

Chapter 6

Cultivating Parent Support



“A school system without parents at its foundation is just like a bucket with a hole in it.”

—Rev. Jesse L. Jackson

Character education begins in the home, and a school-based character program is actually an extension of that home training. In many families the school program will reinforce concepts parents are already teaching. In other families, where parents are not available or are unable to teach good character, the school program can provide guidance that would otherwise be lacking in students’ lives. When talking with parents, always emphasize that the school is reinforcing concepts they are teaching at home. Communication is key here: make sure that parents know what character traits you are teaching so there is a strong link between home and school.

It’s wise to involve parents in the character program from the very beginning. Some schools routinely include parents on the character committee, while other schools do not. Either way, parents should always be welcome to attend a meeting and express their ideas or concerns. At the beginning of each school year, hold a forum where parents can come and learn about the program. The subject of “character” can be touchy among some parents, but knowing what is happening at school is usually enough to allay their parental concerns. After all, very few parents are going to object to an added emphasis on respect, responsibility, self-control, or kindness!

Methods for Involving Parents

There are many different ways to involve parents in the character program. Committee members should constantly be looking for new