



School Connections

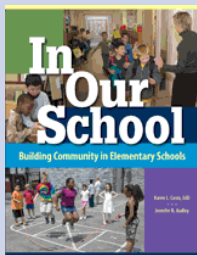
A quarterly publication from FACTS, a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center

Families and Communities Together with Schools (FACTS) is a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC). The FACTS program is funded by the US Department of Education and provides information and support to parents and schools with a focus on parental involvement.

If you have any questions regarding parental involvement, please call the FACTS School Coordinator at (315) 779-7071, email dlothrop@mail.boces.com, or visit our website at www.nyspirc.org.



Professional Resource Review



In Our School: Building Community in Elementary School

Authors: Karen L. Casto, Ed.D and Jennifer R. Audley

Research has shown that when students feel safe and cared for at school they are more motivated and successful.

In Our School is a resource for school leaders and school study groups to learn practical and achievable ideas to help schools build a strong and caring community. Learn how other teachers, administrators and parents have found ways to build community in their schools.

For more information or to order a copy, go to www.responsiveclassroom.org.

Have you visited our website?

www.nyspirc.org contains information on FACTS services, as well as professional resources for teachers. You will also find numerous downloadable fact sheets and guides to use with parents.

When you do visit the site, be sure to click on the **Free Stuff** link to take a survey and enter a drawing for a free professional resource.

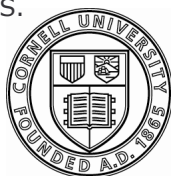
Also, stop by our new blog to share your ideas on parental involvement with other teachers around the state.



I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the school. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized.

- Dr. Haim Ginot

FACTS is a New York State PIRC sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County in partnership with Jefferson-Lewis BOCES.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County



School Connections

Issue 4—Fall 2008



Creating a Positive School Community

In a partnership, teachers and administrators create more family-like schools. A family-like school recognizes each child's individuality and makes each child feel special and included. Family-like schools welcome all families, not just those that are easy to reach. (Joyce Epstein, 2001)

Helping Students Feel Connected to the School

1. Display student work throughout the building and explain the purpose of the work and the high standards it meets.
2. Teach all students the school's alma mater.
3. Greet students upon arrival and dismissal each day.
4. Establish school-wide rules and procedures.
5. Conduct all school meetings and allow students to take the lead.
6. Teach all students life rules (Be respectful, be responsible, be kind and be honest)
7. Pair younger and older students for reading buddies and for field trips.
8. Recognize students on their birthdays and other special occasions.
9. Have staff plan a surprise event for students at a local park or other special place.
10. Create a hallway or area of the school with "We Are All Stars" and include a star and a picture of each student.

Helping Parents Feel Connected to the School

1. Create displays that reflect the families in the community.
2. Provide parent mentors to provide tours, guidance and support to newly enrolled families.
3. Provide a parent resource room or comfortable area for parents.
4. Encourage community use of the school facility.
5. Provide welcome letters, school calendars, parent handbooks, etc. to all families.
6. Create a parent listserve to inform parents of last minute reminders.
7. Provide workshops and/or educational programs for parents.
8. Acknowledge that "parents know their child best" and recognize parents as true partners in the education of their children.
9. Integrate parental involvement into all aspects of the school culture.
10. Show appreciation for parent involvement and parents' contributions to school.

Contact FACTS

If you have any questions or ideas on how the FACTS program can help your school, please contact:

Deanna Lothrop
FACTS School Coordinator
Jefferson-Lewis BOCES
(315) 779-7071
dlothrop@mail.boces.com



This publication was produced in whole or in part with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parental Information and Resource Center program, under grant #84.310.A. The content herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education, any other agency of the U.S. government, or any other source.

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County office if you have special needs or are unable to pay.