

Solid Foundation

Orientation to Solid Foundation

S **O** **L** **I** **D**

Foundation[®]

Reading • Studying • Respect • Responsibility

Implementing Solid Foundation

Solid Foundation connects families and schools in ways that enhance children's reading, studying, and responsible behavior. Solid Foundation helps build a strong school community—a community of teachers, parents, students, and school staff bound together by their intimate attachment to the school and common interest in the students served by the school.

The components of Solid Foundation are implemented over a two year period. By the third year, the school has integrated the Solid Foundation components into its “way of operating,” and continues to improve and enhance its policies, programs, and practices.

The implementation of Solid Foundation is coordinated through a School Community Council (SCC) and facilitated by a Parent Education Facilitator, a teacher or other professional staff member who works with the SCC, is a liaison to the faculty, trains parent leaders, and takes the lead with Solid Foundation activities. The SCC does not replace or duplicate the valuable services of existing parent-teacher organizations. The SCC is a coordinating team that helps build a strong school community around goals established in the School Community Compact. The SCC works in cooperation with other groups and organizations in the school, and the SCC's work is typically behind the scenes, planning activities and maintaining a focus on the mutual roles of the family and the school in promoting reading, studying, and responsible behavior.

The School Community Council:

- consists of the principal, Parent Education Facilitator (teacher or other professional staff member), counselor or social worker (if none is available, then a second teacher), and four parents; in schools with pre-school programs, a Pre-K teacher and the parent of a Pre-K student are added to the School Community Council.
- looks at the connections between the school and the families it serves,
- assists the Parent Education Facilitator in implementing Solid Foundation, and
- makes recommendations for strengthening the School Improvement Plan's emphasis on family-school connections.

In schools implementing Solid Foundation as part of Alliance for Achievement or another school improvement model, the facilitator for that model serves on the School Community Council as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Solid Foundation was developed by the Academic Development Institute (ADI), a non-profit organization that assists families, schools, and communities with children's academic and personal development.

Check out Solid Foundation on the following website: www.adi.org

A school functions as a community when those intimately attached to it—students, teachers, parents, personnel, volunteers—are in close association with one another, communicate with one another, and work together toward the common end of each child's academic and personal development. A school community's strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. The primary relationship is that between the teacher, student, and parents.

Orientation to Solid Foundation

What is Solid Foundation?

Solid Foundation is a blueprint to build a school community, engaging parents in the learning lives of their children and strengthening the connections among members of the school community. Reading, studying, and responsible behavior are Solid Foundation's focal points. The School Community Council (SCC) guides the implementation of the Solid Foundation components over a two-year period, after which the SCC is well-equipped to continue and to enhance the initiatives that have been established.

What are Solid Foundation's goals?

- **Reading.** Every child will learn to *read well, read often, and enjoy reading* through a focused alliance of family support and powerful classroom instruction.
- **Studying.** Every child will *become a self-directed learner* through teaching that incorporates study skills, homework practices that build study habits, and parental guidance.
- **Respect & Responsibility.** Every child will *develop a sense of responsibility and respect* for self and others through consistent direction and support from the family and the school.
- **Community.** The *school will function as a community* of its constituents—parents, students, teachers, and other school personnel.

Why is Solid Foundation important?

A section in the SCC Resources called *Parents and Learning* provides a research base for Solid Foundation, explaining the vital role parents play in children's learning and the importance of a strong sense of community to a school's effectiveness. The research only confirms what parents and teachers already know. Parents and teachers will also attest to the central importance of Solid Foundation's goals. Reading is the door to all other learning. A child's motivation to learn, skill at learning, and solidly-formed study habits will propel success in school and beyond school. Respect and responsibility are learned behaviors, linked to the child's social and emotional health, and necessary to a productive learning environment. Children are most likely to become avid readers, skilled learners, and respectful and responsible human beings when they are part of a community of people working together on their behalf.

What is a Parent Education Facilitator?

In each Solid Foundation school, a teacher or other professional staff member serves as the Parent Education Facilitator, facilitating the implementation of Solid Foundation. The Parent Education Facilitator:

- Is a member of the School Community Council.
- Helps teachers effectively use the Reading School-Home Links (K-3).
- Recruits, trains, and supervises parents who serve as group leaders for the parent courses.
- Oversees the implementation of Solid Foundation components.
- Maintains a Parent Education Facilitator's binder, which will be submitted when the school applies to become a Certified School Community.

What is a school community?

A school functions as a community when those intimately attached to it—students, teachers, parents, personnel, volunteers—are in close association with one another, communicate with one another, and work together toward the common end of each child's academic and personal development. A school community's strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. The primary relationship is that between the teacher, student, and parents.

What is a School Community Council?

The School Community Council—consisting of the principal, Parent Education Facilitator (a teacher or other professional staff member), counselor or social worker (or a second teacher), and four parents—meets twice each month to connect families and communities with the school's learning goals and to provide the necessary support for all students. In schools with Pre-K programs, a Pre-K teacher and Pre-K parent are also included on the School Community Council. In schools implementing Solid Foundation as part of Alliance for Achievement or another school improvement model, the facilitator for that model serves on the School Community Council as an ex officio, non-voting member. The School Community Council is guided by the School Community Council Planning Guide. All of the Solid Foundation activities are scheduled and planned by the School Community Council.

How does Solid Foundation affect children's reading, studying, and sense of responsibility?

Reading. Reading is a skill that is taught by teachers at school and reinforced by parents at home. Reading is also a habit that is established when children find pleasure in reading, are encouraged to read, and take the time to read. Parents play a big role in helping children establish the habit of reading by first reading to them, then listening to them read, and by talking about reading with them. Word games, rhyming activities, alphabet games, and "word sounds" are important steps toward reading that parents take with their children. Continuing to show an interest in the child's reading, and talking with the child about reading, further solidifies the habit of reading. Solid Foundation helps the school enlist parents in the campaign to help all children read well, read often, and enjoy reading.

Studying. Our goal for all students is that they will acquire the skills, habits and desire to take responsibility for their learning and pursue learning with curiosity, pleasure and discipline. Like reading, homework is a habit. It is a habit that starts early, requires discipline, and becomes ingrained when it is a part of a child's daily routine. Homework extends learning time beyond the school day, provides the opportunity for children to practice what they have learned at school, and helps children learn how to learn. Solid Foundation helps the school clarify its homework policies and practices so that teachers, parents and students all understand their roles. Solid Foundation provides materials that supplement the teacher's regular homework and guide parents in building children's reading skills at home. Solid Foundation teaches parents how to establish the conditions at home that are most conducive to their children's studying and homework.

Respect and Responsibility. Children learn to respect themselves and others when they are treated with respect and when they are expected to treat others with respect. The same is true of their sense of responsibility; it is acquired both by seeing others act responsibly and by being expected to act responsibly. Respect and responsibility cannot be learned only at school; they are, in fact, best learned in the context of the home, where children's values are primarily acquired. Solid Foundation establishes an ongoing conversation between parents, teachers and students that makes respectful and responsible behavior everyone's business.

How does Solid Foundation fit with what the school is already doing?

Solid Foundation is designed to supplement what the school is already doing. Solid Foundation provides focused strategies that fit within a framework for an effective school community. Let's look at the building blocks of a school community. We will see how Solid Foundation fits alongside other activities the school provides to help students, teachers and parents work in unison towards every student's school success.

Does Solid Foundation create a lot of new activities?

For its first several months, the SCC will lay important groundwork for activities that will be purposeful and focused on goals. This early phase of planning and getting policies in order may seem to lack in "activity," if activity means events. But when the cycle of annual activities is implemented, they will be based on sound preparation. More important than the number of activities is the quality of activities and their relationship to academic goals for students. Parent involvement in Solid Foundation has more to do with parents' involvement with their children at home than the frequency with which they are involved at the school.

What are Solid Foundation's Building Blocks for a School Community?

In a school community, students, parents, teachers, administrators, and staff all play important roles in helping all students succeed. The building blocks of a school community are:

- **Shared Leadership** — parents, teachers, and administrators together—especially where the responsibilities of the school and home overlap
- **Goals and Roles** — working toward educational goals (standards) for all students; teachers, parents, and students all have a role to play in every child's success
- **Policies and Practices** — based on research and promoting the idea of a learning community
- **Communication** — an ongoing conversation, two-way communication between home and school, and among members of the school community
- **Education** — a learning community for everyone, including parents and teachers
- **Connections** — face-to-face association; forming common understanding; common experience
- **Continuous Improvement** — continuous improvement through assessment of effectiveness

Let's look at the table on the following page and see how Solid Foundation adds to what the school already does to build a strong and effective school community. The first column lists the "building blocks" of a school community. In the second column, write a few of the things the school already does that are related to the "building blocks." Then we will examine the components of Solid Foundation that will add to the good things the school is already doing .

No one knows a child better or cares about the child more than the parents. Sharing leadership among parents, teachers, and administrators brings those who know the most about the child together with those who know most about the child's education.

Solid Foundation's Building Blocks for a School Community

Building Block For School Community	What Our School Is Already Doing
Shared Leadership —parents, teachers, and administrators together—especially where the responsibilities of the school and home overlap	
Goals and Roles — working toward educational goals (standards) for all students; teachers, parents, and students all have a role to play in every child's success	
Policies and Practices —based on research and promoting the idea of a learning community	
Communication —an ongoing conversation; two-way communication between home and school; and among members of the school community	
Education —a learning community for everyone, including parents and teachers	
Connection —face-to-face association; forming common understanding; common experience	
Continuous Improvement —continuous improvement through assessment of effectiveness	

What is the role of the school and its School Community Council?

The primary purpose of Solid Foundation is to build a school community, uniting the efforts of parents, teachers and students so that all children establish a solid foundation of reading, studying, and responsible behavior. The School Community Council is the steering committee for the school community, the coordinating body, the group that maintains a focus on children's learning. The School Community Council looks at the connections between the school and the families it serves, assists the Parent Education Facilitator in implementing Solid Foundation, and makes recommendations for strengthening the School Improvement Plan's emphasis on family-school connections. The SCC must enlist the support and assistance of the parent organization and faculty to carry out its activities. The SCC does not typically involve itself with fund-raising. The SCC does not sponsor activities in its own name, but on behalf of the school as a whole. The SCC brings people together, unifies, creates synergy and good will.

What is the "ongoing conversation"?

Solid Foundation schools use every opportunity for parents, teachers and students to talk about their mutual roles in children's learning. The Compact, learning standards, and homework policy are good tools for discussion. The open house agenda and parent-teacher-student conference procedures ensure

that parents, teachers and students have opportunities for focused conversation.

Parents appreciate knowing:

- how their children are doing,
- what the school is doing,
- what the school expects of parents, and
- how parents may contribute to the operation and improvement of the school.

This conversation begins when parents first register their child for pre-school or kindergarten and continues throughout the child's career at the school. At each open house, the principal and teachers talk about the responsibilities outlined in the Compact, discuss homework and the homework policy, and talk openly about what children need from their parents to do their best in school. The principal and teachers also encourage parents to participate in the courses the school offers for them (*Reading at Home, Studying at Home, Raising Good Kids, Ready, Here I Come!*). In fact, all the components of Solid Foundation need reinforcement with parents. Most important of all is the conversation between the teacher, the parents, and the student. This conversation is an opportunity to consistently reinforce the school's goals for students, and its expectations of students, parents and teachers. Frank conversation, encouragement and practical suggestions help engage parents from the early grades on up, and also establish the relationship between parents and teachers.

Beyond the implementation of the components of Solid Foundation, the school continues to grow in the quality and consistency of its relationship with parents. Accomplishing this "high-quality relationship" requires:

- discussion at faculty meetings,
- in-service training for teachers,
- a strong and consistent message to parents that the school has high expectations of them,
- opportunities for parents to contribute their ideas and energies to the school.

In turn, parents will expect much of their school, contribute to its betterment, and children will benefit.

When does the School Community Council meet?

The School Community Council meets twice each month during the school year and additionally as necessary.

How much paperwork is involved?

There are three kinds of documentation:

- working documents developed by the School Community Council that will be used within the school community—School Community Compact, homework policy, parent-teacher-student conference procedures;
- planning documents that help the School Community Council and Parent Education Facilitator prepare for the Solid Foundation activities; and
- program evaluation tools that help improve Solid Foundation and provide feedback to the school about its progress.

The "paperwork" is spread over a period of time and is very important.

Preview of Solid Foundation Components

Solid Foundation components are activities or program elements organized within the building blocks for a school community. These components add to what the school is already doing. Probably, the school already provides some of the components below, and the SCC will be able to build upon existing successes. Typically, the activities will be carried out in cooperation with a parent organization or other group. The SCC is a planning and coordinating body, but it needs a lot of help to get things done.

Solid Foundation’s Building Blocks and Components	
Building Block For School Community	Solid Foundation Components
Shared Leadership —parents, teachers, and administrators together—especially where the responsibilities of the school and home overlap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Community Council • Parent Education Facilitator • School Community Constitution
Goals and Roles — working toward educational goals (standards) for all students; teachers, parents, and students all have a role to play in every child’s success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Community Compact • Learning Standards
Policies and Practices —based on research and promoting the idea of a learning community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework Policy • Parent-Teacher-Student Conference Procedures • Open House Plan • A Welcoming Place
Communication —an ongoing conversation; two-way communication between home and school; and among members of the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-Child Interaction (Links) • Home Visits and Home Gatherings
Education —a learning community for everyone, including parents and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Workshops • Parent Courses • Family Resource Library • Parent Workshop
Connection —face-to-face association; forming common understanding; common experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Nights • Connecting to Community Resources (3rd Year Option)
Continuous Improvement —continuous improvement through assessment of effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threshold Analysis • Self-Rating Forms • Homework Monitoring; • Degree of Implementation

Solid Foundation follows a natural, annual cycle with three phases. In Phase 1, the building blocks of Shared Leadership, Goals and Roles, and Policies and Practices lay the groundwork of careful planning for the next school year. In Phase 2—Communication, Education, and Connection, the SCC is implementing events and programs. In Phase 3—Continuous Improvement—the SCC evaluates the effectiveness of its efforts so that it can constantly improve.

Shared Leadership

What is the School Community Council?

The School Community Council is a representative body—including the principal, teachers and parents—that guides the implementation of Solid Foundation; focuses on students' reading, studying and responsible behavior; and tends to the sense of community among the school's constituents. The SCC works with and through other school groups to implement policies and conduct activities.

What is the Parent Education Facilitator?

The Parent Education Facilitator is a teacher or other professional staff member who assumes the responsibility of serving on the SCC and facilitating the Solid Foundation activities planned by the SCC. Especially, the Parent Education Facilitator organizes parent education activities. Beyond implementation of Solid Foundation, the Parent Education Facilitator continues to be the point person in the school's parent education activities.

What is the School Community Constitution?

The School Community Council develops a constitution to guide its work. The constitution spells out the SCC's areas of activity, the terms of office of its members, and its relationship to the school's governance system and other groups.

Goals and Roles

What is the School Community Compact?

The word "Compact" brings to mind the Mayflower Compact, the agreement that the pilgrims signed before landing in New England so that everyone understood their responsibilities to one another in the new settlement. A School Community Compact is a document that spells out some of the basic responsibilities of students, teachers and parents so that students will achieve the school community's learning goals.

Many schools have developed Compacts that outline the responsibilities of students, teachers, parents, and sometimes principals. Title 1 schools often call these "Learning Compacts." Some schools use the U.S. Department of Education's "Reading Compact" process.

Solid Foundation schools that already have Compacts do not develop additional Compacts. In fact, any school needs only one Compact, whatever it is called. If the school has no Compact, the sample Compact in this Planning Guide provides a model for Solid Foundation schools. If the school already uses a Compact, that Compact can be modified to include the essential Solid Foundation elements. A process is provided in this Planning Guide for the School Community Council to develop or review and refine its Compact.

What are learning standards?

Learning standards are established by states to provide a gauge of what children should know and be able to do at various grade levels. The standards guide districts and schools in establishing their curricula. They guide teachers in planning their instruction. Learning standards are often accompanied by benchmarks and objectives that provide greater detail. When parents understand learning standards, they are better able to support their children's school progress. The SCC plans ways to acquaint parents with learning standards.

Policies and Practices

What is a homework policy?

We know that homework is a powerful means for increasing children's learning. We know that homework helps children form the habits of independent study. We know that homework is the school's primary extension into the home. We also know that homework is a source of conflict between many parents and children. Homework is also the topic of complaint many parents raise against schools. Parents who accept the responsibility for seeing that their children attend to their homework are often perplexed that homework practices vary so widely from teacher to teacher. Parents are confused when some educators tell them that homework is important but some teachers do not assign it. They find that some teachers grade homework and some do not. In some classes, homework is counted toward the report card grade, and in some classes it is not. Parents are surprised to hear from their children that they have completed their homework at school. What is homework if it is done at school rather than at home?

Because a school community wants its teachers, parents, and students to work in harmony, with clearly understood roles in the education of children, homework is a topic that every school community must address. Because school communities are concerned with children's habit formation, they know that positive habits are best built with consistent reinforcement from home and school. Independent study is an important habit, and homework can be a strong tool for helping children acquire the habit of study.

This Planning Guide provides some background information on the research related to homework and gives the School Community Council a process for developing or refining the school's homework policy.

What is an open house plan?

Sure all schools have open houses, or back-to-school nights, or pot lucks or other times when all parents are invited to the school. Solid Foundation doesn't add new events, but helps the School Community Council look at its open houses and plan an agenda that makes the best use of the time spent with parents. An open house is a perfect time to discuss the school's Compact, homework policy, and, most important of all, to talk about what children need from their parents in order to do their best in school. An open house is also a great time to inform parents of courses available to them and why it is important for them to take advantage of these courses.

What are parent-teacher-student conference procedures?

All schools offer opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to review their children's progress in school. Conferences are most successful when parents and teachers are aware of the agenda in advance. In Solid Foundation schools, conferences are a perfect time to discuss everyone's role in helping all students succeed, so reviewing the Compact and homework policy are standard items on the agenda. This Planning Guide also provides a sample agenda for a process whereby each conference ends with Next Steps for the student, the parents, and the teacher. A copy of the conference summary is kept in a file for the student so that it can be reviewed at the next conference, even if that conference is the next school year with a new teacher. Giving students a role in the conference is also a good idea, and many schools use student-led conferences, especially in the upper grades.

What is a welcoming place?

Schools must be safe places, and they must also be welcoming places for parents who visit. Welcoming policies and procedures are a first step. Training for all school staff in how to greet visitors and how to treat parents is a second step. The SCC ensures that the school is a friendly and welcoming place.

Communication

What is parent-child interaction?

Nothing we do is more important than encouraging interactions between parents and their children that focus on studying, reading, and responsibility. Compacts, policies, and activities do not improve children's lives unless they result in changed behaviors. When parents interact with their children at home in ways that support their children's learning at school, this is the most important of all *parental involvement*.

Reading School-Home Links are one way to focus parent-child interactions on reading. The Reading School-Home Links are take-home activities for K-3 students to complete with the interaction of their parents. The teacher selects the Link that most closely fits what the child is currently learning at school. In other words, the teacher determines which activities are used and when. The Links, then, connect the parent-child interaction with classroom instruction.

Reading School-Home Links provide an added dimension to regular homework in that they:

- encourage reading-related interactions between parents and children,
- reinforce reading skills children are learning at school, and
- communicate to parents what children are learning at school.

There are other ways to encourage parents to spend time with children to build reading habits, study habits, and respectful, responsible behavior.

1. Teachers give homework assignments that require students to interview their parents.
2. Schools include parents in their shared reading projects.
3. Students maintain assignment notebooks that parents review and sign.
4. At the end of a school day, the teachers ask students to write a sentence or two about what they learned that day and take it home to discuss with their parents.

The SCC plans “common experiences” that encourage parent-child interaction.

What are home visits?

Home visits enable a school to reach parents, especially those who might not come to school, with a welcoming message, materials, and helpful advice. In elementary schools, visits are typically made to the homes of second graders, often in spring and early summer, to give the children books and the parents information about summer reading. Visits to the homes of incoming kindergartners are strongly recommended. The home visit packets also include a letter from the principal, tips for parents, and information about school and community programs. The visits are made by school staff—parent liaisons or teachers—or community members employed only for this purpose. Training is provided for the home visitors, materials for their packets, and a system to track the results.

Education

What is the Parents and Learning workshop for teachers?

The Parent & Learning workshop is a 2½-hour workshop for the whole faculty. The workshop covers the research on parents' role in children's learning and applies that research to a variety of school practices, including homework. The workshop also provides teachers with a manual filled with practical tools for communication with parents.

What is the Working Together for Student Success workshop for teachers and parents?

Working Together for Student Success is a 2½-hour workshop that includes ways teachers and parents can encourage self-directed learning (motivation, learning skills and study habits) and explain the family's role in encouraging an independent desire and discipline for learning.

What are the School-Home Communication Tools for Teachers?

At the Parents & Learning workshop, teachers receive a manual filled with communication tools developed by teachers in a variety of school settings. The materials are organized to allow each teacher to identify specific goals for improving communication with parents. Each teacher develops an action plan for implementation of the communication tools, consistent with that teacher's self-chosen goals.

What are the Solid Foundation courses for parents?

Solid Foundation courses help parents build their capacity to provide the support necessary to their children's success in school. The Solid Foundation parent courses are taught by previously-trained parents to other parents, in small groups (10 or less per group), that meet once a week for 90 minutes for three consecutive weeks. In each session, parents acquire new information, share activities, and go home with tasks to complete with their children between sessions. They discuss their experiences with their children and learn from each other. The lessons are research-based, structured, and uplifting. Parents form bonds among themselves and strong attachments to the school.

Solid Foundation schools receive a CD with masters for the materials for all the courses so the courses can be offered as frequently as the school desires. Materials are available in English and Spanish versions. The Parent Education Facilitator coordinates the courses and parents serve as Group Leaders. Training includes a process for recruiting parents, coverage of the curriculum, and a method for evaluating the results.

The Solid Foundation courses are an excellent way to help parents build their skills while also getting to know other parents and strengthening their connection to the school.

Ready, Here I Come! is a course for parents of pre-schoolers. The course teaches 15 family activities that help children develop gross-motor skills, fine-motor skills, language, visual discrimination, and memory. All of these skills are presented within the context of play, everyday tasks, and preparation for school.

Reading at Home includes activities for the whole family, and is targeted especially for parents of children in kindergarten through third grade. Content includes storytelling, family reading activities, interactive reading, word-sound exercises, and methods for reading to learn.

Studying at Home includes activities for the whole family and is targeted for parents of children in fourth through twelfth grade. Content includes study schedules, study place, talking about learning, assignment notebooks, study time, and family meetings.

Raising Good Kids examines the sentiments of sympathy and fairness and considers the ways families shape children's self-respect, respect for other people, and sense of responsibility. Lessons include discussions of characteristics parents want to see in their children, ways adults model admirable behavior, and practical ways to instill good manners in children.

What is group leader training?

Group leader training takes about four hours and can be conducted all at once, or in two shorter sessions. Following the group leader training, parents are recruited and attend the three weekly sessions. To attract good numbers of parents for the courses, however, recruitment is really a year-round activity. Teachers talk about the courses during conferences with parents. The courses are discussed at the open house. Information about the courses is included in newsletters.

What is a Family Resource Library?

A Family Resource Library is a section of the school's library, a shelf of materials in the parents' room, or even a cart in the hallway that includes books and other materials that parents may check out. The materials include books on parenting, family educational activities and educational games, and storybooks for reading to children. In elementary schools, the Family Resource Library also includes storybooks with question cues pasted in them to prompt interactive reading. These books are first created at the *Storybooks and Storytelling Workshop*, and teachers and parents can prepare more interactive storybooks to add to the library.

What are Parent Workshops?

Parent Workshops are one-time events, usually for a couple hours, for parents interested in the topic that is offered. For elementary schools, Solid Foundation recommends *Storybooks and Storytelling* and *Building Blocks for Reading Skills*. Middle schools and high schools may survey parents for topics related to studying, reading, and responsibility. High schools may survey parents for topics, which may include career preparation and getting ready for college. Workshops may be offered in conjunction with a Family Night or by themselves.

Workshop I: Storybooks and Storytelling

Interactive reading means talking about the book, asking questions, and sharing thoughts. A parent or teacher helps the child learn by talking about the words, pictures, story plot, and even the design of the book. This special sharing time expands on what the book has to offer to increase learning, communication, and family experiences.

Workshop II: Building Blocks for Reading Skills

This workshop demonstrates word games and other activities parents can use with their children as the children grow in their reading skills. The activities are organized by the National Reading Panel's five areas of reading instruction. Materials may be placed in the Family Resource Library. This workshop may also be offered in conjunction with Family Reading Night or as a stand-alone workshop for a group of parents and teachers.

Connection

What are Family Nights?

Most schools are familiar with Family Reading Nights at which parents, students, and teachers gather at school to read together, listen to stories, present skits related to a theme from literature, host guest readers from the community, and celebrate the joys of reading. In the Solid Foundation project, Family Reading Nights may include any or all of these activities, as determined by the school. In addition, parents are taught the importance of interactive reading with small children and continued discussion of reading with children of all ages. Family Nights may also be planned for other academic areas, especially in middle schools and high schools.

Continuous Improvement

What is the School Community Index and Threshold Analysis?

The School Community Index is a detailed report based on the results of surveys administered to teachers and parents at the beginning of the school's implementation of Solid Foundation and again two years later. The Threshold Analysis guides the School Community Council in applying the survey results to its work. The school carefully documents every aspect of Solid Foundation so that initiatives can be evaluated and refined.

What is the Solid Foundation degree of implementation?

Once a year, the SCC completes a brief survey that helps calculate the degree to which the Solid Foundation components have been implemented.

What is a self-rating form?

The responsibilities outlined in the School Community Compact should mean something personal to every teacher, student and parent. The SCC creates three self-rating forms—one for teachers, one for parents, and one for students. Each form lists the responsibilities from the Compact and asks the teacher, student or parent to apply a self-rating. How am I doing with this responsibility? The forms are completed anonymously, of course, but are collected so that the SCC can tally the results and see where help may be needed.

What is homework monitoring?

Homework is the primary point of contact between the school and the home. A clear homework policy helps parents and students know what is expected of them. The SCC establishes a clear homework policy, and then it monitors the assignment and completion of homework for one month each year to see how the policy is working.

What is an effectiveness matrix?

An effectiveness matrix is a planning tool, a way to take a good look at the SCC's goals (as stated in the Compact) and examine how effectively the goals are being achieved. Developing an effectiveness matrix for each goal helps the SCC improve its planning and the quality of its activities.

What is a certified school community?

When the SCC has implemented all the Solid Foundation components, it submits the Parent Education Facilitator's binder and an updated degree of implementation. If everything is in order, the school receives a plaque at a special ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments.

Academic Development Institute

Founded in 1984

Assisting families, schools and communities with children's academic and personal development.

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. *Those* children become *our* children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



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