

Parent Involvement and Project CHILD

Parents are the key for success in a child's education. Project CHILD involves parents as key partners in the success of the program. Communication between school and home is enhanced through the CHILD materials and their focus on home/school collaboration.

- ◊ **Parent Materials** - materials to introduce and train parents in the CHILD system are provided. These include a 10-minute parent video and informational letters describing the CHILD system and the reading, language arts, and mathematics components. These materials not only help parents understand the academic focus of the CHILD system, but also suggest ways they can help their children at home.
- ◊ **Student Materials** - the *CHILD Passport* system is designed to enhance home/school communication. At the end of each unit, students take home their completed Passports to share with their parents. Parents can see at a glance the academic content of all the station activities as well as assess the effort their child has put forth in completing station activities.
- ◊ **Parent Volunteers** - parents are encouraged to volunteer and become classroom partners in their child's education. Many CHILD parents serve as computer assistants in the classroom. Others help at home by making station activities and collecting materials for use at the stations. Parents in some schools have sewn special fabric Passport holders to place over the backs of the chairs in the CHILD classrooms, while other have built furniture for the computer stations.
- ◊ **Parent Choice** - most Project CHILD principals use the program as a vehicle for providing parental choice within a school. Parents are offered the choice of enrolling their children in the Project CHILD classrooms or keeping them in the traditional classrooms. In this way, parents can take an active role in determining what method of instruction best meets the needs of their child.

Parents are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the Project CHILD program. Waiting lists to get into the Project CHILD classrooms are long. Parent surveys and interviews have documented the positive attitude of parents toward the CHILD program. "It's the best thing that ever happened to my child;" "It's really turned my son around;" and "my daughter can't wait to come to school each day" are among the many enthusiastic testimonials teachers hear from parents (Kromhout & Butzin, 1993).

Parent involvement is high in Project CHILD classrooms. Today's busy parents are reassured to know that their children are happy and involved in their classrooms. Getting ready for school is not an ordeal when children are eager to come.

Parents, teachers, and students must work together as partners to insure successful learning. Project CHILD provides parents with the satisfaction that their children will be well prepared to enter the 21st century.

References

Kromhout, O.M. & Butzin, S.M. (1993). Integrating Computers into the Elementary School Curriculum: An Evaluation of Nine Project CHILD Model Schools. Journal of Research on Computing in Education, (26), 1, 55-69.