

**WHY IS EDUCATION  
IMPORTANT?**

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**THEME** This workshop points out the importance of education and introduces the APEX Program.

**FACILITATOR PREPARATION**

Prior to conducting this workshop, the facilitator should:

- ✓ Read:
  - Overview of APEX Program
  - Facilitator's Manual
  - Reading Materials provided for this workshop
  
- ✓ Gather:
  - Flipchart
  - Magic markers
  - Chairs
  - Tape
  
- ✓ Do:
  - Set chairs in a circle

**WORKSHOP TIMELINE**

ACTIVITY A:	<b>Icebreaker Exercise:</b> Introductions	20 minutes
ACTIVITY B:	<b>Guided Discussion --</b> Why is Education Important?	25 minutes
ACTIVITY C:	<b>Lecture:</b> Overview of the APEX Program	30 minutes
ACTIVITY D:	<b>Wrap-up</b>	<u>15 minutes</u>
<b>Total Time</b>		<b>90 minutes</b> <b>(1 hour, 30 minutes)</b>

**ACTIVITY A      ICEBREAKER EXERCISES: INTRODUCTION**

**TIME LIMIT**



20 minutes

**OBJECTIVES**

- To learn what an **icebreaker exercise** is meant to accomplish
- To introduce the group members to each other

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**FACILITATOR  
DIRECTIONS**


1. Start by introducing yourself to the group. If there are two facilitators, have each facilitator introduce the other to the group.
2. Advise the group that the first exercise will be an **icebreaker exercise**. Advise them that an **icebreaker exercise** is any activity that makes the members of the group feel more comfortable with each other. It is usually done at the beginning of a meeting and is a fun activity in which everyone can get involved.
3. Ask group members to introduce themselves to a participant whom they do not know, and tell that person a little about themselves. Advise the group members that they have 5 minutes to get to know their partner. Once the 5 minutes are up, you should introduce your partner first and then have your partner introduce you. Then, have all group members introduce their partners, and have them tell a little about their partner.

**ACTIVITY B      GUIDED DISCUSSION: WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?**

**TIME LIMIT**       25 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To discuss the importance of education
  - To learn what a **guided discussion** is meant to accomplish

**PREPARATION**       Make sufficient copies of the Reading Materials for this workshop entitled "**Why is Education So Important?**" to hand out to the group members at the end of the workshop.

 Prior to the beginning of the workshop, write out some "true and false" statements about "education" on the flipchart (see paragraph #2 below for some suggestions).

**FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS**

1. Advise the group that this will be a **guided discussion**. Advise them that a **guided discussion** is when you, the facilitator, encourage dialogue, and use challenging questions to channel the discussion. **Guided discussions** require some understanding of the issues by the participants. This is a learning process that encourages full participation.
2. Display the "true and false" statements about education you wrote on the flipchart. Some ideas are:
  - *"The earlier you drop out of school, the better job you can get since you start before anyone else."*
  - *"The less you know, the less anyone can take advantage of you."*
  - *"Jobs today are different than they used to be."*
  - *"You can make the same amount of money your parents made fifteen years ago and buy the same things they bought then."*

3. Ask the group to decide whether each statement is either true or false and encourage them to explain why. The group should have fun with these statements!
4. Ask the group to point out ways education can have a positive effect on one's life. Write their ideas down on the flipchart and discuss each point. Some of the points which may be highlighted are:
  - *education makes a difference in the kind of job one gets*
  - *the kind of job one gets determines the kinds of things one can get*
  - *Latino youth can be anything they want to be if they put their mind and effort into it*
  - *a sure way to succeed and help our communities is to get a good education*
5. Advise the group that after the workshop, they will be provided reading materials on the importance of education to take home. Do not provide these hand outs until you have completed the workshop or you may lose the attention of some parents who will begin to read the materials during the workshop.
6. You can end this activity by saying something that will lead you into ACTIVITY C, such as:
 

*"Do we agree or disagree that education is important? [group responds] Then what can we do, as parents, to make sure our children receive a good education? How do we get involved? Where do we start? Most parents would like to help their children, but may not be sure what kind of help they can provide. The program that we are introducing here today will hopefully provide some guidance and ideas as to how we can help our children succeed in education."*

**ACTIVITY C      LECTURE: THE APEX PROGRAM**

**TIME LIMIT**       30 minutes

**OBJECTIVES**      ■ To provide the group with an **overview** of the APEX Program, its importance, and objectives

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**FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS**

1. Tell the group about the APEX Program. You should prepare by reading the **Overview of the APEX Program** provided in this manual. You are encouraged to describe the program in your own words and not "read" the description to participants. In addition to the **overview**, the following points should be made:
  - *the workshops begin with how to work with:*
    - *your child at home*
    - *the schools*
    - *other parents and your community*
  - *the workshops were designed with feedback and input from parents during several parent group sessions*
  - *the workshops take into account the feedback of numerous professionals involved and concerned with empowering our families and communities*
  - *as group members go through the workshop, they should write down any ideas or ways to improve the workshop on a piece of paper and provide it on the evaluation sheets at the end of the workshop*
2. Encourage group members to ask questions about the APEX Program.

**ACTIVITY D WRAP-UP**

**TIME LIMIT**  15 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To learn what a **wrap-up** is meant to accomplish
  - To summarize what was discussed during the workshop
  - To invite group members to participate in all workshops
  - To announce/schedule the next workshop
  - To obtain feedback

**FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS**

1. Advise the group that the last exercise is a "**wrap-up.**" Advise them that a **wrap-up** exercise is when the person conducting the meeting (or members of the group) summarizes (a) what happened during the meeting; (b) what decisions were made; and (c) what, if any, are the group's next steps.
2. Summarize the accomplishments of the workshop. Ask the group what they learned. Be sure to include:
  - *The importance of education*
  - *The objectives of the APEX Program*
3. Invite the group to participate in all workshops. Announce that the next workshop will focus on - "**Ways in which parents can get involved in the education of their children.**"
4. Announce (or collectively schedule) the next workshop date, time and place. Be sure to advise group members of the method by which everyone will be contacted to confirm their attendance.
5. Provide parents with copies of the Reading Materials for this workshop entitled "**Why is Education So Important?**"

**READING MATERIAL FOR WORKSHOP TWO**

**Why is Education So Important?**

There are lots of reasons why education can make a difference in someone's life. Here are a few:

- ✓ The more you know, the better and more active a citizen you can be.
- ✓ The more you know, the less anyone can take advantage of you.  
Education helps you protect your rights.
- ✓ The more you know, the more you can help your family, friends, and community.
- ✓ The more you know, the more you have control over your life, doing what you want to do and being treated with respect.
- ✓ The more you know, the better you feel. Education is something to be proud of.
- ✓ The more you know, the more you understand the world -- and yourself.
- ✓ The more you know, the more opportunities are open to you.

So, education is important for many reasons. Let's talk a little more about one of them.

**THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN TO YOU.**

How much education you have makes a big difference in the kind of job you can get. And the kind of job you get determines whether you can:

- buy a house;
- raise a family without worrying about money all the time;
- choose to work one job; or
- afford to leave a job you don't like.

Every person has the right to have a decent job and be treated well. Our youth can, and should, try to be the best they can be. They can be doctors, scientists, lawyers. But it will take everyone's contribution to make and keep our communities strong. Our communities need all of us to do all we can to help them grow. A sure way to succeed and help our community is to get a good education. *That's another very important reason why education is so necessary!*

We know many parents have not had much formal education. When you were growing up, your parents probably thought it was wonderful if you finished high school. And it was! With a high school diploma you could get a good job with good pay. Over half the people in our communities did not finish high school but many still got fairly good jobs, and could raise their families.

Today, the world is different. Those jobs in factories or industries which used to support our communities are not there any more. You've probably noticed in your own neighborhood, but did you know that across the country factory jobs have been disappearing?

There are often two kinds of jobs left. The first kind is what are called "semi-skilled service jobs." That means working in restaurants, supermarkets, or hotels. Service jobs also include cleaning offices, baby sitting, or other jobs like that. You can get some service jobs without finishing high school. But because there are more and more of these types of jobs, that means that many high school graduates are also working in service jobs. Now, service jobs are good honest work and are important to our economy. But the problem with them is that many of them pay very little, they often mean working strange hours (so it's hard to be with your family), and there isn't much room to advance to a better job. Making hamburgers might be a good job experience when you're 17, but not many people want to do it for their whole lives!

The other kind of jobs are the jobs graduates of colleges or trade schools get -- jobs for people with special skills. These days, many people--from secretaries to mechanics to managers to airline pilots to teachers to small business owners--go to college or a trade school. Nearly every office job you can think of requires education beyond high school. This is because these jobs today require you to use so much technology. Computers are everywhere, and jobs change so quickly that employers need people who can always be learning new skills--that is, people who are educated. Jobs like this pay better than other service jobs, the hours tend to be more regular, there is less of a chance that workers will be laid off, and there are more possibilities for advancing to a better job.

Right now, a college graduate will earn in his or her lifetime about \$450,000 more than a high school graduate and \$700,000 more than a high school dropout. And the difference between low-paying jobs for people who don't finish school and high-paying jobs for people who do will only become greater. The young people who will graduate from high school and start looking for work beginning in the year 2000 are in elementary school. They will face a world where:

- most new jobs will be service jobs;
- new technology will create jobs for people who can use it, and get rid of jobs for people who can't; and

education will mean the difference between well-paying, stable jobs and low-paying, unstable jobs.

**What does the future look like?**

- \* In the next ten years, Hispanics will make up 15% of new people looking for work.
- \* Two-thirds of the new jobs will require workers with a high school diploma.
- \* One-third of the new jobs will require workers with a college degree.

So, there are lots of reasons for getting an education. Also, to be successful these days, education means more than just being able to read and write.

Today's successful person needs to:

- 1) know how to learn
- 2) know how to read, write, and do basic math
- 3) listen and speak clearly
- 4) know how to solve problems and think in a creative way
- 5) believe in his or her own value, set goals, and work to carry them out
- 6) be able to work in a team
- 7) understand how companies work
- 8) be a leader

Yes, a leader. Your child is going to start work in a time where more and more workers will need to make independent decisions, have new ideas, and work with less supervision.

### **Where are Latinos now?**

Now, if all the good jobs are increasingly going to college or trade school graduates, it seems to make sense that Latino young people should be finishing high school and continuing their education, right? But in 1989, over a third of our young people had dropped out of high school, and it has been found that more than one half of Latinos in big cities drop out. Only about 12% of Latinos have a college degree. This means more unemployment, more low-paying jobs, and more poverty for our communities. Today more than ever before, we need our young people to stay in school and get a good education.

All of us working together - parents, community, schools - can help our young people. We have to do it, the need is so critical. Together we can help your child and all the children of our communities get the education that will help them succeed in life.

**Did you know that the more education and training *you* have, the better your child will probably do in school? Research says this is true.**

### **What Can You Do About Your Education and Job Skills?**

We talked about what education can do for you. But even when you finish school, it's important to keep learning new things. The world is changing rapidly--there are always new things to learn. Besides, when you get down to it, learning feels good.

If you have a job now, ask at work if there are any opportunities for training in new areas. If you show an interest, your company may train you in some of the skills that are needed to do a better job and advance.

If you would like help with basic educational skills like reading, writing, arithmetic, or English, most cities have community groups that offer tutoring. Check at your local church, the neighborhood community center, the library, or other organizations in the community. They should be able to help you find classes you can attend for free.