

Parents ask about
Title I



TITLE I, IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT OF 1994

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Parents ask about Title I

What is Title I?

Title I (pronounced “Title One”) is the largest federal aid program for elementary, middle, and high schools. Through Title I, the Federal government gives money to school districts around the country based on the number of low-income families in each district. Each district uses its Title I money for *extra educational services* for children who are behind in school.

You may know Title I by its old name, Chapter 1. But the new Title I is different. It is based on three important ideas:

For more on standards, read the brochure *Parents Ask About Standards*

1. All students should work toward the same high standards. Title I’s job is to provide help to students who need it to make sure they reach the same *standards* as everyone else in their school or district. Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Schools cannot have different standards for Title I students compared to other students.

2. Local districts, schools, and parents know best what their students need to succeed. Title I allows them to decide how to use Title I money to help students who are behind.

3. Parents are partners in helping all students achieve. Parents have the *right* to be involved in the design and operation of their school’s Title I program. At the same time, parents have a *responsibility* to help their children succeed in school.

How can Title I money be used?

Districts, schools, and parents and have a lot of choice in how they set up their Title I program, as long as it helps low-achieving students meet the same standards that have been set for all other students. For example, Title I money can be used to:

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- provide after-school, weekend or summer school programs;
 - train teachers and other staff;
 - buy equipment and learning materials;
 - support parent involvement activities;
 - hire special teachers, tutors or aides (usually in reading, language arts or math).

Which students can get Title I help?

Title I programs are for the children who need help the most — those who are furthest behind in school. Each school community decides which students are most in need of Title I services.

Schools where more than half of all students are low-income can operate a school-wide Title I project.* This means all students in that school can receive Title I services.

How can Title I help me as a parent?

Title I money can be used for many types of parent involvement activities. It can be spent on:

- Family literacy activities;
- Parent meetings and training activities;
- Transportation and child care so that parents can come to school activities or volunteer in the classroom;
- Materials that parents can use to work with their children at home;
- Parent resource centers.

For more information on policies, read the brochure *Parents Ask About Parent Involvement Policies*

For more information on compacts, read the brochure *Parents Ask About Compacts*

How can I find out what my Title I program offers parents?

All Title I programs must have in place a plan for how it will involve parents. This plan, called a *parent involvement policy*, explains how the school and district support the important role of parents in education. The parent involvement policy must include a *compact*, which is a written

*As of July 1, 1996

statement of what schools and parents are each supposed to do to help students achieve.

If my child is in Title I, how can I help?

Parents can help their children be more successful by *teaching* them in ways that add to what the teacher is doing . . . by *learning* more about their school . . . by *supporting* their children and the school . . . and by *making decisions* about their children's education.

Here are some ways you can do all that:

- Find out what your child is supposed to learn to meet the standards for his or her grade level;
- Find out what your child is being taught;
- Find out how the Title I program is helping your child meet the standards;
- Keep in close touch with your child's teacher;
- Make sure your child does his or her homework;
- Attend parent-teacher conferences;
- Talk with your child about school;
- Become a school volunteer;
- Join your local parent-teacher organization.

How can I help my school's Title I program?

There are many ways you can become involved:

- You can help plan or review your school's Title I program.
- You can help develop your school's plans for how parents and schools can work together (its parent involvement policy and its compact).
- You can work on the committee that reviews your state's Title I policies.

How will I know if the Title I program at my child's school is working?

For more information on profiles, read the brochure *Parents Ask About School Profiles*

Schools need to show that their Title I programs are working. This means that their Title I students are learning the same things and gaining the same skills as all the other students. It also means that Title I students are making good progress each year to reach the standards set by the school for all students. Parents can get this information from the *school profile* which is like a report card on the school. If Title I programs are not working, states and districts are required by law to improve them.

What else do I need to know?

Because every school designs its own Title I program, every program will be different. Here are some questions you might want to ask to find out how Title I works in your school:

Ask about putting a Title I program together

What Title I money is available to our state for improving schools?

Does the school have a Title I program in place? If not, when will the program be available?

Who's in charge of developing the program for our school?

What is the process for creating the program?

How are parents involved in that process?

What part can I play in creating the program?

How can I help the program once it is started?

Ask about Title I and your school

What Title I program does the school have?

Are students pulled out of class for Title I instruction, or are they taught in the regular classroom?

Who provides Title I services, the regular classroom teacher or another teacher?

How are children chosen for Title I?

How is progress measured for children in Title I? Will progress be measured the same as for all other children in the school, as Title I requires?

How is the school involving Title I parents?

How can I get a copy of the school performance profile to see how Title I children, and all children, are doing in the school?

Ask about Title I and your child

Why was my child chosen for Title I?

How will the school's Title I program help my child?

Are you expecting my child to know what all children in school are expected to know, as Title I requires?

How will I be told how my child is doing?

Will I meet with my child's regular classroom teacher to find out how my child is doing in the Title I program?

Are there other special programs I should learn about for my child?

What if my child needs help after Title I services have ended?

Who can answer these questions?

Your child's teacher can answer many of them. Or you can ask:

- The school principal
- The Title I director in the school
- The superintendent of schools
- Members of the school board
- Members of the parent-teacher organization
- The parent coordinator
- Staff members at the parent resource center
- Other parents

Other brochures in this series available from your school

Parents Ask About Standards

Parents Ask About Parent Involvement Policies

Parents Ask About Compacts

Parents Ask About School Profiles

National sources of help about Title I:

To get a copy of Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, contact the U.S. Senate Document Room, Telephone: **(202) 224-7701**; Fax: **(202) 228-2815**.

National Coalition of Title I Parents

Edmonds School Building
9th & D Streets, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
Telephone: **(202) 547-9286**

The National PTA

Office of Governmental Relations
2000 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: **(202) 331-1380** FAX: **(202) 331-1406**

Center for Law and Education

National Title I and School Reform Advocacy Project
Center for Law and Education
1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 510
Washington, DC 20009
Telephone: **(202) 986-3000** FAX: **(202) 986-6648**