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## Kinder's Family Room

Kinder Elementary School

Miamisburg, Ohio

Our partnership activity is a family resource center located at the school. It helps increase our parent involvement and awareness of school activities and functions. Information on community services and various parenting resources are also available for parents to use.

An action team made up of teachers, parents, and school officials saw the need for increased parental involvement in our students' education. This team attended workshops and seminars for ideas on how to increase our parent involvement. We decided our school needed a non-threatening, family-friendly environment to assist in bringing families into the school. This resulted in the recommendation of a "Family Resource Center" on the school premises.

We first applied for a \$500.00 "Goals 2000" grant. These funds from the Ohio State Department of Education were awarded to us late in the 1996-1997 school year. We decided to name our family resource center "The Kinder Family Room." Parent volunteers and our Action Team donated their time to get the family room off to a great start. A parent volunteer designed a "Logo" for our family room. We used the grant to purchase resources and equipment to establish the family room. We purchased various parenting books and magazines to start our library. We wanted to make our family room as comfortable and relaxing as a family room is at home, so we purchased coffee pots and items for parents to eat and enjoy as they come to relax in our family-friendly environment and learn what is happening in our school. We have a Kinder Swap Board where parents can post personal items they may want to sell, or if they have any services they would like to offer to other parents (such as child care, ride sharing, notary etc.)

We then applied for an implementation grant from the Ohio Office of Family and School Partnerships. The funds from this grant are being used to pay for two parent coordinators who operate "The Kinder Family Room". The parent coordinators contacted our "Partners in Education," which consist of local businesses, for donations.

Parent coordinators plan parenting workshops monthly during the school year. A few topics of workshops include the following: stress management, discipline, and good reading practices for children. Our funds are limited, so speakers volunteered their time and services to us. Monthly social gatherings are held for any relative or parent to come and relax and introduce themselves to our family room. They are personally invited by the parent coordinators, and these social gatherings have been well attended. The parent coordinators communicated with all teachers in our school to implement a classroom information center. Parents can find weekly spelling tests, homework assignments, and any classroom information in this center. Teachers are responsible for updating this classroom

information to the coordinators for parental access. Parent coordinators write and distribute a monthly newsletter for parents, to help keep them informed on school activities.

The on-going challenge is for us to continue to increase parental involvement in our school. Our friendly and family-oriented environment enables our parents to become more comfortable and welcome in our school. As barriers diminish, our hopes are that all parents will be involved with their children's education.

In our 1998-1999 school year, we have hopes to expand our resources in all areas in "The Kinder Family Room." We hope to increase community involvement by using other resources.

We are proud to say that our parent involvement has increased and this has been shown by parents visiting and enjoying time spent in "The Kinder Family Room."

Activities from the family room have been based on Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Involvement. All of our practices follow the six types of her framework.

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