School COMMUNITY NETWORK

Just Connect®

EDUCATION

Family Learning Series

Parent Courses

Building Student Success within a Strong School Community ®

School Community Network

Core Beliefs

A school community rests upon mutual respect, strong relationships, shared responsibility, and focused attention to students' learning. Its core beliefs are that:

• all parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

• all teachers are inspired by professional standards and personal conviction to see that their students succeed.

• student success is bolstered when parents, teachers, and other members of the school community work in unison in their behalf.

• school leaders are the prime movers in establishing and nurturing the processes and practices necessary in intentionally strengthening the school community.

Outcome Goals for a School Community

1. Reading & Literacy. Every student, and students of all ages, will learn to read well, read often, enjoy reading, and achieve literacy through a focused alliance of family support and powerful classroom instruction.

2. Self-Directed Learning. Every student will become a self-directed learner through teaching that incorporates study skills and learning strategies, homework practices that build effective study habits, and school and family guidance that encourages self-directed learning.

3. Respect & Responsibility. Every student will develop a sense of responsibility and respect for self and others that fosters social and emotional well-being through consistent direction and sup¬port from the family and the school.

4. Community. The school will function as a community of its members—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers.

Further Resources Available

http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/ - School Community Network website

http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/resources/ - Parent and School Resources, including Parent–Child Activities in English and Spanish, searchable databases, and more

http://www.indistar.org/action/Community.html - Indicators in Action - School Community Course, 5 professional development modules with video clips of effective practices in action (Courses on Instruction and Leadership are also available)

http://www.centeril.org/personalcompetencies/ - Personal Competencies - Supporting the teacher's ability to influence a student's learning and personal competencies (cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and social/emotional) by virtue of their personal knowledge of and interaction with the student and the student's family.

Introduction

What is Solid Foundation®?

Solid Foundation® is a parent education program of the Academic Development Institute, a not-for-profit organization that assists families, schools, and communities with the academic and personal development of children. Solid Foundation® provides sponsoring organizations (usually schools) with materials to conduct courses for parents.

Please note that "parent" as used throughout this document and the courses includes any family member or guardian acting in the parental role for a student.

What are Solid Foundation's Courses for Parents?

Solid Foundation® offers four courses for parents in both English and Spanish. The four Solid Foundation® courses include:

- *Ready, Here I Come!* is for parents of preschool children (ages 3 to 5). This course teaches family activities that help prepare children for school.
- *Reading at Home* helps parents build their children's reading habits and instills a lifelong love of reading. The course is best suited for parents of children in Grades K–3.
- *Studying at Home* is designed to help parents build their children's study habits in the home. The course is best suited for parents of children in Grades 4–8.
- *Raising Good Kids* is for all parents. It explores the way children develop their sense of respect and responsibility within the context of the family.

What is a Round? A Session? A Group?

Each time a Solid Foundation® course for parents is offered, it is called a "round." Solid Foundation® courses are conducted for "groups" of up to 10 parents each. The groups are led by previously trained parents (group leaders). In the course, the group meets for three weekly "sessions" of 90 minutes each. Depending on the number of participants, two, three, or more groups may meet at the same time, in the same round.

What is a Solid Foundation® Facilitator?

The Solid Foundation® facilitator is the person designated to assume primary responsibility for the Solid Foundation® course. The facilitator is usually a teacher, counselor, or staff member. The facilitator's tasks include:

- Review the *Leadership Handbook* and course materials.
- Prepare a Schedule for a Course Round (see masters forms in section 5 of the *Leadership Handbook*).
- Prepare a Contact List of parents to be contacted by group leaders for participation in the course (a master form of the Contact List is in section 5 of the *Leadership Handbook*).
- Select parents to serve as group leaders: one parent for each group of 10 parents to be recruited, plus one extra parent to serve as an administrative group leader.
- Meet with the group leaders for a 2-hour training session (or two 1-hour sessions), using the *Leadership Handbook* as the training manual.
- Bring to the group leader training:

  A *Leadership Handbook* for each group leader (photocopied from Solid Foundation® master or obtained from ADI)

  Session manuals and postcards (photocopied from Solid Foundation® master or obtained from ADI)

2 postcard stamps for each parent to be recruited (20 stamps for a group of 10)

A copy of the Schedule for a Course Round for each group leader

A copy of the Contact List for each group leader

- Meet with the group leaders for an Organizational Meeting about 3 days before the first session of the course.

- Attend the 3 sessions of the course.

- Lead the graduation ceremony at the end of the third session.

- Evaluate the program based on course evaluations submitted by participants.

Session Schedule (example)

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.
Week 1			Group Leader Training	Group Leader Training	Recruitment		
Week 2	Recruitment					Organizational Meeting	
Week 3			Session 1				
Week 4			Session 2				
Week 5			Session 3 and Graduation				

Parent Course Plan

Group Leader Training

Date(s): _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Organizational Meeting

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Sessions (three consecutive weeks, same day)

Date(s): _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Suggestions for parents who will serve as group leaders:

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EDUCATION

Family Learning Series:

Getting Started

Getting Started

Just add your ingenuity to this
tried-and-proven path to success.

1 Principal and Facilitator Meet

2 Facilitator Selects Group Leaders

3 Facilitator Trains
Parent Group Leaders

4 Group Leaders
Recruit Participants

5 Organizational Meeting:
Facilitator and Group Leaders

6 Group Leaders Conduct
Three Weekly Sessions

7 Parents Apply Lessons
with their Children.
Children Read and Study.
Teachers Rejoice.
Life is Good!

The Path To Success

1

Principal and Facilitator Meet

Of course you've met before; you've probably known each other for years. But this is a special meeting. At this meeting, the principal and facilitator launch their course for parents. So please, principal, we know you're busy, but this meeting is very important.

What do you do at the meeting?

- Determine your target group of parents
- Schedule the Round
- Select the Parent Group Leaders

2

Selecting Your Group Leaders

You will need one group leader for each group of 10 parents, plus an administrative group leader. Select group leaders carefully. You will depend on your group leaders to deal with other parents warmly and effectively. They must be comfortable reading to a small group and willing to call parents before sessions.

Group Leader Qualifications

- Able to read aloud to group from manuals
- Articulate
- Enthusiastic
- Reliable

Of course, the group leaders must be available for Group Leader Training, the Organizational Meeting, and the course sessions.

Suggestions for Recruiting Group Leaders

- Be clear about the amount of time required and responsibilities.

  Attend the Group Leader Training.

  Call parents to recruit them for the course.

  Attend an organizational meeting.

  Call group members before each session.

  Lead a group once each week for 3 weeks, 2 hours each session (including set-up time).
- Explain that the group leader reads the curriculum to a small group of parents.
- Provide assurance that the training will fully prepare group leaders for the job.
- Stress the wonderful service group leaders provide to other families.
- Emphasize the benefits to the group leader's own family and the personal skills developed by the group leader.

In Section 5 of the *Leadership Handbook* you will find a master form of a fact sheet that is helpful in describing this course to potential group leaders and other interested parties.

3

Facilitator Trains Parent Group Leaders

Group Leader Training takes two hours and may be done in one session or in two shorter sessions. The *Leadership Handbook* gives you an agenda. In fact, it gives you a script to use at the training. The *Leadership Handbook* also tells you everything you will need.

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Group Leaders Recruit Participants

Recruitment procedures and suggestions are in the *Leadership Handbook.* Telephone calls/contacts and postcards are extremely important. Group leaders will need encouragement and guidance. They may also need help from teachers who will suggest to their students' parents that they enroll in a course. Recruitment is not for the faint of heart. Hard work, persistence, and enthusiasm will fill your groups!

Recruitment Steps

Step 1: Facilitator Prepares a Contact List (master form in Section 5 of *Leadership Handbook*)

◆ Distribution of Parent Interest Flyer. The Parent Interest Flyer (master in Section 5 of the Leadership Handbook) is to be sent home with children, completed by parents, and returned to the school. The Contact List is then prepared to include the parents who indicated their interest in the course on the Parent Interest Flyer.

◆ Meeting of Parents. If a large number of parents will be in the same place at the same time–for a PTO meeting or Open House, for example–you can explain the Solid Foundation® course, distribute Parent Interest Flyers, and collect the flyers from interested parents. Be sure to explain that participation is highly encouraged.

◆ Target List. You may want to limit the potential participants by some category; for example, only the parents of students in grades K–3, or only families new to your school. If so, prepare a Contact List to include only these names. Of course, Parent Interest Flyers could be sent or distributed only to these families before preparing the Contact List.

Step 2: Group Leaders Confirm Enrollment

When you train the group leaders, you will give them a Contact List of parents to call or message to recruit for the course. In this case, each group leader makes contacts until he or she has recruited 10 parents for his or her group. A master form for the Contact List is found in Section 5 of the *Leadership Handbook*. Remember to give the group leaders a sufficient number of prospects; not all parents will agree to attend.

Use your own creativity to attract just the right number of parents to the course. But remember, the group leaders need to know in advance who will be enrolled so they can send welcoming postcards and make reminder phone calls.

5

Organizational Meeting: Facilitators and Group Leaders

Near the end of the recruitment period, the facilitator and group leaders meet to iron out last minute wrinkles. See the agenda at the end of the "Recruitment" section of the *Leadership Handbook.* If recruitment is lagging, do some problem solving. Does a group leader have cold feet? Warm them up. Remind group leaders of the important "welcoming" telephone call. It feels great to be so darn well organized!

6

Group Leaders Recruit Participants

At the first session, expect a few goose bumps. Nervousness. Excitement. Curiosity. But then watch the groups come together. Each session, the parents grow closer as they discuss their progress at home with their children. Each session they learn more. And at the end of the final session, the graduation ceremony is a wonderful occasion.

7

Parents Apply Lessons with Their Children

This is the really important stuff—the changing relationships between parents and children at home. Reading together. Making study time a family institution. Talking about learning. Listening. Sure all the work was worth it; you have helped families grow stronger in their support of children's learning.

What Next?

Use the Program Evaluation Form in your *Leadership Handbook* to plan your next Solid Foundation® course.

<u>Contact Us</u>

to Just Connect®

www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org