

**THE HOME
CONNECTION**

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THEME This workshop examines the need for study and quiet time in the home, indicates ways in which parents can help their children study, and examines ways in which parents can provide positive discipline to their children.

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Prior to conducting this workshop, the facilitator should:

- ✓ Read: · Facilitator's Manual
· Reading Materials provided for this workshop

- ✓ Gather: · Flipchart
· Radio or television
· Magic markers
· Chairs
· Paper
· Tape

- ✓ Do: · Set chairs in a circle

WORKSHOP TIMELINE

ACTIVITY A:	Introductions	10 minutes
ACTIVITY B:	Icebreaker Exercise: How Noisy Can It Be?	15 minutes
ACTIVITY C:	Case Study: Improving the Home Study Environment "Ana's Report Card"	45 minutes
ACTIVITY D:	Wrap-up	<u>15 minutes</u>
Total Time		85 minutes (1 hour, 25 minutes)

ACTIVITY A INTRODUCTIONS

TIME LIMIT  10 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To welcome the group back and introduce new members to the group
 - To answer any questions not answered during the last workshop
 - To provide an overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted

**FACILITATOR
DIRECTIONS**

1. Welcome everyone back who attended the last workshop. Welcome new members to the group and have them say something about themselves if they feel comfortable doing so. Then, have group members briefly introduce themselves to the new parents.
2. Announce that new group members should get in touch with a person who attended the last two workshops in order to get copies of the reading materials provided.
3. Answer any questions which were not answered at the last workshop.
4. Provide an overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted. Your overview may contain the following:

"The purpose of today's workshop is to examine the need for study and quiet time in the home, how you can help your child study, and ways that parents can provide positive discipline to their children. To help us examine these issues, we will be doing three exercises--an 'icebreaker exercise' and two 'case study exercises'."

ACTIVITY B ICEBREAKER EXERCISE: HOW NOISY CAN IT BE?

TIME LIMIT



15 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- To illustrate that children need a quiet place to study

PREPARATION



Have a radio or television available



Prepare pieces of paper to be handed out to 1/2 of the group members containing a question which will be difficult for them to answer

**FACILITATOR
DIRECTIONS**

1. Advise the group that this is an **icebreaker exercise**. Make certain the group understands what an **icebreaker exercise** is--if not, have a group member explain. Once the person is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Ask the group to pretend they are children with other sisters and brothers. Provide about 1/2 of the group with the piece of paper containing the difficult question you have chosen. Tell the group they will be tested on what is on the piece of paper. Ask the group not to open the piece of paper until you have given the signal.
3. Ask those group members without a piece of paper to imitate, when you give the signal, sisters and brothers who are constantly picking on each other. Encourage them to interrupt those people with a piece of paper, as if they were their sisters and brothers. They should interrupt with questions such as:
 - *"You borrowed my sweater, where is it?"*
 - *"Mom wants you to take her to visit Doña Luz and Don Raul."*
 - *"There's a phone call for you!"*
 - . . .or whatever they can think of!


4. When everyone's role is understood, give the signal and turn the radio or television to a station that most of the group would listen to.
5. Allow the group to enjoy/not enjoy their roles for at least 2 minutes. Once the laughter has stopped, ask those who were trying to study to describe in one word how they felt.
6. Ask them what they think the "theme" of the exercise is. Explain that although the noise level has been exaggerated to make a point, we need to remember that it is often difficult for children to study when there are a lot of activities going on in the household.
7. Explain that now, the group is going to use a "case study" approach to begin some discussion on this and other issues about the "home connection."

ACTIVITY C CASE STUDY: ANA'S REPORT CARD

TIME LIMIT  45 minutes

OBJECTIVES

- To identify places where children can have a "quiet place" to study
- To identify ways in which parents can assist their children to study

PREPARATION  Make sufficient copies of the Reading Material for this workshop entitled "**How Do I Help My Child Study**" to give to group members at the end of the workshop

FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Advise the group that this is a "case study" exercise. Have a group member who attended the last workshop explain what a **case study exercise** is meant to accomplish. Once the person is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Tell the group a short story (no more than 5 minutes.) The story should not be read, but told, and should contain the following elements:
Ana Colón, who is 12 years old, brings home a report card with three D's and two C's. Her teachers say she is smart, but she doesn't do her work and she isn't prepared for tests.

Victor, her papá, says she spends too much time with her friends and not enough time studying. Ana says she can't study at home because there is too much noise, and there's no place for her to study.
3. Ask the group about possible "quiet places" where Ana might study and why these places would be good. Write "Quiet Places" on the top of a page and list ideas on the flipchart. Tape the list on the wall.
4. Explain that Ana has already begun to fall behind her classmates in schoolwork! She may need some extra help. Ask the group their ideas about where Ana can find help with her schoolwork. List them on another page in the flipchart.

5. Some ideas of where Ana might find help include:
- *After-school programs*
 - *The library*
 - *Local colleges*
 - *From other children or friends*
6. Now, ask group members for suggestions on what parents can do to help their children study. Some ideas are:
- *Set up two hours of study time each school night*
 - *Give each child a special place in which to work*
 - *Set up a calendar of due dates with each child*
 - *Meet with their teachers at least once a year*
 - *Use the resources available to help you (schools, agencies, libraries)*
 - *Let your child read to you*
 - *Talk about the future with your children*
 - *Encourage your children to do what they are interested in*
 - *Get outside help if your child continues to have problems*

ACTIVITY D WRAP-UP

TIME LIMIT  15 minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To summarize lessons learned
 - To invite group members to participate in the next workshop
 - To announce/schedule the next workshop
 - To obtain feedback
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FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Have a group member explain what a "wrap-up" is meant to accomplish. Once the group member is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Summarize accomplishments of the workshop. Ask the group what they learned. Be sure to include:
 - *Children need a quiet place to study*
 - *Parents can help their children study in many ways*
3. Invite the group to participate in all workshops. Announce that the next workshop will focus on - "**Parent Involvement in School.**"
4. Announce (or 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 members with copies of the Reading Materials for this workshop entitled "**How Do I Help My Child Study.**"

READING MATERIAL FOR WORKSHOP THREE

How Do I Help My Child Study?

As a parent, you want your child to have the best life possible. Today that means finishing high school and even going to college. Lots of Latino parents worry that the schools aren't doing enough to help their children succeed. About half of all Latino children drop out of school before they graduate.

Who can help these kids if the schools can't?

YOU can, that's who!

No matter what the school is like or what kind of neighborhood you live in, parents are still the most important people in a child's life. Nothing can guarantee your child will succeed, but it's certainly a help when the school and community are working with you for his/her success. There are some specific things you can do to help your child succeed in school and in life.

The best way for your child to do well in school is for them to have **STUDY TIME**. Every single school night, your children need to sit down and do their homework. It's really simple: children who study do better in school, and children who do better in school are more likely to graduate. If you want to help your child graduate, you need to make sure they study.

HOW SHOULD THEY STUDY?

Now, how can you do that? If you wait until your children bring home bad grades, and then say, "You're going to study every night and that's final!" What will happen? They will feel studying is a punishment, instead of the key to their future success. A better way is to make sure they understand, like you do, that studying is important for their future. Start talking with your child about school. How does he/she like it? What subjects do they find interesting, or difficult? How often does he/she have tests? When your child brings home a report card you think could be better, discuss with your child what the family can do to help. Decide together to set aside study time each day. Of course, it's best if you can start your children studying even when they're very young--this way it gets to be a habit!

WHEN SHOULD THEY STUDY?

Now that you've decided on study time, you're probably wondering just what this requires. On average, we recommend you set aside two hours every evening. The amount of time you decide is correct can depend on the age of your children and the grade they are in. Right after dinner is often a good time--this way your child can play or work while it's still daylight, and then stay home at night. If you eat at 6:00, for example, 6:30 to 8:30 can be set aside for QUIET study time.

That's right--no noise! Especially no radios or television. Children always say that they can study and watch TV at the same time. Don't believe them. The experts say they can't.

WHERE SHOULD THEY STUDY?

Where should your children study? Anywhere they can set their books and papers is fine. The kitchen table is a great place, or a coffee table or even the floor. The important thing is that they have a "study corner"--a special quiet spot in your house that can be a child's personal place to do homework.

WHAT ARE THEY STUDYING?

So, now that your child has a "study corner", ready to begin, what should your child be studying? There are several ways that you can find out what your child should be learning. The first way (of course) is to ask your child. You can help your child keep track of homework by getting or making him/her a calendar--the cheaper the better, as long as it has big enough spaces to write assignments in. Encourage your child to write down on his/her calendar any tests coming up and any projects that are due. This will help your child (and you!) know when to begin preparing for due dates. Children usually have daily assignments they need to do for the next day's class. They can work on these during their study time, too.

Another person who can tell you what your child should be studying is his/her teacher. You can ask the teacher to let you know if your child is not doing the required homework or misses turning in a project. The teacher can also tell you what your child should know, or be able to do, by the end of the semester. This helps explain your child's homework assignments. It also lets you judge how much your child is learning. If the teacher tells you the class will be able to do fractions by Christmas, and at Christmas time your child still can't understand fractions, you will know that it's time to talk to the teacher again. You should try very hard to get to know your child's teacher as soon as you can, and then visit the teacher at least once a year. Teachers say they pay more attention to a child if the child's parents are interested in how he/she is doing.

WHAT ABOUT HELP?

You might be worrying by now about what to do when your children ask for help with their homework. Maybe you don't think you understand what your child is doing, particularly if you didn't get to finish school or if you have trouble with English. Don't worry, help is out there! You just need to find it.

PLACES TO FIND HELP WITH HOMEWORK

Your Other Children. You can encourage your older children to help their younger brothers and sisters with their homework. This helps them take responsibility for each other. It's important to remember, though, that your older children need plenty of time to do their own homework.

The School. Lots of schools have after-school tutoring programs your child can go to. Some schools also run a Homework Hotline, where your child can just telephone in and get help!

Community Agencies. Local agencies run lots of programs to help young people with school. Sometimes the child can go to the agency, and sometimes they send volunteer tutors to your home. They may also have recreation programs for your child and parent support groups for you.

Local Colleges. They often have programs where students volunteer as tutors. You may want to ask someone at the school or community agency if they know of any college programs you can call.

Local Libraries. Libraries are great for helping your child learn. They sometimes have homework assistance programs. They have thousands of books on all subjects, plus special young people's books. Anyone can borrow these books for several weeks after getting a free library card. Librarians can help your child with any reports she needs information on. Libraries also run special programs during the summer and on weekends. They even have lots of tables which make perfect "study corners." Getting to know your local library can be a great way for you to help your kids.

Besides all these outside resources, there is something really important that you can do to help your younger children even if you have absolutely no education or English. This thing is almost certain to improve your children's school performance. What is it? **YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CHILDREN READ TO YOU.** Reading is probably the most important skill they will learn, and young children learn it better when they can read to their parents and then talk about what they've read. It's also fun!

Another fun reading project that one of our field coordinators told us about is having a Family Reading Night. Once a week everyone in the family gets together with one short story or speech that they want to read aloud. You might want to make it especially fun for the kids by telling them they can also choose special snacks to eat. Each person takes a turn reading his or her short paper to the family. If you want your children to maintain their Spanish, or if you or other relatives feel more comfortable speaking in Spanish, you can have the evening be bilingual. Sometimes an older person in the family never really learned to read, and they can be encouraged to tell stories from memory instead.

WHAT IF YOUR CHILD WON'T STUDY?

Sometimes, even after you've gone through all this work to help them, your children tell you they simply do not want to study. What do you do then? Children (especially teenagers) do what interests them and what they think is important. You know how important it is for your child to do well in school--make sure you let him/her know! Talk with your children about what they want to do in their future. Then talk with them about what they need to do to achieve their dreams. Most good jobs today require an education--encourage your child to dream big dreams and then do the school work needed to reach them.

One final problem you may run into is that your children don't have enough homework to fill the two hours. DON'T shorten the time! This would encourage your children to rush through their work, or even to lie about the amount of homework they have when they don't want to study. Keep the two hours as study time every night, but let your children read library books or write a letter to a relative or some similar activity. Their teachers could also recommend extra projects in an area they are interested in. Remember, encourage your child's interests and the extra work they do to develop those interests.

Finally, don't forget all those educational programs on the television. Those nature or science or history shows can satisfy your child's desire to watch TV, and they also can spark an interest in a field your child didn't even know existed.

One important note: if you follow these suggestions and your child is still doing poorly in school, you may want to get outside help. This is especially true if your child was doing all right in school before, and suddenly starts failing. There may be some physical problem (maybe he/she needs glasses!) or some other reason for your child's poor performance. If you think you need advice, talk with a community agency, school organization, or a hot-line to get the help you need.

ISN'T THIS A LOT OF WORK?

This may seem like a lot of work for a tired, hardworking parent! But let's look at the suggestions again:

- 1) Set up two hours of study time each school night
- 2) Give each child a special place in which to work
- 3) Set up a calendar of due dates with each child
- 4) Meet with their teachers at least once a year
- 5) Use the resources available to help you (schools, agencies, libraries)
- 6) Let your children read to you
- 7) Talk about the future with your children
- 8) Encourage them to do what they're interested in
- 9) Get outside help if your child continues to have problems

What will your home be like after you set up Study Time? After dinner each night, all your children will pull out their books and study or read for two hours. You will not hear your child's loud radio on, there will be no fights over what to watch on TV, you won't have to worry over where your children are or what they're doing. And thanks to your efforts, your children have a better chance to make it through school, and succeed in life.