



# Parents-in-Action

**What You Need to Know About  
Your Child's School Experience**

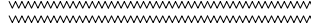


Produced by  
**Delta Family Resource Centre**  
and  
**Community Social Planning Council  
of Toronto**

A Canadian Heritage Funded Project



# **Parents-in-Action**



## **What You Need to Know About Your Child's School Experience: A Handbook**

**Delta Family Resource Centre  
"Parents-In-Action Project"**

**Funded by Canadian Heritage  
Government of Canada**

**December 2004**

***Parents-in-Action: What You Need to Know About Your Child's School Experience – a Handbook***

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For additional copies of this publication, contact:

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- ◆ Community Social Planning Council (416-351-0095)

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## Introduction

Parents-in-Action is a two-year pilot project funded by Canadian Heritage (Government of Canada) to increase the participation of “visible minority” parents in the schools. The project was developed by Delta Family Resource Centre, a community-based organization that serves families with children. Delta FRC is located at the corner of Jane Street and Sheppard Avenue West. Parents-in-Action works closely with three local elementary schools and can include any parents living in the broader Jane-Finch area.

This parent handbook is intended to provide useful information to parents new to the Ontario school system, whether they live in Jane-Finch or beyond. The handbook is not produced by the schools, school boards, or the Ministry of Education. The Parents-in-Action project is a community-based, resident-driven effort to inform and support parents in dealing with the often mysterious realm of the school system.

## Children: The School Experience

### *How much homework should my child get?*

The amount of homework each child receives is determined by the teacher who uses a rough guide set out by the District School Board. The following chart will give you an idea of what might be expected.

<b>HOMework EXPECTATIONS BY GRADE (Suggested Time Guidelines, 2004)</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Approximate Time</b>	<b>How Often</b>
JK, SK	10 - 30 minutes	Nightly
1 - 3	15 - 30 minutes	Nightly
4 - 6	30 - 60 minutes	Nightly
7 - 9	45 - 90 minutes	Nightly
10 - 12	60 - 120 minutes	Nightly

*Each school may have different amounts of homework*

### **What is a School Agenda (homework planner)?**

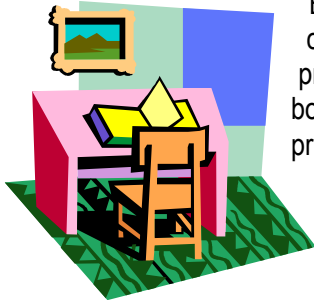
At the beginning of each school year, children may receive a School Agenda (also called a School Planner or Homework Planner). In the School Agenda are daily homework assignments and/or notes. Parents can thereby know what their child should be working on at home so the parent can help. Parents can write to the teachers in it.

Also, in the first few pages of the Agenda you will find important information about homework, daily schedules, lunch program, national anthem, Safe Schools Act, and more.

The School Agenda is a good way to help children learn skills for organizing themselves and keeping track of their responsibilities, especially their homework.

***What will my child learn in each grade?***

In the lower grades, much of the learning is through play and hands-on activities that the teacher uses to help children learn basic skills.



Each teacher has the right to be creative and unique in the way they present the curriculum of the school board, within guidelines developed by the principal and the teaching staff. Below are basic programs or courses of instruction that would be taught in those grades, but other options are also available in some schools.

- **Kindergarten:** The Kindergarten program provides for growth in: personal and social development, language, mathematics, science and technology, and the arts. Play is an important part of the Kindergarten classroom. Young children learn best through play activities that are planned and have purpose.
- **Grades 1-8:** Language, Mathematics, Arts, Physical and Health Education, Science, Technology (French Immersion and Native languages may also be offered, depending on the school)
- **Grades 1-6:** Social Studies
- **Grades 7-8:** History and Geography
- **Grades 4-8:** Core and Extended French (optional)

***What are EQAO tests and does my child have to take them?***

The EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) holds province-wide testing of reading, writing and mathematics administered to all students in Grades 3, 6 and 9. The assessment takes several days for approximately 2 hours per day. The assessments require students to read and respond to written passages, write, and solve mathematical problems. They test students' knowledge and how well they can apply it.

The EQAO test results are not recorded on the report card or on college or university applications. The results are not used to determine

any aspect of your child's future until Grade 10 when they will be used to determine if the student will be able to graduate.

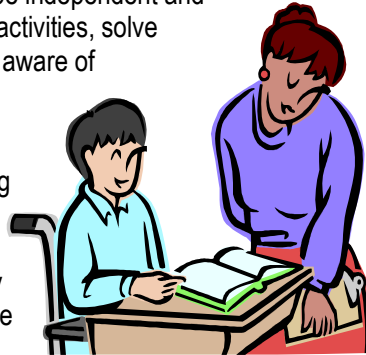
Some students are not required to write the tests if they recently arrived in Canada and are just beginning to learn English. Special education students can be exempted or have their special needs accommodated.

[For more information contact the school or EQAO at [www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com)]

### ***What are the responsibilities of teachers?***

The teacher provides appropriate resources, and changes and adapts the activities to meet the learning needs of children. Children are given a variety of experiences so that they will: continue to develop a positive attitude about themselves and others, be independent and responsible, take part in daily physical activities, solve problems and complete tasks, become aware of health and safety choices, and make choices and decisions.

Different learning activities and teaching should include the contributions of the diverse population. Teachers are expected to offer instruction in a variety of forms and strategies to accommodate students' different levels and styles of learning.



Teachers are expected to provide clear instructions, expectations and deadlines for students' work. They must monitor the amount of homework allotted and take some time during the day to organize this in the school agenda book. Students' work should be checked regularly and the teacher should provide feedback and extra support when necessary. It is part of the teacher's job to ensure that assigned work is completed.

Strategies for successful independent learning (e.g. time management, organization, use of the School Agenda, research, study techniques) are a large part of the work of teachers. Upon request, teachers are expected to provide additional resources, and parents' guides, prepared by the Ministry of Education for math and reading.

## Parents: Rights & Responsibilities

### ***What rights do I have regarding my children in school?***

You have the right to ask any questions or raise any concerns you may have to teachers and the principal or vice-principal (regarding homework, school safety, school policies, attendance, etc).

You have the right to visit your child's class, to observe the teacher and your child in class (please make an appointment first).

You have the right to attend school council meetings and give input regarding decisions being made that affect your children's education (see section on *School Councils*).

You have the right to participate in school life (such as monitoring children at lunch time or helping children be safe when arriving by car) and to help out with special events (like field trips, shows or presentations). For other volunteer opportunities, speak with the school principal or school council.

### ***What should I be doing to help my child in school?***

Be aware of the importance of family reading, dinner table discussions, etc., for the child's development of values, knowledge, reasoning, and a positive outlook towards learning.

Take children to community resources such as libraries, museums etc., and encourage the use of newspapers, magazines, books, and the Internet (as appropriate).



Provide support, suggestions, explanations, interest and encouragement for school work and homework.

Monitor time spent on homework. Inform the teacher (by note or phone call) if the child has consistently too little or too much homework or when homework cannot legitimately be

completed due to unusual circumstances.

Monitor what your children are doing at school and refer daily to their School Agenda [see page 3].

Attend all parent-teacher interviews or conferences. Actively support school events such as concerts, literacy nights, open house, and other initiatives

**TIMELY TIP:**

The Ministry of Education has good resources to help children with homework online. Look for “Helping Your Child Learn Math” and “Helping Your Child Learn to Read” [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

The Toronto District School Board has homework tips online in the ‘Parents’ section. Speak with teachers for suggestions on helping your child with learning. Check out school resources, the library, and community support agencies [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca)

***How can I help with my child’s homework?***

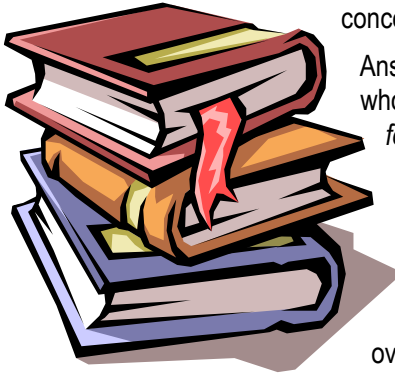
Be sure to create an environment at home that makes it easy for your child to study. Provide a quiet setting, appropriate for the completion of homework (e.g. a desk with good lighting, paper, pencils etc.). Find a space for your child to spread out books and notes. Provide a regular, consistent time for homework, free from distractions.

Give children a healthy snack if they are supposed to start their homework before dinner time.

Turn off the television/radio/music (if it distracts from their concentration), remove distracting toys, and separate the student from siblings at play. The fewer distractions, the better the child can

**TIMELY TIP:**

Parents are encouraged to read to and speak with their children in their first language (children are capable of learning more than one language at a time, even if they struggle with them a little in the first few years)



concentrate on homework.

Answer questions or find someone who can, but don't do the homework *for* your child.

For your child's sake, be consistent with your child's schedule for homework, leisure and free time. This consistency, when possible, must take priority over other social or family activities.

### ***And, if I think my child has special needs?***

If your child is having difficulties at school, the administrators or teachers can provide extra supports. Children with special needs are called "exceptional" by the education system. If required, an assessment by an *Identification, Placement and Review Committee* (IPRC) will determine if the child is exceptional and what supports are necessary. Areas of special need include behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical, and multiple needs (more than one) .

If you believe your child has special needs, you can speak with school staff or go to an outside agency or professional for an initial assessment. If you think there is a need, write to the principal requesting an assessment. The Education Act says a principal cannot refuse to refer students to an IPRC.

For more information regarding this process — the rights of parents and students, services available, and/or making appeals or complaints — speak with your school and request a copy of a "Parent's Guide" for children with special needs. This will explain how children are identified, what help they can receive, and your rights in the process. Or contact supports such as the Hospital for Sick Children (which has resources useful for possible assessment, advice and advocacy) or your local community legal agencies for legal advice and advocacy (see *Parent Resources*).

### ***How can I prepare for parent-teacher interviews?***

Regular parent-teacher interviews for all parents take place in

December, and by teacher or parent request in March after report cards are released. You can request an interview at any time or the teacher may ask you to come in. Interviews last 10-30 minutes.

Read your child's report card carefully before meeting with teachers. Speak with your child about what the teacher has written, praise his/her achievements, and get the child's explanation for what is not positive on the report card.

If you want more information, do not understand something on the report card, or do not agree with what the teacher wrote, prepare questions to ask the teacher at the next parent-teacher interview.

Some sample questions might include:

- How does my child get along with other children?
- How is my child progressing in learning English (if another language is spoken at home)?
- In what subjects is my child having difficulties? What kind of support is he or she getting?
- In what subjects is my child excelling?
- What kinds of extra challenges or opportunities are available?
- In areas where my child is making an excellent contribution, what additional programs, clubs, or projects are offered by the Board or community organizations?

Parent-teacher interviews are a good opportunity for the parent and the teacher to discuss what each will do to help your child succeed in school. This is also an opportunity to find out what community supports or programs might be available for your child.

If you do not feel that you had enough time to discuss your child's school work or behaviour, make another appointment to continue the discussion with the teacher. If you have concerns, call your child's teachers anytime during the school day to speak with them. You can also speak with the principal, vice-principal, or school social worker.



## When Things Go Wrong

### ***How can I handle behaviour problems with my child?***

Behaviour problems are usually a sign that your child needs some extra attention. Talking with your child, the teacher, the principal or others can be helpful in dealing with problems that may be affecting your child. This may result in a behaviour change by the child. If not, go to the library, go on the Internet, speak with a local community agency (such as Delta Family Resource Centre), or with your child's teachers for suggestions on effective ways to discipline children.

### ***How do I know if my child is dealing with bullying?***

Bullying occurs when a more powerful child or group of children, boys or girls, repeatedly and intentionally harm another child. Bullying can be physical, verbal or social. Taking no action can make matters worse.

#### **Signs that your child is getting bullied**

- ☹ Suddenly becomes afraid to go to school
- ☹ Changes their route to school
- ☹ Complains about being ill before school
- ☹ Skips school
- ☹ Starts to do poorly in school
- ☹ Suddenly "loses" belongings
- ☹ Comes home with unexplained cuts or bruises
- ☹ Avoids play areas at lunch or recess
- ☹ Cries easily when asked about school or playtime

It is difficult to determine when a child is a victim of bullying because children are reluctant to tell adults who they believe may make things worse.

### ***What can I do if my child is being bullied?***

- ✓ Stay calm and comfort your child, do not show anger in front of them

- ✓ Reassure your child that you will help and that the bullying is not his or her fault
- ✓ It is important to let your child know that adults in the school must be informed so they can also help — bullying hurts everyone at school
- ✓ Discuss possible scenarios and role-play with your child on how to deal with bullying – help rebuild your child’s confidence
- ✓ Work with the school: contact the teachers and/or principal immediately so they can monitor the situation to ensure your child is safe
- ✓ Simply punishing a child for bullying will not stop the behaviour (bullies are often hurt and angry). The child must understand the impact of bullying, apologise and demonstrate that they are sorry

### ***What do I do if my child is suspended or expelled?***

It is important to read and keep any letters that your child brings home from school. It is also important that you get to know the school, your child’s teachers and the principal. The more you know about how your children are doing, the better you can help them to avoid trouble.

However, if your child is suspended or expelled, you have the right to expect all the information of how long, the reason, what alternative plan is set for their continued studies, etc. Parents are entitled to have all the details documented and sent home. They have the right to respond and have their response attached to the school’s file and communication.

An expelled or suspended student is entitled to be given school work sent home with them and continued for the duration of the time away from school. An alternative teacher or counsellor should supervise the student’s work and parents may ask for an alternative learning environment instead of just being at home during the suspension.

There are certain steps that you need to take. Look in the School Agenda for the Code of Conduct and Safe Schools Act, go to the Board’s website (see *Parent Resources*), or ask the school for a description of the Safe Schools Act. The Act sets out when a child can be suspended or expelled, if police are to be called and what steps are

to be taken in dealing with this.

If this happens to your child, they need your help to ensure that all their options are explored. Talk with the principal about what special programs are available for students on suspension or limited expulsion. You should also ask about the requirements for the child's return to school.

Always make an appointment before going to the school. Stay calm and try to get all the information you can. You can get help from a number of organizations or individuals connected with the school system (see *Parent Resources*).

**TIMELY TIP:**

Act quickly. Bring another parent or a member of School Council (and/or an interpreter) to help you or to be your advocate. Gather all the information you may need and know your rights (e.g., Safe Schools Act). If speaking with the principal or teacher does not achieve what you want, speak with the superintendent of schools for your area, school board trustee, etc. (see hierarchy chart). Appeals should be submitted in writing within seven (7) days of suspension or expulsion.

***Can I see my child's file?***

You have the right to see your child's Ontario School Record (Section 266 of the Education Act). You have the right to remove information from your child's OSR, after one year, if you think it will hurt them in the future. There are some time limitations on removing suspension or expulsion notices.

***Who do I speak to about the treatment of my child?***

Speak first to the person involved (the teacher for classroom issues, the principal or vice-principal when it is more than just a classroom issue, and the superintendent/trustee for whole school issues)

Get to know members of the school council, know your child's teachers, principal, and vice-principal. You have the right to voice concern about anything concerning your child's learning or their treatment in the school.

**Education Hierarchy Chart**

- ↓ Speak with teacher, school council members, and principal
- ↓ Contact school superintendent (Jefferys-Westview school family, Verna Lister, 416-394-2030 [verna.lister@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:verna.lister@tdsb.on.ca))
- ↓ Contact your school board trustee if you need an advocate (Stephnie Payne, Ward 4, 416-397-2441, [stephnie.payne@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:stephnie.payne@tdsb.on.ca)) (or Sheine Mankovsky, Ward 5, 416-397-2431, [sheine.mankovsky@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:sheine.mankovsky@tdsb.on.ca))
- ↓ Toronto District School Board (5050 Yonge Street Toronto, ON M2N 5N8: David Reid, Director of Education, 416-397-3000 [david.reid@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:david.reid@tdsb.on.ca) or Board Chair Sheila Ward [sheila.ward@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:sheila.ward@tdsb.on.ca))
- ↓ Member of Provincial Parliament Mario Sergio, York West, 2300 Finch Ave W, Unit 38, Toronto M9M 2Y3, 416-743-7272 [msergio.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:msergio.mpp@liberal.ola.org)
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- ↓ Premier of Ontario Dalton McGuinty (Queen's Park, Toronto, ON M7A 1A1, 416-325-1941 [dalton.mcguinty@premier.gov.on.ca](mailto:dalton.mcguinty@premier.gov.on.ca))
- ↓ Contact other organisations for information and assistance (see *Parent Resources* section at end of handbook)

**Meeting with the Principal**

- ☐ Make an appointment to see the principal
- ☐ Bring an advocate with you to the meeting such as:
  - ✓ A strong, supportive friend (who will keep you calm, remember what was discussed, help you figure out the next steps), a translator, or even the school council chair
  - ✓ Decide if you want your child at the meeting to present his/her side of the story

☐ Before the meeting:

- ✓ Write down the main points you would like to express in the meeting, or the main questions you have to better understand the situation and seek clarity
- ✓ Think about what you hope to achieve in the meeting, what you are willing to compromise on, what further information you will require to help your child

☐ During the meeting:

- ✓ Pay close attention to your physical responses. If you notice yourself shaking, getting hot, feeling upset or getting angry, take a deep breath, ask for water, count to 10 or take a break (getting angry with the principal will not necessarily help you)
- ✓ Take notes during the meeting so you do not forget what was discussed. If something is unclear, ask for clarification.

☐ After the meeting:

- ✓ Write down what was discussed, your feelings, questions or concerns that arose. Document everything!
- ✓ If not all of your questions were answered, if you need to think about what was said before responding, set up another meeting

***How to complain effectively***

- ⊗ Calmly (but quickly) get all sides of the story
- ⊗ Speak to the people involved, present them with your concerns, take notes, and attempt to find a mutually agreeable solution
- ⊗ If finding a solution you agree with is not possible, speak with the principal about your concerns, results of discussions and what you want changed



- ⊗ If you feel uncomfortable speaking to administrators on your own, bring school council members with you.
- ⊗ Other parents/council members can a) just observe, b) speak up in support, or c) advocate for you
- ⊗ The school should provide an interpreter if you are not comfortable in English, although you may bring someone of your own choosing to interpret for you
- ⊗ If still unsatisfied, go to your school council to gain support in dealing with the school board
- ⊗ Bring other parents or a parents advocate to the school board with you to help you in the presentation or debate on your issue

**TIMELY TIP:**

To be most effective, remain calm and polite in tone. Do not be afraid to call things as you see them (your values and perceptions are as important as anyone else's). Keep a copy of all letters for your files.

***Writing a letter of complaint to school officials***

Letters of complaint, whether to an official at the school, such as the principal, or your elected politician, require some basic formatting. On the next page is an template of a letter to a principal.

This template is provided to show you how such a letter should appear. You will, of course, use your own issues and words to create an effective letter of complaint/request for action. You can also change the format if you have one you like better. This is a standard format for letters with complaints or bad news. The number of paragraphs, length of the letter, salutations and closings, and so on are up to you. Being brief, clear, to the point, and at the same time, giving enough information to back you up is a real balancing act. A non-blaming tone can help avoid defensiveness and make sure you are truly "heard".

***Format of a Letter to the Principal***

*[Next page]*

[parent's name]  
[street address]  
[city (e.g., Toronto or Downsview)], ON [postal code]

[date]

(*Ms., Mr., or Mrs.*) [principal's full name], Principal  
[full name of school]  
[school's street address]  
[city], ON [postal code]

**Re:** [subject of letter in few words – *in bold type*]

Dear Principal [family name]

[First paragraph – a short introduction – answer question: why am I writing to the principal? Describe (*briefly*) the situation that you think needs changing. State (*briefly, again*) what you would like the principal to do about it]

[Second paragraph – explain the problem in more detail and/or give some background information as you understand it, how it came to your attention, etc.]

[Third (*or fourth*) paragraph – describe what you did to resolve the problem/situation and what happened then]

[Fourth (*or fifth*) paragraph – restate in more detail what you would like done, and in what (*reasonable*) time. (*Be as clear and to the point as you can*). Add what you are willing to do to help (*if anything*). State when, and how (*telephone #*), the principal can get back to you to tell you what is being done]

[Thank the principal for considering your request and taking action on this]

[Closing: “Sincerely” or “Yours truly”]

*Sign your name*

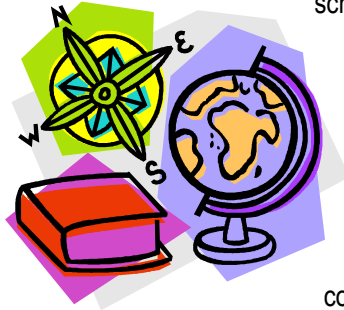
[print your name]

CC: [trustee's name (*and actually send her/him a copy*)]

## School Councils

### *What is the purpose of the school councils?*

School councils can be useful for parents to organize together to help schools identify and respond to the educational needs of students



They also serve as a channel to provide information to parents, get feedback from them, and present parents views to the school and the school board. Councils provide parents, guardians, students and the community an opportunity to participate

in the decision-making process that influences education at both the Board and local school levels.

Parents participation in the school council can improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

### *Which issues are discussed at school council meetings?*

Many issues are discussed at school council meetings. Information and educational topics come from other parents, the school, outside resource people, and other invited guest speakers. Some examples include:

- ◆ School code of student behaviour and teacher/staff behaviour
- ◆ Selection of principals and vice-principals
- ◆ School budget priorities
- ◆ Safety and school improvement planning
- ◆ Methods of reporting to parents and community
- ◆ School dress code
- ◆ Extra-curricular activities
- ◆ EQAO tests results and changes/resources necessary
- ◆ School curriculum

- ◆ School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs
- ◆ Organizing information and training sessions to enable parents to develop skills as council members

### ***Why should I get involved in the school council?***

School councils are an excellent way of discovering what is happening at your child's school. You can meet other parents and work together to resolve issues, respond to questions, and be actively involved in your child's schooling. Instead of having to create a parents forum or channels of communication between parents and teachers and/or administrators, parents have access to a council system set up by the government.

### ***How can I get involved in the school council?***

All parents with children at the school (and community members who do not have children there) should be welcomed and encouraged to participate in all school council meetings. Council meetings usually take place monthly, in the evening. You can go and simply listen, you can ask questions, contribute your knowledge or experience and/or give your opinion.

Look for announcements regarding the date of each meeting in notices sent home with your children or in the school newsletter. You can also call the school office.

There are leadership roles for parents who want to volunteer such as chairperson, secretary, and treasurer [*see School Council Roles for details*].

### ***Running an effective school council***

#### **Increase parental involvement**

- ◆ Keep parents notified about issues
- ◆ Piggy-back on school events for publicity or sign-up tables
- ◆ Telephone active parents to remind them about meetings
- ◆ Hold food sales, auctions, arts and crafts sales and other events to

bring in the wider community and motivate new parents to join

- ◆ Provide interpretation — through board interpreters or by working with the International language programs
- ◆ Informal or formal groups for discussion in other languages allow parents with poor English to participate more fully in the school's life and their children's education — someone from the group should report regularly to the school council
- ◆ Change meeting times to accommodate more parents
- ◆ Ensure everyone knows that school council meetings are public – not everyone can vote, but anyone can attend each meeting and speak



### **Develop parent participation at meetings**

- ◆ Make meetings relevant: discuss issues that are relevant to the particular school and students
- ◆ Keep meetings brief
- ◆ Share responsibility – this keeps people interested, provides options of different ways that parents can get involved
- ◆ Particularly for new parents who feel unsure, assigning small tasks makes them feel useful
- ◆ Define roles and responsibilities clearly, including time commitment
- ◆ Recognise that the meeting can feel very intimidating; assign a mentor to new parents so they may understand what is happening and encourage them to participate
- ◆ Survey parents – what are their skills? What are their needs? Get to know parents and their skill set so that their particular skills can be put to use
- ◆ Advertise “no experience necessary”, “English not required” (ensure there are translators)

- ◆ Make it FUN! Have ice-breakers, games (ideas available from Delta Family Resource Centre), and humour
- ◆ Provide child care, food, TTC tickets
- ◆ Have an appreciation event at end of year for all school volunteers

### **Options for Meetings**

- ◆ Avoid discussing personal issues – stick to general council related topics otherwise parents will get bored
- ◆ Have a good agenda with a set time for each item
- ◆ Write the goal as well as the topic for each item on the agenda



- ◆ Do not let any individual dominate the meeting
- ◆ Ensure every voice is heard – create a safe, inclusive environment
- ◆ Ensure there are interpreters available, as necessary
- ◆ Provide refreshments –

social interaction is increased by sharing food

## **School Council Roles**

### ***The Role of the Chairperson***

The Chairperson provides leadership to the school council. She or he is responsible for planning agendas, facilitating discussion and maintaining order and discipline in the meetings. The Chair works closely with the principal in preparing for meetings.

### ***The Effective Chairperson***

- ▣ Listens to participants to set priorities on agenda
- ▣ Follows the agenda and ensures the group knows which item is being discussed
- ▣ When people want to discuss items not on the agenda, ensures

the item is on the next meeting's agenda

- ▣ Helps the group members become comfortable with each other by using ways of putting people at ease and creating a good physical environment
- ▣ Welcomes late-comers by briefly informing them what items are being discussed
- ▣ Generally, refrains from offering own opinions to sway the group. When Chair wants to speak at length, she/he must clearly step aside from role as Chair and speak as an individual
- ▣ Gives frequent summaries of group's discussion so the Council members can understand what progress has been made
- ▣ Helps the group arrive at effective decisions
- ▣ Outlines matters to be discussed at future meetings



### ***Role of Secretary***

- ▣ Takes notes of issues discussed at meetings and the decisions and actions taken; briefly summarizes discussion
- ▣ Keeps attendance list and, shows in the minutes who is present and who absent
- ▣ Takes note of when meetings begin and finish, types up notes and distributes them within a week of the meeting (people need time to prepare for meetings and to respond to actions assigned to them)

### ***Role of Treasurer***

- ▣ Keeps an up-to-date record of all the financial transactions and reports this information to the school council
- ▣ Provides an annual written report of the school Council financial

activities to the Toronto District School Board

- ▣ The treasurer does not make financial decisions, these decisions are made collectively by the entire council. The treasurer simply accounts for and releases money

### ***Role of the Principal***

- ▣ Acts as a resource to the school council and assists the council to obtain information relevant to its work, including information relating to relevant legislation and policies
- ▣ Considers each recommendation made by the School Council and advises the council of action taken in response
- ▣ Assists the School Council in communicating with the school community

### ***Role of the Teacher Representative***

The teacher representative brings some of the views and concerns of teachers to the council meetings. Requests for support (financial and moral support) can be aired at those times. Teacher representatives also communicate the perspectives, concerns and needs of the parents to the rest of the teaching staff.

### ***Role of the Community Representative***

Community representatives often play the role of bridge between parents and the local neighbourhood and/or broader community. They may provide certain expertise that is useful to the parents discussions and, where possible, communicate announcements of community events, services and programs available, and important community initiatives.

## Parent Resource List

### ***Programs and Services***

*Promoting Economic Action and Community Health (PEACH) /*

*Oolagen Wraparound*: programs for youth expelled from school. 95 Eddystone, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 416-740-9593

Settlement.Org is a website of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Valuable resources in "The Newcomers' Guide to Elementary School in Ontario": adjusting to a new school; learning English; school procedures, policies; student behaviour; report cards; parent involvement, EQAO tests. Available in 14 languages. Also see "Resource Kit for New Immigrant Parents" for Developmental Guidelines, Communication and Discipline, Literacy and more [www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

*The SWIS Program* (Settlement Workers In Schools) connects newcomers to community resources to help them settle after immigrating to Canada. Help parents and children with the school system. Find a SWIS program at *North York Community House*, located in Lawrence Square Mall. Contact Zesta at 416-784-0920

### ***Advocacy and Legal Services***

*The Child Advocacy Project* represents children in special education hearings, provides mediation and advocacy with school districts in special education, school attendance matters, and other disputes. Call 416-920-1633 [www.probononet.on.ca/projects](http://www.probononet.on.ca/projects)

*Justice for Children and Youth*, a non-profit legal aid clinic that specializes in the rights of those facing conflict with the legal, education, social service or mental health systems. 416-920-1633 [www.jfcy.org](http://www.jfcy.org)

*CLASP (Community Legal Aid Student Program)* has Osgood Hall law students performing legal services for students and the community. You can reach them at 416-736-5029 [www.yorku.ca/osgoode/clasp](http://www.yorku.ca/osgoode/clasp)

*Jane-Finch Community Legal Services* is funded by the Ontario Legal Aid program and provides a range of legal services and education. Call them at 416-398-0677

*Centre for Spanish Speaking People* has a legal clinic and provides

support on immigration issues. Telephone 416-533-8545

Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre has community volunteer legal workers who provide free advice and advocacy 416-663-2733

### **Information and Training**

"A Parents Guide to the TDSB" is a useful handbook with information to help you understand the role of the Toronto District School Board.  
[www.tdsb.on.ca/communications/publications/SchoolMatters.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/communications/publications/SchoolMatters.pdf)

"Coping with Fear: Guide for Parents/Guardians", a School Board resource with information on how to help your child deal with anger and the desire to fight back, coping with fear, and feelings of loss of control. Available in 12 different languages  
[www.tdsb.on.ca/communications/ny/advice](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/communications/ny/advice)

The Jane-Finch Action Learning Centre provides leadership training and development for community residents and organizations. They can be reached at 416-788-3968 [alcjanefinch@ca.inter.net](mailto:alcjanefinch@ca.inter.net)

### **Other important websites and groups**

Toronto District School Board: 5050 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario M2N 5N8 Tel: (416) 397-3000 [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca)

Ontario Ministry of Education [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/welcome)

Ontario School Council Network [www.geocities.com/ontarioschoolcouncils](http://www.geocities.com/ontarioschoolcouncils)

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
[www.oise.utoronto.ca](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca)

### **Education System-Oriented Advocacy Groups**

Campaign for Public Education <a href="http://www.campaignforpubliceducation.ca">www.campaignforpubliceducation.ca</a>	Toronto Parent Network <a href="http://www.torontoparentnetwork.ca">www.torontoparentnetwork.ca</a>
People for Education <a href="http://www.peopleforeducation.com">www.peopleforeducation.com</a>	Ontario School Advocate <a href="http://www.schooladvocate.ca">www.schooladvocate.ca</a>

*\*\* If you do not have access to the internet at home, libraries or some community organisations have computers. Organisations may also help you locate information, if you are unfamiliar with computers \*\**



### **Family Resource Programs**

Parent/Child Playgroups  
Baby Time/ Toddler Time  
Literacy Activities  
Toy Lending Library  
Parent Relief  
Child Care Registry  
Caregivers/Parenting Workshops  
Ontario Early Years Centre Drop In

### **Settlement Programs and Services**

LINC-English as a Second Language Classes  
JSW-Job Search Workshops  
Support and Counselling  
Settlement Workshops  
Information and Referrals

### **Community Support**

Food Supplement Program (Food Club)  
Leadership Training  
Volunteer Opportunities  
Community Office  
Computer Training Classes  
Community Workshops and Events  
Parents-in-Action

## **Delta Family Resource Centre**

**(Jane - Sheppard Mall)**

**Phone: (416) 747-1172 Fax: (416) 747-7415**  
**E-mail: [contact\\_us@dfrc.ca](mailto:contact_us@dfrc.ca) Website: [www.dfrc.ca](http://www.dfrc.ca)**