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Points of Interests:

- Funding will continue to provide training, information and resources to Indian families.
- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and you probably heard it from your own parents.
- There are strategies you can use to foster a positive, supportive relationship with your child's teacher. .
- Congress has now begun the reauthorization of NCLB process.

EPICS Project Receives Federal Funding from Office of Special Education Programs

Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS) project receives federal funding from the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP), Department of Education, Washington, DC.

EPICS project is a parent resource center for the NM 22 American Indian communities. The project provides information, resources and training to the parents of Indian children with disabilities ages birth to 26 years old. EPICS has been in New Mexico for over 20 years located in Bernalillo. Over the course of EPICS lifetime, the project has made over 6,000 parent contacts, including professionals, paraprofessionals alike (those that work with Indian families). We provide parents with the tools that will enable them to become self-advocates in their child's education.

EPICS is unique in many ways. We are staffed with American Indians, if not from the same communities the parents come from. We are parents of children with disabilities, experts in our own rights. We are strong advocates in children's education. As the project director

I am very happy and excited the project will continue to provide the services to the Indian families. With two teenage boys with disabilities, I understand the need for services and information. I am a strong advocate for children, families and progress, and believe that all families can change, and children can learn. Work outside of the tribal system has helped me to appreciate "my way of life" and has sensitized me about issues of cultural competency when working with Indian families and communities.

Ronalda Tome, Training Specialist is Navajo from Crownpoint, NM. She has three young children one with disability and two children who are gifted and talented. Ronalda comes to EPICS with many talents herself, and in short time with the project she has made tremendous impact.

As parents of children with disabilities, we have walked in your shoes and know and understand your needs. As Indian parents, we are not any different, we have the same needs as other non-Indian parents.

Jeanette Trancosa

SCHOOL HAS STARTED! HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN GET GOING IN THE MORNING...

You probably heard it from your own parents: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But now you're the one saying it—to your sleepy, frazzled, grumpy kids, who insist "I am not hungry" as you try to get everyone fed and moving in the morning.

Even if you eat a healthy morning meal every day, it can be tough to get kids fueled up in time for school, childcare, or a day of play. But it's important to try. Here's how to make the morning meal more appealing for everyone.

Why Bother With Breakfast?

Breakfast is a great way to give the body the refueling it needs. Kids who eat breakfast tend to eat healthier overall and more likely to participate in physical activities—two great ways to help them maintain a healthy weight. Skipping breakfast can make kids feel tired, restless, or irritable. In the morning, their bodies need to refuel for the day ahead after going without food for 8 to 12 hours during sleep. Their mood and energy can drop by midmorning if they don't eat at least a small morning meal.

Breakfast kick-starts the body's metabolism, the process by which the body converts the fuel in food to energy. And when the metabolism gets moving, the body starts burning calories. Also, people who don't eat breakfast often consume more calories throughout the day and are more likely to be overweight than those who skip lunch. That's because someone who skips breakfast is likely to get famished

before lunchtime and snack on high calorie foods or overeat at lunch.

Breakfast Brain Power

It's important for kids to have breakfast everyday, but what they eat in the morning is crucial. Choosing breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein while low in added sugar may boost kids **attention span, concentration, and memory**—which they need to learn in school.

Research also has shown that kids who eat breakfast get fiber, calcium, and other important nutrients. They also tend to keep their weight under control, have lower blood cholesterol levels and fewer absences from school, and make fewer trips to the school nurse with stomach complaints related to hunger.

Make Breakfast Happen

Try these practical suggestions to ensure that—even in a rush—your kids get a good breakfast before they're out the door.

- Stock your kitchen with healthy breakfast options.

- Prepare the night before, cut up fruits, etc.

- Get everyone up 10 minutes earlier

- Let kids help plan and prepare

- Have grab-and-go alternative (fresh fruit, individual box of cereal, yogurt or smoothies, trail-mix) on days when there is little or not time to eat.

– Source: www.kidshealth.org

“Skipping breakfast can make kids feel tired, restless or irritable.”

“Choosing breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein, low in added sugar may boost kids attention span, concentration and memory”

Top Tips for Partnering with Your Child's Teacher

At the beginning of the school year, every parent wonders about the new-to-you teacher. Will he/she understand your child's individual learning or attention needs? Will the teacher recognize your child's special talents? Will this year be a successful collaboration between you and the teacher—or a struggle?

Unfortunately, there is no operating manual for your child that you can consult for easy answers to your questions and concerns. But you can learn from other parents who are experiencing the same situations. Schwab Learning collected helpful advice from parents “What tried-and-true steps or strategies used to foster a positive, supportive relationship with your child's teachers?”

Top Tips for Partnering with Your Child's Teacher:

1. Help the teacher to get to know your child.
2. Be collaborative.
3. Communicate, communicate, communicate
4. Be even-tempered.
5. **Put it in writing.**
6. Join forces to help your child get organized.
7. Participate in the classroom.
8. Sweeten the relationship.
9. Stretch the teacher's awareness of learning and attention problems.
10. Know your rights and responsibilities.

Not always easy to do! **Help the**

teacher to get to know your child.

Be involved in your child's school life in anyway that you can. Talk to the teacher about your child's—likes and dislikes, strengths and weakness, general personality traits, and your vision for your child in the future. The more the teacher knows your child as a person, the better she can address your child's special situation.

Be collaborative, what does this mean? Ask the teachers what you can do to assist. Treat your child's teacher as part of your team. Ask for help and strategies you can use at home with your child—then do it! Teachers appreciate it when parents do their part. Don't concentrate solely on problems, let the teacher know that he/she is doing a good job.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. We never communicate enough whether it's by email, phone, notes or in person. Make an ongoing effort to stay in touch with your child's teacher.

Be even-tempered. Attempt to deal with the issues at hand in a non-adversarial manner. Don't try to lay blame on anyone. Use “I” messages rather than “You” sentences. For example “I am concerned that my child is stressing about too much homework, “ instead of “you give too much homework!”

Put it in writing. The best way to partner with your child's teacher and the school is to put everything in writing and to document requests, questions, and notes.

“Help your child's teacher to get to know your child”

“As parent, know your rights and responsibilities”

“Be collaborative and put things in writing”

Join forces to help your child get organized

Together, you and your child's teacher can help your child get organized. Partner with your child's teacher at beginning of the school year. Establish a system, if the teacher doesn't already have one set up; homework/assignments.

Participate in the classroom. It has been said "taking interest beyond your child helps foster a good relationship with the teacher. Nothing is a substitute for being in the classroom."

Sweeten the relationship. It has been suggested it is not a bad idea to show your child's teacher that you are grateful by presenting them with cards or small token of appreciation. Ask them—sincerely—how they are. Give them things to pamper themselves. Even if you work outside the home, you can still feel involved at school by donating items needed in the classroom.

Stretch the teacher's awareness of learning and attention problems. Teachers have a lot on their plates each day, especially general education teachers, who have to cover a curriculum with all kinds of learners. You can help them stretch their awareness about learning difficulties by providing them with well-researched information. If your child's has a specific learning disability provide them with more information on the topic so they understand more about the disability and your child.

Know your rights and responsibilities. It has been suggested "the very best thing any parent of a child with special needs can do is to learn the rules and laws that govern the schools. Find out what are the school's responsibilities—and then make sure you understand your own responsibilities.

Adapted 2004 Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation

Reauthorization of NCLB: Focus on Parental Involvement

Congress is now reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Signed into law on January 8, 2002, NCLB is one of the most far-reaching federal laws ever written in support of elementary and secondary education reported by the Massachusetts Parent Information and Resource Center (PITC).

"Reauthorization" means to review the law. When Congress passes laws, they include an expiration date. NCLB, now in its 5th year, expired on September 30. The reauthorization process has begun, and will most likely continue throughout the next year. During the process, the current law is still in place. As Congress reviews the law, holds hearings, and asks for feedback from stakeholders, including parents and teachers, congress uses this input to improve the law, and then votes to reauthorize it.



Parental Involvement

NCLB defines "Parental Involvement" as regular two-way and meaningful communication around student academic learning. Studies have found that the most powerful link to learning is regular communication between teachers and families around what students are learning and doing in class. The law requires that schools nurture and support this communication for every child. In addition, NCLB requires that parents play a significant role as partners in school governance and decision-making.

NCLB requires schools bring all students—including students with disabilities and those who are English language learners—to grade level in reading and math by 2014. To achieve that goal, the law includes provisions aimed at increasing parental involvement in education. For example, parents must be given clear, understandable information and data about the quality of the

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schools. NCLB also gives parents more opportunities for school choice, free tutoring, and participation in school decision-making. Many parent advocates are pleased with the strong parental involvement provisions of NCLB; however, throughout the country, these provisions are often overlooked or weakly implemented.

Several major advocacy organizations have written testimony to Congress recommending changes that would empower parents to be true partners in the education of their children.

In addition, the House Committee on Education and Labor has posted a discussion with amendments that would strengthen the law's provisions requiring schools to involve parents in forming school policies, goals, and reforms. Schools would have to demonstrate how they would receive and process parent feedback. They would also be encouraged to use multiple forms of communication to reach out to parents.

The reauthorization period is a time to share your views about the law. Parents can participate in a variety of ways:

Learn about NCLB and the major provisions of the law.

Attend public hearings, town meetings, and other forums where you can share your views about your child's education with other parents and community members.

Invite policy makers to your school to show them what works and how NCLB is beneficial.

Identify two or three major areas of NCLB that you believe need improving and share your views with your congressional delegation (contact information at www.congress.org).

Adapted: Federation for Children with Special Needs—Fall 2007 Newsline

New Mexico NCLB Site:
www.ped.state.nm.us/fedpro/index.html.

In 2006 New Mexico was estimated to have received \$112.5 million in Title I funding.

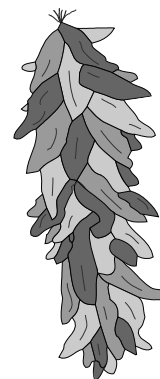
“We must... explore new and innovative strategies to engage parents and communities in helping kids succeed in school.” said Senator Edward Kennedy, Chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

“It has been our observation that New Mexico don't have enough reading teachers and math specialist in the struggling schools to meet standards and to provide a smaller learning environment and rigorous academic after-school programs for students who face the most difficulty on state tests.”

Full federal funding for New Mexico can mean students receiving the much needed services. Parental involvement is critical... Get involved and speak up!

“Parents need to take a proactive role in the effort to understand the NCLB a’

For more information on NM- NCLB Site:
www.ped.state.nm.us/fedpro/index.html.



“Have a Safe and Happy Holidays!”

From EPICS Staff

*Jeanette Trancosa
Ronalda Tome*

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We're on the Web
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The EPICS Project is a community parent resource center for American Indian families who live in New Mexico and who have children with special needs.

EPICS primary goal is to provide training and information directly to parents and to support educational and health care professionals to involve American Indian Parents.

EPICS Project provides information and support, while informing parents of their rights under special education law, IDEA.

We are available to present workshops on topics:

IDEA the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

Mediation/Due Process

IEP/ IFSP Process

Transition Process

Section 504

How to advocate for your child

Record Keeping

Bullying



2007 Fall

Calendar of Events

November	10	Parent Rights—IDEA Part B—Bernalillo Public Schools
	15	Culturally Responsive Services for Children and Families NM Department of Health Professionals
	30	IDEA 2004—San Juan College—Farmington
December	4	Record Keeping—Gallup McKinley County Schools
	6	Pathways to Transition—Grants Cibola County Schools
	7	Parent Rights—IDEA Part B—Five Sandoval Head Start
	11	Parent Rights—IDEA Part B—Tohatchi High School
	14	Parent Rights—IDEA Part B—Cuba Independent Schools

Check EPICS website for more training opportunities for your area. OR, if you are interested in scheduling a workshop for your community, call us at 867-3396 ext 111.

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