

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

South-Western City Schools Columbus, Ohio

South-Western City Schools believes that a strong interaction among the family, school, and community supports student learning. To reinforce this belief statement, a Family Resource Center has been established. Additionally, this school year all 17 elementary school buildings in the district have become Ohio Partnership Schools through the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The goal of the Family Resource Center is to provide accessible, on-site services for the community that strengthen and support the family. We believe parents are the first and most significant teachers in the lives of their children and that all children are entitled to reach their developmental potential. The Family Resource Center provides a central location from which family/school/community partnerships can be organized in order to provide family-centered, community-based, preventive, and comprehensive services that support and are responsive to the needs of families. The Family Resource Center exists mainly to provide integration and coordination of activities and services to families. We believe that more extensive efforts must be made to build relationships with school families and that families should play an integral part in the planning and implementation of school programs in addition to providing extended learning at home.

The Family Resource Center is located in a subdivision that neighbors one of the 17 elementary schools in the district. It is open Monday – Wednesday from 8:00am until 8:00pm. On Thursdays it is open from 8:00am until 6:00pm. The Coordinator of Federal & State Programs staffs the Center, along with a Family Resource Center Manager, Parent Coordinator, ABLE and Even Start Coordinator, and secretary. Funds required for operation include salaries, facility operations such as utilities, custodial service, materials and supplies, and equipment. These funds are provided through a variety of resources and numerous grants.

The following programs have been provided for families at the Family Resource Center: Well-Baby/Well-Child Checkup, Even Start, Head Start, counseling, free immunizations, health insurance for children, Car Seat Program, Columbus Speech and Hearing, Title I Lending Library, Columbus Family & Child Guidance Center, Read & Achieve, Parents as Teachers Playtime, First Link, parenting workshops, craft nights, ABLE/GED classes, and a computer lab. Opportunities are available for families with children who have learning disabilities or who are bilingual. One hundred seventy-five preschool children have participated in early childhood education programs, which enable these children to have a greater opportunity to start school ready to learn. Close to 350 adults have been involved in improving their own academic and employability skills, enhancing their parenting skills, or

availing themselves of Family Center resources. The adults' involvement has strengthened their support and involvement in their own children's education.

In addition to programs and services available at the Center, the Family Resource Center collaborates with the schools through support of family and school partnerships, an outreach van, newsletters, open houses at the schools, parent programs held at the schools, volunteer programs, cooperative work with teachers at the elementary schools, family literacy programs, computers, after-school tutoring, data collections, and other ways. For the 1998-99 school year, South-Western City Schools received one of forty-six statewide awards for its partnership activities with schools. Improvements for next year include strengthening family and school partnerships, providing a strong reading component between school and home, and affiliating with professional organizations at the national level.

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