

The Parent Educator

A Newsletter for Parent Educators Throughout the State of Arkansas

Special Issue
on the
*No Child Left
Behind Act*

What *No Child Left Behind* Means for You

The *No Child Left Behind Act* gives parents new tools to help their children learn and to help improve America's schools. *No Child Left Behind* is designed to highlight success and shine a light on failure. It will give them objective data. By 2007, students will be tested in science, reading, and math. Many parents have children who are getting straight A's but find out too late that their child is not prepared for college. That's just one reason why *No Child Left Behind* gives parents objective data about how their children are doing.

The new law took effect in the fall of 2002. That's why it is critical that parents and educators are informed about the new reforms and improvements brought about by *No Child Left Behind*. Here is what it means.

Begins Early To Prevent Children From Having Learning Difficulties

Children who read well in the early grades are far more successful in school in later

years. Children who enter school with pre-reading and language skills are more likely to learn to read well. It's never too early to start talking with and reading to babies. *No Child Left Behind* does not waste one moment of a child's life before beginning his or her education.

Gives Children and Parents A Lifeline

The federal government promises that children will no longer be left behind in schools. Every child will have the opportunity for a quality education that prepares him or her for the future. Parents will know when their child is falling behind, and they will have new options if their child's school isn't meeting their needs. Schools that

don't improve or meet state standards must use their federal funds to get children extra help, that might mean transferring to a better school in the area or paying for "supplemental services" in the community such as tutoring, after-school programs, remedial classes, or summer school.

Hands Parents More Information On Their Child's Progress



Under the *No Child Left Behind Act*, each state will measure every child's progress in grades three through eight in reading and math. *No Child Left Behind* gives districts new flexibility and freedom with federal funds so children with disabilities can be better served. This information will be passed on to parents.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LOOK WHAT THEY HAVE FOR YOU

The Parent Educator is published by the Center for Effective Parenting which is a collaborative program of the Jones Center for Families, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Arkansas Children's Hospital. This newsletter is supported by funds from a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the sponsoring organizations. Offices are located in Little Rock: 800 Marshall Street, Slot 512-4, Little Rock, AR 72202 and in Northwest Arkansas: 614 E. Emma, Suite 113, Springdale, AR 72764. All editorial inquiries should be addressed to Marti Genge at (479) 751-6166. All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be used or reproduced (except "Just For You") in any manner whatsoever without written permission

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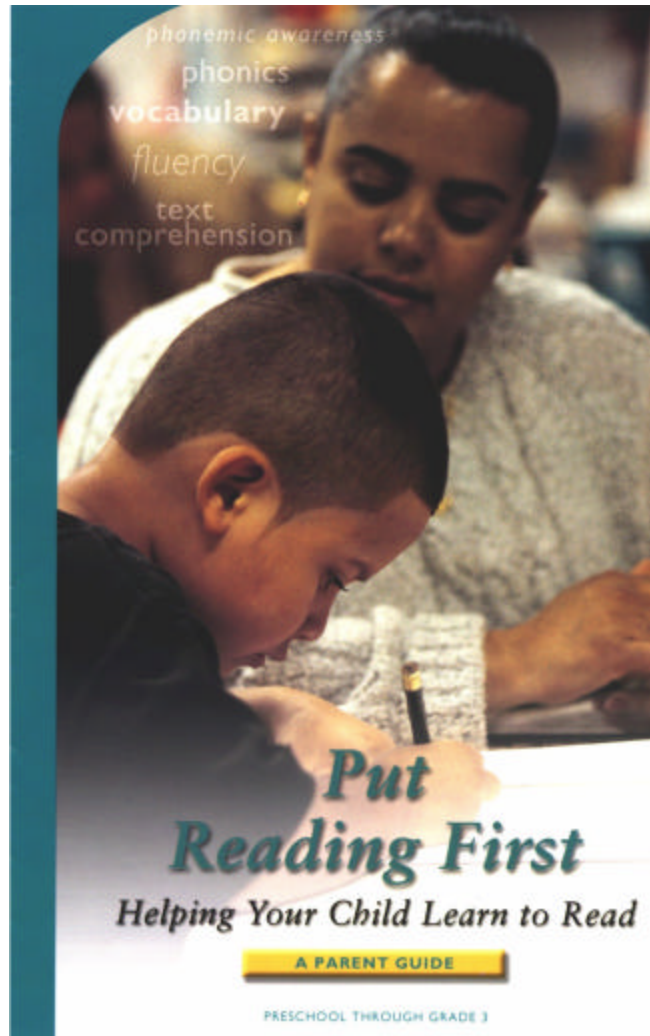
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Success in school starts with reading. When children become good readers in the early grades, they are more likely to become better learners throughout their school years and beyond. Learning to read is hard work for children. Fortunately, research is now available that suggests how to give each child a good start in reading. Becoming a reader involves the development of important skills, such as sharing conversations with a child over meal times and other times families are together.

This brochure was published to help parents put reading first.

The Partnership for Reading, a collaborative effort of the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the U.S. Department of Education have made evidence-based reading research available to educators, par-



ents, policy makers, and others with an interest in helping all people learn to read well.

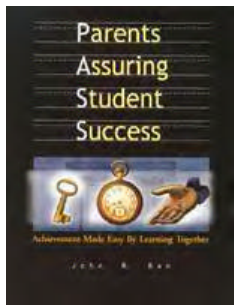
To obtain additional copies of this brochure, contact the National Institute for Literacy at ED Pubs, Po Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. 1-800-228-8813. Fax 301-470-1244. Email edpuborders@edpubs.org. Or download the document at www.nifl.gov.

Brochures are offered for preschool through grade 3 and older. ■



Let's Discuss

Parenting Program Review



Parents Assuring Students Success (PASS) is a stairway to greater family involvement in a child's education. Its main focus is to draw home and

school, parent and child, closer together to create a "connection" that has proven to lead to increased student performance in the classroom. Developed in an urban school system in Northwest Indiana, this program successfully motivated and involved low-income families in their children's education. These parents took greater responsibility for their children's learning after discovering how to teach the study skills and values necessary for success in school. Once schooled at home in specific techniques for learning, children should perform at a higher level in the classroom and their test scores, motivation, and self-esteem all should rise.

Pathfinder Family Center-North Dakota

PASS is a step-by-step manual, widely used across the United States, that consists of two major parts. The first part teaches parents what it takes to become an efficient learner. Here, the focus is on study skills, including the principles and characteristics of well-known learning strategies. The second part gives parents the opportunity to acquire skills in teaching and reinforcing critical study habits at home.

The eight easy-to-follow modules can be used by parents independently or in a workshop setting. PASS will help parents improve their ability to:

- 1 enhance a positive attitude to-

ward learning

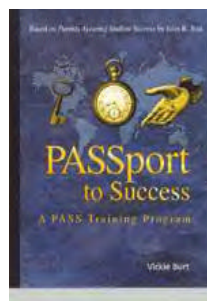
- 2 provide a productive learning environment

PASS will also help parents teach their children how to:

- 1 manage time, listen, and concentrate
- 2 manage homework and study textbooks
- 3 prepare for and take tests
- 4 take notes and organize information
- 5 improve their memory and thinking skills
- 6 improve their reading skills

You can use the guidelines, strategies, forms, and worksheets in PASS to give parents the knowledge and confidence to improve their child's study skills. PASS will help parents become active and motivating "learning engineers" in their children's lives, assuring their success as students. 151 pages, paperback (8 1/2" x 11"), grades K-12 \$24.95

PASSport to Success is the kit that provides you with the guidance and materials you will need to conduct parent training sessions based on the book *Parents Assuring Student Success* (PASS) by John R. Ban.



Each kit contains a Trainer's Manual; a copy of *Parents Assuring Student Success* by John R. Ban; and a CD-ROM con-

taining a PowerPoint slide presentation and handouts that can be modified. These materials, coupled with your creativity, are all that are needed to teach parents to become active and motivating "learning engineers" in their children's lives.

The *PASSport to Success* training program is divided into 8 training modules: Parent Attitude, The Home Environment, Study Skills, Homework and Learning Expeditors, Note-Taking Skills, Preparing for Tests, Memory and Thinking Skills, and Reading Skills. These modules follow the same structure as the book *Parents Assuring Student Success*, which parents will use both during class and for at-home work.

You are encouraged to tailor your training sessions to the needs and interests of the parents you will be training. Each module includes:

- 1 **A Lesson Plan** with an overview and instructions for teaching each module
- 2 **Slides and notes** with snapshots of the PowerPoint slides and space for your notes
- 3 **Activities and Tips** for presenting the information in the module
- 4 **Additional Material**, such as handouts, games, signs, and surveys that you will need for each module

200-page trainer's manual (8 1/2" x 11"), 151-page parent manual (8 1/2" x 11"), CD-ROM with PowerPoint presentations, sample "passport" booklet \$179.00. And can be ordered through -

National Educational Service
Bloomington, IN
(888)763-9045 or (812)336-7700
Fax: (812) 336-7790
<http://www.nesonline.com/res/assuring.html>

Pass This On To Parents !

What No Child Left Behind Means for America's Families

Raising Standards

Everyone who spends time with children learns a vivid lesson: Children want to meet the expectations of adults. If these expectations are low, children will miss their true potential. When expectations are high, amazing progress can happen. Teachers, parents, grandparents, and neighbors should all challenge children to read well, to do advanced math, to learn history, and to understand science.

Well thought out standards should explain in plain language what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. They should set clear expectations so that teachers, parents, and communities can understand what should happen in the classroom. Families should ask their children's schools to explain what the standards are and what each child should be learning.

Families should encourage and challenge children to learn more every day. If your child fails at a task, don't make excuses-make a plan for accomplishing the task and work toward it together. Insist on high stan-



dards form your child, your child's school, and yourself.

Annual Testing

Just as you can't judge a book by its cover, you can't judge a school by its location or its design. Some rundown schools in poor areas are doing well at raising student performance, while some suburban schools with fancy athletic equipment and new science labs are not preparing many of their students well, especially their poor and minority students. The only sure way for parents to know how their children's schools are doing is to look at the information on student progress that all public schools must make available. The way schools will obtain that useful information is through standards-based assessments-or tests.

Taking a test is like going to a doctor for a checkup. A test can tell you what kind of help you need and where you need it most. It also gives your children a chance to show what they learned. If a state fails to use standardized tests, the state will have a hard time making sure no child is forgotten and no classroom is slipping through the cracks. The same is true for districts and schools. Through good testing, parents can learn which schools are doing the best. They can also discover the methods that work the best and encourage their use.

If Arkansas starts testing in reading and math, you can expect to get much more information every year on how your children are doing in school. Go over the information carefully, take note of your children's strengths and weaknesses, understand how their classes work and what their teachers



are doing, and talk to your children about how you can help them progress toward the academic standards set for their grade. One thing you may hear when people discuss testing is that teachers will "teach to the test." The important thing to remember is that each state must choose a test that matches what children are expected to learn. A well-designed test really measures those things a state wants every child to know and be able to do.

Looking At Progress

Another benefit of annual testing is that it allows us to identify successful schools. Previously, we looked mainly at average test scores for states and sometimes for districts. These scores gave us some information about school performance, but not the complete picture. Thanks to annual tests, we can look at a child's progress in each grade or class. We can consider how students perform from start to finish and can identify and reward schools that are truly helping their students make progress along the way.

For example, if children are neglected by a particular middle school, but their high school subsequently helps them catch up, the high school deserves recognition. Also, tests can help us find the problems that need

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No Child Left Behind Means To You cont. . .

(Continued from page 1)

Alerts Parents To Important Information On How Their Child's School Is Doing

No Child Left Behind gives parent's report cards so they can see which schools and districts are succeeding and why.



With this information, *No Child Left Behind* gives parents, community leaders, teachers, principals and elected leaders the information they need to improve schools.

Gives Resources To Teachers And Schools

The federal government promises schools will have the funding and resources they need to improve. Since 1994, federal spending on education has more than doubled. Federal spending on education will grow 29 percent with *No Child Left Behind*.

Puts Valuable Information Into The Hands Of Teachers

Measuring children's progress provides teachers with independent information about each child's strengths and weaknesses. With this knowledge, teachers can craft lessons to make sure each student meets or exceeds the standards.

Tells Parents And Principals How Well Instructional Program Are Working

Parents will know how well learning is occurring in their child's class. They will

have information about how well their child is progressing compared to other children.

Annual tests will give principals independent information about exactly how much progress each teacher's students have made, so they can also make good decisions about teacher needs.

Allows More Flexibility

No Child Left Behind gives schools more flexibility in how they spend taxpayer dollars. That means principals and administrators will spend less time filling out forms and less time dealing with federal red tape. It also means they will have more time to spend focusing on student progress.

Gives School Board Members And Superintendents Better Information On The Basics



No Child Left Behind ensures every child gets a solid and challenging curriculum aligned with rigorous academic standards. That's why it requires schools to use lessons and materials backed by sound, scientific research. ■

Reprinted with permission-U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Secretary, *What to Know & Where to Go, Parents' Guide to No Child Left Behind*, Washington, D.C. 2002

Special Education and No Child Left Behind

Undersecretary of Education Eugene W. Hickok admitted that the Education Department is still struggling with issues related to special education under the No Child Left Behind Act.

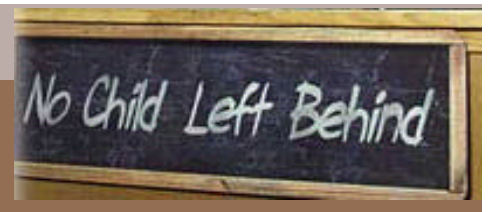
The law requires that all students be held to the same high standards, including students with disabilities. But many questions have arisen about how to ensure accountability for students with severe cognitive disabilities, in particular. Earlier, the department had proposed that in determining adequate progress, states be permitted to hold a small group of students -those with significant cognitive disabilities- to alternative achievement standards, rather than the same performance standards as those for other students. But the department suggested that group should not exceed 0.5 percent of all students. "To be honest with you, we did not come to closure on that issue," said Mr. Hickok, who noted that setting such a rigid ceiling might not make sense. "While it does have some validity, it seemed like almost too blunt an instrument," he said.

To make sure that students with disabilities are not excluded from state accountability systems, the final regulations require that the same grade-level content and achievement standards that apply to other students also apply to students who take alternative assessments. The department will soon publish a proposed exception to that policy for a small group of students with severe disabilities, and will seek public comment. The regulations also clarify that teachers of special and bilingual education who are providing instruction in core academic subjects must be "highly qualified" in the subjects they teach, such as English or mathematics. This could provide a challenge to many states, where special education teachers have not previously had to be certified in particular content areas. Mr. Hickok stated, "I think No Child Left Behind in and of itself represents a substantial attempt to improve education for students with disabilities." ■

Excerpt from Education Week article Final Rules Give States Direction, Little Flexibility December 4, 2002 Lynn Olson. You can find out more on this subject by going to www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov or Department of Education at www.ed.gov

What to Know & Where to Go

Questions and Answers about No Child Left Behind Act.



This article will help answer some questions about the Program No Child Left Behind. Please check out the web site www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov if you have more questions.

What is it? *No Child Left Behind* is Federal Education legislation to provide assistance to the neediest areas. It provides children in high poverty areas additional resources so that they will have an equal opportunity to obtain a high quality education.

Is it new?

Not really. In 1965, legislation was passed as a part of Lyndon B Johnson's War on Poverty for this same purpose and was called *Title I*. During the Clinton administration it was reauthorized under the *Improving America's School Act*. In 2002, it was reauthorized once again under the Bush administration and this time was called *The No Child Left Behind Act*. Each time this legislation is reauthorized the guidelines are changed to improve services.

How is *The No Child Left Behind Act* different from past legislation?

Several components of this act have changed:

- **Funding:** There has been a significant increase in federal education funding to more than \$422.1 billion for America's elementary and secondary schools.
- **State Established Standards:** States design their own standards and their own tests.
- **Accountability:** Every child in third through eighth grades will be tested and parents will be given report cards for every school - highlighting success and shining a light on failure.
- **Yearly Gains:** States must set clear goals and time frames, give parents information on academic achievement, and provide choices if their child's school fails.
- **Local Control & Flexibility:** Local communities and school districts will be empowered by having more discretion in using federal funds.
- **Good Teachers:** Teachers will be supported with the best research-based lessons and materials, and the best training.

- **Getting Help for Students:** Supplementary services will boost academic success.
- **Using Research-based Programs:** Only the best ideas with proven results will be introduced into the classroom.

How does "Expanded Parental Choice" work? Can my child transfer from a low-performing school?

Students attending a school that has been identified for improvement must be notified by the beginning of the school year that they have the option of transferring to another public school served by the district. Students will not be allowed to transfer into another low performing school and they can only transfer within their district, unless special arrangements have been made.

What if there is not enough space at the school of choice?

In this case, the lowest achieving students from the lowest income families will be given a priority.

What about transportation?

Districts are allowed to spend up to 10% of their Title I funds for transportation. However, if the school of origin improves their performance, the transportation option will automatically end. Also, if the state department takes over, resulting from a need for corrective action again, transportation will end.

What are "Supplemental Services"?

Students from low-income families who are attending schools that have been identified as failing for two years will be eligible to receive outside tutoring or academic assistance. Parents can choose the appropriate services for their child from a list of approved providers. The school district will purchase the services.

What is the "Reading First" program?

This is another part of *No Child Left Behind*. It is a national initiative aimed at helping every child in every state (K-3rd grades) become a successful reader. Special emphasis will be placed to support early language, literacy, and prereading development of preschool age children, particularly those from low-income families.

What is my role as a parent?

No Child Left Behind gives parents new tools to help their children learn and to help improve America's schools. Parents will be getting reports on their children's schools, reliable testing results for their children, and options as mentioned. Parents should contact their children's teachers to find out how they can help. Also, the state is required to develop a Statewide Parent and Community Involvement Committee to coordinate and serve as a clearinghouse for parent and community involvement activities at the state and local levels. Parents can contact their local school district to find out if there is a local committee that they can join.

When does this law come into effect?

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The law came into effect fall of 2002 and states were required to submit their proposals by January 31, 2003.

What if I have more questions?

There are several sources of additional information. Visit the website: www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov or call your local school Board of Education. ■

Adapted from "No Child Left Behind, Closing the Achievement Gap in America's Public Schools." U.S. Dept of Education, 2002 and reprinted with permission from Alabama Parent Assistance Center.

(continued from page 4)

fixing while the students are still in the middle school, and we can make things better for future students. Children who go to high school without having mastered elementary and middle school material will only fall further behind, and will find it harder to catch up. The No Child Left Behind Act tries to fix these kinds of problems early. Testing every year in grades three through eight will help.

Accountability

So, you've read the test scores for your children, their classes, their schools, and their district. What next? If your child's school is excelling, celebrate! Tell the teachers and principal you appreciate their good work in helping your child progress, but then find out what their goals are for further progress.

Write a letter to your local paper thanking the school for its success and suggesting new educational horizons. After all, even great schools can still improve. A school's "report card" gives everyone good information on where the school needs improvement.

For 35 years, the federal role in education has been aimed at helping the schools that face the biggest challenges. One thing we should never do is tolerate schools that fail year after year. A

school that cannot teach and will not change requires outside intervention.

If a school or a particular classroom is not doing well, you may want to ask the principal or the teacher how you can help it do better. Take a look at the rest of the school and at neighboring schools to find models for success. Also, consider offering your time to help the school improve. If these methods don't work or seem unlikely to have any positive effect, then consider other options. Some families have chosen other public schools, magnet schools, private schools, parochial schools, home schooling or charter schools, or to supplement their current school with a tutoring program. Figure out what choices you have, and weigh them carefully. Watch for more options created by new reforms - particularly for disadvantaged families. Talk with other parents about what they do. No one cares more about your children's future than you do; and no one can make better decisions about their education than you can.

Whatever you decide, continue to insist on high standards from your children and their teachers. ■

Adapted from Back to School, Moving Forward; What No Child Left Behind Means for America's Families. U.S. Department of Education, 2001 and provided by Alabama Parent Assistance Center.



***“ When it comes to the
education of our children...
failure is not an option.”***

President George W. Bush

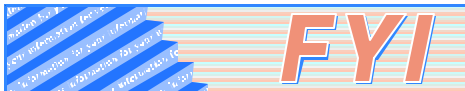
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We're on the Web
www.parenting-ed.org



— Important Web Sites —

Websites for Parent Educators

No Child Left Behind
www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov

U.S. Department of Education Publications
www.ed.gov

The White House
www.whitehouse.gov

United States House of Representatives; Committee on Education and the Workforce
www.edworkforce.house.gov

United States Senate: Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
www.labor.senate.gov

National Institute for Literacy
www.nifl.gov

New York University Child Study Center
www.AboutOurKids.org

American Federation of Teachers
www.aft.org

Time for Kids-Parents-Teachers
www.timeforteachers.com

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

National Mental Health and Education Center
www.naspcenter.org

National Education Association
www.new.org

National Educational Service
www.nesonline.com

Center for Effective Parenting
www.parenting-ed.org

The website of the Center for Effective Parenting. Be sure and look over the publication *Parenting in Arkansas*, as well as other information of interest.

What's Coming In The Next Issue

Department of Ed Pamphlets

More Websites

Getting To Know You

Let's Discuss Parenting Curriculum Critique



www.parenting-ed.org