PLAN to LEAD

A Guide to Parent Leadership and Advocacy Training for Educational Equity

2nd Edition © 2007
About PLAN

The Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN) is a regional network of parent leaders and organizations working to build a social justice movement for families. PLAN unites and strengthens diverse parents and organizations fighting for educational equity, economic justice, quality child care, and parent representation through alliance building, leadership development, and action.

Founded on a collective vision to build a parent-led, social justice movement for families, PLAN seeks to unite and galvanize parents, guardians and allies across issues, geography, language, and culture.

PLAN builds bridges between parent-based groups, allied coalitions, and policy organizations, and supports and galvanizes low-income parents to act as a powerful counterweight in a society that increasingly puts their needs at the bottom of the priority list.

PLAN provides Bay Area parents and parent organizations with opportunities to:

- Build relationships with other parents and organizations
- Network with peers and build alliances
- Develop leadership and advocacy skills
- Exchange information and strategies
- Take action on common concerns.

PLAN provides parent leaders and organization staff with leadership development and capacity-building tools for educational equity through the PLAN to LEAD curriculum. Training programs include:

- Leadership in Education Training Series: A two-day training for parents/guardians and others working to support parent leadership in school decision-making.
- Training of Trainers: A six-month program to increase the capacity of Bay Area parent-based organizations to use leadership training as a tool for parent-led action for educational equity.

For more information or to get involved with PLAN, visit www.parentactionnet.org, email info@parentactionnet.org, or call 510-444-PLAN or 510-444-7526.
Acknowledgements

Many talented and committed people have contributed their ideas, values, insights, and expertise to this second edition of PLAN to LEAD.

First and foremost, we extend our ongoing gratitude to Rebecca Aced-Molina and Robin Ortiz-Young, who laid the foundation for the PLAN to LEAD model, as well as rewrote and piloted the last edition of the PLAN to LEAD curriculum. Their dedication, along with support from the Zellerbach Family Foundation and Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA), ensured that PLAN to LEAD would live on to benefit parents and schools for years to come.

The improvements and innovations reflected in this second edition of PLAN to LEAD would have been impossible without the considerable expertise and commitment of trainers Veronica Neal and Martha Benitez, who rewrote several modules and enriched the curriculum with many new activities. Veronica’s deep well of knowledge in the field of diversity education and Martha’s breadth of experience in community and labor organizing have been invaluable.

Participants in the PLAN to LEAD Training of Trainers program have also been a source of inspiration. We would especially like to acknowledge the Tenderloin Housing Committee’s La Voz Latina program for inspiring a new approach to the Living History Wall, and to Chinese for Affirmative Action’s Visitacion Valley Parents Association, for sparking new ideas for Using the Educational Code.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the wealth of existing popular education, community organizing, and diversity education curriculum, which forms the backbone of PLAN to LEAD. The Right Question Project, Project South, Community at Work, Parents Leadership Institute, EdChange and the Multicultural Pavilion, and Neighborhood Funders Group’s Community Organizing Toolbox were key sources informing PLAN to LEAD.

Spanish and Chinese versions of this curriculum would not have been possible without the patience and skill of our capable translators, Liliana Herrera and Kai Lui. Their hard work and dedication have made PLAN to LEAD accessible to the Bay Area’s many immigrant parent leaders and immigrant-serving organizations.

Finally, we are grateful for the ongoing financial support of The Zellerbach Family Foundation, The Walter and Elise Haas Fund, and The Evelyn and Walter Haas Fund, which made this second edition possible.

Melia Franklin
Director
2007
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Why Parent Leadership?

The concept of leadership has been around for a long time. Many of us have heard stories of the some of the great leaders of our time: Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Cesar Chavez, and An San Su Ki, to name a few. Businesses, nonprofits, and public services have studied leadership, seeking clues to what makes a person able to motivate so many other people to work collectively to bring about such dramatic changes—to our economic systems, our civil rights, our values, and the way we live our lives. Margaret Mead captures the sentiment of leadership in her famous quote: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” A growing professional field of leadership development has recently emerged and is still developing, including sub-categories such as community leadership, service leadership, and collaborative leadership. So where does Parent Leadership fit into this mix?

First, parents are natural leaders. Parents’ primary identity is around nurturing the potential of others, their children. Parents, by nature, are driven to fight for the best for their children, to make sacrifices for their benefit, and to inspire children to their full potential. Second, the conditions facing U.S. children today are nothing short of dire. According to the Children’s Defense Fund: “3 in 5 preschoolers have their mothers in the labor force, 1 in 3 is behind a year or more in school, 1 in 5 was born poor.” (www.childrensdefense.org, 2005) The public institution where parents are most likely to connect is at their children’s schools. Here again, conditions are dire. According to Cross City Campaign: “By almost any measure, urban public schools are failing to provide an adequate education to their students.” (www.crosscity.org, 2002) From low test scores to overcrowding, uncredentialed teachers to budget deficits, dilapidated buildings to violence on campus, schools are not fulfilling their promise of providing every child with equal educational opportunities. Parents across the country have begun responding to this crisis through parent leadership, advocacy, and organizing.

Making systemic changes to hold schools accountable to the promise of providing an equal education is a monumental challenge. Parents face specific challenges:

- Schools are designed so that professional administrators hold the power. There are not effective mechanisms for parents to engage as equals with administrators in planning for school reform.
- Schools that need the most help are located in the poorest neighborhoods, where families have limited educational backgrounds and limited time to give to school reform efforts.
- Misguided federal reform measures, such as No Child Left Behind, punish the schools that need the most help.
- Underpaid and overworked teachers lack the time or training to integrate parents as meaningful partners in their children’s education.

There are many strategies to begin to tackle these challenges. PLAN to LEAD develops the skills and knowledge of parents to inspire them to engage with school decision-makers as change agents. PLAN to LEAD’s curriculum and program model is designed for emerging grassroots parent organizations. We hope organizations seeking to help parents find their voice, unite with each other, and demand excellence of our schools will read this guide, review the learning activities, and use the material to accomplish education reform goals.
Brief History of PLAN to LEAD

PLAN to LEAD, a parent leadership and advocacy training program, began in 1999 as a project of the California Partnership for Children (CPC). Alan Watahara, CPC’s founder, envisioned a day when empowered grassroots parents, rather than lobbyists, could lead in children’s rights policy arenas. In pursuit of that vision, CPC researched parent advocacy training curricula from organizations across the country, and found a model from the State Advocacy Parent Empowerment Program in Connecticut. An advisory committee of parents, family services specialists, and consultants adapted this curriculum and created the first PLAN to LEAD pilot in 1999.

Over the next three years, PLAN to LEAD enrolled and trained over 100 parents in San Francisco and Alameda counties with great success. Many PLAN to LEAD graduates have drafted policies, led grassroots parent councils, and advocated in local and statewide policy arenas on school reform, child care, welfare rights, juvenile justice, and cultural competency issues.

In 2001, after the stock market downturn and the subsequent downsizing of many private foundation portfolios, CPC closed its doors. However, the PLAN to LEAD curriculum was still in demand. Through generous funding from the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and fiscal sponsorship through the Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA—formerly Northern California Citizenship Project), PLAN to LEAD offered two trainings in 2004-2005 in San Francisco and Alameda counties. Significant changes were introduced to the curriculum and project design. The curriculum was shortened from twenty to ten weeks. Parents participated through organizations, rather than as individuals. Finally, the revised PLAN to LEAD curriculum focused on community organizing and systems change in education.

The two pilot trainings implemented in 2004-05 demonstrated that the new PLAN to LEAD curriculum and model are more accessible to working parents, and give parents a clearer focus for action planning and more support to implement planned actions. The curriculum and program model described in this Guide were informed by the parent participants, the organizational partners, and the trainers who participated in this pilot.

Today, PLAN to LEAD has found a permanent home in the Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN), a grassroots network of parent organizations working for educational equity, quality child care, economic justice and authentic parent representation in the decisions that affect children.
What is PLAN to LEAD?

PLAN to LEAD is a capacity-building program designed to develop leadership and activism in parents in order to improve public education. The program includes the following elements:

- Approximately 40 hours of learning activity guides and accompanying handouts
- An overview of the curriculum and program model
- A “training of trainers” for PLAN to LEAD

VALUES

The philosophy that guides PLAN to LEAD’s approach to training includes the following values regarding how adults learn and the need for this course:

- Parents are natural leaders and have capacity to advocate for their children.
- Understanding the need for parent advocacy is linked to understanding oppression in our society, related to class, race, language, immigrant status, gender, sexual orientation, and the under-appreciation of the value of parenting in our socioeconomic system.
- Adult learning must build on the existing experiences and knowledge of participants. Trainers are committed to asking, listening, drawing out, and building on existing experience and knowledge of participants, even if not traditionally recognized with degrees or job titles.
- Adult learning must be action-oriented. Content of the courses will include a balance of conceptual thinking and examples of concrete actions related to advocating for children and families.
- Adult learning is relational. Trainers are committed to enhancing opportunities for parents to learn from each other and build trusting respectful relationships that can extend beyond the scope of this course.
- Adult learning environments must reflect an understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and commitment to addressing personal bias through on-going self-assessment and reflection.
How to Use this Guide

This Guide is designed to help prospective trainers develop their own approaches to delivering PLAN to LEAD. We believe that in order to deliver a successful training, trainers must have several elements in place:

- An understanding of adult learning and popular education values
- Confidence in the material and processes to be presented in each of the learning activities
- A vision for what parents will accomplish by taking this course
- A logical flow and order to the selected activities
- Real-life examples, data, and information relevant to the life and work of prospective parent participants.

The first part of the Guide is designed to share the PLAN to LEAD program model, values, and approach. The second part of the Guide lays out the “nuts and bolts” of the learning activities. The curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable to a variety of organizations and needs. We acknowledge that parent leadership organizations are at different stages of development, have different levels of resources, and have different needs and interests. Organizations may choose to implement only a few of the learning activities the first time they deliver PLAN to LEAD, or choose to implement the entire 10-week curriculum.

The PLAN to LEAD curriculum is divided into three focus areas, or “pillars”: Systems Change, Tools/Skills, and Action Planning. We suggest that at least one of the learning activities from each of the three pillars be included in any delivery model of PLAN to LEAD, as well as one opening and closing activity in every class. Likewise, we strongly suggest you incorporate the Cross-Cutting Themes: Addressing Oppression, Maximizing Participation, and Integrating Data, throughout PLAN to LEAD.
PLAN Training Philosophy

The PLAN to LEAD training model is based on the philosophy that to be an effective trainer, you must be aware of your sources of identity, values, and personal prejudices and how these factors influence your training style. Trainers must be willing to work toward creating a values- and bias-conscious training environment.

We believe it is every trainer's responsibility to explore the lenses through which you view the world. What messages did you receive about other cultures? How do your personal values inform your behaviors or the ways you interact with those who are culturally different from yourself? How do you help to maintain systems of inequality? How has internalized oppression impacted your life? Asking the hard questions of ourselves helps us to better understand how we walk through the world as well as how others walk through the world. Thus, it is essential that we are clear about what shapes our perceptions and how this can help or hinder us when training, building relationships, or advocating for educational equity.

As a PLAN to LEAD (PTL) trainer, you are sharing a set of values and beliefs around training and educational equity and should clearly state these values during the opening of any training session. However, participants also have the right to their perspectives or personal values and should feel safe to share their ideas without feeling judged or put on the defensive. When participants are made to feel ashamed, blamed, victimized or attacked, the learning stops and the training space is no longer safe for anyone. As a trainer, we encourage you to consider how you can invite and hold multiple perspectives during trainings while also encouraging participants to consider new perspectives, ideas, or opposing views.

Developing this level of personal knowledge and awareness will greatly contribute to your effectiveness as a trainer. We also encourage you to accept your own training limitations. You will make mistakes, conflict will happen. There are very few “right” answers but many complicated questions.

While we will never learn everything there is to know about cultural diversity and oppression, we invite you to commit to being a life-long learner. Continuously re-examine your training style, and who you are reaching in your trainings and why. Reexamine your identity and your areas of personal growth, stay open to new ideas, and be flexible in your trainings when confronting unanticipated situations, perspectives, and behaviors. These are all opportunities to model acceptance, to learn about yourself, and capture “teachable moments.”
Cross-Cutting Themes: Addressing Oppression

Oppression—the unjust exercise of authority and power by one group over another—impacts all of us in myriad ways. In order for parents from communities of color and/or low-income neighborhoods to gain the necessary confidence to participate as true decision-makers in public schools, they need to understand the impact oppression has had on our overall society. Similarly, in order to be true partners and allies in the fight for equity in education, Anglo, middle class, and other privileged groups must also understand how oppression hurts everyone.

Oppression exists in all known societies. Each society perpetuates the roles of oppressed and oppressor. When oppressed groups come to believe the negative descriptions perpetuated by the oppressor—for example: “I only am in college because of a special program, not my personal merit”—oppression becomes internalized. Internalized oppression can cause members of oppressed groups to find fault, criticize, and invalidate each other through name-calling, stereotyping, exclusion, even violence.

For example, many young boys are told: “Big boys don’t cry!” As they become men, some may seek relief for the hurt they suffered by becoming the oppressor. For example, the male victim may express the abuse and invalidation he experienced through violence against women. Thus, internalized oppression becomes external oppression, starting the cycle over.

The skills taught in the PLAN to LEAD curriculum—including self-reflection, systems analysis, learning from history, and communication—can help parent leaders move beyond oppression. Although there are several activities that are dedicated exclusively to understanding oppression, trainers should help parents tackle issues of oppression in every training.
Building a Foundation for Addressing Oppression

PLAN to LEAD (PTL) is rooted in the belief that in order to achieve educational equity, issues of oppression must be addressed. However, there are many different approaches to addressing issues of oppression. The PTL approach combines parent advocacy, alliance building, and multicultural education.

Oppression is a complicated idea to understand and one that impacts everyone in our society. There are many ways to begin to challenge oppression within school systems: one approach is Multicultural Education (ME). ME focuses on oppression at both the individual and organizational level, while paying special attention to how oppression impacts institutions of education. Multicultural education defines and addresses changes needed to correct the inequities experienced by oppressed or disenfranchised groups on a variety of levels, including classroom environment, teaching styles, and curriculum. In order to fully dismantle oppression in education, we believe that we also must focus on institutional and systemic issues, such as inequitable resources, “informal” tracking, and discriminatory disciplinary policies. Last, we encourage parents to “insist on education change as part of a larger societal transformation in which we more closely explore and criticize the oppressive foundation of society and how education serves to maintain the status quo—foundations such as white supremacy, capitalism, global socioeconomic situations, and exploitations” (Gorski, 2006).

PTL focuses on all of these areas of educational inequity by empowering parent leaders to find their voice, deepen their advocacy skills, and support the process of building allies who can effectively challenge all levels of oppression through cultural knowledge, sensitivity, awareness, and action. We do this through integrating the following three cross-cutting themes into our curriculum: data, maximizing participation, and addressing oppression.

Oppression is a sensitive topic and will test trainer readiness. There may be heated discussions and rising emotions of denial, resistance, and anger. Using structured activities, assignments, and games will often facilitate adult learning. The National Multicultural Institute in Washington, D.C., has found that the most effective training strategy to facilitate personal change contains the following components:

- **Head** (intellectual knowledge)
- **Heart** (emotional experience)
- **Hand** (action)

We recommend that any activity you design incorporate discussion questions that stimulate all three of these areas. Issues of oppression are a common thread that is interwoven throughout the curriculum, so trainers should be prepared to explore these issues thoughtfully with parents, but are not expected to have all the answers.

We encourage you to spend some time reflecting on your own personal experiences of oppression as part of preparing to facilitate conversations about oppression. Additionally, complete the activities in the Systems section of this curriculum, which directly address diversity and oppression. Develop a support system: talk with a trusted peer about your concerns, fears, and anxiety around facilitating conversations of oppression. Start a journal, read books on the subject of oppression and multicultural education, talk with parent leaders at your school, or speak with the PLAN staff.

If you are interested in receiving additional guidance and/or preparation tools, please contact PLAN. We are committed to helping you prepare for this much needed work!
Cross-Cutting Themes: Maximizing Participation

Every learner is different. We each have our own ways of processing information and participating in group settings, and our own reasons for coming to an adult learning environment. The PLAN to LEAD approach attends to participants’ different learning styles as much as possible. For example, someone with a strong educational background may be very articulate and have a lot to say. However, her ideas are just as important of a parent who may not have finished high school and who expresses his ideas in a less direct or polished manner. Other examples of learning differences that we often encounter include:

- Comfort levels speaking in front of groups
- Preferences for speaking in pairs or small groups
- Comfort levels with reading and writing
- Comfort with physical activities
- Learning through visual presentations, storytelling, practicing/presenting, and action-oriented activities.

The learning activities and the approach seek to find a balance between varieties of different learning styles. This means that not everyone is necessarily going to be happy with every approach, but that hopefully everyone will feel valued and have an opportunity to participate equally throughout the sessions of PLAN to LEAD.

The curriculum provides opportunities in every class for parents to interact in pairs and in large group settings, incorporates many activities that allow participants to practice or act out a new skill, and uses visual aids as much as possible. Participants are encouraged to develop and practice reading and writing in a safe, non-intimidating environment. High school-level reading and writing skills are recommended, though not essential.
Cross-Cutting Themes: Integrating Data

Information is power! Community organizers use statistics to inspire members to action. For example, perhaps parents are not aware that only 10% of the teachers at their children’s school are credentialed, while 90% are credentialed at schools in the upper-income areas across town. The realities of inequitable public education can be displayed in simple statistics that shock, outrage, and, hopefully, inspire action. PLAN to LEAD trainers borrow this organizing approach by bringing real-life examples of data, statistics, and information to the learning environment.

The mainstream media in the United States is increasingly controlled by a handful of mega-companies driven more by profit than by a desire for an informed citizenry. PLAN to LEAD trainers should investigate and develop relationships with alternative media and research organizations that can provide alternatives to the daily newspaper and news.

Trainers can get so overwhelmed by the complex concepts of social change that they can sometimes overlook the importance of integrating data into the training. We challenge you to include at least one piece of relevant factual information (a statistic, a policy, an article in the news) to every class session.
Role of Organizational Partner

The PLAN to LEAD training is not an end in itself. The success of the training should be measured through parent graduates’ ability to implement actions inspired by training activities and processes. Organizational partners are essential to support parent-led actions during and after the training. Therefore, the role of the organizational partner is key to the success of PLAN to LEAD. A successful partnership requires a significant commitment from at least one key staff person. We recommend organizations reflect on their capacity to fulfill this role prior to offering PLAN to LEAD.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- Outreach to parent population
- Securing space for the training and space for child care
- Contracting with and supervising child care providers
- Meeting with trainers prior to the course to co-adapt the curriculum
- Attending at least two classes
- Meeting with trainers to debrief outcomes of the training
- Supervising implementation of action plans on an ongoing basis after the training.

OUTREACH

Outreach is one of the most challenging and important elements of PLAN to LEAD. It is also a core component of the PLAN to LEAD curriculum. Partner organizations must be able to model good outreach practices. We recommend starting to contact parents 8-10 weeks prior to offering the course. Remember that outreach must be based on parents’ personal interests. Attempts to encourage parents to enroll in the course should be repetitive but respectful.

If parents seem reluctant, offer a “tester,” or introductory class. This is an open class with an ice-breaker and one short activity where they get to see the trainers in action and see who else is taking the training. Usually, one positive experience with the curriculum and the opportunity to make connections with other parents is enough to get them in. You can also then encourage the participants to invite other interested parents. We use the phrase, “Each one bring one!”

TRAINER TIP

Encourage potential parents to fill out an “interest form,” which includes their phone number. Call parents on the phone and talk to them one-on-one about their concerns for their children and their children’s school. Listen! Make connections when possible between their concerns and the curriculum. Let them know how much you’d like to see them at the first class. Call them again to remind them to attend the first class.
**SPACE**

The partner organization should be able to provide space. The training space should comfortably hold 15-20 people sitting in chairs in a circle with space to move around in the front of the room for role playing and other physical activities.

The space of the child care room depends on how many children sign up. The space should be childproof and include space for games and activities for children.

We recommend that the child care space be located close to the training space but not so close that voices can be heard between the two rooms.

**FOOD**

Dinner should be provided for the evening classes and breakfast and lunch for the retreats. A suggested budget amount includes: $8 per adult dinner meal and $6 per child dinner meal. For breakfast and lunch, we suggest $6.00 per adult and $4.00 per child. Make sure to share the purpose of the training with caterers, who may offer donations or discounts because they value the program.

**PLANNING CURRICULUM**

The framework of the learning activities is set. However, the examples that trainers choose to bring those learning activities to life are flexible. The more relevant your examples are to the work and life experience of the parents, the more the learning will solidify. Therefore, trainers and an organizational representative should meet twice prior to the course to identify organizational goals and to co-create relevant examples that can bring the material to life. Debriefing the class with trainers is also essential for representatives to ensure ongoing development of the curriculum and quality control. It is also important for organizational partners to reflect on the outcomes of the training and have some suggestions from trainers about strategies for sustaining momentum built in the class.

**INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION**

One of the most powerful things we can do is build parent organizations that truly reflect the diversity of our schools and communities. With the goal of maximizing participation, we ask that each group spend time considering the group’s needs for interpretation during the trainings, as well as translation of the written materials. We advise you to review equipment and resources needed BEFORE beginning the training process. Please remember that simultaneous interpretation is a specialized skill which requires practice; every effort should be made to find or hire experienced individuals to provide interpretation. The quality of the interpreter can make the difference between true connections and collective learning or further marginalization and division of parents from one another.
Cross-Cutting Themes

Addressing Oppression  Maximizing Participation  Integrating Data

Pillars: Core components of the curriculum

Understanding Systems  Tools and Skills  Action Planning

Desired Result

Educational Equity!

Adult Learning Values:

- Everyone has the capacity to be a leader
- Making change starts from understanding oppression, including your own biases
- Trainers honor and build on the existing knowledge and experience of participants
- Adult learning is action oriented and always applied to real life circumstances
- Adult learning is relational and must allow for community building and peer learning
Organization of the Curriculum

The PLAN to LEAD curriculum is divided into three “pillars,” or core components: Systems Change, Tools & Skills, and Action Planning. Activities under each pillar develop skills and knowledge for effective parent advocacy. Opening and closing activities help participants feel comfortable and integrate learning. In addition, three cross-cutting themes should inform all PLAN to LEAD workshops: Addressing Oppression, Maximizing Participation, and Integrating Data.

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<th>Tools/Skills</th>
<th>Action Planning</th>
<th>Closing</th>
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<td>• Conocimiento</td>
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<td>• Hand-Knee</td>
<td>Intro to Systems: Human Waterfall</td>
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<td>• Respect</td>
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<td>• Knowing the Community</td>
<td>Understanding Budgets*</td>
<td>Using the Media*</td>
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<td>Announcements</td>
<td>Diversity &amp; Oppression</td>
<td>* Guest speaker</td>
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<td>Listening Partnerships</td>
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<td>Setting Ground Rules</td>
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All the activities within the “Systems” pillar help participants understand the “Big Picture” of inequity for children and families, particularly low-income families of color. “Systems” introduces parents to the history of parent involvement in social movements and provides an overview of existing decision-making structures in schools and familiarity with policy-making processes. Additionally, participants are introduced to how injustice breaks down across race, class, gender, and other social divisions. Participants gain an understanding that the inequities they may face are created by people and therefore can be changed by people.

The “Tools and Skills” pillar helps participants develop practical skills relevant to participating effectively in an organization. Parent-led organizations increase their credibility and effectiveness when parents learn the following skills: planning a meeting among staff or volunteers; standing in front of a group and facilitating a meeting; making decisions in a group; and asking questions of people in authority.

In the “Action Planning” pillar, the class transitions from a training into a workspace. Action planning activities introduce a basic community organizing model that begins with a visioning process. The planning also includes reaching out, listening, and developing relationships with parents through “one-on-ones.” Action planning concludes with developing a framework for making a policy change through analyzing targets, finding allies, and selecting strategies for action. Class time during these sections should include less speaking from the trainers and more group work time for participants.
“Menu” of Options for Offering PLAN to LEAD

To aid you in the design of your training plan, we have highlighted some possible “menus” for offering PLAN to LEAD. We hope these menus will guide you in choosing PLAN to LEAD activities that are most appropriate your groups’ goals and level of experience.

LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE

PLAN to LEAD was designed to appeal to parents with a range of skills and experience, so most of the curriculum activities should be appealing to parents with beginning, intermediate and advanced skills. However, below, we have indicated which sessions might be particularly good for parents who are new at advocacy work, as well as those that work well with parents who have more experience as leaders and advocates.

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<th>Intermediate parent advocates</th>
<th>More advanced</th>
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<td>Intro to Systems (Human Waterfall exercise)</td>
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<td>History Wall</td>
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<td>Diversity and Oppression</td>
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</table>
**SUGGESTED SESSIONS FOR 3, 5 AND 10 CLASS PLAN TO LEAD TRAINING SERIES**

Each class session should be at least two hours in length to ensure there is enough time for opening and closing the session, as well as incorporating discussion. The designation of “beginner,” “intermediate,” and “advanced” are flexible—it depends largely on the interests of your parent group!

**SAMPLE THREE-CLASS SERIES FOR BEGINNERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Class #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Wall</td>
<td>Visioning</td>
<td>Asking the Right Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Defining Advocacy</td>
<td>Closing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SAMPLE THREE-CLASS SERIES FOR INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Class #3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Wall</td>
<td>Agenda Planning</td>
<td>Action Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Effective Facilitation</td>
<td>Closing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: For a four-class series—the above order would be even better if you inserted One-one-Ones before Action Planning. Also Agenda Planning and Effective Facilitation can happen separately, but it works really well to have them go together on the same day as displayed above.*

**SAMPLE THREE-CLASS SERIES FOR INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Class #3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Wall</td>
<td>Agenda Planning</td>
<td>Action Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Effective Facilitation</td>
<td>Closing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### SAMPLE FIVE-CLASS SERIES FOR DEVELOPING A CAMPAIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Class #3</th>
<th>Class #4</th>
<th>Class #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener Visioning</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Wall</td>
<td>One on Ones</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Asking the Right</td>
<td>Final Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Advocacy</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Intro to Action Planning</td>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Closing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Action Planning can be done several times over several classes for groups that are ready to actually implement an action plan. The template can be introduced early in the training by focusing on defining terms. Later, people can work on filling in their template and get feedback from the trainer and from peers. The “research questions” on the template are a great way to give parents “homework” and then report back with answers at a following class. You might then want to allocate 30 minutes at each class for working on action plans. It’s also a nice way to end the class series with a “final” action plan reflecting the research and feedback that can be presented at a graduation ceremony.

### SAMPLE 10-CLASS SERIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class #1</th>
<th>Class #2</th>
<th>Class #3</th>
<th>Class #4</th>
<th>Class #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener Visioning</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Wall</td>
<td>One on Ones</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Agenda Planning</td>
<td>Check-in on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Advocacy</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Intro to Action Planning</td>
<td>Group Facilitation</td>
<td>Action Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Asking the Right</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class #6</td>
<td>Class #7</td>
<td>Class #8</td>
<td>Class #9</td>
<td>Class #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener Visioning</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
<td>Opener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and</td>
<td>One on Ones</td>
<td>Budgets</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Complete Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppression</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Closing</td>
<td>Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Check-in around Action</td>
<td>Check-in around Action</td>
<td>Closing:</td>
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<td>Plans and One-on-Ones</td>
<td>Plans and One-on-Ones</td>
<td>Affirmations and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**TRAINER TIP**

As the training moves ahead, you will want to set aside more and more time to discuss the “real work” of parent advocacy using the skills and tools that parents are learning—so “lab” time (i.e. talking about one-on-ones and action plans) gets longer towards the end.

It’s also good to not overpack your agendas in your later classes in case discussions in the earlier classes take up more time than expected. It is helpful to have some flexibility to allow you to change things around as needed (such as add an activity you didn’t get to) in the later classes.

Class #1 and Class #6 could both be turned into retreats. Activities such as the History Wall, Visioning, One-on-Ones and Diversity and Oppression lend themselves nicely to retreat settings. Originally, PLAN to LEAD always started with a retreat in order to give parents a chance to develop trust and a sense of community with one another. The ice-breaker “Conocimiento” works as a nice introduction. The four activities listed above, though they can be done in 1–1.5 hours, can easily take more time, especially the art and storytelling components of these activities, so it’s nice to give them 2–2.5 hours each. Diversity and Oppression also may require up to 3 hours depending on how much people feel a need to debrief and being in a retreat location can help this process.
Openings

Listening Partnerships
Guide for Setting Ground Rules
Conocimiento
Respect Activity
Knowing the Community: Sharing Activity
Hand to Knee Icebreaker
Openings

We have found it helpful to start each class consistently using the following format:

- Welcome
- Agenda
- Listening Partnerships
- Announcements
- Parking Lot
- Ground Rules
- Ice Breakers

WELCOME

Start each class with an appreciation that the parents showed up for themselves, their children, their community. Appreciate those parents who were there on time. Beginning class on time will encourage participants to be there on time. However, if less than half the class is present, wait 5 more minutes

TRAINER TIP

While the class is officially beginning, it is also a transition time. Some classes eat dinner with the children, so be sure to start 5–8 minutes before class actually starts to give parents time to settle and focus

AGENDA

Have your agenda prepared ahead of time. Trainers should have an agenda which clearly identifies which trainer will lead each activity or discussion and the times for each. Some trainers like to hand out a written agenda with times to participants. Review the agenda with the class before class begins, with a brief description of the content.
Listening Partnerships

It is important to provide an opportunity for parents to unload the stress that comes with being a parent, especially a parent advocate. Based on an approach from the Parents Leadership Institute, parents get into pairs and each has an opportunity to talk for five minutes while the other listens, and then switch roles. The following guidelines are used for the listening partnerships:

- You can talk about anything you want
- Adopt an attitude of respect for each other
- Assume your listening will make a difference
- Give your full attention
- Don’t interrupt, don’t offer advice
- Respect your partner’s ability to experiment and problem solve.

It may feel strange to some parents to listen and not say anything for five minutes, but in most cases, parents get accustomed to it. For some participants, this activity becomes the favorite part of the class. Others have been so resistant to talking about their emotions that we have had to skip this activity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Set aside a few minutes at the beginning of every class for parents to have an opportunity to network and share upcoming events that may impact their work. We also encourage parents to share any good news about their children.

PARKING LOT

This is a sheet of chart paper that holds questions generated by the group that trainers didn’t know the answer to or were not related to the topic being discussed. The parking lot should be posted and questions should be answered weekly. Trainers can alternate who will “empty” the lot.
Guide for Setting Ground Rules

Have you ever been in a training where some participants talk over each other, answer their cell phones, or treat other participants with disrespect? Whether preparing for a one-hour workshop or a yearlong class, developing group guidelines for participation is a vital first step. These guidelines, often referred to as “ground rules,” should provide participants within a workshop or class a way to ensure open, respectful dialogue and maximize participation.

GENERATING A LIST OF GROUND RULES

If you will be meeting on an ongoing basis, allow sufficient time for participants to generate the entire list. Ask them to think about what they, as individuals, need to ensure a safe environment. If the participants are having difficulty coming up with ground rules, or if they do not come up with a particular ground rule you feel is important to the success of your facilitation, try to prompt them toward it. If they still do not mention it, you can add it to the list.

For workshops with time constraints, you may use one of the following options:

Option 1: List the ground rules for the group. Be sure to inquire whether the ground rules are agreeable, and mention that if you had more time together, you would have preferred the group to generate the list.

Option 2: List those rules you commonly use, and ask for additional ground rules from the participants. When somebody proposes a ground rule, ask the other participants if they agree to it. If most do, add it to the list.

TRAINER TIPS

1. Post the ground rules during each meeting.

2. Adapt ground rules for each context. Appropriate ground rules may depend partially on age, region, social class, and other factors, such as the topic to be discussed.

3. Decide how participation will be managed. Will participants raise their hands and be called on, or speak freely? Some people need more time to process thoughts and decide to speak. Others may shut down in a more formal process. Find the right balance for your group.

4. Challenge participants on the ground rules early and often. If the group is not challenged to stick to ground rules early in the process, it may become impossible to enforce them later.

5. Try focusing on particular ground rules during appropriate activities or discussions. For example, if you are facilitating a discussion in a large group, state before the discussion starts that you would like to focus on active listening. Challenge participants to refrain from any side discussions.

6. MODEL ground rules in your own participation.

7. If a particular ground rule is routinely broken, bounce it back to the participants. Often, a group discussion of why the participants are not adhering to particular ground rules may yield new insights.

8. Revisit the ground rules occasionally, and if time allows, ask whether the participants would like to add any new items.

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Ground Rules

1. TIMELINESS
We agree to be here on time to begin class and after meals and breaks. We also agree to end the workshop on time.

2. COMMITMENT
Make a commitment to attend the whole training. If it’s not possible to commit, please inform the trainers. We are also requesting that you make a commitment to fully participate in training activities.

3. RISK TAKING
We know that some of our best learning comes from mistakes, so we will all be supported to take risks and make mistakes.

4. RIGHT TO PASS
You have the right to pass on any activity, especially those that involve personal disclosures.

5. MAINTAIN STRUCTURE
We acknowledge that it is the trainer’s task to maintain structure and keep the group on track. We are requesting you all share in the responsibility for staying on track.

6. RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT
We agree to respectful engagement while interacting with all participants throughout the training. We want to honor the knowledge and experiences in the room. Only one person at a time should be speaking.

7. AGREE TO DISAGREE
We acknowledge individual differences among members of this group. The training is designed to facilitate learning experiences.

8. STEP UP/STEP BACK
If you are a person who comfortable speaking out in group, we appreciate your contribution. If you have been actively participating, be sensitive to the group and hold back and allow others to speak. If you are not as comfortable with speaking in front of a group, we want to encourage you take the risk, knowing that your contribution is important.

9. TECHNOLOGY
We agree to put all paging devices (beepers, pagers, cell phones, etc.) on vibrate and refrain from using phones or other electronics during training presentations.
Conocimiento

PURPOSE

- Icebreaker: get to know strengths
- To provide ongoing opportunities for participants to connect
- To create a sense of community
- To provide participants with an activity while waiting for class to begin, and learn about other participants

MATERIALS

- 4-6 sheets of chart paper (chart paper with lines and adhesive backs is easiest to use)
- tape
- 10–12 markers, different colors

SETUP AND PREPARATION

- There are two parts to this activity: please read completely before beginning.
- Trainers will participate in this activity.
- This activity requires at least 6 feet of wall space to hang the chart paper, which will permit participants to write their answers directly on the chart paper. (Be careful to use markers that will not bleed through the paper and damage the wall.)
- Before the training, trainers should agree on 2-3 questions (see Handout on page 17) and write one question on the top of each sheet of chart paper. Number each sheet on the left side so that each participant has his or her own line. If you have a larger group you may have to add extra paper to the bottom of each sheet. Hang the chart paper on the walls prior to participants’ arrival.
- Participants will receive instructions from the registration table.

TOTAL TIME

30 MIN

HISTORY

Conocimiento means the beginning of getting to know you and understand you. The saying gained popularity during a time when Chicanos were attempting to build closer relationships with the white community. They quickly realized that they had different approaches on how to build relationships and community.

Draw a circle with “to know you,” “to trust you” is “to empower us,” around the outline of the circle. In Spanish “conocer” means all three of these things. This activity emphasizes all three as well.

INSTRUCTIONS

PART I

As participants come into the workshop, gently guide them to the wall where the chart paper is hanging, requesting they begin answering the questions.

Participants do not have to start in numeric order—they can choose their favorite number! What’s most important is that they respond to each question.
PART II

Note: You can bring Part I of this activity to a close once you want to get the class started, and continue with Part II later in the session.

Each participant should have approximately one minute to verbally share their contributions with the group. Some participants will be late, and they will not have had the opportunity to participate in Part I. Once the activity has started, ask the late participants to answer the questions verbally, and during the break write their answers on the chart paper.

Notice anything outstanding about the group. For example, you may have noticed that among this group, seven languages are spoken, and list those languages.

One trainer should begin the process, by answering the identified questions first, to model the activity for the participants.

Thank the group for their participation and how express how excited you are to learn more about them. Encourage them to continue to look at the chart paper hanging on the wall, to see what they have in common with people and see their differences.

Use the information on the chart paper to make a statement about the group. Example: we have 80 years of experience in parent advocacy in this room. Make a statement appreciating the diversity in the room.

TRAINER TIP

Questions were chosen to be inclusive and sensitive about gathering relevant and accessible information about the group.
List of Possible Questions

1. Name?
2. Names and ages of your children, grandchildren?
3. City, state, country where you were born?
4. Something we wouldn’t know by looking at you?
5. How many people live in your house?
6. What kind of pet do you have? Name?
7. Your favorite hobby?
8. Favorite color?
9. Favorite animal?
10. Favorite movie?
11. Languages that you speak?
12. Your ethnicity, nationality?
13. How long have you been a parent advocate?
14. What issues or policies have you worked on?
15. One quality you have that makes you a good parent leader?
16. How many siblings do you have?
17. Your favorite time of year?
18. Favorite food?
19. Favorite flavor of ice cream, yogurt or soy cream?
20. What month were you born?
21. What day of the month were you born?
Respect Activity

PURPOSE
- Icebreaker to begin building a community of respect
- Lay a foundation for discussions or activities around diversity, multiculturalism, and oppression.

MATERIALS
- Flip chart paper
- Markers

SETUP AND PREPARATION
- Post opening reflection questions on flip chart paper

TOTAL TIME
- 30 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS
Ask everyone to pair up with someone in the room who they do not know. Instruct them to introduce themselves to that person, and spend five to ten minutes talking about respect by responding to the following question:

What does it mean for you to show respect, and what does it mean for you to be shown respect?

After the allotted time, ask the participants to return to their seats, and open the discussion. What ideas did people come up with? Chart responses.

CLOSING COMMENTS
- Remind the group of the purpose of this opening activity
- Mention that respect is a crucial ingredient in any discussion, but especially in a discussion of often-controversial issues regarding issues of inequity and oppression.
- The point is NOT to agree. Rather, it is to learn from our differences—to understand each other’s understanding.

TRAINER TIPS
Common responses include treating others as you would like to be treated, looking somebody in the eyes, being honest, and appreciating somebody’s ideas even when you do not agree with them.

Building a strong sense of safety within the group through community-building exercises such as these can make or break an attempt to effectively facilitate discussions about sensitive topics such as oppression.
Knowing the Community: Sharing Activity

PURPOSE

• Continue to build a sense of community through showing difference within groups and similarities among members of different groups.

• Learn the names of each person in the class, group, or community, as well as something about each person’s background.

MATERIALS

• Flip chart paper
• Markers
• Scratch paper and pens
• Questions handout (optional)

SETUP AND PREPARATION

• Arrange chairs in a circle.

• Develop a list of questions for the group on a handout or flip chart paper. (Sample questions below)

TOTAL TIME 30-40 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS

Provide a list of questions for each participant to answer for the group. Possible questions could include: name/nicknames, ethnic background, where they are from, where their parents were born, which generation they represent in America for their family, and one custom or tradition their family practices. Give participants 5 minutes to write down some ideas for how they would answer the questions on scratch paper.

Instruct the participants to identify one or two people in the group whom they do not know, and think about what answers they expect from those people. Note: This part is not to be shared among group members, but can help people realize how they formulate ideas about people based on appearance.

Ask participants to share their responses to the questions. Facilitator should begin this exercise in order to model the kind of information that should be shared. For groups up to 10 people, allow 2 min. per participant; for larger groups, invite a limited number of volunteers to share out.

DEBRIEF

Ask the group: What did you learn from the exercise? Did some of the response you heard surprise you? Did you find yourself stereotyping others in the group? Why is this an important activity to begin with?

Consider pointing out themes that emerge in the conversation. Some themes that may emerge:

• Even members of the same “groups” have very different backgrounds.

• Often members of different “groups” have more similar backgrounds than they realize.

• Cultural diversity transcends black/white.

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TRAINER TIPS

This activity is ideal for the workshop or session held right after the respect exercise described on the previous page.

This activity can be emotional for some participants, especially those who don’t know about their heritage and/or have been adopted. If someone seems to be getting emotional, remind the group that they only have to share what they feel comfortable sharing.
Hand to Knee Icebreaker

PURPOSE
• Icebreaker
• An opportunity to have people get up and move around
• Participants will notice comfort level with physical closeness

MATERIALS
• None

SETUP AND PREPARATION
• Trainer participation in this activity is optional.
• You will need ample room for participants to move around.

TOTAL TIME

INSTRUCTIONS
This activity is helpful for shifting the energy of the group through body movement and laughter.

The trainer will model for the activity. You must have an odd number of participants for this activity.

Ask the group to stand up and go to an area where people can move around. Once the group is standing ask for a volunteer. The trainer will make the first call. The person left without a partner is the person who makes the next call.

For example, the first call should be something non-threatening for participants, “Everyone touch hand to hand.” All participants will be scrambling to find a partner, and the person left without a partner will make the next call. All participants are then required to find a new partner.

Repeat this activity 10 to 12 times, naming different parts of the body to touch.

Reconvene the group and ask them to go back to their seats.

SHORT DEBRIEF
Trainers should be observing the group during the activity, so they can reflect back some of the interesting observations.

TRAINER TIP
*If you have one or more persons in your class with limited physical abilities this may not be an appropriate icebreaker.*
Learning Activities

Systems Change

Defining Parent Advocacy
History Wall
The Human Waterfall
Using the Educational Code
Understanding Budgets—Guest Speaker
Diversity and Oppression Activity I: Exploring Language
Diversity and Oppression Activity II: Circles of My Multicultural Self
Defining Parent Advocacy

**PURPOSE**
- Introduce a guiding definition of parent advocacy, so that the class knows what the trainers mean when they use this word.
- Understand how parent advocacy is part of a continuum of good parenting skills.

**MATERIALS**
- Two handouts: “Grassroots Parent Advocacy Defined,” and “Defining the Terms: Support, Monitor and Advocate.”

**SETUP AND PREPARATION**
- Flip charts to record responses to “Defining the Terms: Support, Monitor, and Advocate”

**TOTAL TIME**
- 60 MIN

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Start by passing out Handout #1, “Grassroots Advocacy Defined.” Share the purpose of this activity. Acknowledge that people use the word “advocacy” to mean different things and we want to make sure we all know what we mean as a group when we use the word, “advocacy.”

Read the definition out loud.

Go through each of the descriptions of the definition, one by one. Use your own words, but stay true to the concepts in the definition.

Afterwards, ask the group if they have any questions about the definition.

Ask the group if they agree with the definition, if there is anything new in the definition that they had not thought about before, or if there is anything missing from the definition, based on their own experience as advocates.

Refer to Handout #2: “Defining the Terms: Support, Monitor and Advocate.”

Inform the group that this activity comes from a Boston-based nonprofit organization, The Right Question Project (RQP). The goal of the RQP is to help parents feel empowered when dealing with public institutions through building communication and problem solving skills. RQP has made their curriculum public information, so thank RQP out loud for their generosity in supporting parents.

Acknowledge the purpose of this activity: “To understand how parent advocacy is part of a continuum of good parenting skills.”

Recognize that parents already practice many different types of leadership and advocacy. This activity will help everyone see their own base of experience in order to grow from there.
Start with the word “Support” and read the definition out loud. Ask participants for examples of how they support their children. Write responses on the Flip Chart.

Move on to the word “Monitor” and read the definition out loud. Ask participants for examples of how they monitor their children. Write responses on the Flip Chart.

Move on to the word “Advocate” and read the definition out loud. Ask participants for examples of how they advocate for their children. Write responses on the Flip Chart.

**DEBRIEF**

Acknowledge the breadth of experience and good ideas in the room regarding parent leadership and advocacy!

Ask participants if, after seeing all the responses on chart paper, they think any of the examples should be moved from one area to another. For example, should an example of “support” be moved under “monitor.” Ask the parent to explain why he or she believes it should be changed. Ask the large group for agreement and then move the word if appropriate. Sometimes participants may need the trainer to step in to clarify the differences.

**TRAINER TIP**

_Usually there are several examples that fit better under different categories. This discussion helps reinforce the differences between the terms support, monitor, and advocate._

Ask participants if they see the differences more clearly now between the terms support, monitor and advocate. Share with the group that one is not more important than the other. Rather, they are all part of being a good parent leader.

Let the group know that although the course will touch on all three aspects of parent leadership, we will focus on building skills in the “advocacy” area.
Grassroots Advocacy Defined

“Process by which everyday people collect and analyze information, form opinions, and recommend, insist, or demand that those with a legal, moral or ethical responsibility to serve the public do so in full accordance with our civil rights.”

Everyday people—may not have formal education in politics, education, the courts, or other public systems.

Collect and analyze information—inform themselves of their rights and the laws, policies, and procedures that guide how a public service is supposed to be given. This can sometimes include how public money is supposed to be spent or the job responsibilities of a city/county employee.

Form opinions—advocacy involves raising awareness. After reviewing information, there is often an “ah ha!” moment, when a parent/resident/youth realizes public services are not in fact always fulfilling their legal or ethical mandates.

Recommend, insist, or demand—advocacy involves doing something about your opinions. This can take many forms. It can be simply a one on one discussion or it can be more public in a demonstration covered by the media. Advocacy should involve not only stating what is wrong but suggestions for how to make it right.

Those with a legal, moral or ethical responsibility—advocacy involves a target. A target is a person who has power, either because of his/her staff position or because s/he has been elected by the people.

In full accordance with our civil rights—Many public servants are good people and work very hard. However, the system they work for—i.e. public schools—does not guarantee that our civil rights are being honored. In order to change these systems, the public has to remind public servants that we know our rights and know that they must be honored.
Defining the Terms: Support, Monitor, and Advocate

**SUPPORT**

The dictionary defines support as “to hold up or in position, to provide for or maintain by supplying necessities.”

What are some ways you support your child?

**MONITOR**

The dictionary defines monitor as “to watch over, to keep track of.”

What are some ways you monitor your child?

**ADVOCATE**

The dictionary defines advocate as “to speak or be in favor or, to recommend or to urge.”

What are some ways you advocate for your child?
History Wall

PURPOSE
- Honor the historical struggles and accomplishments of people who have fought to improve children’s lives and opportunities.
- Share personal histories of parents, grandparents, or other allies in participants’ lives who have fought to improve children’s lives and opportunities.
- Acknowledge that parents have been integral to social movements throughout US history (e.g., immigrant rights, civil rights, women’s rights, children’s rights, etc.). These movements have helped to shape the role of parent leadership in education.

MATERIALS
- Large roll of butcher paper (about 10 feet long)
- Colored paper, pens, scissors, crayons, string, streamers or colored masking table (to create a line on the wall)
- Adhesive spray, tape, glue
- History Wall dates and pictures (mounted on color paper)
- Post-it notes or index cards
- Flip chart paper and easel

SETUP AND PREPARATION
- Set-up for this activity will require significant time before the workshop begins.
- Draw a line across the 10-foot piece of butcher paper. You may also consider creating a line on the wall using streamer paper or string (tape to the wall).
- Using the examples given here as a starting point, compile factual information from newspaper or magazine articles, internet research, etc. regarding education policy and parent-driven social movements from the 1800s to the present.
- On separate pieces of paper identify the date, the accomplishment or event, and add any graphic material, such as photographs, illustrations, or copies of historical documents. Try to include one major historical event per decade.
- Set up the timeline display. Leave extra space between the facts for participants to include personal dates, and prepare your own personal example.
- Provide ample space for participants to move around, as well as tables for creating their own personal contributions to the timeline.

TOTAL TIME 90 MIN
FACILITATION OPTIONS

OPTION A

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Opening Remarks

Explain the purpose of the Living History Wall Activity. Briefly discuss the definitions of “parent leadership” and “social movements.” Explain that a movement includes activities undertaken by a group of people to achieve change. Often these social movements are a response to inequity or oppression.

Highlight that workshop participants will also have an opportunity to learn about each other as they share their personal histories of parents, grandparents, or other allies working to improve the lives and opportunity of families, and communities.

2. Gallery Walk and Personal Contributions

After introducing the purpose for the activity, invite participants to walk around (in groups of 4-8) and review the key events on the Living History Wall.

Encourage participants to reflect on the following questions as they review the timeline. (You may want to post these questions on flip chart paper for participants to refer back to.)

Ask participants to reflect on what may have been occurring in their personal lives, in their neighborhoods or schools, or the lives of their parents or grandparents, during the time period on the wall. Ask participants to think of 1-2 key events from their or their families’ experience related to advocating for children. Participants may either write down the event or use the paper, pens, and crayons to draw an image of this event.

Encourage participants to post additional facts they know of from their personal cultural community histories that may not be represented.

Invite each person to place 1–2 events on the time line. Spray the time line with sticky spray (if using butcher paper), or provide tape, glue, or large Post-It notes.

Invite participants back to the larger group.

TRAINER TIP
We strongly encourage you to be culturally inclusive, adding dates to our sample timeline that reflect the communities you serve. For additional dates and a sample timeline layout, visit: http://www.parentactionnet.org/info/history_wall_english.indd.pdf
3. Pair-share and Group Debrief

Ask participants to pair-up with someone sitting next to them and briefly explain their personal contribution(s). (Allow 15 of the total 30 min. for this section.)

Ask for two or three volunteers to share aloud with the entire group. Move into a larger group debrief.

TRAINER TIP

Provide a personal example: For example, “My grandfather purchased a bus in the 1950s, when no bus drivers would take Black children to school. He picked up all the Black children in the area and took them to school on this bus.”

Proposed Debrief Questions

- What did you notice or learn?
- What surprised you?
- Where did you locate yourself?
- Were there any historical events missing?
- How did oppression play a part of the timeline?

Please note: You may use all of these questions or select two or three, depending on time availability.

4. Closing Comments

Summarize by restating the importance of knowing our history and locating ourselves in it as well as understanding how parent organizing has been the catalyst for change. Explain that throughout the training we will be building our skills to contribute to this wall of history and keep the movement alive.

TRAINER TIP

Participants may want add facts related to the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, or other events related to social justice in general. Encourage people to identify the relationship between social change movements generally and parent-led school reform movements.
OPTION B: Exploring Themes

Additional pre-workshop preparation: Organize the timeline by themes by grouping facts relating to similar themes on color paper, using colored fonts, or placing colored dots on each fact to identify various categories. You may also group themes in different stations around the room.

Themes could include:
- Parent Organizing
- Language Rights
- Equity (Racial, Disability, etc.)
- Testing
- Funding

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Opening Remarks

After introducing the purpose of the activity, divide participants into small groups and assign each group one of the thematic categories.

Inform small groups that after reviewing their timeline theme, they will be invited to present what they learned about their area of focus to the larger group. Encourage participants to take notes, as well as identify a recorder and reporter.

For additional information and/or guidance regarding “opening remarks” refer to Option A.

2. Gallery Walk and Personal Contributions

Have participants roam the room to view different stations or themes.

Refer to Option A for additional instructions regarding adding personal stories or contributions to the timeline.

3. Small Group Discussions and Whole Group Sharing

With participants still in small groups, invite them to reflect on the history wall, using the proposed debrief questions in Option A. 20 min.

Invite everyone back to the large group. Select three or four examples or ask for volunteers to share stories regarding their specific theme. 15 min.

4. Closing Comments

You may also consider debriefing with the whole group after small groups share their reflections and learning to the gallery walk process. In this case, move into a whole group debrief, building on the questions provided in option A above. Ask for general reflections, surprises, connections across themes, and/or personal contributions. Conclude with trainer’s closing thoughts/comments, if desired.

Thank participants for sharing. Conclude the session as outlined in Option A.

Option B adapted with permission by Tenderloin Housing Clinic, 2006
Expansion of public schools throughout the US does not include Blacks of any social class.

Chinese Children are excluded from San Francisco schools.

San Francisco builds new “oriental school” in response to court case challenging the ban on Chinese children in the school system.

Plessy v. Ferguson decision. US supreme court requires separate but equal railroad cars for Blacks and Whites – leads to school segregation.

National Association of Colored Women established. NACW financed, organized and maintained kindergartens for African American children, organized girls’ clubs and provided scholarships and interest-free loans to young African Americans.

40% of all children in the US received bilingual public education in English and German – more than receive bilingual education in Spanish today.

Higlander Folk School established, teaches union organizing, workers’ rights, race relations, socialism, economics and sociology to workers and community leaders. Later became a training ground for the civil rights movement.

Supreme Court unanimously agrees that segregated schools are inherently unequal and most be abolished.
1968
African American parents and white teachers clash in the Ocean Hill area of New York City over the issue of community control of the schools. Teachers go on strike and the community organizes freedom schools while public schools are closed.

1974
Lau vs. Nichols decision. San Francisco Unified School District is ordered to provide special native language instruction to 1800 Chinese immigrant students. The Supreme Court says there is no equality of treatment by providing the same (as for native speakers) facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum to students who do not understand English.

1968
At San Francisco State University, students make demands for ethnic studies departments and increased student of color admissions. The strike lasts 4 ½ months.

1970
With a strong push from parents, Special Education (Public Law 94-142) became federal law. The law acknowledged need for parental involvement. National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and National Congress of Mothers (by then PTA) merge.

Late 1970s
The so-called “Tax Payers Revolt” leads to the passage of Prop 13 in California, which funnels property taxes into schools and lessens federal and state contributions. As a result, CA drops from the first in the nation in per-student spending in 1978 to 43rd in 1998.

1982
Plyer v. Doe The Supreme court ruled that any child living in the United States, regardless of legal status, is entitled to a free public school education. California voters attempt to overturn this ruling by passing Prop. 187 in 1994, which is later ruled unconstitutional.

1996
California passes Proposition 209, which outlaws affirmative action in public employment, public contracting and public education.

1999
“Zero Tolerance” policies adopted by public schools in the wake of in school violence are proven racially discriminatory. Black students are expelled or suspended as much as 3 to 5 times the rate of their white peers.

1999
President George W. Bush signed into law No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which requires that all students be “proficient” in math and English by 2014 and penalizes schools that fail to make “adequate yearly progress.”
The Human Waterfall

INSTRUCTIONS

Take the group through a guided visualization. Ask the group to close their eyes, listen to their breathing, and place their bodies in a comfortable but alert position.

Tell the group to imagine they are walking alone through a natural park and they come upon a beautiful waterfall.

Gaze at this waterfall.

PAUSE

Notice its beauty.

PAUSE

What does the waterfall sound like?

PAUSE

What color is the water?

PAUSE

Is the waterfall spraying you at all?

PAUSE

What else surrounds the waterfall?

PAUSE

Look at where the water is coming from?

PAUSE

Look at where the water is going?

PAUSE

Take a deep breath and smell the waterfall.

PAUSE

When you are ready, open your eyes.

PAUSE

PURPOSE

- Experience physically, through movement and teamwork, the concept of a “system.”
- Identify public systems as inclusive, adaptable and evolving—made by humans and possible to be changed by humans.

MATERIALS

- None

SETUP AND PREPARATION

- Create an open space in the classroom, where many people will be able to stand and physically relate to one another

TOTAL TIME

- 60 MIN

- 15 MIN
Ask the group to try to remember their image of the waterfall.

Now, each person, one person at a time, will come up to the open space in the middle of the room and take on one physical movement that represents some part of their waterfall. The movement should be something comfortable that people can hold or repeat for about five minutes.

**TRAINER TIP**

*Show the group some examples. For example, a rock could be, squatting down holding your knees. The water could be many things, such as a wave movement with your hand.*

The first person will make their movement. The next person should build on this person’s movement so that it creates a little fuller waterfall. Ask the participants to use the image in their head from the visualization for ideas.

The third person builds on the waterfall a little bit further. Each person in the class adds on, one by one, until everyone in the class has created some physical movement that contributes to a Human Waterfall.

**TRAINER TIP**

*Some people in the class will feel more comfortable with this activity than others. Usually watching the first few demonstrate physical movements, will help the others feel more comfortable. If someone really can’t think of what to do, feel free to whisper some ideas or show some examples.*

Let the Human Waterfall pulsate for a few moments.

Applaud and ask the group to return to their seats.

Then go around the room and have each person share what their movement represented.

Ask the participants the following debrief questions to elicit how the Human Waterfall is similar to public systems.

1. How did it feel to enter into the waterfall at first?
2. As more people entered the waterfall, what happened?
3. Are any of these feelings similar to how you feel when you enter a public meeting related to schools? How?
4. What do you think the waterfall can tell us about how important our contributions are to systems?

5. What do you think is the difference between a “healthy” system, like the waterfall and a “sick” or “dysfunctional” system?

Summarize by stating that public systems sometimes seem like they are moving out of control and no one can stop or change them. However, public systems are created by people with ideas and images of the way things should be. By including more ideas and recognizing our own ability to contribute to the system, the system can and will change.

**TRAINER TIP**

Think of a real-life example of a sick system that has been changed by contributions from the public. For example, in the past, parents with children with learning disabilities did not receive any special services at public schools. Through parent advocacy efforts, there now are laws that mandate individualized learning environments, tutors, and other services to aid successful integration of children with disabilities into public school settings.
Using the Educational Code

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Introduce the purpose of the activity: “We know that parents working together are able to demand and win great changes and benefits for children in our schools. While collective action is the most powerful tool, we can’t forget the importance of knowledge—knowing our rights and roles according to the law. The California Educational Code and our district’s structure, rules, regulations and procedures can be very complicated—no one could memorize all of them—but we can learn how to find the information we need to know, and we can practice using that knowledge.”

Ask the group: “Can someone think of a reason or an occasion when knowing the law or the regulation could be important? How can this help us? Has anyone had any experience when knowing or not knowing an aspect of the law has affected our ability to defend our rights?”

Explain that we will be using an example of the California Educational Code and practicing reading and interpreting it. Hand out the Parent Rights Scenario & Questions with corresponding Sample Educational Code copied on the back side.

Explain that each group will have a situation that requires researching the law, and using the information we find, each group will have to answer a set of questions about the education code and how they would deal with the situation.

Form the group into 2-4 smaller groups as needed, so there are no more than five people in each group. Assign each group one of the two scenarios, hand out copies of the scenario to every person in the group.

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**PURPOSE**

- Reveal the power and challenges of using the law to help parents advocate for their rights
- Introduce the language of education code
- Brainstorm alternative methods of finding out what parents need to know
- Provide research resources.

**MATERIALS**

- Copies of Parent Rights Scenario & Questions each with corresponding Sample Educational Code copied on the back side
- Handout of list of online Educational Code Resources
- Any other resources for parents in your district.

**SETUP AND PREPARATION**

- Run off enough copies of the handouts for the whole class

**TOTAL TIME**

60-75 MIN

10 MIN

20 MIN

10 MIN
Instruct each group to read their scenario and questions out loud, go through the sample piece of California Educational Code and follow the instructions on the sheet. Give the groups 20 minutes to complete the task.

**TRAINER TIP**
*It is important that you take time to familiarize yourself with the Sample Educational Code Handout so you can assist parents, if needed, in finding the appropriate information for their scenario.*

Bring the groups back together, ask for volunteer(s) from each group to present their scenario, the information they learned from the Educational Code, and what they recommend for to solve the problem.

**DEBRIEF**
After each group presents, congratulate them on their work. After all the groups are done reporting back, ask the following debrief questions:

- What, if anything, was challenging about finding the information?
- Was the Educational Code easy to use? Why or why not?
- Is it useful to practice doing this kind of research?
- Would you feel more prepared for a meeting about the problem if you read the Educational Code first?

Hand out the list of Educational Code Resources. Remind parents that by working together, asking for help and sharing knowledge, we can get the information we need.

*This module was inspired by Chinese for Affirmative Action and Visitacion Valley Parents Association.*
Parent Rights Scenario & Questions #1

1. Please read the scenario and the questions below out loud for your group:

A group of Vietnamese speaking parents at Springfield Elementary want to get involved at the school and understand how to best support their children’s success in school. Whenever they go to the office to ask questions, it is hard to find someone available to interpret for them—only one teacher’s assistant in the school speaks Vietnamese. In addition, none of the school letters and notices is translated into Vietnamese.

2. Go through the attached piece of California Educational Code on the back of this sheet to look for the answers. Work together to make sure everyone understands the Code as best as possible.

3. Answer the questions as a group. Make sure someone is taking notes for the group.

Questions:

• What is the problem in this scenario?

• According to the California Educational Code, what is the rule about the translation of notices?

• What can parents do to enforce this law? (Write down three ideas)
  1. 
  2. 
  3. 

• How can understanding the educational code help the parents?

• In this case, is knowledge of the educational code enough to solve the problem?

• If parents do not have access to California Educational Code (because it is not translated into Vietnamese) how can they find out what their rights are?

• What other action steps would you recommend in order for the parents to resolve these problems?

4. Prepare to share what you learned from the code and the ideas your group came up with to resolve the problem in the scenario.
SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL CODE #1
CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL CODE PART 27. PUPILS
CHAPTER 6. PUPIL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 4. Notification of Parent or Guardian ... 48980-48985

48985. (a) If 15 percent or more of the pupils enrolled in a public school that provides instruction in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, speak a single primary language other than English, as determined from the census data submitted to the department pursuant to Section 52164 in the preceding year, all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parent or guardian of any such pupil by the school or school district shall, in addition to being written in English, be written in the primary language, and may be responded to either in English or the primary language.

(b) Pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 64001, the department shall monitor adherence to the requirements of subdivision (a) as part of its regular monitoring and review of public schools and school districts, commonly known as the Categorical Program Monitoring process, and shall determine the types of documents and languages a school district translates to a primary language other than English, the availability of these documents to parents or guardians who speak a primary language other than English, and the gaps in translations of these documents.

(c) Based on census data submitted to the department pursuant to Section 52164 in the preceding fiscal year, the department shall notify a school district, by August 1 of each year, of the schools within the school district, and the primary language other than English, for which the translation of documents is required pursuant to subdivision (a). The department shall make that notification using electronic methods.

(d) The department shall use existing resources to comply with subdivisions (b) and (c).
Parent Rights Scenario & Questions #2

1. Please read the scenario and the questions below out loud for your group:

You are at a parent workshop at your child’s high school, and the principal mentions that there is a School Site Council (SSC) meeting next Tuesday. One person asks who serves on the School Site Council. The principal says that the SSC is made up of her, a teacher, and one of the school office support staff. You have never heard of the SSC before, so after the meeting you go to the office to ask about it and they give you a big book of California Educational Code and point you to the attached page.

2. Go through the attached piece of California Educational Code that is attached to look for the answers. Work together to make sure everyone understands the Code as best as possible.

3. Answer the questions as a group. Make sure someone is taking notes for the group.

Questions:

• According to California Education Code, who must be on this School Site Council?

• According to the educational code, what are the responsibilities of the School Site Council?

• How could it make a difference to have parents on the Council?

• What can you do to resolve the issue? (Write down three ideas)
  1.
  2.
  3.

• How can understanding the educational code help resolve this problem?

• In this case, is knowledge of the educational code enough to solve the problem?

• Any other ideas of what you and other parents can do in this situation?

4. Prepare to share what you learned from the code and the ideas your group came up with to resolve the problem in the scenario.
SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL CODE #2

PART 28. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
CHAPTER 12. SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM COORDINATION ACT
Article 3. School Plans ......................... 52850-52863

52852. A school site council shall be established at each school which participates in school-based program coordination. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: teachers selected by teachers at the school; other school personnel selected by other school personnel at the school; parents of pupils attending the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.

At the elementary level the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel; and (b) parents or other community members selected by parents.

At the secondary level the council shall be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel; and (b) equal numbers of parents, or other community members selected by parents, and pupils.

At both the elementary and secondary levels, classroom teachers shall comprise the majority of persons represented under category (a).

An employee of a school who is also a parent or guardian of a pupil who attends a school other than the school of the parent's or guardian's employment, is not disqualified by virtue of this employment from serving as a parent representative on the school site council established for the school that his or her child or ward attends.

52853. (a) The school site council shall develop a school plan which shall include all of the following:

(1) Curricula, instructional strategies and materials responsive to the individual needs and learning styles of each pupil.

(2) Instructional and auxiliary services to meet the special needs of non-English-speaking or limited-English-speaking pupils, including instruction in a language these pupils understand; educationally disadvantaged pupils; gifted and talented pupils; and pupils with exceptional needs.

(3) A staff development program for teachers, other school personnel, paraprofessionals, and volunteers, including those participating in special programs.

(4) Ongoing evaluation of the educational program of the school.

(5) Other activities and objectives as established by the council.

(6) The proposed expenditures of funds available to the school through the programs described in Section 52851.

(b) The school site council shall annually review the school plan, establish a new budget, and if necessary, make other modifications in the plan to reflect changing needs and priorities.

52855. The school district governing board shall review and approve or disapprove school plans. A school plan shall not be approved unless it was developed and recommended by the school site council.
Online Resources for California Parents

California Department of Education
www.cde.ca.gov
Information about Accountability Progress Reporting and Standardized Testing and Reporting, California High School Exit Exam, No Child Left Behind, and all other state requirements.

- Resources and support for parents, guardians, and families of children with disabilities can be found at the California Department of Education’s website at: www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/fp/

Decent Schools for California
www.decentschools.org
This website is maintained by the ACLU and Public Advocates, co-counsels of the Williams Settlement, a landmark civil rights case brought by Eliezer Williams, which provides new tools for students and parents to ensure quality learning conditions for millions of low-income students of color. English and Spanish materials include sample complaint forms and brochures are available at http://www.decentschools.org/settlement_action.php. In addition, brochures guiding parents and students through the Williams complaint process (in English and Spanish) and the manual on checking teacher qualifications (A Teacher Is Key) (in English only) are available at http://www.publicadvocates.org/resources/.

Families & Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE)
www.fape.org/pubs/index.htm
Special education resources for parents in multiple languages.

Great Schools
www.greatschools.net
Allows you to access data to compare schools, as well as look up STAR test data. Library includes many articles about getting involved, understanding education systems, and improving your child’s education. For a wide selection of articles in Spanish, click the “Library” button, and select “articles in Spanish.”

Education Code
www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=edc&codebody=&hits=20
The entire California Education Code.

School Wise Press
www.schoolwisepress.com (English only)
The website of School Wise Press has information for parents about California school law and school performance.
Understanding Budgets—Guest Speaker

**PURPOSE**
- Become more comfortable reading and understanding budgets.
- Identify opportunities to change budgets.
- Identify the relationship between budgets and systems change in education.

**MATERIALS**
- None

**SETUP AND PREPARATION**
- Identify and agree to expectations with Guest Speaker 3–4 weeks before the class

**TOTAL TIME**
60 MIN

**TRAINER’S INSTRUCTIONS**
Introduce the Guest Speaker: Allow the Guest Speaker to make their presentation and field questions from the group during their scheduled hour.

**TRAINING TIP**
If participants feel quiet around a new person in the class, the guest speaker, ask a question to get the group going. If a parent has asked you a question about budgets in the past, use that one.

After the presentation and question and answer period, thank the guest speaker for coming and transition to a break.

**TRAINING TIP FOR SELECTING A GUEST SPEAKER**
Discuss the purpose of examining school budgets with prospective guest speakers to gauge their ease relating to these priorities.

Division of public resources is at the heart of most questions related to equity in public schools. Most new ideas, suggestions for improvements, and quality improvements in education require additional funds. Participants continually hear that the reason their children’s education is suffering is because of “budget cuts.”

Reading and understanding budgets is challenging for most people. At the same time, when one can make intelligent references to a specific budget, that person can make a powerful impact.

PLAN to LEAD seeks to familiarize participants first with the definition of a budget, the general structure a budget follows, and how a budget may get changed through discussion. If possible, select an example of a public budget related to participants’ ongoing advocacy efforts to examine and, hopefully, better understand.

Some examples may be a particular school’s budget, a portion of the school district’s budget dedicated to supporting schools, or the state’s education budget.
SHARE EXPECTATIONS OF A GUEST SPEAKER

1. PLAN to LEAD trainers will select a guest speaker to join one evening class and address the class for approximately one hour.

2. Guest Speakers need to be willing to dedicate this time pro bono.

3. Guest Speaker must select and be familiar with an example of a real budget related to education.

4. Guest speaker must bring their own materials, such as an enlarged copy of the sample budget, and any other learning materials they would like to use during the presentation.

5. Guest speaker should save time for questions and answers after the presentation.

6. Guest speakers are welcome to stay throughout the remainder of the class, but are also free to leave after their presentation.

After the guest speaker leaves, trainers are encouraged to use the second half of the class for a discussion on a sample budget related to the parent leaders’ on-going work. Trainers may use this time to share the organization’s budget or to review the school’s budget.

Closure and evaluation
Diversity and Oppression Activity I: Exploring Language

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Begin with a general overview of the purpose for this activity (see Purpose).

Inform the group that participants will be asked to brainstorm definitions for the terms oppression, stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, privilege, ally, and target group, using two sources: the person’s opinion and a formal source (see Handout).

Let the group know that they will brainstorm their understanding of these terms before reviewing the formal definitions provided on the handout.

Divide participants into small groups so that everyone will have ample chance to speak. For smaller groups, divide into groups of two to four. For larger groups, divide into groups of 6-10. There should be seven small groups: each group will analyze one term. (Note: If you have a very large group, two small groups may explore the same term.)

Assign each small group one of the seven words listed above. Each small group should select a recorder and reporter.

**PURPOSE**

- Help participants understand key terms for discussing and addressing oppression
- Develop a shared language among participants and increase awareness about definitions for each term
- Appreciate the importance of language in discussing multicultural issues.

**MATERIALS**

- Ground rules on flipchart or overhead projector
- Definitions Handout

**SETUP AND PREPARATION**

- A space where all participants can sit in a circle and break in to small groups.
- Flip chart paper and markers

**TRAINER NOTES**

- This activity is an essential building block to be conducted before additional diversity activities or discussions about diversity and oppression.

**TOTAL TIME**

90 MIN
INDIVIDUAL DISCRIMINATION
Individuals treating other individuals differently based on prejudice and stereotypes regarding particular characteristics, such as appearance, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, etc.

INSTITUTIONAL OR SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION
Policies, practices and attitudes built into the institutions of our society, which are often invisible but which result in unequal treatment, access and opportunity for individuals because of their (perceived) belonging to a certain group and/or their particular characteristics.

Clarify any misunderstandings of the terms. Ask participants to record their understanding of the term, as well as an example to illustrate the term on an individual AND institutional level. Share an example, such as: “As an individual, I am a target because I am a woman. On an institutional level, I am a target because I am lesbian parent and forms do not ask if my child has two moms. My family is not recognized and included in the mainstream school system documentation.” Everyone should have an opportunity to share their personal experiences in the small group; however, the group should select only ONE example to share with the larger group.

Reconvene the large group. Ask each group to define their term and share one of the examples they discussed.

After each small group has had a chance to share, review the formal definition for each term. Provide examples as needed to help facilitate understanding.

Address any differences, misunderstanding, or conflicting information.

Proposed Debrief Questions

• What did you learn or what surprised you about these terms?
• What feelings came up for you as you did this activity?
• Why is it important to explore our understanding of these terms as we begin to learn about and challenge oppression?
• How does this information help us better understand educational inequity?

Adapted with permission from Paul Gorski for EdChange and the Multicultural Pavilion; copyright permission granted 2006.
**TRAINER TIPS**

1. Distribute Definitions Handout after the small group brainstorm and discussion. Other terms or concepts that may come up in the discussion are as follows, be prepared to help define:

   - **Racism:** prejudice or discrimination based on race/ethnicity
   - **Sexism:** prejudice or discrimination based on gender
   - **Equality:** the fact of being equal, of having the same value; having equal quantity
   - **Equity:** justice, impartiality, and fairness; having equal quality

   According to the definitions above, anyone can be racist or sexist. It is vital to bring the issue of power into the discussion. For example, a definition of racism might be “prejudice or discrimination based on race, plus the power to enforce it.” In that case, in America, only men can be sexist, and only white people can be racist. This perspective has a major impact on people and some respond by insisting that the “other” group can be just as racist as her or his group. Remember you are talking about definitions, and their opinion is based on their definition, which may be based on a lot of other factors. This discussion opens up the channels for discussing those other factors later.

2. An issue that arises regularly is that prejudice and discrimination can be positive. (“I am prejudiced towards my children/I am a discriminating eater.”) It is important to note that when these issues are discussed in context of cultural diversity, they are generally considered negative. Even a positive stereotype results in limiting an individual’s unique qualities and placing people in a box.

3. Before beginning the exercise, prepare the group for what could become an emotional discussion. When the discussion becomes heated or emotional, point this out to the group and invite reflection. If necessary, revisit ground rules on respectful dialogue.

4. These terms have the power to push people’s buttons. People do not like to be labeled perpetrator, target, and oppressor, oppressed. Some people will become defensive. This is an indication that they are thinking about the issues. Encourage participants to reflect and explore their defensiveness, frustration or discomfort around these terms.
Seven Key Terms

ALLY
An ally is someone who is not in the target group, yet who stands in the way of mistreatment or intervenes to stop mistreatment.

DISCRIMINATION
Action or behavior based on stereotypes and prejudice. Treating individuals differently because of their (perceived) belonging to a certain group and/or their particular characteristics.

OPPRESSION
Oppression is the systemic mistreatment of human beings based on their membership in various groups. Oppression includes both institutionalized or normalized mistreatment as well as instances of violence. It includes the invalidation, denial, or non-recognition of the humanness (goodness, smartness, powerfulness, etc.) of individuals and groups who are the targets of that form of mistreatment.

PREJUDICE
Prejudice is prejudging or making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge. Prejudicial thinking is frequently based on stereotypes.

PRIVILEGE
An unearned advantage based on membership in a certain group.

STEREOTYPE
A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even seemingly positive stereotypes that link a person or group to a specific positive trait can have negative consequences.

TARGET GROUP
Target groups are those that are on the down side of the economic and social power imbalance while non-target groups are on the up side. People in target groups are recipients of both individual and institutional mistreatment.
Additional Key Terms

BYSTANDER
A bystander is someone who sees an act of prejudice or discrimination happening and does not say or do anything.

CONFRONTER
A confronter is someone who speaks out when they see an act of prejudice or discrimination taking place.

DIS-EMPOWERMENT
The intentional (by consciousness or unconscious habitual behavior) removal of power that one is entitled to.

INDIVIDUAL DISCRIMINATION
Specific differential action or behavior directed by individuals towards others based on prejudice and stereotypes based on particular characteristics, such as appearance, physical level of ability, sexual orientation, etc.

NON-TARGET GROUP
Non-target groups are in the role of perpetuating the mistreatment and are usually in a privileged position in terms of social and economic power compared to target groups.

PERPETRATOR
A perpetrator is someone who, intentionally or unprovoked, says or does something harmful or malicious to another person or group of people.

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION
Policies, practices and attitudes built into the institutions of our society which are often invisible but which result in unequal treatment, access and opportunity for individuals because of their (perceived) belonging to a certain group and/or their particular characteristics.
Diversity and Oppression Activity II: Circles of My Multicultural Self

PURPOSE
• Engage participants in a process of identifying what they consider the most important dimensions or aspects of their own identity
• Examine stereotypes

MATERIALS
• Ground rules on flipchart or overhead projector
• Circles Activity Handout

SETUP AND PREPARATION
• A space where participants can move their chairs around
• Definition of Stereotype on a flipchart

TRAINER NOTES
• This activity is an essential building block to be conducted before additional diversity activities or discussions about diversity and oppression.

TOTAL TIME
60 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS
Begin with a review of the purpose or rationale for this activity. Remind participants of the ground rules and the definition of stereotype, which you explored earlier. If you have not completed the Definitions Activity, record the term and definition of stereotype on flip chart paper and review. Remind participants that one way we can be oppressed or oppress others is to stereotype, prejudge, and discriminate. Ask participants to use this opportunity to continue to reflect on their experience of oppression and how to challenge oppression on a personal and institutional level.

Ask participants to pair up with somebody they do not know well. Invite them to briefly check-in or introduce themselves. Remind participants that this activity provides them with an opportunity to reflect on their personal identities as well as the stereotypes or messages they received about themselves and others. Invite participants to begin reflecting on how they have internalized these negative messages and how they can begin to challenge personally held stereotypes. While in pairs, lead participants through the following steps:

Step 1: Distribute activity handout. Ask participants to write their names in the center circle. They should then fill in each outer circle with a dimension of their identity they consider to be among the most important in defining themselves. Give them several examples of “identifiers” that might fit into the outer circles: female, parent, Jewish, brother, educator, Asian American, working class, etc.
Step 2: Ask participants to reflect on their experience as a student in the public school system. First, they should share with their partner stories about when they felt especially proud to be associated with one of the identifiers they selected. Next, they should share a story about a particularly painful time to be associated with one of the identifiers they chose.

Step 3: Ask participants to share a stereotype they have heard about one dimension of their identity that fails to describe them accurately. Ask them to complete the sentence at the bottom of the handout by filling in the blanks: “I am (a/an) ____________ but I am NOT (a/an) ____________.” Provide your own example, such as “I am a Person of Color, but I am NOT unintelligent.”

Bring participants back to the large circle. Ask the group for reactions to each other’s stories. Ask whether anyone heard a story she or he would like to share with the group. (Make sure the person who originally told the story has granted permission to share it with the entire group.)

Advise participants that the next step will involve individuals standing up and reading their stereotype statement. You can either simply go around the room in some order or have people randomly stand up and read their statements. Make sure that participants are respectful and listening actively for this step, as individuals are making themselves vulnerable by participating. Model this activity by reading your own statement.

**TRAINER TIPS**

*Encourage participants to think about the stereotypes they apply to people and to make a conscious effort to think more deeply about them, eventually eliminating them.*

*As with most activities, it can be especially effective if you participate while you facilitate. If you are willing to share your own experiences, participants are more likely to feel open to share their own.*

*Allow for silences. People will be hesitant to share initially, but once the ball starts rolling, the activity carries a lot of energy.*

*There is usually some laughter when somebody shares common stereotype such as “I am Arab, but I am not a terrorist” or “I am a parent, but I do have a social life.” If so, you may want to ask: “I heard several moments of laughter. What was that about?”*
PROPOSED DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

• How did it feel to complete the handout? Was it easy, hard, or frustrating? Why?

• Why do you think it is important to talk about our personal identities and stereotypes as we are learning about addressing oppression?

• How do the dimensions or aspects of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions other people use to make judgments about you?

• Did anybody hear somebody challenge a stereotype that you once bought into?

• How did it feel to be able to stand up and challenge your stereotype?

• Where do stereotypes come from? How can we eliminate stereotypes?

• How do stereotypes create systems of oppression in our schools?

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Circles of my Multicultural Self

We all have many dimensions of our identities. For this activity, you will define them yourself. Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write a word describing an important aspect of your identity in each of the outer circles. For example: African American, female, immigrant, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or other “identifier.”

With your partner:

1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify yourself with one of the identifiers you used above.

2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of identifiers.

3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

   I am (a/an) _____________________ but I am NOT (a/an)_____________________.

   For example: I am a Christian, but I am NOT a right-wing Republican.

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Learning Activities

Tools and Skills

Asking the Right Questions
Working with the Media: Getting Your Message Across—Guest Speaker
Effective Facilitation and Agendas
Group Agreement Through Modified Consensus
Asking the Right Questions

PURPOSE
• Participants will increase their critical thinking skills and have an opportunity to explore issues in a new way.
• Participants will increase their skills in question formulation and prioritize their concerns.
• Participants will increase their ability to hold themselves and the public institutions they deal with more accountable.
• Participants will practice working together with other parents on a common issue.

MATERIALS
• Chart paper and markers
• Handout: The RQP Question Formulation Technique

SETUP AND PREPARATION
1. Prepare on chart paper before class, “Rules for Brainstorming and Recording Questions”
   • Ask as many questions as you can: do not stop to judge, analyze or answer any of the questions.
   • Be sure to write down every question.
   • If you are recording the questions, write them down exactly the way they are worded by your group member.
2. Prepare on chart paper before class, “The RQP Question Formulation Technique”
   • Brainstorm, come up with as many questions as you can.
   • Prioritize, choose three questions you want to explore further.
   • Branch Off, now choose just one of your three questions. Brainstorm more questions about it.
   • Prioritize Again, look over your new list of questions. Choose the three you want to address.
3. Prepare on chart paper before class, Two Types of Questions
   • Close-ended questions can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” or with a one-word answer.
   • Open-ended questions require more explanation; they cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” or one-word answer.
4. Prepare a quick role-play with a co-trainer or volunteer to demonstrate what can happen when parents are not prepared for meetings with decision-makers. Ask a volunteer or co-trainer to come prepared to play the role of a relevant decision-maker for a mock 5-minute meeting. Ask the volunteer to think about: Who will you be? A principal? A superintendent? A legislator? What is your attitude toward this group of parents, who are not prepared for the meeting?

TOTAL TIME 85-100 MIN
INSTRUCTIONS

Provide a brief history of RQP and why PLAN to LEAD decided to use it as a tool for the parenting toolbox.

The Right Question Project, Inc. (RQP) is a nonprofit organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, which offers an effective, easy-to-use educational strategy based on a vision to build a more democratic society. Based on a simple methodology of asking questions designed with low and moderate income families in mind, RQP supports emerging activists to make real-life changes in public schools, welfare agencies, the health care system, housing programs, homeless shelters, job training centers and many other publicly supported agencies, programs and institutions. The curriculum is available for public adaptation at www.rightquestion.org.

Begin the activity by asking participants to make a list of issues that they are dealing with right now or that are really important to them as parents.

Make a list of 5-7 issues. If you are working with parents who are already members of an organization, all of the issues/topics should be related to projects of the parent organization.

Prepare for the quick role-play: Let the group know that a decision-maker on these issues will be joining the group for a five-minute meeting to answer parents’ questions. Immediately introduce your decision-maker, and thank them for graciously agreeing to meet with the group. Ask the group what they would like to ask, based on the issues list we brainstormed. Parents will take turns asking questions. (Note: they will not have had time to prepare.)

TRAINER TIP

If you have worked with the group before, you can remind the group of issues of importance that have come up in past discussions.

Begin the activity by asking participants to make a list of issues that they are dealing with right now or that are really important to them as parents.

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TRAINER TIP

During this un-prepped role-play, parents typically express their concerns and explain the problems they have identified. Often, parents lead with “why?” questions, such as, “Why is the lunchroom dirty?” or questions seeking information, such as, “Can we get more security guards?” Typical decision-maker responses include “Thank you for telling me about this, I will look into it.” “I agree that sounds like a problem.” “Oh my, that doesn’t sound good.” Another tactic is to respond literally to the “why?” questions, for example, “Well, it’s dirty because we have a problem with the children throwing trash on the ground.” Unless parents ask directly, the decision-maker can avoid committing to making concrete changes or taking steps to resolve the problem.
Debrief: After five minutes, thank the decision-maker for their time. End the role-play and ask the group what they thought of that meeting. What went well? What could have been better? Did we find out what we needed to know? Do we know how or when these issues will be solved? Did we seem like an organized group?

Share what you think went well, and acknowledge the ways in which you agree it could have been better. Explain that is precisely for these types of meetings that the Right Question Project was developed. Mention that thousands of parents have used this method for developing the important questions we need to ask to get solutions for our issues.

Select one of the issues from the brainstormed list. Write it on the top of a flip chart. Explain that we will start with this example, imagining that we are preparing for a meeting to discuss this issue with a decision-maker.

Hand out the RQP Formulation Technique Handout.

Ask for a volunteer to read the first step: Brainstorm. Review the “Rules for Brainstorming and Recording.” Ask the group “When you think about this issue, what questions do you have?” Solicit 4-6 questions about the issue, modeling the “Rules for Brainstorming.”

Ask for a volunteer to read the second step: Prioritize

Ask the group to prioritize three questions from the list of questions generated in the first step.

**TRAINER TIP**

*Depending on the size of the group, you may want to ask people to raise hands or make a checkmark to indicate the three highest priority questions. Remember that you are using the example to quickly illustrate the RQP Technique.*

Ask for a volunteer to read the third step: Branch-off

Ask the group to choose one of the three priority questions to focus on. Write this question on a new sheet of easel paper. Brainstorm more questions (4-6) about this question.

Now, using this list of questions, review the Two Types of Questions on a flip chart. Ask the group which questions are open-ended and which are closed. Mark each question with an O or a C as appropriate. Ask: “What are some advantages and disadvantages of asking close-ended questions? What are some advantages and disadvantages of asking open-ended questions?” Choose two close-ended questions from the list and ask the group how they can be changed into open-ended questions, reminding them to use words like “what,” “how,” “when,” “where,” and “why” to ask open-ended questions.
Advantages of close-ended questions include:
- Help us get a simple yes or no answer when we want it
- Help us get specific information without being sidetracked
- Make it clear we want answers, for example: “When will you call us? What day will this be fixed?”

Disadvantages of close-ended questions include:
- Don’t allow for full explanations, which we sometimes want
- May not allow the person we’re meeting with to open up

Advantages of open-ended questions include:
- Can help us get a lot of information
- Can facilitate someone sharing their opinion
- Can help develop a relationship with someone

Disadvantages of open-ended questions include:
- Can enable the person we’re meeting to take over the meeting
- Can make it harder to maintain your agenda
- Can result in evasive answers

**TRAINER TIP**
You may want spend a few minutes facilitating a group brainstorm on the advantages and disadvantages of open- and close-ended questions, writing participants’ responses on a flip chart. Remind the group that both kinds of questions are useful, depending on the type of answer you are looking for.

Ask for a volunteer to read the fourth step: Prioritize again.

Ask the group to prioritize the top three questions from the list. Remind them that for the purposes of learning the technique, we are going to stop here, but in a real situation, they could decide to keep going, brainstorming, prioritization and branching off until they were satisfied.

Review the questions selected. Ask if people think that these questions will get us better information or results than the meeting we had earlier.

Explain that now we will all practice this technique. Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-5 people each. Make sure each group has easel paper and markers to do their work.

Ask each group which issue they are going to focus on (from the original brainstormed list), and who will be the recorder.
Let the groups know they have 20 minutes to go through the RQP process and prepare for a meeting with a decision-maker.

After 20 minutes, reintroduce the decision-maker for another 5 minute role-play. Ask for one group to volunteer role-playing the process of asking the questions they have prepared.

Debrief this second role-play, congratulate the group, and ask what went well. Did they see a difference in being prepared for this meeting? Would they get better answers or results with these questions? How did it feel?

Ask each group to report-back briefly, sharing only their starting issue and their final questions. Provide positive feedback.

**DEBRIEF**

- What did you learn today?
- What is the value of learning how to formulate your own questions?
- How can you use what you learned today?

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

The Right Question Project helps us prepare to ask questions that will get results. However, it's important to remember that not all we do in meetings with decision-makers is ask questions or gather information. Sometimes we tell them what we want—voicing our opinions and our demands. Sometimes we are telling them what the problem is from our perspective. Sometimes we want them to listen to us or to agree to do what we believe is necessary. Sometimes it is a combination of all of these things. Whatever the goal of the meeting, it is always important to be prepared and coordinated as a group, and the RQP process helps us get there.
The RQP Question Formulation Technique

**Brainstorm**
Come up with as many questions as you can.

**Prioritize**
Choose three questions you want to explore further.

**Branch-Off**
Now, choose just one of your three questions. Brainstorm more questions about it.

**Prioritize Again**
Look over your new list of questions. Choose the three you want to address now.

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Proyecto de la Pregunta Correcta (RQP) Técnica para la Formulación de Preguntas

**Idear Preguntas**
Idear todas las preguntas que sean posibles.

**Dar Prioridad**
Elija tres preguntas que quiera explorar un poco más.

**Ramificar**
Ahora, elija solo una de las tres preguntas. Invente más preguntas sobre esa.

**Dar Prioridad Nuevamente**
Examine su nueva lista de preguntas. Elija las tres que quiere señalar.

---

RQP 問題形成技巻

**集思廣益**
儘量收集所有提出的問題

**將問題定出優先**
選出三個你想進一步探索的問題

**篩選**
現在，從三個問題中只選一個。然後徵詢大家對此問題有關的問題。

**再定優先**
看看你的問題新名單。選擇三個你目前想解決的問題。
INSTRUCTIONS

There is plenty of evidence that media advocacy works. For example, media advocacy by public health advocates resulted in a shift of reporting on tobacco issues: the media stopped portraying individual smokers as bad people, and began to focus on the level of corruption in the industry.

Advances in gun control, AIDS research, and alcohol policy offer more evidence of successful media advocacy. In each case organizations started with clear policy objectives and desired outcomes and then figured out how the media could advance their goals. Encourage participants to take advantage of the speaker and use the resources provided to figure out how to use the media to advance their goals.

INTRODUCE THE GUEST SPEAKER

Allow the guest speaker to present their material and field questions from the group during their scheduled hour.

After the presentation and question-and-answer period, thank the guest speaker for coming and transition into the break.

TRAINER TIP

You may need to support the speaker by asking questions that cover the material most relevant for the group. In addition, encourage participants to take advantage of resources and information the speaker has to offer.
There is nothing so compelling as a good story. Stories provide lessons and direction, reflect and reinforce values, and illustrate core concepts and ideas. Communication is about being a good storyteller, and mass communication is about telling the story in ways that take full advantage of the medium. There is power in linking our stories with policy objectives and constituencies and effectively conveying them through the media to create change.

Ask the group if the speaker helped increase their knowledge about how to use the media to get their point across. Why or why not?

After a brief discussion, ask participants to meet with their organization and decide on a media strategy that might be most effective for their project.

Meet in organizational groups to start the brainstorming process of which strategy might work best.

Summary, evaluation and closing circle

**EXPECTATIONS OF A GUEST SPEAKER**

1. The PLAN to LEAD trainer(s) (possibly with the help of the group) will select a guest speaker to address the class for approximately one hour.

2. Guest speakers need to be willing to donate their time pro-bono.

3. Guest speakers must have experience with the media and parent advocacy strategies.

4. Guest speakers will be expected to bring samples of educational media campaigns that relate to parent advocacy.

5. Guest speakers will be expected to provide handouts and resources to participants.

6. Guest Speakers will incorporate a time for questions and answers into their presentation.

7. Guest speakers are welcome to stay the remainder of the class and should be invited to have lunch or dinner.
Effective Facilitation and Agendas

PURPOSE
• Plan effective meetings and agendas.
• Understanding how to maximize participation from everyone in a group as a facilitator.
• Practice dealing with difficult dynamics in groups.

MATERIALS
• Copies of the Sample Agenda Structure handout
• Copies of the Help Focusing on Topics handout
• Copies of the Meeting Challenges and Suggestions handout
• Copies of the Facilitator’s Review Checklist handout

SETUP AND PREPARATION
• Re-create Sample Agenda Structure and Help Focusing on Topics handouts on flip charts.

TOTAL TIME
90 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS
Start with the Sample Agenda Structure handout. Ask the group:

1. “How many people have ever been to a meeting that seemed like a waste of time?”

2. “Do you ever feel like you have so many meetings you can’t get any ‘work’ done?”

3. What happens at these meetings that seem like a waste of time?

Chart responses on a flip chart.

Explain that people often have meetings with the intention of working collaboratively, getting more ideas, or ensuring cooperation, but don’t plan meetings to effectively accomplish these goals.

Having a good meeting takes a lot more than finding a time when everyone can attend and deciding on the topic. Even though it may seem like even more work, effective meeting planning will save time in the long run and inspire more real teamwork!

The Sample Agenda Structure handout is the first step of planning an effective meeting. Everyone should have a copy of the handout.


TRAINER TIP
To allow the group to follow the discussion, two handouts should be recreated on a flip chart (see setup and preparation).
Ask the group for a volunteer to think of either a recent meeting they attended or one they are planning for in the future.

Ask that person to list all the topics they believe the group needs to meet about.

Next, ask that person to attempt to define an “outcome” for each topic. Explain to the group that an outcome should be something concrete that gives the group a sense of accomplishment.

Some examples of meeting outcomes are:
1) A list of assigned tasks
2) A decision or agreement
3) New knowledge
4) New information

An outcome is not:
1) Giving a report
2) Checking in
3) Discussion

Follow the guidelines in the Handout, and develop an outcome for each topic area. Ask the large group for input and suggestions for outcomes for the topic area the volunteer suggests.

Then, ask the participant to reflect on what can be done before the meeting, what needs to happen during the meeting, and what can happen after to ensure the outcome.

Once this sheet has been completed, turn to the Sample Agenda Structure handout. Transfer the topics and outcomes to the bottom table on this handout. Then discuss “process.” Ask the group for different processes that might be used to get to the desired outcomes.

Some examples include:
1) Group Discussion
2) Voting
3) Presentations (sharing written information, pictures, videos)
4) Individual sharing in large groups
5) Partners or small-group sharing

Once the bottom table of the Sample Agenda Structure handout has been filled out, ask the group to reflect on whether they agree that this approach would help their meetings be more effective and why.
This activity is designed to help participants practice good facilitation techniques. Review Facilitator’s Review Checklist and Meeting Challenges and Suggestions handouts. Ask the group if they agree with the approaches suggested in the handouts. Ask the group if they have any other ideas to add.

Ask a new volunteer to role play the facilitator for the next activity. Hand an index card to members of the group with the same behaviors listed on the Meeting Challenges and Suggestions handout. The volunteer will assume the role of the facilitator for the meeting the group just discussed.

Ask the volunteer to start from the beginning, “Welcome and Review of the Agenda,” and go through the meeting. The group should periodically act out their behaviors on index cards and the facilitator should respond using the suggestions listed on the handout or any other ideas she/he might have.

Allow the role play to go for about 5 minutes.

**TRAINER TIP**

*If the group gets out of hand—making so many problems just for the fun of it but it doesn’t seem realistic—stop the activity, mix up the cards and start again. Let the group know we are here to help challenge the facilitator but not make her life impossible. Tell them to try to be as realistic as possible with behaviors, but everyone does not have to act out in every role play. Let the group know the exercise will repeat a couple of times.*

After the role play, ask the group to debrief with the following questions:

1. What did the facilitator do effectively?
2. What else could the facilitator have done to improve a difficult situation?

Ask for another volunteer, switch the index cards around, and start the role play again. Repeat the role play about 3 times, (depending on how much time you have in the class).

Debrief after each role play.

**TRAINER TIP**

*Make sure you give positive feedback to the volunteer practicing effective facilitation. It is difficult to offer to stand in front of the group and have the courage to try, so each volunteer should be acknowledged.*
## Meeting Challenges and Suggestions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Typical mistake</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One person dominating the group</td>
<td>“You’re taking up too much of the group’s time.”</td>
<td>Actively encourage others to participate. If it keeps happening, talk to the person individually after the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people not participating</td>
<td>“Ms. A, you haven’t talked much today, is there something you’d like to add?”</td>
<td>This might make a shy person feel even more uncomfortable. Be more general, “I’d like to hear from those who haven’t shared yet today.” Switch to small groups and identify a recorder to document input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side conversations</td>
<td>“Ignore it.”</td>
<td>Call one person by name and ask them an easy question. (Avoid sarcasm: making the person feel bad is not the point.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two people at odds</td>
<td>“Let’s resolve this problem in front of the whole group. Maybe we will all learn something.”</td>
<td>Look for additional opinions from the group to see whether there are other factors to consider. Focus on the passive majority instead of the aggressive minority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone who wants to help all the time.</td>
<td>“Thank the person and then move on.”</td>
<td>Ask this person to summarize major points, ask them to help by engaging others’ participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative</td>
<td>“Defend yourself; make your point in a new way.”</td>
<td>Reflect on your own temper and hot buttons before facilitating a group. Look for the kernel of truth. Agree to disagree and possibly talk with this person in more depth outside the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group resisting getting started</td>
<td>“Allow the group to come together in their own time. I don’t want to be imposing.”</td>
<td>Bad habits get worse with time. If you start late once, it’s difficult to go back to starting on time. Start on time with a welcoming tone, people will appreciate someone else providing structure.</td>
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</table>
Facilitator’s Review Checklist

☐ Set the tone by greeting people.

☐ Start on time.

☐ Keep an open mind and learn from others.

☐ Encourage participation.

☐ Tell a story, but don’t go on too long.

☐ Use active, empathic and interpretative listening skills.

☐ Help the group define their goals and objectives.

☐ Stick to the agenda. If you need to deviate, let people know why.

☐ Pay attention to both process and content.

☐ Keep the meeting on task. Provide structure to get back to objectives.

☐ Encourage participants to talk to each other, not just to the facilitator.

☐ Give positive feedback and encouragement to participants.

☐ Respond to comments and suggestions with attention and consideration.

☐ Ask for clarification as needed. Don’t ignore what you don’t understand.

☐ Check in with the group when needed.

☐ As needed remind people of their differences and how that is valued.

☐ Stop people from using hurtful language or actions.

☐ Use humor and creativity to keep the meeting fun.

☐ Summarize what the group has accomplished or ask someone else to.

☐ Save time at the end for “next steps” and wrap-up.
Sample Agenda Structure

1. Welcome

2. Topics

3. Next Steps

4. Closing
### Help Focusing on Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>DESIRED OUTCOME</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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Group Agreement Through Modified Consensus

**PURPOSE**
- To give groups a method for including as many participants' opinions as possible when making decisions
- To understand the value of listening to the minority.

**MATERIALS**
- Copies of the Gradients of Agreement handout

**SETUP AND PREPARATION**
- Select a decision the group is faced with making
- Write up Gradients of Agreement handout on chart paper

**TOTAL TIME**
- 60 MIN

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Review the Gradients of Agreement handout.

Start by asking the group for examples of how decisions are made in the following contexts:
- U.S. Government
- Their Family
- Their School
- Their Work

Often people will say, “voting” with the U.S. government. Remind the group that although voting is more inclusive than a dictatorship, President George W. Bush won only 51% of the popular vote. Therefore 49% of the voting population was upset with the outcome. That’s a lot of people!

People might say that within their own family the parents make all the decisions. In their school or work, decisions might be made in secrecy and then “reported” to the group under the guise of being inclusive. Some people might have experience with schools or jobs that are genuinely inclusive.

Conclude this discussion by stating that although “majority rules” is one way of including more people in decisions, there may be ways to include the minority as well. The modified consensus model is one way of listening to minority view points.

Review the handout and review the gradients written up on the chart paper. Explain the process described below. Choose a real proposal that the group needs to make a decision on. (Sometimes trainers can sense this decision in prior classes and suggest the group use it as an example.)

Q: If there is just one person blocking, why should we care?

A: It depends on the proposal. If the proposal requires the participation of person who's blocking to succeed, the group needs to consider whether to accept the resistance or attend to the concerns raised.

1. Someone from the group makes a proposal. The proposal can be very well-researched or very preliminary. The tool can be used to confirm agreement on a detailed proposal or to generate additional ideas to round out a new proposal.

2. After presenting the proposal, open the floor for a specified time for comments and questions. Five minutes is a good amount. If the person who has made the proposal can answer clarifying questions, they should. If questions require more research or discussion, leave them on the chart paper.

3. After the five minutes are up, regardless of outstanding questions, poll the group. Restate the proposal and ask everyone to go around and state which number on the handout most closely matches their feeling.

4. Ask the group to consider what the spread indicates, such as, “we really need more discussion,” “this is really unpopular,” or “although we still have some additional questions, we are almost all in agreement.”

5. Usually, the group then can focus on hearing from the people that voted 4 or 5. If you have time you may want to hear from everyone in the group. Usually at this point, someone from the group makes a modified proposal. At this point, the facilitator should write up the proposal on the chart paper and re-poll the group. Usually the discussion brings the group significantly closer to agreement.

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

- Consensus does not have to be used to make every decision of the organization. We suggest organizations generate a list of the kinds of decisions that will be made using consensus and which will be at the director’s discretion.

- If you are a new organization, try it once and see how it goes!

- You can also establish ground rules like: “Consensus minus 2,” meaning that you will move forward as long as only 2 or less people have voted 4 or 5.
Gradients of Agreement

1. I support the decision 100%

2. I support the decision with only minor reservations

3. I don’t support the decision, but I don’t want to hold the group up.

4. I have fairly major reservations that I want to discuss before moving forward.

5. I oppose. I block.
Learning Activities

Community Organizing and Action Planning

Visioning Activity Guide
Community Organizing: One-on-Ones
Action Planning
Visioning Activity Guide

PURPOSE

- Deepen participants’ ability to use their creative minds.
- Check agreement on the organization’s parent advocacy goals.
- Agree to a vision that will guide action planning.

MATERIALS

- 4-6 ft long cardboard paper
- Art supplies: magazines, scissors, fabric, pipe cleaners, glue sticks, colorful markers, glitter, colorful construction paper, other miscellaneous toys or other small objects for an art project.
- 6 ft table

SETUP AND PREPARATION

- Space permitting, have 2 tables on opposite sides of the room. Each group should have equal amount of art supplies for the project. Trainers should begin gathering art supplies weeks before class begins to cut down on costs.
- Read through the visualization at least once before class.

TOTAL TIME

80 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS

REVIEW THE “PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY”

Explain that the visioning process will begin with a guided visualization, after which groups will have an opportunity to reflect, discuss and confirm the organization’s vision through a creative art project.

Provide some background on the purpose of visualization:

“Visualization is a tool to help you clarify your visions of a positive future for your community, your family, or yourself, and to co-create visions that have a shared meaning. Visioning is just the beginning!

It can help create a strong sense of purpose. Where you want to go? And how do you want to get there? A clear vision forms the basis for clear ideas, which lead to powerful actions.

Visioning may be new to some of us. Some of us have been trained to focus on the problems, not thinking about what we really want! The purpose of this experience is to temporarily free us from the constraints of our habit of looking for problems to solve. Let’s take this opportunity to open our minds and hearts to our deepest hopes for our lives, our children’s lives, and the institutions that we interact with.”
GUIDED VISUALIZATION

Speak slowly and clearly

Let’s start by getting comfortable in our seats. Put your feet on the floor in a position you find relaxing, empty your hands of any paper or pens, notice your arms and position them comfortably. Sit with your spine straight; relax your neck and shoulders. If you feel comfortable, I invite you to close your eyes, quiet your mind, block out all stimuli but stay alert.

Take a deep breath, hold it to the count of three and release, (repeat 3-4 times).

We all have the power to vision—that is, to form an image in our minds of an experience or situation other than the present moment.

Imagine that you have been in a suspended state for 30 years. In your mind...Open your eyes and look around you. Get up and walk out the door. Outside of the building you will find a barrier.

This barrier has been protecting our little time capsule from connection to the outside world for 30 years.

PAUSE

Picture the barrier.

PAUSE

Take a deep breath. Now gently find a way through it. You are standing outside your future school—and it is exactly the school you have always wanted for your children... Notice the children learning... What are the adults doing?

Are you in a different geographic location? Where are you? Look around. What does your school look like? ... What do you see and hear around you? ... Who do you see around you?... What is your role? ...What is your relationship to those around you?

How does it feel to be in this place? Remember, this is your perfect school for families and children.

Take a deep breath, and begin to bring your attention back to the present. Repeat breathing 3 times ... When you feel ready open your eyes.

Notice how you feel: Was it easy for you? Difficult? How did you get through the barriers? What did you find?
Ask the group to break into pairs by turning to the person next to them. Each person will have 5 minutes to share their experience with the visioning exercise.

Ask the group to get into either their organization or project-specific groups to reflect on their organization’s vision. If you one group all working on the same project, you do not need to break up into groups. If the organization already has a vision statement, ask them to bring it to this class. Some organizations only have a mission statement. Ask them to bring it to the class.

The class will use this time to create a visual representation of their organization’s vision, using the art materials provided. Ideas that surfaced during the visualization can be added into the project.

**TRAINER TIP**

*With every timed activity give participants a one minute warning.*

If the class has broken up into two groups, each group will have approximately 7 minutes to share their vision with the other group. If the class created their visual representation together, have them spend about 15 minutes describing their art to the trainers.

Reconvene to a large group. Some debriefing questions to consider:

1. How did it feel to participate in a guided visualization?
2. Was this activity helpful to identify ways to move toward your vision?
3. At any point in the activity, did you think of ways to improve the responsiveness of governments, institutions, the nation and the world to your vision?
4. Can you formulate action ideas on how to move from present conditions toward your visions/dreams for the future?

**TRAINER TIP**

*This is not the time to redraft the words in an organization’s vision statement, but rather use the art project to allow everyone to state what the vision means to them.*

10 MIN

25 MIN

15 MIN

15 MIN
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: ONE-ON-ONES

PURPOSE

• Learn the definition of community organizing and share examples from our own experience and from the histories of other groups
• Develop consciousness about the need for one-on-ones in our organizing and relationship-building work with parents
• Learn and practice a process for conducting a one-on-one
• Be able to leave the class and immediately conduct a one-on-one with another parent.

MATERIALS

• Copies of the Community Organizing handout
• Copies of the Historical Roots handout
• Copies of the Goals of a One-on-One handout
• Copies of Tips for Scheduling a One-on-One handout
• Copies of the One-on-One Practice handout
• Copies of the Feedback Sandwich handout
• Extra pens or pencils

SETUP AND PREPARATION

1. Prepare on easel paper before class, “Roles for One-on-One Practice”
   • Organizer (the person conducting the one-on-one)
   • Parent (the person being visited)
   • Observer (extra set of eyes)

2. Prepare ahead of time with a co-trainer or volunteer for a role-play. What is the parent’s situation? What is their interest or concern? What is the organizer’s goal?

TOTAL TIME

120 MIN

INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce the topic: We will be talking about community organizing today, and practicing one of the most essential organizing skills. Ask the group what the term “community organizing” means. Have people heard it before? What types of activities does it include? Who has had any experience with community organizing? What was it? Write up responses on a flipchart.

Point out that these activities or events are examples of community organizing. Ask the group to look at the handout titled Community Organizing. Ask for a volunteer to read the Rosa Parks quote from the Community Organizing handout. State that we are going to focus on how to get the cooperation of the people around us. Review the handout.

Refer to the Historical Roots of Community Organizing handout. State that while it is impossible to detail the entire history and development of modern community organizing in this class, it is useful to name some of the defining moments and common understanding of how community organizing evolved in the United States. Ask the group if they have any questions.

TRAINER TIP

This is a lot of information. Feel free to select 2-3 points that you would like to highlight from the handout and let the group know that if there is time or interest in subsequent classes, you can talk more about the history. This review should not take more than 15 minutes!
Review Goals of a One-on-One and Scheduling a One-on-One, including the summary. Ask the group if they have any questions.

Role Play: Two trainers should model the One-on-One process. One trainer should act out the Parent Organizer and one the Parent. Make sure that in your scenario, the Parent Organizer has a specific goal, such as a project they want to get the Parent involved in. The Parent should decide their “self-interest”—the thing they are most concerned about for their children—before the role play.

As we are going through this role play, I invite you to follow along on your One-on-One Practice sheet, to see how I do all six parts of the visit, or if I miss any part.

Debrief Role Play: Were you able to follow along on the Practice Sheet? Did I get through all the sections? Was I able to find out something that is important to this parent, a concern or interest? If so, how? Was there something I missed?

Introduce the Handout: Feedback Sandwich. Ask the group to provide feedback for the Parent Organizer in the role play using the Feedback Sandwich model.

Review the Handout: One-on-One Practice. Ask the participants to fill out the practice form for a role play. Ask participants to think of a real-life situation in which they are interested in involving more participants.

Break the group into groups of three, if possible. (There can be one group of two, if necessary). Each group has three assigned roles:

1. Parent Organizer (the person asking the questions)
2. Parent (the person telling their story)
3. Observer (an invisible set of eyes)

Once the group is broken into groups of three, describe each role. Ask the person who will first act out the Parent Organizer to raise their hand. Make sure to stop and identify that in each group, one person has raised their hand. (Trainer Tip: this actually saves time in the end). Then, ask the person who is going to be the Parent to raise their hand. Observe that each group has one person raising their hand. Take a moment and ask those playing the role of the “Parent” to consider what is going to be their “self-interest”: what do they care most about for their children; what is their biggest concern. Ask them to write their self-interest down on the back of their Handout. Finally, ask that the person who will be the Observer raise their hand. The Observer does not participate in the role play; s/he watches and listens as if invisible.
Give the groups approximately 5 minutes to act out the role play. When the role play is finished, give the group another 5 minutes for providing feedback to the Parent organizer. First the Observer should state what they observed, then the Parent what they experienced, and finally the Parent Organizer can reflect on their own experience. Remind the group to use the Feedback Sandwich model. At the end, ask the Parent Organizer to guess the self-interest of the Parent. At this time, the Parent can reveal their real self-interest.

Ask the group to switch roles. Again, ask the next person to be the Parent Organizer to raise their hand and refer to their One-on-One Practice sheet. Ask again for the next Parent to raise their hand. Ask those participants role playing the Parent to consider their “self-interest” and write it down on the back of their handout. Repeat the process above—5 minutes for role play, 5 minutes for feedback.

Do the same a third time until everyone has had a chance to be the Parent Organizer, Parent, and Observer.

Large Group Debrief. Once everyone has had a chance to role play each role, come back in the large group and give people a chance to share what they learned out of the opportunity to practice a one-on-one.

Sample Large Group Debrief Questions:
1. What was hard or easy about being the parent organizer?
2. What were some good techniques that you observed in the parent organizers in your group?
3. Were you able to discover the self-interest of the parent when you were the parent organizer?
4. Do you think you would be able to do a one-on-one with someone in your community soon?

Closing statements:

- One-on-ones are a give-and-take process of listening, persuading and asking.
- One-on-ones are not everyday conversation—they are special. There is an urgent problem we are working to solve, and therefore we want to learn what is important to people right away. We are depending on their openness and honesty, and therefore we must be open and honest about who we are and our agenda.
- We are not trying to trick or coerce anyone to taking an action, or convince them that our plan to win will immediately solve a distinct problem they may have. We are, however, trying to inspire people to build collective power to make things better in the schools, and using the one-on-one as a tool to identify people who are ready to take action.
Community Organizing

“I think it’s important to believe in yourself and when you feel like you have the right idea, to stay with it. And of course, it all depends upon the cooperation of the people around.”

—ROSA PARKS

WHAT IS IT?

Community organizing is a process by which disempowered people are brought together to act in their common self-interest. Community organizing values people working together for common ends, and recognizes the power of collective action. Community organizations focus on building the power of the people by giving them appropriate support, resources and opportunity to take collective action.

WHO DOES IT?

Disadvantaged or disenfranchised groups, such as various ethnic and racial groups, low-income communities, youth, women, etc., use community organizing to fight for fairness and equity. Community organizing reaches out to and involves people who have not been served well by societal institutions and, often times, who aren’t voting or don’t believe that their voices count.

Organizations that use community organizing as their central strategy come in all shapes and sizes. However, they share the elements listed below:

• They enable grassroots people—those who are directly affected by the issue, not the government, business, academics, or the media—to set their own priorities.
• They help their members and constituents to develop skills and know-how to act on those priorities.
• They seek to have an impact by changing public and private policies and priorities to become more responsive to the needs of the people affected by the problem.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Community organizers create popular movements by building a large base of concerned folks, mobilizing these community members to act, and developing leadership from and relationships among the people involved. Some of the activities that are most common include:

• Research and analysis
• Political education
• Direct action
• Negotiation
• Media advocacy
• Base-building

Base-building involves recruiting and engaging new people, keeping current members motivated and involved, and deepening member participation. The most effective method to do this is through one-on-one discussions.

HOW DOES COMMUNITY ORGANIZING RELATE TO PARENTS?

Parents throughout the country use methods of community organizing in order to bring about the changes they believe are necessary on behalf of children in systems affecting children and families, such as public schools, child care, welfare, juvenile justice, etc.

Source: Community Organizing Toolbox: A Funder’s Guide to Community Organizing by Larry Parachini and Sally Covington
Historical Roots of Community Organizing

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Often influenced by movements, organizing strategies, and methods from around the world, community organizing develops in the United States as a response to oppressive conditions. Among individuals and groups that have inspired U.S. organizations are Mahatma Gandhi and the non-violent movement for India’s self-determination; Paolo Freire and the popular education movement in Brazil; and Nelson Mandela and the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. We encourage you to include these examples in any further study of organizing and social movements that your group may do.

1890—1920 SETTLEMENT HOUSES
Focus: Organizing in industrialized, urban, immigrant neighborhoods in order to build stronger communities. The dominant approach was organizing as social work, providing information, support, adult education and voter registration.

1920—1950 LABOR & COMMUNITY ORGANIZING
Focus: Fueled in part by the effects of the Great Depression and the influence of politically radical European immigrants, worker organizing boomed in this period. In the 1920s and 1930s, labor militants created unemployed councils to raise immediate demands for public relief as part of their effort to build a working class movement. They used a range of supplementary action tactics, including local and national demonstrations, hunger marches on employers and government officials, petition drives, street corner speakers, etc. In addition, to strengthen their movement efforts among the unemployed, they supported community-based tenant associations to fight evictions, farmers’ unions to fight foreclosures, veterans’ committees to demand bonus payments, cultural associations among immigrants and artists, share-croppers’ unions among Southern Blacks, and underground in-plant organizing committees. With these roots, the 1940s saw the emergence of contemporary community organizing in the work of Saul Alinsky, who brought together unions, community groups, and churches to improve the living conditions of thousands of packinghouse worker residents of Chicago neighborhoods. Alinsky’s model of community organizing continues today in the work of the Industrial Areas Foundation and many other groups.

1955—1980 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & PROGRESSIVE ACTIVISM
Focus: Widespread grassroots neighborhood organizing marked this period, in part as a response to ineffective and misguided post-World War II federal urban renewal and anti-poverty programs. Beginning with the Civil Rights Movement, this period saw enormous social upheaval and the rise of student, farmworker, anti-Vietnam war, women’s, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), and environmental movements. Progressive activism began taking place outside of the realm of traditional community organizing, building racial justice organizations with explicitly radical political agendas.
1980—PRESENT  PROFESSIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS & GLOBALIZATION

Focus: Community organizations become increasingly professionalized (rather than volunteer member-run, self-sustaining). Organizations which proactively address issues of race, class, gender, corporate concentration and global economy proliferate. This period also marks a new emergence of parent organizing and leadership development, as well as immigrant rights organizing. Solidarity organizing, such as supporting international struggles against apartheid in South Africa and against U.S. intervention in Central America, as well as more recent support for struggles for self-determination in Chiapas, Mexico and Palestine also takes place. Major mobilizations against the effects of globalization begin and continue.

Sources: Community Organizing Toolbox: A Funder's Guide to Community Organizing by Larry Parachini and Sally Covington & The Last Stop Sign, essay by Gary Delgado
Goals of a One-on-One

“There are some very simple things that have to be done in organizing, certain key things that nobody could get away without doing, like talking to people. If you talk to people, you’re going to organize them. But people aren’t going to come to you. You have to go to them. It takes a lot of work.”

—CESAR CHAVEZ

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

The first step of organizing is getting to know other parents. By introducing ourselves to other parents, sharing our advocacy work, and listening to parents share their experiences of parenting, interacting with schools, and living in their neighborhoods, we begin to build a base of trust that will be essential to any collective action for change.

FINDING THE SELF-INTEREST OF PARENTS

In order for parents to spend time working to make changes in schools, they have to see that their effort will affect their own personal life and improve things for their own family. In order to be able to work as a group, we first have to find out what parents care about the most for their own lives. We do this by asking parents about their concerns, dreams, and frustrations.

A good organizer is first of all one who asks good questions and listens well to others.

CHOOSING AN ISSUE THAT REPRESENTS YOUR CONSTITUENCY (YOUR PEOPLE)

Parent leaders and organizers remember (or better yet, write down!) what parents say in the one-on-one and report back the parent’s interests to their team of parent organizers. These ideas inform the development of a campaign that includes as many people as possible.

Having listened well, the organizer is able to express not only his or her own views and feelings but those of the group.

INSPIRING ACTION

When you provide a parent with new information that demonstrates the injustices and inequity confronting their children AND share that there is a way for them to take action to change the situation, parents can be inspired to become involved. When you talk to someone and overcome her fears, answer her questions, lift her morale, invite her to a meeting, or take her to the rally—that’s what organizing is all about.

Source: A Troublemaker’s Handbook by Dan La Botz
Scheduling the One-on-One

WHEN SCHEDULING A ONE-ON-ONE YOU SHOULD ACCOMPLISH THESE FOUR ITEMS.

1. Introduce yourself by stating your name

2. State who you represent: For example, “I am on the Parent Committee of (Name of School).”

3. State your purpose: “I am working with a group of parents to improve our school so our kids can learn and perform up to the standards of their grade level, and I would like to hear your opinions on this subject.”

4. Time and place to talk: Choose a time and a place that is comfortable for you and the parent to talk about their ideas, concerns, and how to get more involved. This could be over the phone, at the school parent center (if your school has one), a local café, anywhere you think both people would feel comfortable.

SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A one-on-one is about...</th>
<th>A one-on-one is not about...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Developing relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Listening to people's stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discovering self-interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Inviting participation</td>
<td>• Telling people what to do</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chit chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Solving people’s immediate needs/being counselors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One-on-One Practice

1. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Establish who you are and give her a reason to talk to you.

2. **LISTEN:** To get to know what is important to her, ask questions. Think of two questions to stimulate the parent to tell her story, so that you can learn the things you need to know in order to effectively move her to action (for example: How do you feel about your child’s progress in the class?)
   
   Question 1:

   Question 2:

3. **STATE THE PROBLEM:** Clearly state the problem you are working to change. (For example: The STAR report shows that our children are scoring lower than every other school in the area.) Ask if the parent agrees that something is unfair or wrong about the situation.
   
   The problem:

4. **SHARE THE VISION:** Share the vision for how things could be different, how they should be. (For example: Our children should be getting the best education possible, and we as parents should be able to know why there is a problem.)
   
   The vision:

5. **OUTLINE THE PLAN TO WIN:** Lay out an effective plan to achieve the vision, if you don’t have the whole detailed plan yet, lay out the first steps needed. (For example: We want the principal and teachers to meet with us to explain what the problem is, and we want parents to have a voice in deciding how we are all going to work together to improve the education outcomes for our children.)
   
   The plan:

6. **THE ASK:** Ask the parent to make a commitment to take action, to do something to solve the problem and achieve the vision. (For example: Will you sign this petition asking for a school wide meeting to discuss the results of the STAR report and figure out how we are going to take steps to improve?) Remember, “yes” means “yes” and only “no” means “no.”
   
   The “ask”: 
Feedback Sandwich

GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving feedback is an important skill in the one-on-one process used in community organizing. This model is referred to as the “Sandwich Model.”

You to begin by sharing what the person did well (slice #1). Next is the constructive feedback, which is considered the meat (or filling) of the process. What might the interviewer have done differently? The final part of the feedback ends with a positive affirmation (slice #2).

This model can be used in the workplace, with teachers, school administrators, spouses, and your children.

1ST Slice: Start by telling the interviewer what they did well. Whenever possible, link feedback to a behavior or skill. Be specific! For example: “You asked good open-ended questions.” Or: “You are a really good listener; you maintained good eye contact and body language.”

Avoid saying, “that’s good,” without saying what was good about it. Ask questions if you need clarification about the feedback.

Meat/Filling: Constructive feedback: be as specific as possible. Focus on a realistic change. For example: “You seemed uncomfortable with silence. I was thinking about my answer, and before I could answer the question you were asking me another.” If you have several items on which you’d like to give feedback, prioritize them and choose only one.

2nd Slice: Whenever possible, offer suggestions for how to do it differently. If the interviewer agrees, ask him or her what they can do differently to improve the process. This model works best when people are not defensive.

End your feedback with a positive affirmation.
**PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE**

The purpose of the next activity will be for the group to fill out their own action plan template based on one goal/demand that the group wants to take on in an organizing context.

Explain to the group that not all their activities will be planned for in an organizing context. Planning for a family fun night, fund raising, or volunteering in your child’s classroom do not need to be done in an organizing context. Ask the group to pick something related to reclaiming their rights as parents whose children and communities are entitled to quality public education.

**TRAINER TIP**

*Often, participants choose “Increasing parent involvement in our school” as the goal for this activity. State from the beginning that this cannot be the goal. Participants should think of a demand that they make of someone in power. Another way of helping participants understand the difference is asking: Why do you want to increase parent involvement? For what purpose?*

To help the group feel confident in developing their organizing action plan, provide a finished example. See handout.

**DIVIDE INTO ORGANIZATION GROUPS**

Depending on the group composition, the large groups can divide into either organization-specific or issue-specific small groups and begin to discuss and fill out their action planning templates.

Each small group should select someone to play the following roles:

- **Facilitator:** Someone to initiate the process and ensure that everyone is participating equally.
- **Scribe:** Someone to write down the group's ideas in the action planning template.
- **Reporter:** Someone to report back the main ideas discussed to the large group.

Trainers can sit in on the group's work time and answer questions, but should not come up with the plan for the participants.
LARGE GROUP DEBRIEF

The reporter from each group should spend a few minutes reporting their action plan to the large group. Use the Feedback Sandwich model to have other members provide feedback.

Trainers can also comment on items that are particularly strong in individual plans—such as a clear demand, an obvious target, or realistic commitments to do in the short term. Trainers can also sensitively challenge people to think more like an organizer if their demands are not related to systems reform, or if they don’t have a clear target.

TRAINER TIP

Every group is different. Thinking like an organizer is a big leap for a lot of groups. Pushing people too soon to completely shift may be too much. It’s better to ask a lot of questions, rather than tell people what they have done is wrong.
### Action Planning for School Reform

**Vision:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals (Demands)</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Tactics (Strategies)</th>
<th>Obstacles and Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An observable change in policy, practice, or behavior. Including: When it will be done Who will do it Review process</td>
<td>The target is the person who has the power to give you what you want. Targets can be divided into primary targets and secondary targets. A primary target might be the School Superintendent. A secondary target might be her assistant.</td>
<td>Should be fun! Should demonstrate real power! Members feel knowledgeable and comfortable doing it. Examples: Public Hearings Demonstrations Petition Drives/Letter Writing Educational Forums Civil Disobedience Boycotts</td>
<td>Who can we count on to support us publicly? Who will come out against us?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| I commit by DATE to: in order to find out whether our goal is something our constituency cares about deeply. | I commit by DATE to: in order to find out who has the power to give us what we need. | I commit by DATE to: in order to collect data that makes our case stronger. | I commit by DATE to: in order to find out who is an ally and/or an obstacle. |
**Action Planning for School Reform**

**Vision:**
An elementary school where children are excited to learn, parents have specific roles for supporting the learning process on and off campus, and the community – teachers, parents and other staff – nurture our children’s academic, physical, and emotional strengths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals (Demands)</th>
<th>Targets (DecisionMakers)</th>
<th>Tactics (Strategies)</th>
<th>Obstacles and Allies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hire three additional teaching assistants to work with children in small groups who are not performing at grade level. | Primary: District Superintendent  
Secondary: Principal | Write up a proposal for the need for hiring additional teaching assistants and present to principal and have all parents in the school sign it. | Obstacles: Maybe the Principal?  
Maybe the District?  
Allies: Maybe the Principal?  
Maybe Teachers?  
Parents? |
| I commit by May 10th to:  
Break up the phone directory of parents among our group and do one-on-ones with at least 10 parents each to test the idea. | I commit by May 10th to:  
Ask the principal for the hiring process.  
Review the school budget to see if there are any funds for hiring teaching assistants.  
in order to find out who has the power to give us what we need. | I commit by May 10th to:  
Go to the library to research if anything’s been written about the positive impact of more teaching assistants in the classroom.  
in order to collect data that makes our case stronger. | I commit by May 10th to:  
Do a one-on-one with the principal and test the idea.  
in order to find out who is an ally and/or an obstacle. |
### Action Planning for School Reform

**Vision:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals (Demands)</th>
<th>Targets (Decision Makers)</th>
<th>Tactics (Strategies)</th>
<th>Obstacles and Allies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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I commit by DATE to:  

- in order to find out whether our goal is something our constituency cares about deeply.
- in order to find out who has the power to give us what we need.
- in order to collect data that makes our case stronger.
- in order to find out who is an ally and/or an obstacle.

I commit by DATE to:

- Ask the principal for the hiring process.
- Review the school budget to see if there are any funds for hiring teaching assistants.
- Go to the library to research if anything's been written about the positive impact of more teaching assistants in the classroom.
- Do a one-on-one with the principal and test the idea.

I commit by DATE to:

- Break up the phone directory of parents among our group and do one-on-ones with at least 10 parents each to test the idea.
- In order to find out who has the power to give us what we need.
- In order to collect data that makes our case stronger.
- In order to find out who is an ally and/or an obstacle.
Closing

PURPOSE
• To summarize the days activities.
• To acknowledge participants’ work.
• To receive feedback from participants.

MATERIALS
• Chart paper and makers

SETUP AND PREPARATION
• Optional to write questions on chart paper (see questions below)

TOTAL TIME

INSTRUCTIONS

OPTION ONE
Thank the group for their participation. Possible questions for debriefing include:

1. Did we meet our goals and objectives? Please share how the process worked for you
2. What ideas have you started to formulate about action steps?
3. How did it feel to work with group of people you didn’t know or people that you did know?

OPTION TWO
Draw a line down the center of the chart paper. Ask participants, “What worked well for you and why?” Record their answers. Then ask, “Do you have suggestions for what could be improved?” Record those answers on the other side of the chart paper.

OPTION THREE
Ask all participants to stand up and hold hands. Trainers should stand across from one another. Ask participants to share one word that reflects their experience or feeling about the class tonight. You can share in order or “popcorn” style.

Once everyone has shared, one trainer will squeeze the hand of the person to the left or right, then that person should squeeze the hand of the person standing next to them until it goes full circle and comes back to the trainer who gave the first squeeze. Some trainers like to have everyone hold their hands up, say “Yes!” and let go.

TRAINER TIP
If possible, trainers should make themselves available to participants after class for 5 to 10 minutes to answer questions or hear additional feedback.
Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN), 2007
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