



# Parent Information Press

A quarterly publication from FACTS, a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center

**Families and Communities Together with Schools (FACTS)** is a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The primary goal of our program is to help parents and schools work together to increase student achievement.

As always, if you would like more information on any topic related to parenting and involvement in your child's education, please contact FACTS at (315) 788-8450 or visit our website at [www.nyspirc.org](http://www.nyspirc.org).

## No Child Left Behind: Changes in New York State

New York State is participating in a pilot program with the Federal Education Department called *Differentiated Accountability*. This affects what the school must do when it does not meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals.

Under NCLB, schools must show that their students are making *Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* and meeting the state learning standards. Schools show AYP through student test scores, graduation rates, and teacher quality. This is reported to the public by the New York State Department of Education through the *New York State School Report Cards*. Ask your school for a copy of the report card or download a copy at <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb/>.

A school will be identified in the *Improvement* phase if it does not show AYP for two years in a row in the same grade and subject. If your child's school is identified as being in the *Improvement* phase, you may have options regarding extra tutoring services and school choice.

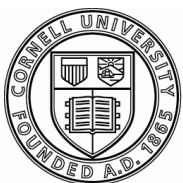
### **Supplemental Educational Services (SES)**

Your child may qualify for free tutoring services if your child's school is a Title I School that is identified as *Improvement Year 1* and your child qualifies for free or reduced priced lunch. You may have to provide transportation to the SES services that are offered outside of the regular school day.

### **Public School Choice**

You may request for your child to attend a different public school *in the same district* if the school your child attends is a Title I school that is identified as *Improvement Year 2*.

Additionally, schools in the *Improvement* phase must undergo School Quality Review, which is a school improvement support and intervention strategy. Schools in the *Corrective Action* phase must undergo a Curriculum Audit, which is an assessment of the school's education program as it is written and taught. Schools in the *Restructuring* phase must implement a restructuring plan and undergo an Assessment of the Education Program by a Joint Intervention Team, which is a team appointed by the New York Commissioner of Education.



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(315)788-8450 to continue receiving the newsletter.

## Title I

The options for families described in the previous article are only available to families whose children attend Title I schools. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act has 10 parts, or Titles. The first part, Title I, is important because Title I money is the biggest source of federal funding for K-12 schools. More than half of all public schools are Title I schools. The goal of Title I is to give resources to schools that have many students from low-income families. The purpose is to make sure that all students have the chance to get a high-quality education, meet the New York State Standards, and be successful in school.

Title I schools are required to:

- Hold a yearly meeting with parents to explain Title I.
- Give parents up-to-date information about how their children are doing in terms of meeting the standards.
- Involve parents in the decisions about how parent involvement money is spent.

**What can Title I funds be used for?** Title I funds can be used for family engagement in the following ways:

- Provide after-school or summer programs
- Train parents, teachers, or other school staff
- Buy equipment and materials
- Take-home learning activities
- Support parent involvement activities
- Parent meetings
- Transportation and childcare for parents to participate in activities
- Hiring family liaisons
- Family resource centers in schools

## College Costs

NCLB and Title I are helping more and more students be prepared for college. With college costs at an all-time high, many families are wondering how they are going to pay. Here are some ideas to help:

1. Look for local, national, and college specific scholarships related to your child's area of study, or if you are a military family. The high school guidance counselor or college financial aid officer can be very helpful in this area.
2. Fill out the FAFSA. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to determine eligibility for all federal aid, including grants, loans, and work-study programs. *This should be done as early as possible after January 1st of your child's senior year.* You will need your driver's license, bank statements, mortgage information, and the previous year's tax return. To fill it out, go to **fafsa.ed.gov** or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
3. Find information about New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) at **www.hesc.com**.
4. Find information about individual college's financial aid programs by contacting the financial aid office at the college.
5. Every school that accepts your child will send an award letter. Compare and contrast the aid packages that are offered and factor that into the decision of where your child is going to attend college.

### Helpful Websites

- \* [fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://fafsa4caster.ed.gov) - to learn about the FAFSA process before you child's senior year
- \* [MyCollegeCalendar.org](http://MyCollegeCalendar.org) - for your teen to plan for what has to be done to prepare for college

- \* Visit the New York State PIRC website, [www.nyspirc.org](http://www.nyspirc.org), for more helpful links and to download the *Getting Ready For College Parent Guide*

## Everyday Learning: Talking About Math At Home

Incorporating math skills in activities of daily life is a bonus for your child to improve their math scores in school. The following activities will give you some ideas of things to do at home:

1. **Number of the day:** See how many ways everyone can find to make the number of the day. Offer specific challenges to give children practice with something they're doing in school. Make up stories about the number of the day.
2. **What's fair:** All children want you to divide things "fairly," so ask them to figure out how to divide up food so everyone gets the same amount. Tell your child how much one or two people get, and ask them to figure out how to share the rest fairly.
3. **How much longer?** Figuring out how much longer is a great mental math exercise and a great way to develop a sense of time. When there is an exciting event coming up, like the holidays, ask your children to find out "how much longer" in weeks, days or hours.
4. **How much did we save?** We all want to save money and your children can help by using coupons. Pick about 20 coupons and ask your child to find the total value of all the coupons in the set. Group coupons to make a value of a dollar, \$2.00 or \$5.00 in as many ways as possible. They could also do a sorting activity by categories like junk food, healthy food, things you can eat, or things you can use to clean with.

In order to become strong mathematical thinkers, children need lots of practice. Make math a regular part of your everyday life. The more you do, the more your children will enjoy math.



### Ask the Educator

This section features questions from parents related to parenting and children's education from birth through high school. Research-based answers are provided by the staff of the FACTS New York State PIRC. If you would like to submit a question, please email it to [info@nyspirc.org](mailto:info@nyspirc.org).

#### Dear Educator:

*When I asked if I could visit my son's classroom during the day, his teacher said that it wasn't appropriate for me to come in during regular classroom time. As a parent, do I have the right to come into the classroom when I want to? If not, can I at least come during lunch?*

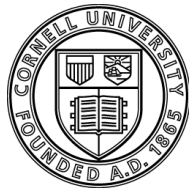
- ⇒ In researching this topic, there is Education Law 2801, which requires a code of conduct be adopted by schools that governs the conduct of visitors, to "assure safety and security of students and school personnel."
- ⇒ Most schools require advanced permission from the building principal in order to visit a classroom during regular school hours. The reasoning behind this policy is connected with safety, security, or disruption to the educational program and is not made randomly.
- ⇒ It is a good practice to contact your child's teacher and principal to find out the specific policies regarding classroom visitations. Keep in mind, schools have the utmost regard for the safety and security of your child in mind when writing these policies.

To answer your second question, most schools have a policy for parents having lunch with students, again check with the school office and they can advise you on their policy. To improve family engagement many schools encourage visits during lunch time and other times, when it is least disruptive to the classroom routine.

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