserve the integrity of your program against the restraints imposed by the

system." The director finds herself constantly mediating between school system policies and the program philosophy. Scheduling, space restrictions, and other factors that limit program flexibility can be minimized; departments that are used to the needs and constraints of adult learners are sometimes more flexible in this regard.

The interviews with program directors suggest that in some places school administrators actively champion these programs. They also note the benefits of operating within an institution with clear accounting procedures, and other benefits accruing from a stable and respected community institution. However, many report that wherever they are housed within the system, they receive more support and visibility from other agencies in the community than they do from the school system itself. It is fair to say that these programs are not yet seen by school personnel as a central part of the school system, particularly in the case of programs initiated through local districts. The sometimes tenuous connection between these programs and the districts is especially evident on funding issues.

### C. Funding

Very little systematic evidence is available on the comparative costs and cost feasibility of different programs, particularly of local, as opposed to state-initiated, programs. Moreover, as the profiles indicate, programs' budget amounts and sources vary widely. Minnesota, Missouri, and Kentucky now have some cost information available, but each of these states has a different funding mechanism. Missouri reimburses local districts for each family served; Minnesota has a combination of state allocation based on the number of

eligible families in combination with a local levy; Kentucky now has grant funding to local sites. Program funding for locally initiated programs is much less stable and consistent, making it difficult to determine how much different services cost.

Because locally developed programs are not usually considered part of the core of vital educational services, when money is tight these programs experience substantial budget cuts and are sometimes forced to fight for their very survival. Several of the programs profiled in Appendix III, for example, have suffered severe funding cuts in recent months; several are now lobbying to survive. Program directors report that they are often the victims of shifting priorities when school systems move whatever discretionary money they have to another pressing social problem, such as drug abuse or adult illiteracy, for example. Many program directors indicated that programming that seems intact today may vanish tomorrow.

Another frequent pattern that results from this situation is that programs report they are continually repackaging themselves to accord with new district priorities. For example, one local district outside Missouri that adapted the PAT program is a PAT program today, and will be a literacy program tomorrow. In an effort to maintain her program, the director's strategy is to add adult literacy to the program, because that is a current school system concern for which money is available. As another program director summarized the situation: "one problem is that money for programs is always seed money. Sometimes we have to think, what can we call new? What can we do that's new? Sometimes that's

good, but sometimes it's silly. The program works, and if it works, you don't want to throw it away so you can try something new."

Some obvious secondary consequences of this uncertain pattern of program expansion and contraction are the difficulties building and maintaining a strong staff; a changing identity, resulting in confusion in the community; and staff burnout as a result of periods of underfunding and continual struggles for survival. The research of the Harvard Family Research Project on state-supported initiatives suggests that many of the funding problems are alleviated when programs receive stable state support and are therefore regarded as a mainstream educational service. Even state-supported programs, however, are continually looking for ways to make their dollars go further, to receive in-kind services, and to create relationships with other agencies in order to share and extend resources. But even the best funded programs report difficulties getting money for transportation and for some of the services necessary to reach and serve high-risk families.

#### D. Facilities

One of the problems cited most frequently in interviews with both program directors and school personnel is lack of space for new programs. When schools have an excess of space, they are happy to fill it up with a popular program; however, when space is tight, programs are eliminated or repeatedly shifted to new space. Program directors report that frequent moves convey an image of instability as well as creating a great deal of

inconvenience.

Program directors often mention problems due to inadequate space. Many settings are acceptable for the parent component of a program, less than ideal for parent-child activities or for the children's component of the program. Due to space constraints, programs have, almost uniformly, developed a nomadic readiness to shift quarters that bespeaks their precarious position within the system (Parsons, 1987).

Space limitations, however, also prompt creative efforts to deliver services in new settings. In order to attract families and to deal with the problems of limited space, many programs offer services in child care centers, hospitals, neighborhood centers, and the like. Space limitations can also become a stimulus for outreach and coordination with other community agencies and services. In a case of a local Parents As Teachers (PAT) program, for example, the local district did not have the space for the screening component, so they created a partnership with a hospital that had a satellite center in the middle of the school district.

Issues involving the availability and appropriateness of space are pre-eminent and difficult to resolve both for program staff and for school personnel. In Minnesota, a few districts are currently building new schools and space is being allocated and designed for the ECFE program. That kind of commitment on the part of the school system reflects the acceptance and stability of the state-supported ECFE program in that district. New buildings are rare, however, and space issues are likely to continue to be a problem for

many districts.

### E. Curriculum and Materials

Little systematic information is available about the curricula and materials or about the philosophy of child development and adult education that underlie them in these programs. Therefore, questions about the appropriateness or effectiveness of the teaching and communication strategies are impossible to answer, particularly for the many scattered locally developed programs. What is clear is that program directors put a premium upon flexible and responsive programming, and many have developed their curricula and approaches through a process of trial and error (Maciuka & Weiss, 1987). What is less clear is whether they have the clearly developed program models which, as noted in the review of the literature above, appear to contribute to program effectiveness.

Programs and school districts have three choices about their curricular approaches: use an existing curriculum exactly as written; adapt an existing curriculum; or create their own. Most programs do the last, although now that more and more curricular and training packages are available, many are choosing to adapt an existing curriculum. For example, one local community outside of Missouri, which adopted the PAT program, noted that "halfway through we tossed it up in the air -- a lot of their assumptions didn't make sense for us, like that everyone could read. We didn't use the handouts, we used portions of the videos, and we brought in every community resource we could find." Using materials developed elsewhere, without adaptation, is rare.

Maintaining flexibility and responsiveness, directors believe, is critical for these programs. No program directors have indicated to HFRP that the school system attempted to standardize their approach or impose any particular materials. The one concern about materials they did express had to do with the necessity of the program maintaining control over curricular approaches and the philosophy of child development. As one project director said, "Within the school system, people don't generally know the subject matter, and so you get a watered-down first-grade curriculum" -- and little sensitivity to parents as learners.

At this point, new programs frequently re-invent the wheel when they create all their own materials; as states initiate these programs they are developing mechanisms to alleviate this problem. Minnesota has dealt with this issue by creating a resource guide to materials to be used in the Early Childhood Family Education programs, which allows programs to maintain flexibility and a sense of local ownership and responsiveness to the needs of local parents. In order to make training available in their Parents As Teachers model, the Missouri PAT program has set up a Parents As Teachers National Center, which offers material and training to persons interested in developing that model. Similar efforts to collect and disseminate appropriate materials and to train others are crucial if school systems are to benefit from the growing pool of materials available to create quality programs.

As more and more states begin to sponsor these programs, efforts to balance local

ownership, program flexibility and responsiveness against the benefits of some degree of standardization and quality control are likely to surface. Missouri handles some of these issues by providing training in the PAT curriculum. The legislation establishing the program requires districts to use that curriculum or one that the state determines is comparable. In Minnesota, the ECFE legislation requires that each local ECFE program provide a parent component and a parent-child component and that the state staff monitor compliance. As noted, Minnesota provides a resource guide to help in local program development, and extensive inservice training to district staff. Local communities thus have a great deal of discretion with respect to basic decisions about the program's philosophy of early childhood and parent education. Kentucky's PACE Program provides a child-development curriculum based on High/Scope's early childhood model; an adult illiteracy model; and materials on parenting education and support that the state has put together for use by local programs. They, too, do extensive training with local program staff on the development and implementation of their PACE approach.<sup>6</sup>

More and more material and curricular packages are available for school systems wishing to implement these programs, but no systematic assessment of the quality of these materials has been made nor is there a simple way to access them. In the future, it will be important to examine the available curricula and other materials currently in use in light

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<sup>6</sup>See Weiss, 1988 for an extensive discussion of the process these states went through to develop the ECFE and PAT programs.

of the research results described previously about the kinds of parenting behaviors and contextual factors that promote subsequent school achievement.

#### F. Personnel and Training

School-based programs have tremendous variation in certification requirements, pay scales and training of staff. State-sponsored programs attempt to standardize these across the state, but locally sponsored grass-roots programs vary considerably. In some programs, family support and education personnel are considered part of the regular school staff with all personnel and salary benefits that follow, but this is not always the case by any means.

For example, programs that are located within community education often only have part-time staff who are paid an hourly wage and not reimbursed for preparation time. One program director in such a situation said that, like her employees, she is paid an hourly wage that accrues to an annual income of less than a starting teacher in the K-12 system. As she put it, "I get tired of being broke." The disadvantages of being outside the regular salary and benefits system include lower salaries and unstable employment, and frequent staff turnover. The advantages can include more flexibility in hiring. Programs that are part of the regular salary and benefits system usually employ licensed or certified teachers, and report more staff stability and greater respect from other school staff. However, they sometimes find themselves in difficulties because of the system's inflexibility with respect to hiring personnel who do not have educational certification. Some programs also indicate that the school system has forced them to hire unqualified staff, usually teachers with tenure

who are not needed by elementary or secondary schools.

Several of the states with state-sponsored programs are currently dealing with questions of licensing and certification and attempting to define what new qualifications are necessary for staff who work with parents and young children. Current program personnel sometimes find themselves at a disadvantage in this process, because their educational system does not give them credit for experience in the field of early childhood or work with children under five years of age in day-care or Head Start settings. Minnesota has established a system wherein the early childhood and parent educators within that program will licensure to work within the system; state staff have worked with the state's colleges and universities to provide the necessary courses for ECFE staff. Long-term questions about attracting, training, paying and retaining qualified staff for these programs -- staff qualified to work with young children and adults -- are among the most important issues that need to be addressed by school districts and states if these programs are to be effective. G.

#### Program Advisory Groups

The majority of the two dozen local programs on which the Harvard Family Research Project has detailed information have local advisory groups and program directors frequently mention that these groups are critically important to their programs. They help to heighten visibility and increase the penetration of the program into the community. These groups often include members who are involved in other community agencies and help to establish inter-agency networks for information and referral, co-sponsorship of

services, and service coordination. These boards typically include parents, so they become a forum in which programs can get parents' perspective on the service. Finally, many program directors noted that when the program was facing financial cutbacks or elimination, the advisory board helped to lobby the school system to maintain the program.

#### H. Outreach

Programs and school personnel alike emphasize the critical importance of outreach efforts in order to attract a diverse array of families into programs, whether the program is designed to serve everyone or targets particular population groups. They use many creative strategies, like asking ministers, whose standing in the community commands respect, to recruit parents. They also report considerable frustration at not having the resources necessary to reach and maintain participation among high-risk families. One of the mundane but critical issues that surfaces in this regard is the need for transportation to get families to the program.

#### I. Linkage and Coordination with Other Agencies

The linkages of these programs with others within the school system and between these school-based programs and other community agencies are important in programs' efforts to serve families. Program directors point out that one of the benefits of being in the school system is that they can refer families to other school-system services such as the GED, adult literacy programs or vocational education. In order to attract certain parents, one Maryland program offers child care while parents attend vocational and GED classes,

in return for parent participation in parenting workshops. Many programs make an effort to acquaint families with other resources in the community, and many have information and referral services.

One of the critical linkage issues that needs to be addressed if family support and education programs are to fulfill their potential involves coordination between these programs and the regular school system when children and families make the transition from one to the other. In a recent analysis of public-school early childhood programs, the Early Childhood Education Policy Panel of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development noted that pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary teachers generally have not communicated or planned collaboratively with professionals in the settings from which the children have come (Warger, 1988). As noted previously, a number of family support and education programs deliberately work with parents, and sometimes with the school in an effort to facilitate this transition. However, the majority of the family support and education programs are not so linked to the school program. Previous discussion of the complexities of the relationship between these programs and the public schools suggest some of the reasons for this weak linkage. The research reviewed in the first section of this paper and research about the benefits of parent involvement in elementary schools (Henderson, 1987; Weiss, 1987) suggests the importance of maintaining active parent-school partnerships. Family support and education programs are successful in involving parents in their children's development, and pose a substantial challenge for the school system: to

continue to involve these parents throughout the child's school career.

Interviews with directors and school personnel associated with family support and education programs suggest that by design, and often by default, these programs often function as a screening device during the period prior to public school entry. Few other agencies in the community have regular contact with children and families before the child enters the public school. Some programs, such as Missouri's PAT, include screening as a regular part of the service; informally, many programs detect both child and family problems that call for additional services. As a result, programs often face the question of what to do with issues or problems that the program itself is not set up to handle. One of the chief ways programs address this problem is through information and referral for individual program participants. At the program level, these school-based programs put considerable effort into the creation of formal and informal linkages and coordination with other community agencies. Nonetheless, many program directors report that they still cannot meet the needs of many of the high-risk families that they identify.

The need to provide more comprehensive, intensive and continuous services for high-risk families has led a number of early childhood and family education programs in Minnesota to develop joint programs with other community agencies. In St. Paul, for example, the Amherst Wilder Foundation has spearheaded a three-way partnership between the St. Paul Department of Public Health, the Department of Social Services, and the ECFE program to develop a comprehensive program for at-risk families in St. Paul. The

program begins with public health nurses assessing the stresses and supports of families at birth, and then providing an array of services in conjunction with the social service department and the ECFE program to those who need more intensive services. In Minneapolis, the ECFE program is a partner in a larger proposed plan to promote the school readiness of that city's children. The plan, Way To Grow (Kurz-Riemer, Larson, & Flournoy, 1987), is designed to coordinate the activities of a variety of community agencies into a continuous, intensive plan to meet the needs of at-risk children and families, and thereby promote school readiness. The proposed partners in the plan include the school system's ECFE program, public health nurses, and social services.

Public schools are now in a time of transition as they struggle to work out how and whether to incorporate school-based family support and education programs into their more permanent services. Family support and education programs are in a time of transition as they struggle with the benefits and problems associated with their incorporation into major community agencies, including schools. Our analysis of the situation of school-based programs is that becoming part of the school system offers a potential for substantial gains for the programs and for the children and families who participate in them. This is particularly the case if the school systems continue the partnership relationships with families into elementary school and beyond. Although it is clear that school sponsorship does not necessarily lead to financial and other stability for locally initiated programs, state sponsorship of family support and education programs bring a measure of financial stability.

This analysis has also pointed out some of the problems inherent in school sponsorship of these programs. Some of these problems, involving funding, training, certification, and the availability and choice of curriculum, will be lessened as more stable funding is available and districts are able to make firmer commitments to these programs. Some of the tensions, however, for example, those around the different philosophy of parent involvement between programs and schools, are less easily resolved.

Because these programs have been in, but not of, the schools, they have had both the advantages and the disadvantages that accrue to outsiders who are not regarded as a main part of the school system. The advantage to becoming insiders would be that the strong relationships created with parents benefit the school in a variety of ways as the children move through the school system. At a time of transition, it is difficult to predict what will happen if and when these programs become integrated into regular school offerings. It is possible that they may lose some of their flexibility and become more standardized. It is also clear that even when programs have state sponsorship, many in local districts regard these programs as much less important than the K-3 program, and in some cases, as taking resources from it. It will clearly take time for even more permanent programs to win acknowledgement and respect from the larger systems. The challenges involved in incorporating these programs in a more central way should not be minimized, and careful thought should be given to how to integrate them without jeopardizing many of the features that distinguish them and seem to contribute to their popularity and

effectiveness.

#### IV. Questions and Considerations For the Future Development of School-based Family Support and Education Programs

The Harvard Family Research Projects's research on state family support and education initiatives (Weiss, 1988) and on school-based family support programs suggest a number of points that should be taken into consideration by state departments of education and school districts considering the development of school-based family support and education programs. They are described below.

##### A. The Benefits of Pilot Programs

First, case studies of state initiatives suggest many benefits to beginning these programs on a pilot basis, so long as this strategy is accompanied by a plan to manage program growth if the programs are effective (Weiss, 1988). Beginning with pilot programs, as opposed to full scale implementation, is warranted because these programs are a new type of service, particularly for school systems whose previous emphasis has been on children between the ages of 6 and 12. Those who have worked in these programs point to the many complex issues in developing and implementing programs to serve families with young children, and suggest that it takes time to develop clear program models, to work out the inevitable implementation problems, to train staff and develop appropriate certification standards, and to set up state systems of training, technical assistance, and accountability.

In addition, the time involved in shaping programs to deal with some of the difficulties of working with contemporary families should not be underestimated. As Heath and McLaughlin (1987) note, some of the very changes in families that are making the provision of these programs so important, also make their implementation all the more difficult. As families become increasingly pressed for time, for example, program participation becomes less of a priority, and as a result the programs are forced to develop creative ways to reach parents.

B. Allowing for Program Diversity

The evaluations of family support and education programs suggest that different types of programs can be effective, and that it is therefore appropriate to allow for some diversity in program models, especially in state systems. Diversity and local input are also warranted because literature on educational reform suggests the importance of local ownership and involvement in program creation and of other local contextual factors in program effectiveness (McLaughlin, 1987; Weiss and Halpern, 1988). At the same time it is important to create a state system of accountability and quality control.

A number of states that have designed family support and education programs are useful models in this regard. They have developed hybrid models; hybrid in the sense that they are not top-down strategies imposing uniform programs across the state, nor are they simply collections of diverse, grass-roots programs. These hybrid models typically specify a detailed set of services that local programs are to provide, but allow a great deal of

variation in approaches, program settings, staff and the like.

C. Linkage with the Public School

As noted previously, many current school-based family support and education programs, even those within states that have stable, state-sponsored programs, do not have much linkage with the public school, nor mechanisms to facilitate the transition of the child and family into the public school system. A substantial body of research documents the resistance of school systems to more parent involvement and to partnership roles with parents (Stallworth & Williams, 1982). Ample evidence also exists that schools that want to involve parents in a broader set of roles than simply attendance at the PTA or parent/teacher conferences can do so successfully (Epstein, 1987; Moles, 1982). It is important to recognize school system resistance, and to develop incentives to encourage more parent involvement that is based on partnership relationships with the school system.

It would be very short-sighted to have a school-based family support and education program working hard to involve parents in their child's development, and then to inhibit that involvement when the child moves into kindergarten or elementary school. It should be a joint responsibility of the family support program and the school system to facilitate the transition of the child and family into the school system. However, it would seem to be the school system's responsibility, specifically the responsibility of the K-12 component of the system, to promote more parent involvement in the elementary and subsequent

grades. In this way the school system is more likely to realize the full potential of the earlier family support and education programs.

D. The Limitations of Narrow Parent Education Programs

It is important not to confuse the practice or benefits of narrow, didactic, and superficial parent education efforts with those of broader, more interactive, and sustained family support and education programs. Some districts and states are providing parent education money-- for example, a few hundred dollars a district-- to have speakers for parents of young children once or twice a semester. This is not a family support and education program, nor is it likely to produce the kinds of gains for families and children that were produced by the programs described in the research review earlier in this paper. They are also not likely to produce the kinds of gains that these programs have produced for school systems in terms of less retention in grade, less special education placement, and fewer dropouts. The provision of family support and education programs requires a deeper and more sustained commitment through the provision of a high quality program, that works intensively with families and their children. Over the last 30 years, programs working with families have moved from a narrow emphasis on teaching parents how to teach their children to a broader emphasis on family processes and social support. Evaluation research results suggest, however, that it is important neither to have too narrow an emphasis nor too diffuse an approach. Rather, programs must maintain the critical balance between support and guidance; between the needs of parents as people with the needs of parents

in their child-rearing roles; and particularly in the case of poor families, between the need for a programmatic emphasis on the promotion of child development and parents' pressing need for social services (Weiss & Halpern, 1988).

E. Universal or Targeted Programs

Another complex issue facing states and local school districts as they design family support and education programs is the question of whether to create a universal primary prevention program that is open to everyone with young children, or to target the program for a group regarded to be at risk. Worthy arguments can be made for either choice; either one involves trade-offs. Minnesota and Missouri have developed universal programs. Both found that in order to get broad political support, it was important to create a universal program seen to benefit everyone across the state. These states are currently working through issues related to the capacity of a universal program to serve high-risk families. Much of the current interest in early childhood programs is driven by concern with the increasing numbers of poor children seen to be at risk for school failure. At a time when resources are scarce, many argue that it makes sense to target available resources on those considered to be at highest risk. Therefore, some states and districts have decided to focus on at-risk groups and are now grappling with questions about how to screen, and what kinds of risk factors to examine in order to target programs more effectively on either individuals or geographic areas. Those who argue for universal programs need to be particularly sensitive to equity issues, and make sure that in their implementation these

programs are not simply another benefit for the middle class. Those who argue for targeted programs need to address issues of stigmatizing certain groups, and the fear that programs for poor people are inevitably poor programs.

A new line of thinking in this debate involves a compromise-- a "have your cake and eat it too" strategy-- whereby the program provides some universal service, perhaps on a sliding-fee scale, but also provides more substantial services for those regarded to be at high risk. Such a strategy can sometimes be crafted when there is interagency collaboration like that now taking place in St. Paul and proposed in Minneapolis. In those cases, the Early Childhood Family Education program is universal for anyone with children 0-6. But a particular form of the ECFE program is tailored to meet the needs of high-risk families. By collaborating with other agencies, the ECFE program is able to accrue some of the resources necessary to do this tailoring and to reach high-risk families.

#### F. Program Auspices Within the School System

Another question worthy of substantial consideration by state departments of education, as well as by local districts, is that of where to place family support and education programs within the school bureaucracy. As noted previously, different auspices have different costs and benefits. But whatever the decision, it is critically important to recognize that program administrators and staff need to understand how to work with young children from birth through age 6 and with adult learners. As it currently stands, many school systems do not have the staff capacity to provide these programs. Therefore, school

systems will need to incorporate new staff with the relevant expertise and train existing educational personnel to understand the importance of the family support and education program.

G. The Importance of Evaluation to Document Program Processes, Implementation, and Outcomes

The results of a set of high-quality evaluations of early childhood programs have helped to create the current widespread interest in early intervention. To sustain this interest and build effective systems of programs, state and local programs must build evaluation into their programs. If evaluation research is to be truly useful for program growth and development, the conception of evaluation needs to be broadened from simple outcome assessment to include documentation of program processes and implementation (Weiss & Halpern, 1988). At present, very little information is available about how to implement family support and education programs on a large scale. Plans are now underway in Missouri, Minnesota, and Kentucky to examine implementation issues and the ways in which the state builds a broad set of programs; these efforts will provide valuable information to those inside and outside these states. Finally, some outcome evaluations should be mounted. If programs are often justified on the basis that they benefit children and families, it is important that some programs test this claim and determine whether family support and education programs are a good use of public money.

#### H. Creating Broader Partnerships for High Risk Families

It is clear that school systems cannot take on all of the responsibility for programs to enhance child development and strengthen families. In many states and communities, these programs now serve as a formal or informal screening mechanism and locate families with a broad range of needs. But many of these programs were not meant to provide intensive service and are having difficulty serving highly stressed families. This has led some districts with school-based family support and education programs to question what the school alone can or should do and to consider the types of partnerships with other community agencies that are now on the drawing board in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Such partnerships may go further than any single system, school or otherwise, can in creating the continuous, comprehensive and intensive services needed by some high-risk families.

Moreover, such partnerships may play into the current momentum to create family-oriented strategies to help alleviate inter-generational poverty. In his analysis of ways to alleviate persistent poverty, Berlin (1988), for example, argues "poverty's new permanence suggests a need for comprehensive, whole-family approaches to social welfare programs. . . . Involving mother, father, and child, such programs would offer many interventions at key points over the life cycle -- for example, before birth, in pre-school, and during the transition from school to work." (p. 3) Schools clearly have a critical important role to play

in such efforts. A plan to put together a school-sponsored or co-sponsored family support and education program in the early years combining Head Start, adult education, and job training, for example, might have considerable appeal in many communities currently designing strategies to deal with the persistently poor. Family support and education programs can make a unique contribution to this service package, because they are two-generational programs designed to facilitate many aspects of human development. School system involvement in these two-generational efforts may also facilitate linkage with GED, literacy, and vocational education programs.

Many school systems are creating their own programs, but a number of additional ways exist for states and school districts interested in providing such programs to work with other agencies to create new or co-fund existing family support and education programs in local communities. Contracting with existing programs and other similar strategies will be possible because more and more communities now have these programs under non-school sponsorship. Our research on school-based family support and education programs shows that school systems are, in fact, now engaging in many different types of collaborations with other agencies, both to provide family support and education programs, and to become parts of larger service collaborations involving health and social service agencies. These linkages and coordinated plans are best made at the local level, but state departments of education can contribute to the process by creating mechanisms to encourage and facilitate linkage and coordination.

The analysis in this paper suggests that providing support and education to young children and their families is not a simple enterprise, particularly if we are to realize the full benefits of these programs. But it is increasingly evident that even though families are changing in many ways, their critical importance for human development endures. To reinforce family roles, and to nurture future generations of children who have the chance to live up to their potential, schools and other community institutions need to create new partnerships with families. Family support and education programs offer them a powerful opportunity to do so.

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## APPENDIX ONE

### STATE PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Excerpted from: Marx, F. & Seligson, M. (1988). The Public School Early Childhood Study: The State Survey. Bank Street College of Education.

State                      Pre-Kindergarten Legislation

ALASKA                      Governor appointed Interim Commission on Children and Youth (1987), charged with planning comprehensive child care system and developing proposals for at-risk youth. Particular emphasis will be on developing new state system of regulating child care and preschool programs and on new initiatives for parent education. (p. 32)

CALIFORNIA                Head Start model used by state preschool program. Only eligibility criteria are income level and age of child. Program components: educational development, health, social and nutrition services, staff development, parent education and participation, and evaluation. Parents encouraged to spend time in classroom and to serve on advisory boards. (p. 35)

Special education provides parent services, including support groups, parent education, and joint parent child programs. (p. 38)

DELAWARE                      Governor Castle's program, Focus on the First Sixty Months, has components of health, community and public awareness, and parental involvement and education. Parent involvement and education is considered central to the success of the program. (p. 46)

FLORIDA                      A Pilot Preschool Program in Dade County (under Schools and Neighborhood Intervention Project funding), begun in 1985, was expanded into a state program in 1986 by the legislature. The program offered three hours of instruction, 5 days per week, including a weekly inservice education program for parent to teach them how to reinforce the childrens'

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learning experiences in the home. (p. 57)

Chapter 228 established the Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program to "encourage and assist" school districts in starting developmental programs for 3- and 4-year-olds. It made available grants to support teaching staff, home visits, parent education, administrative and supervisory costs, materials, health and developmental screening, social service referral, and program monitoring and evaluation. (58) **Parental involvement is required and defined as maximizing the active participation of parents and providing a parent education component for them. There are also parent support groups, information and referral to community services, and sometimes, home visits. Transportation is provided. (59)**

**ILLINOIS** As a result of major educational reform legislation, provisions for a state prekindergarten program were instituted in 1985, with funding provided by the Governor's Education Reform and Finance Act. The grants made available by the Act support parent services that may include parent support groups, information and referral to community services, parent education, resource and toy libraries, joint parent child programs, and child care. Parent education services are also available through appropriations for subsidized child care.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund (founded in 1982) offers statewide service, research, technical assistance, and training in schools, clinics, and community organizations. Its initial funding came from matching funds from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Pittway Corporation. In 1987, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services gave matching grants to fund the Center for Successful Child Development (the Beethoven Project). **The Ounce offers parent training for teens using home visitors and developmental day care and medical services. The Beethoven Project also offers Health services, developmental screening, a family drop-in center, family advocates, home visitors, referrals, parenting education, infant and toddler care, and a system to train family day care providers among community residents.**

As a result of the comprehensive education reform act of 1985, measures

relating to Special Education were enacted. School districts contract with public and non-profit organizations to start model pilot programs to provide services to the handicapped. In addition, the Governor and the state's human services department provides services through the **Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative, including health, parenting education, infant and toddler day care, etc.** (p. 70)

**KENTUCKY** Legislation passed in 1986 resulted in the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Education and Development in the Governor's Office, and the Interagency Council and an Interagency Advisory Committee to address early childhood education and development issues. In that same year, two grant programs were established to serve preschool children, under the administration of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Adult Community Education. One, the Parent and Child Education Program (PACE), received two-year funding as a pilot program directed at parents over age 25 without a high school diploma who have a child between the ages of 3 and 4 years. **Among PACE goals is "enhancing the relationships of the parent and child through structured interaction. Parents receive adult education while their children receive prekindergarten programs. PACE Programs are currently administered by the public schools.** (p. 73)

**LOUISIANA** SB 697, passed in 1984, funded ten pilot projects in early childhood education. This was followed by 1985 legislation to provide funding for projects for children who are at-risk for being insufficiently prepared to enter public school kindergarten, but who do not fall under the eligibility guidelines for Special Education services. **The extent to which parents are involved varies among projects; in some, they have access to lending libraries; in others, they work in the classroom.** (80)

Louisiana provides subsidized child care through SSBG/Title XX funds, though state spending is declining. Priority goes to handicapped parents and children, children who need protective care, WIN participants, and income eligible working parents. **Services include transportation, health services, parent education, and staff training.** (p. 81)

Head Start programs are also including parent participation in some of their programs.

Through Special Education Preschool Incentive Grants Program, available

services are support groups, parent education, and joint parent child programs. Parents also serve on advisory boards. (p. 83)

**MARYLAND** Maryland received ESEA Title III funds in the early seventies to development and implement early childhood programs for disadvantaged 4-year-olds. In 1978, the Department of Education proposed a primary program for 4- to 6-year-olds to help increase their chances for school success. The program emphasized basic skills, development of positive self image, continuity of learning through grade one, and the development of support systems for parents. (p. 92) In 1979, State Funds were appropriated to implement the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP), to eventually provide half-day prekindergarten and continuity of learning in kindergarten through grade three. The program primarily focuses on language and concept development. Home school cooperation is emphasized, and programs are required to involve parents in the school program and in home activities that foster educational and developmental experiences for the children. Parent education is accomplished through home visits, parent child projects, and newsletters. (p. 93) Special Education services also provide services that include transportation parent education, support groups, and joint parent child programs. (p. 96)

**MASSACHUSETTS** The Office of Early Childhood Education in the State Department of Education (DOE) administers the state's early childhood programs. The curriculum encourages parental involvement, but it is not mandated, and an attempt is made to provide opportunities for participants to improve their parenting skills. In addition, adult literacy courses, toy lending libraries, and play and support groups are sometimes offered. (100)

**MICHIGAN** In 1986 and 1987, through the DOE, money was appropriated for early childhood education programs administered by local school districts. Funds were regarded as operating grants for teacher salaries, materials, meals or snacks, transportation, home visits, parent education, screening and testing, health, social and rehabilitative services, and program monitoring and evaluation. (114) In addition, two bills will have an impact on program curriculum in 1988. HB 4279 will provide funds for early childhood development programs for four-year-olds, under the aegis of the DOE. Parents will be involved in this program. HB 4280 provides money for prekindergarten programs for at-risk four-year-olds, and the programs will

include parent involvement components that are identical with those specified in HB 4279 (to be delineated in 1988). Parents will also be included on a committee on early childhood education curriculum with teachers to review program implementation and child referrals. (115)

**MINNESOTA** Early Childhood Family Education Program was started in 1974 by State Senator Hughes to fund pilot programs that emphasized parent education and involvement as a method of improving child development. Legislation was passed in 1984. This is a statewide program through community schools. They provide information about child development and learning, child health, and community resources. Parent involvement is substantial, and parents must be present with their children or take parent education classes concurrently. (121)

**MISSOURI** Missouri passed legislation (The Early Child Development Act, SB 658) in 1984 that funds local school districts to provide the New Parents As Teachers programs. The programs are designed to provide information to parents about child development, with a goal of increasing parental participation in their child's educational development, and to increase parental confidence in parenting. (127) Home visits by parent educators are offered, as well as printed resource materials on home learning activities. There are also personal visits to the families during the year, and education group sessions with other parents. NPAT also provides a referral network to assist parents with other resources they may need. (128)

**NEW JERSEY** There is a state compensatory education program that mandates services to 4-year-olds, in addition to Chapter I funds for prekindergarten programs. This program has health, remedial, and social services, as well as transportation and home visits. Parent support groups, parent education, and joint parent child programs are provided in addition to parent advisory councils in participating school districts. (138)

**NEW YORK** The New York State Experimental Prekindergarten Program is funded by the State Education Department (SDE) for local boards of education to fund prekindergarten programs for disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds. A longitudinal study published in 1982 concluded that there was evidence to show that cognitive development test scores were higher for children whose parents had been involved in the program. The present curriculum mandates

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parental involvement, and provides for it through employment in the program, parent education, and participation in "decision making." (142)

**OHIO** Provides parent support groups and education under the federal Special Education Preschool Incentive Grant. (151)

**OKLAHOMA** The DOE funds half-day programs in school districts for 4-year-olds. The parent services provided are parent support groups, parent education, joint parent-child programs, and information and referral to community services. (155)

**OREGON** SB 524 (1987) provides for a state prekindergarten program, which will begin in 1988-89. SB 524 also funds the Parents As Teachers Program, to begin in 1989. (160) In addition, the DOE and NASBE supported a (state) bill to legislate new programs for 4-year-olds and for parent education. (161)

**PENNSYLVANIA** The Get Set Day Care Program, in Philadelphia, offers services that include health, social, educational, developmental, and parent involvement components. (166)

Under the federal Preschool INcentive Grants Program, a full range of diagnostic and remedial services are offered. Transportation, home visits, parent education, and joint parent-child programs are also available. There is also an opportunity for parents to serve on both local and state level advisory boards. (167)

**RHODE ISLAND** The Education Excellence Act of 1987 emphasizes enhancing basic skills and preventing dropouts. It includes funding for parent training and parent involvement for low-income parents of preschool children. (170)

**SOUTH CAROLINA** Appropriated state funds in 1980 to use for competitive grants to school districts for comprehensive child developmental centers and for parent education programs. A home based parent education model was approved by the legislature in 1980, and continues to provide services. The Education Improvement Act of 1984 now provides program funding for school districts for a four-year-old program. The services are free to participating families, and the grants cover teaching and administrative salaries, materials and supplies, instructional equipment, developmental

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screening and some remedial services, health, social, nutritional services, and home visits. For parents, education services, support groups, resource and toy libraries, and joint parent child programs can be funded. (176-177)

**TEXAS** Parent education, support groups, joint parent child programs, and home visits provided under Special Education funds through the Department of Health. (186)

**VERMONT** Working with a budget surplus, the DOE and the Governor drafted legislation for a prekindergarten program called "Project Good Start," in 1987. The DOE recommended programs that incorporated parent education and involvement. Programs now may be center based, home based, classroom, or a combination. Parent involvement in program design, service delivery decisions, and parent training components are required. The grants cover salaries, administrative costs, social, health, and nutritional services, and parent education. School districts, family centers, Head Start, private preschools, and day care centers apply for funds. (190)

**WASHINGTON** Legislation passed in 1987 established the State Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to serve four-year-olds from families at or below the poverty level. (195) Grants cover space, renovation, teaching staff, administration, health, social and nutritional services, transportation, parent education, home visits, program monitoring, and evaluation. Parent services that may be offered include parent support groups, information and referral to community services, and parent education. (196)

Under special education, home visits, parent education, parent support groups, and joint parent child program are provided by at least 4 school districts. (199)

**WEST VIRGINIA** Through the DOE, Title XX, and parent fees, West Virginia provides early childhood programs. The parent education program serves 80 children and their families in a home based program in four counties. (202) Local school district prekindergarten programs that are home based provide at least one hour per week of instruction for parent and child. (202)

**WISCONSIN** Parent education and support groups provided through Special Education

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8

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(209-210).

**Appendix Two: State Programs**

## Parent Child Education Program (PACE)

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**Location:** Kentucky

**Starting date:** 1986

**Sites:** Twelve school districts throughout the state

**Goals:** PACE was founded in response to the unusually high number of adults who have failed to complete high school in Kentucky, and to the resulting shortage of skilled labor. It aims to:

- break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and poverty by providing services to two generations at once
- improve the educational future of mother and child

**Services:**

- GED tutoring for mothers
- preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds based on the High/Scope developmental model
- joint parent/child activities with emphasis on behavior management and observation
- support group for mothers on issues related to self-esteem and competence

**Participants:** parents over age 25 who have not completed high school and their 3 or 4 year old children; school districts are eligible for funding if 60% or more of the adult population has not received a high school diploma

**Role of Parents:** Parents receive GED preparation, support and motivation to gain parenting and career development skills

**Staff:** Each site has one adult educator, one preschool teacher and one aide; teachers are employees of the school system and receive equal compensation; aides are hired by PACE.

**Funding sources:** Kentucky Department of Education awarded \$300,000 for six pilot programs; in 1987 the KDE increased funding by \$900,000 to \$1.2 million for 12 school districts

**Collaborations:** Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Adult and Community Education

**Evaluation:** PACE is in the process of developing an evaluation tool

## Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

---

**Location:** Minnesota

**Starting date:** 1975

**Sites:** schools, housing projects, neighborhood centers, jails, hospitals, Indian Reservations

**Goals:** Based on the philosophy that parents are the child's first teacher, the program aims to:

- enhance parents sense of self-worth through a variety of education and support services
- help parents' optimize their children's physical, social and intellectual development

**Services:** Local programs vary. In general they offer:

- parent education and group discussions
- home visits
- developmental preschool activities
- advocacy and crisis intervention
- newsletters
- drop in centers
- toy and book lending
- special services for particular populations (Southeast Asian immigrants, single parents, etc.)

**Participants:** Parents with children 0 to 6; special efforts are made to recruit low income and stressed families

**Role of Parents:** Parents are the primary recipients of the program. They make up the majority on local advisory councils and are represented on the State Advisory Task Force

**Budget:** ECFE in Duluth operates on approximately \$798,000 annually. Sixty percent of this came from the state, 40% from the school district; foundations gave \$10,000 and fees covered \$8,000.

**Funding sources:** In 1987, ECFE received \$18.3 million from the State Department of Education under Community Education, and local levy

**Staff:** Varies at individual programs, but staffing can include early childhood educators, child development and family life specialists, nurses and consumer home economists. Certification for early childhood educators is being

formalized; currently they are licensed under the Division of Vocational and Technical Education.

**Collaborations:** ECFE cooperates with other community social service agencies, as well as jails, hospitals and housing projects in Duluth.

**Evaluation:** ECFE has had several systematic evaluations and one summative evaluation. The state is currently working out a state-wide client tracking form and more summative evaluations.

**Parents as Teachers**

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**Location:** Missouri

**Starting date:** 1985

**Sites:** schools, homes

**Goals:** Philosophically committed to the notion that parents are their children's first and primary teacher, the program offers:  
- information and educational guidance to enhance the child's social, physical and intellectual development  
- help in reducing the stresses and promoting the pleasures of parenting

**Services:**  
- minimum of four home visits a year  
- parent meetings for pregnant mothers and families with children 0 to 3 (home visits individualized to meet each family's needs  
- health examinations for children

**Participants:** all parents in the school district

**Role of Parents:** Parents are the primary recipients of services, and may serve on local advisory boards.

**Staff:** The Ashland PAT program hires 16 parent educators (12 full-time and 4 part-time)

**Budget:** In 1987, the State Department of Education allocated \$11.4 million for PAT across the state

**Sponsors:** State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and local school districts. Initially four sites were chosen by competitive grant process, with funding coming through Title IV-C, ESEA; foundations provided technical assistance money.

**Collaborations:** information not available

**Evaluation:** Following a formative evaluation judged unhelpful by state staff, a private research firm performed an outcome evaluation, examining the program's impact on children's cognitive and social development, on parent knowledge, and on attitudes in the school system.

**Appendix Three: Program Profiles**

**Practical Parent Education**

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**Location:** Plano, Texas

**Starting date:** Pilot program started in 1986

**Site:** Plano Independent School District: class locations are at the convenience of participating parents and the instructor; resource library located in a church

**Goals:** Founded on the notion that the changing American family needs support to continue functioning well

**Services:**

- orientation/introductory classes
- 4 to 6 week class series
- workshops and inservice training for volunteer associate parent educators
- family resource library
- brief personal consultation and referrals

**Staff:** trained parent educators and volunteer associate parent educators

**Budget:** approximately \$55,000

**Funding sources:** privately funded through businesses, foundations, churches, private individuals and others; school district provides in-kind services

**Collaborations:** Board of Trustees of the Plano School District, community leaders and business people.

**Evaluation:** based on responses from parent questionnaires, and continued community support of the program

## Family Service Agency

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**Location:** Santa Barbara, CA

**Starting date:** 1899

**Sites:** The Parent Support Centers are offered in the schools, other services operate out of a community activities center, the Girl's Club, Family Place, an Education Center and FSA Offices

**Goals:** Non-profit, nonsectarian human service agency providing essential services to strengthen local families. The Family Service Agency aims to:

- prevent family breakdown
- provide effective intervention, and
- help individuals and families deal with stress

**Services:** FSA offers a variety of services in a variety of settings to families, children and elders. Connection with the schools comes through its Parent Support Centers which offer family life education classes in a school setting. In addition, the agency serves families through the following:

- child guidance clinic
- child care specialty program for families in crisis
- family and individual counseling
- family support advocacy program
- various home visitor and homemaker services to the elderly

**Participants:** Teachers, parents, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, elders

**Staff:** credentialed and hired by Adult Education, FSA trains leaders, often young mothers, who work in schools

**Budget:** The Family Service Agency has recently gone through severe budget cuts, and as a result has eliminated two positions from its school component, subsuming management and fiscal responsibility for the Parent Service Centers into the Child Guidance Clinic. The new budget for 1988 has been trimmed to approximately \$208,000 annually. Teachers' salaries for the Parent Support Centers are funded through Adult Education.

**Funding sources:** Donations from fourteen community groups; individual donations; in kind services from the schools.

**Collaborations:** community partnerships with the Council of PTA's, the March of Dimes, the schools, Girl's Club, SB County Health Services, Office of Superintendent of Schools, Junior League, Birth Resource Center, Step Family Association, CALM, Single Parent Alliance, and so on.

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**Evaluation:** In 1986 the Program Committee thoroughly evaluated FSA using data gathered from clients, teachers and the community. The Committee is currently developing a tool which will be used to evaluate the program annually. FSA is accredited nationally, and overseen by an Executive Director.

## Center for Creative Art Therapies

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**Location:** Boston, MA

**Starting date:** 1984

**Sites:** schools, family shelters, CCAT's center in Boston's South End

**Goals:** This non-profit human service organization encourages expression through the arts to enhance developmental skills, promote self-esteem and interpersonal skills for individuals and families.

**Services:**

- clinically based client-centered therapy services in the arts
- special needs pilot program
- early intervention for children at-risk
- parent/child classes in three Boston schools
- training site for interns

**Participants:** Children and adults 6 months to 86 years; children with developmental delays; inner-city children; infants at risk; the chronically ill and disadvantaged

**Staff:** All are registered Master's level therapists in art, music or dance

**Budget:** In 1987-88, for its parent/child classes, CCAT received approximately \$15,000 from each of the three schools.

**Funding sources:** Public/private agencies and organizations, foundations, businesses, corporations, Mass Council on Arts and Humanities, Mass Arts Lottery

**Collaboration:** CCAT has developed partnerships with approximately 74 agencies and services; it is affiliated with the Boston Community Schools, Boston City Hospital, Boston Children's Services, Coastal Community Counseling Center, Boston Public Schools and Emmanuel College

**Evaluation:** CCAT is currently developing an evaluation tool

**Preschool and Parenting Learning Center**

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**Location:** Knoxville, TN

**Starting date:** 1984

**Sites:** inner city high school serving 50% White, 50% Black students, with 65% on free lunch program

**Goals:** PPLC aims to help teenage parents graduate from high school; to reduce unplanned teen pregnancy and to provide quality child care and parenting education

**Services:**

- laboratory/demonstration child care
- classes for teenagers around pregnancy and parenting, nutrition, child development and home management
- counseling

**Participants:** Infants 6 weeks to 3 years; teen mothers in grades 9 through 12.

**Staff:** Teachers hold a B.S. in early childhood education; the Director has an M.S. in Child and Family Studies; the program hires one full-time teacher aide (qualifications unspecified)

**Budget:** \$65,000

**Funding Sources:** Initially funded through Chapter II Federal Grant and a Levi-Straus Community Grant; for the last two years funded by State appropriations, student fees (\$5/wk)

**Collaborations:** City Health Department, Knox City School District, Public Health Department

**Evaluation:** An informal study of the program performed by the State Board of Education and the General Assembly, included on-site visits, review of relevant documents, and interviews with staff and community leaders. There is interest in a longitudinal study to provide hard evidence of the program's achievements.

**Parent Leadership Training Project of the Citizen's Education Center, NW**

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**Location:** Seattle, WA

**Starting date:** 1986

**Sites:** The Project is located in one urban and three rural school districts

**Goals:** The Citizen's Education Center aims:

- to enable low-income parents to help their children make a successful transition from preschool to elementary schools
- to prevent school failure and drop out among Chicano and Latino students, and among low-income minority students in inner-city systems

**Services:**

- parent training sessions on issues of parents' rights and responsibilities, special programs and resources in the schools, student testing
- child care during classes

**Participants:** Chicano, Latino and low-income families in participating school districts

**Staff:** Director, Regional Coordinator

**Budget:** 1988-89 - approximately \$75,000 for centers in four school districts

**Funding sources:** corporations, businesses, educational agencies

**Collaborations:** The project is the result of a partnership between the Washington State Migrant Council and four school districts

**Evaluation:** The Citizen's Education Center is currently developing an evaluation tool

**Program for Adolescent Parents: New Future School**

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**Location:** Albuquerque, NM

**Starting date:** 1970 in basement of YWCA; in 1976 the Albuquerque schools adopted the project

**Sites:** New Future School (60% Spanish population)

**Goals:** New Future School hopes to assist and motivate school age parents to make responsible, informed decisions, to complete their secondary education, to have healthy pregnancies and healthy families, to be responsible, self-sufficient members of society.

**Services:**

- perinatal program
- young parents' Center serving high-risk parents unable to return to the regular school program following the birth of their child
- parent education
- home visits
- vocational services
- health services
- child care

**Participants:** Pregnant and parenting adolescents

**Staff:** certified volunteer teachers, health care professionals

**Budget:** not available

**Funding sources:** Albuquerque public schools, New Futures, Inc.; NM Department of Human Service; NM Health and Environment Department; Public Welfare Department; State Department of Vocational/Technical Education; group, individual and corporate donations

**Collaborations:** Univeristy of NM School of Medicine's Maternity and Infant Care Project operates a weekly prenatal clinic; WIC clinic

**Evaluation:** New Future conducted a five year study between 1980 and 1985; a new five-year follow up study commenced in 1987

## Parent and Child Education (PACE)

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**Location:** Canton, OH

**Starting date:** 1975

**Sites:** An inner city program that also serves all of Stark county at two satellite locations, PACE operates centrally out of the Martin School, an Adult Education Center in downtown Canton.

**Goals:** PACE addresses a comprehensive list of social problems, including domestic violence and child abuse, high-risk, developmentally delayed infants, underachievement and failure in school, by:

- offering parent education as a means of nurturing the family
- providing a supportive environment for a diverse clientele
- fostering understanding, individual growth and awareness of options

**Services:**

- dual parent-child classes in drop in centers
- networking
- counseling
- unofficial warm line
- crisis intervention

**Participants:** Parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and friends, children birth to six, with emphasis on birth to three.

**Staff:** Teacher Coordinator for the Center, one part-time teacher and three aides. The School Board prefers Certification for teachers, high school diplomas or GED equivalency for aides. The Center encourages training in child development and administration, ending in a two-year associate degree. The director views life experience and personality as equally important.

**Budget:** approximately \$202,000 in 1986

**Funding sources:** The State Department of Education funds PACE 80%; the Canton City Schools Department of Community Education picks up the remaining 20%. In 1986, the Children's Trust Fund awarded PACE a three-year grant. The schools donate space and utilities.

**Collaborations:** PACE referrals come from a variety of public/private agencies and family advocates, including:

psychologists, family defenders, hospitals, welfare agencies, well-baby clinics, the Urban League, Stark County Action Center, Family Courts, Mother's KISS (Keeping Infant Stimulation Strong), and the Juvenile Justice Department

Evaluations: PACE did a longitudinal study in 1982; staff continue to perform their own informal needs assessment through conversations with parents; an Advisory Board monitors progress and a parent evaluation sheet provides immediate response to staff; the state and the Children's Trust Fund also review the budget and direction of the program

## Working Families Center of the Parent Education Program

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**Location:** Silver Spring, MD

**Starting date:** Parent Education Program started in 1971; the Working Families Center began in 1984.

**Sites:** The Working Families/Day Care Enrichment Program delivers classes in three schools in Montgomery County.

**Goals:**

- offers education, training and support to family day care providers
- helps employed parents and providers develop a closer alliance

**Services:**

- Day Care Enrichment Program, a supportive atmosphere of classes for caregivers and preschool children in their charge
- Drop-in Center for working parents
- scheduled evening and Saturday activities
- information and referrals
- parent conferences and warm line

**Participants:** Parents, family day care providers, children from infancy to five

**Staff:** The Program is headed by a full-time Parent Specialist; fifteen to twenty parent educators work on a part time, temporary basis from two to twenty hours/wk; three to five assistants act as support staff to teachers. Clerical staff contracts are absorbed into the Adult Education Department Budget. Staff have varying qualifications, with a minimum of a B.A. and experience with children and families.

**Budget:** The line item figure was unavailable as the program operates as part of the County Adult Education Department

**Funding sources:** The Montgomery County School District contributes \$77,000 to cover the remaining costs; the schools provide toys and equipment, space comes from the county government; fees range from \$5 to \$60.

**Collaborations:** Strong liaisons exist between the Parent Education Program and the county government, the Health Department, the Department of Family Resources, the Women's Commission, the County PTA and school counselors.

**Evaluation:** The Parent Education Program monitors its work through participants' assessments, looking for proof of

affectiveness, unmet needs and new ideas; staff perform their own internal evaluations of the program twice yearly.