

The No Child Left Behind Act and Title 1 Schools

What Parents Should Know • What Parents Can Do

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed by Congress in 2001. Its intent has been to raise the bar on the quality of education in public schools to ensure that all students, regardless of race, culture, or income, receive a quality education.

Title 1 is a federally funded program within NCLB that provides additional funds to schools with a high number of children from low-income families. As a result of the conditions that often affect families who are poor (e.g., high mobility, unsafe communities, poor health), these children often fall behind in school and require additional resources to catch up and stay on track.

A key element of the Title 1 program is parent involvement. There are six key leverage points for parent involvement in Title 1 that give parents the power to be effective partners with schools and advocates for their children. When parents *know* their rights, and *exercise* their rights, then students will succeed in school.

Below are the six key leverage points and what you can do to fully exercise your rights.

#1: Parent Involvement Policy

Every Title 1 school must have a written parent involvement policy, developed with and approved by parents.

What Parents Can Do

- ❖ Get a copy of your school's parent involvement policy.
- ❖ Share the policy with other parents in your school/district.
- ❖ Update the policy and make it as specific as possible.
- ❖ Find out what training is available and when.

#2: School-Parent Compact

Every Title 1 school must have a school compact, developed with and approved by parents.

What Parents Can Do

Make sure the compact:

- ❖ Covers what is needed to help all children achieve to high academic standards.
- ❖ Specifies how teachers will keep parents informed about their children's progress.
- ❖ Defines the terms of parent-teacher collaboration.

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#3: District Policy

Every school district must have a written Title 1 parent involvement policy that is developed with and approved by parents and evaluated every year.

What Parents Can Do

- ❖ Get a copy of your district's Title 1 parent involvement policy.
- ❖ Look for specific, concrete language that lays out how the district will meet its obligation.

#4: Report Cards

The school district must distribute a report card specifying how every school and the district as a whole are performing.

What Parents Can Do

- ❖ Make sure the data in the school report card is addressed in the school's Title 1 or school improvement plan.
- ❖ Make sure the report card is designed and written in a way that is understandable.

#5: Public School Choice

If a Title 1 school has not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) over the past two or more years, parents have choices.

What Parents Can Do

- ❖ Don't wait for your state to issue a report—find out how your school is doing.
- ❖ Find out whether your school has made (or not made) AYP for the past two years.
- ❖ Schedule a meeting with the principal to find out what the school is doing to improve achievement.

#6: State Review

The state education agency is responsible for monitoring Title 1 programs in its state.

What Parents Can Do

- ❖ If you disagree with the district policy, express yourself.
- ❖ Ask the state Title 1 office to meet with district administrators to discuss your concerns.
- ❖ If you believe that the state is not doing its job for all children, contact the federal Department of Education.