



Texas Association of Parent Educators

QUARTERLY NEWLETTER OF TAPE

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First Words from the President by Linda Ladd

OUR MISSION

TAPE has launched!

Welcome to the first-ever TAPE newsletter which announces the creation of the Texas Association of Parent Educators! We are so very proud of this beginning and are eager to share our excitement with YOU—another parent educator or professional who supports parent educators.

First, an enormous *Thank You* to Dr. Arminta Jacobson! Arminta Jacobson has been the force behind many good things that have happened for parent educators since she initiated the UNT Parenting Education Center as well as the very successful UNT Conference on Parent Education (now in its 15th year!). Part of her vision is the belief that parent educators need a professional organization where their specific issues can be addressed. She asked a number of professionals to join a task force in 2005 to make it happen and here we are today.

What is the purpose of TAPE? I am glad to share it with you! TAPE has two main areas of focus:

1. To promote parenting education, parent involvement, and family support in the schools, communities, and the state.
2. To create opportunities to increase knowledge and skills in the field of parenting education, parent involvement, and family support.

The purpose statement has been discussed and debated for the better part of this past 15 months as the Board wanted a statement that was specific to parent educators but flexible enough to include everyone committed to the field. We believe that TAPE extends a hand to anyone who works or wants to work as a parent educator.

Being a Board Member

Even as you read this newsletter, we hope that you are asking yourself—How can I get involved? In 2005, Dr. Arminta Jacobson called a number of parent educators of Texas and said “I have an idea and need your help!” Well, the idea is now an association with by-laws and a board of dedicated people. Here is your invitation to become involved as a member at large or even just an interested professional. Interested? Call Linda Ladd at (940) 898-2694 or email at lladd@mail.twu.edu and we can talk!

Elections for the 2007 Board will take place at the TAPE reception and meeting on Thursday, February 8 from 4:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. The 2006 Board of the Texas Association of Parent Educators includes Linda Ladd as interim president and vice president for programs, Beth Thompson as vice president for credentials, and Sandy Renick as secretary/treasurer. Our members at large include: Arminta Jacobson, Debbie Klinger, Sharon Hirschy, Lucy Long, Mary Ellen Nudd, and Nerissa LeBlanc Gillum.

Do you ever wonder about the people who serve on the Board of an association? Thankfully, we are hard-working people just like YOU! The 2006 TAPE Board includes doctoral students in Family Studies and Early Childhood Education, a state coordinator for Even Start and Family Literacy in Texas, the director of Practical Parenting, an administrator with Mental Health Association of Texas, a professor of Child Development and Education at Collin County, a professor of Development and Family Studies at UNT, a professor of Family Therapy at TWU, and an assistant professor of Family Studies at TWU.

To build a network of professionals and opportunities to increase knowledge and skills in the fields of parent education, parent involvement, and family support in order to promote education in schools, communities, and state.

Announcements:

15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON PARENT EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS IS FEBRUARY 8-9, 2007.

WWW.CPE.UNT.EDU TO REGISTER.

WATCH FOR:

CONTEST TO NAME OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER

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Column on Training Tips by Sharon Hirschy

You have worked hard to create a parent education program. Some participants seem a little bored; some do not participate; few attend. You may become frustrated with this lack of success. Therefore, how can you improve training so that both your participants and you are satisfied for the time spent? From my experiences, I have learned the following ideas to help me to create successful programs.

1. Find out what people want and need. Send out a short survey on what kind of workshops would be helpful, where it could be held, and what are their special needs such as transportation or child care. You may plan for a workshop on reading to children, but the burning need of the parents you are targeting may be to get more information on potty training. Your workshop can be combined to include both the information you want to share on reading and the information they need on potty training. You could have a series of workshops beginning with topics identified by the parents and then moving to those topics you want to share. Remember to provide your workshop in a convenient location and provide child care—this may increase attendance.

2. Have a parking lot. At the beginning of the workshop, obtain parents' written concerns and questions and discuss these during or at the end of the session. Parents will believe you are trying to meet their needs and not just your own agenda.



3. Use small group interaction. We all get a little bored when lectured to for an extended length of time. Yet it may be intimidating to ask or answer questions in front of the whole group. To help participants be more comfortable, create activities in which parents can discuss topics and ask questions in small groups. Then, you can have a group debriefing in which more people are likely to volunteer their thoughts and ideas.

4. Use incentives. We all like prizes. Having small toys or other gifts that you can give throughout the workshop to those who participate may encourage responses. Offering door prizes can set a positive atmosphere and encourage future participation. Approach local businesses or write to companies to donate free child products. You can often get growth charts, games, booklets on topics about children, and other free materials from companies such as Kimberly Clark, Johnson and Johnson, and General Mills, and from agencies such as the health department. Go ahead and ask.

A goal in teaching parents is to create an accepting and supportive atmosphere where parents can ask questions and gain information that will help them to be better parents. These ideas can be helpful to the success of your parent education programs.

Words from the President, Cont. (Page 1)

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How About Those By-Laws?

Beth Thompson single handedly drafted about three versions of the TAPE by-laws before they were approved. Along the way, she graciously listened to the 2006 Board suggest changes to just about everything. Beth, *Thank You* for your wonderful work!

The TAPE by-laws include four different types of membership. Any board member will be more than glad to talk with you about the membership type that best fits you or your organization. In the meantime, please check out the types of memberships that are below:

Students: Students who are enrolled in a college or university have voting rights and receive TAPE newsletters and other communications. Membership rate: \$15.

Professionals: Individuals who work in the field of parenting education or have a professional interest in parenting education have voting rights and receive TAPE newsletters and other communications. Membership: \$35.

Supporting Organizations: Organizations that want to support TAPE appoint a single individual to receive all TAPE newsletters and other communications. They do not have voting rights. Membership rate: \$100.

Practitioner Organizations: These are organizations that employ five or more individuals who support parenting education. Each individual in the organization has voting rights and receive TAPE newsletters and other communications. Membership rate: \$150.

Thank You Sandy, Travis, and Shannon

Sandy Renick is a skilled teacher and a doctoral student in Family Studies at TWU. She volunteered to work on the TAPE logo with her son Travis Renick who is an artist and with her daughter Shannon Carson who is a graphic artist. *We Thank You* for your hard work.



Home-Based Instruction: More Than Just a “Visit” By Beth Thompson

Home-based instruction affords families the opportunity to study in the optimum learning environment, the home. Because the “classroom” is the family home, parent educators have a limited amount of time in which to facilitate a lesson that is individualized for the family, addresses unanticipated family needs and quantifies the results of home visiting. Now, that is a challenge. This article opens a discussion of some of the aspects of delivering high-quality home-based instruction.

Home visiting time is precious. Parent educators do not want to spend all of their time on assessment. Administrators would prefer for families to participate in as much instruction as possible in order to demonstrate outcomes. Nevertheless, parent educators need baseline information about families in order to deliver appropriate instruction. Baseline information could include a developmental screening for the child, pre-assessments of parent knowledge, an observation of the parent-child interactions and a family history. Decisions regarding collection of baseline information are influenced by each organization’s mission and the parameters of their funding. Parent educators then take the information at hand and use it to inform instruction for the family.

A successful lesson plan is one that meets parents where they are. Regardless of their background, parents have unique strengths. These strengths can be used as the foundation for growth in parenting education. Parents with college degrees may know how to access resources, but have little knowledge of child development. These parents expect a parent educator who can verbalize the research behind the concepts taught. Parents with only two or three years of formal education and who are new to this country may

not have been exposed to staples of American life such as free public school, mandatory attendance laws, public libraries and the Internet. For them, assimilation into American life is equally as important as learning how to be their child’s teacher. Thus, baseline information becomes necessary for developing an appropriate lesson.

Picture this. A parent educator prepares for a home visit. She reviews the record of the last home visit and prepares to follow up on last month’s activity. She prepares an individualized research-based lesson. She gathers the appropriate materials and arrives at the visit fully prepared. The family, however, is in crisis. The mother, normally attentive, is suddenly very focused on the safety needs of her family.

There is a certain element of surprise in home-based instruction. In this case, an urgent parent need supersedes the lesson plan. This is the famed Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in motion. The reaction of the parent educator in the scenario above will vary depending on her skill level and the mission of the organization that employs her. Each organization develops their own procedures for situations like this with the overall obligation to report activities that endanger family members. Procedures aside, safety needs must be resolved before the parent can access the cognition needed to learn new skills.

Increased accountability requirements are driving programs to quantify the outcomes of home-based instruction. Parent educators need a clear understanding of their objectives for home-based instruction to do this effectively. That means having clear objectives and defined measurement tools. Careful consideration must be given to hard questions. How will we know that this family gained parenting skills while participating in home-based instruction?

To what degree did the gain occur? How can we use the results of home-based instruction to improve the program for future participants? How will we know if the monetary investment in home-based instruction yielded the desired result? Funders want program answers to such questions before awarding funds to the project.

Parent educators are asked to include documentation, assessment and purposeful instruction to the limited time available for home-based instruction. That brings us back to the opening point of this article: time. Parent educators have a finite amount of time available to conduct home-based instruction. There are steps that parent educators can take to make the most of their time. Preparation is crucial in order to create lessons that are appropriate and relevant for the family. Reviewing records of recent home visits, using research-based curriculum, building familiarity with community resources, and building a library of learning materials all contribute to effective home-based instruction. In short, parent educators will deliver higher quality instruction when they know the material well, have a system to manage their work and stay organized.

References

- Huitt, W. (2004) Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Educational Psychology Interactive. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved June 20, 2006 from <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html>.
- U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service and Even Start Family Literacy Program, Guide to Improving Parenting Education in Even Start Family Literacy Programs, by Douglas R. Powell and Diane D’Angelo. Washington, D.C.: 2000.
- Wasik, Barbara and Bryant, Donna, Home Visiting: Procedures for Helping Families, Second Edition. Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company, Thousand Oaks, CA: 2000.



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Success Stories by Lucy Long



ABC's of Early Childhood

One mom attending a series of six classes on the ABC's of Early Childhood asked many relevant questions at every session. Seven months after the last class, she called the parent educator and scheduled a parent coaching session with her. By this time, the mom's two children were three and a half years old and two years old, and she was six months pregnant with number three. Her life with her two children was not going well. She was constantly stressed and anxious, and she was concerned that her anxiety was causing emotional harm to her children. The thought of adding another child to the family overwhelmed her.

During the first session, the parent educator gave the mom strategies for dealing with her toddlers and some simple organizational tools. Also, she helped her prioritize her goals. When the mom attended her second parent coaching session three weeks later, the mom reported that she could see progress. She was more organized and her children were responding to her better. She was spending more time meeting her children's needs. She left this session believing that she had the tools that she needed to work with her family, and she was ready to welcome the third baby into the family.

Avoiding Power Struggles

The following comment was written on an evaluation form in response to a class on avoiding power struggles at a high school. "I really learned a lot. I wish I had had this class 40 years ago. I am 70 years old now and raising my granddaughter."

Public Policy Updates

Advocate for Families

Identify existing or proposed state or federal legislation related to family issues and your Senator or Representative at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/> or <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>.

Use the AAFCS Public Policy Tool Kit at www.aafcs.org for advocacy and letter-writing guidelines.

Check out these websites for issues before the 2007 Texas Legislature.

- The Center for Public Policy at www.cppp.org/
- Texans Care for Children at www.texanscareforchildren.org.
- Prevent Child Abuse Texas at www.preventchildabusetexas.org/

New Parent/Family Life Educator Certifications

This space reserved for recognition of new certifications of TAPE members.

Organizational Structure

MEMBERSHIP is open to all professionals, students and groups who share the same mission as TAPE. TAPE BOARD MEMBERS consist of the following professionals who provide governance to the organization:

- **President:** Linda Ladd
LLadd@mail.twu.edu
- **Vice President Programs:** Sharon Hirschy
shirschy@cccd.edu
- **Vice President Credentials:** Beth Thompson
ethompson@hcde-texas.org
- **Secretary:** Debbie Klinger
DKlinger@coe.unt.edu
- **Treasurer:** Sandy Renick
srenick@coe.unt.edu
- **Members at Large:** Mary Ellen Nudd, menudd@mhatexas.org
Lucy Long, llong2@pisd.edu
Nerissa Gillum, NGillum@twu.edu
Arminta Jacobson, Jacobson@coe.unt.edu

Employment Opportunities

Send your job announcements to parenting @unt.edu

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Sponsored by
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