



# METS NEWS

## Parent Edition

October 2000, Volume 7, Issue 1

### If an Adolescent Begins to Fail in School

Many children experience a time when keeping up with school-work is difficult. These periods may last several weeks and may include social problems as well as a slide in academic performance. Research suggests that problems are more likely to occur during a transitional year, such as moving from elementary school to middle school or middle school to high school. Some children are able to get through this time with minimal assistance from their parents or teachers. It may be enough for a parent to be available to simply listen and suggest coping strategies, provide a supportive home environment, and encourage the child's participation in school activities. However, when the difficulties last longer than a single grading period, they can be linked to a long-term pattern of poor school performance or problematic behaviors, parents, METS counselors and teachers may need to intervene.

Parents often feel uncertain about how to best approach their child or the school when their child is having difficulty. However, it is important to remember that children need their parents not only to set appropriate expectations and boundaries, but also to advocate for them. Teachers can ease a parent's concerns by including the parent as part of the student's educational support team. Here are some ways those parents and teachers can assist when a child is having difficulty:

- ◆ Making the time to listen to and try to understand the child's fears or concerns.
- ◆ Setting appropriate boundaries for behaviors that are consistently enforced.
- ◆ Encouraging the child to participate in school activities.
- ◆ Attending school functions, sports, and plays.
- ◆ Providing a supportive home and school environment that clearly values education.
- ◆ Emphasizing the importance of study skills, hard work and follow-through.
- ◆ Encouraging the child to volunteer in the community.

Adapted from Parents & Schools, Together for Success, Vol4,

### Helping Middle School Students Make the Transition to High School

The importance of parents being involved in their young adolescent students' transition from middle to high school can hardly be overestimated. When parents are involved in their student's transition to high school, they tend to stay involved in their child's school experiences; and when parents are involved in their child's high school experiences, students have higher achievement, are better adjusted, and are less likely to drop out of school.

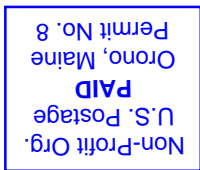
Parent involvement in the transition process to high school can be achieved through a variety of activities. Parents may attend a conference with their child and the high school counselor to discuss course work and schedules, visit the high school with their child in the spring or fall or spend a day at the high school to help them understand what their child's life will be like.

Parent involvement can make a real difference in your child's academic success.

Adapted from ERIC Digest 8/99

### Maine Educational Opportunity Center

If you, as a parent, have considered going back to school now is the time. The Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) is a sister program to the Educational Talent Search. MEOC works with adults across the state who are considering making a career change, selecting a college, and finding appropriate Financial Aid. MEOC differs from METS in that it only works with adults, 19 years and older, who are considering college. If you are ready to think about your college options please call **1-800-281-3703** for more information.



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5713 Chadbourne Hall  
Orono, ME 04469-5713  
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## Are You Involved?

By Ronda Alley

As it has been stated many times, parents are a child's first and most influential teachers. Parents are part of the school community, which consists of families, schools, businesses and community members. When the four components work together as partners, our children and communities benefit.

When parents make sure that children go to school ready to learn, we give them a strong foundation to build upon. By connecting with the teacher early in the year, we set the stage for communication. When parents ask questions on a regular basis about what their children are learning, we empower ourselves to help our children and support the teacher.

When teachers give parents information about how our children are performing, homework assignment due dates, and upcoming events, parents can then support their children and the teacher by being involved. With information, we can continue at home what the teacher began at school. Open two-way communication is the most important aspect of parental involvement.

When adults work together in educating children, the students feel valued and begin to see that education is a life-long journey. October is Parent Involvement Month, let's work together as adults and break down the barriers to your child's academic success.

## Your child is never too old for your time and attention! Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher.

The Maine Educational Talent Search Program is one of over 300 Talent Search Programs located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Operating in the State of Maine since 1977, the METS program will serve approximately 950 individuals in their educational and career-planning endeavors during 2000. You may leave a message for METS project staff at 1-800-540-0493.

Talent Search Programs are funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The grant award for 2000-2001 is \$417,360. The Department of Education is also the funding source for Educational Opportunity Centers, Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and McNair Scholars Programs. These TRIO programs all target low-income, first-generation college youth and adults.

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## Be Involved In Your Child's Education At Home

1. Make sure your child is well rested and fed before he/she starts the day.
2. Communicate with your child's teacher early in the year; ask to be informed on what the class will be learning each week. That way you can ask your child specific questions, instead of "what did you do in school today?" Ask your child's teacher if there is something you can do at home to help the class.
3. Spend time with your child playing.
4. Organize a homework corner with a well lit comfortable space and all the tools that your child needs.
5. Talk to your employer about offering "flex-time" for employees, so you may participate in some of your child's activities.
6. Give your child lots of hugs and encouragement.
7. Read together.
8. Plan a freezer meal with your child, make a list of ingredients, budget for the meal, go shopping for ingredients together, depending on age help your child prepare the meal and freeze it for a night when everyone's too busy to cook. Better yet, make two, eat one that night and freeze the other.
9. Set clear, consistent limits.
10. Encourage communication between you and your child. Listen to your child about his/her hopes, dreams and concerns for the future. Remember, it's never too early to talk about goal setting and planning for their future.