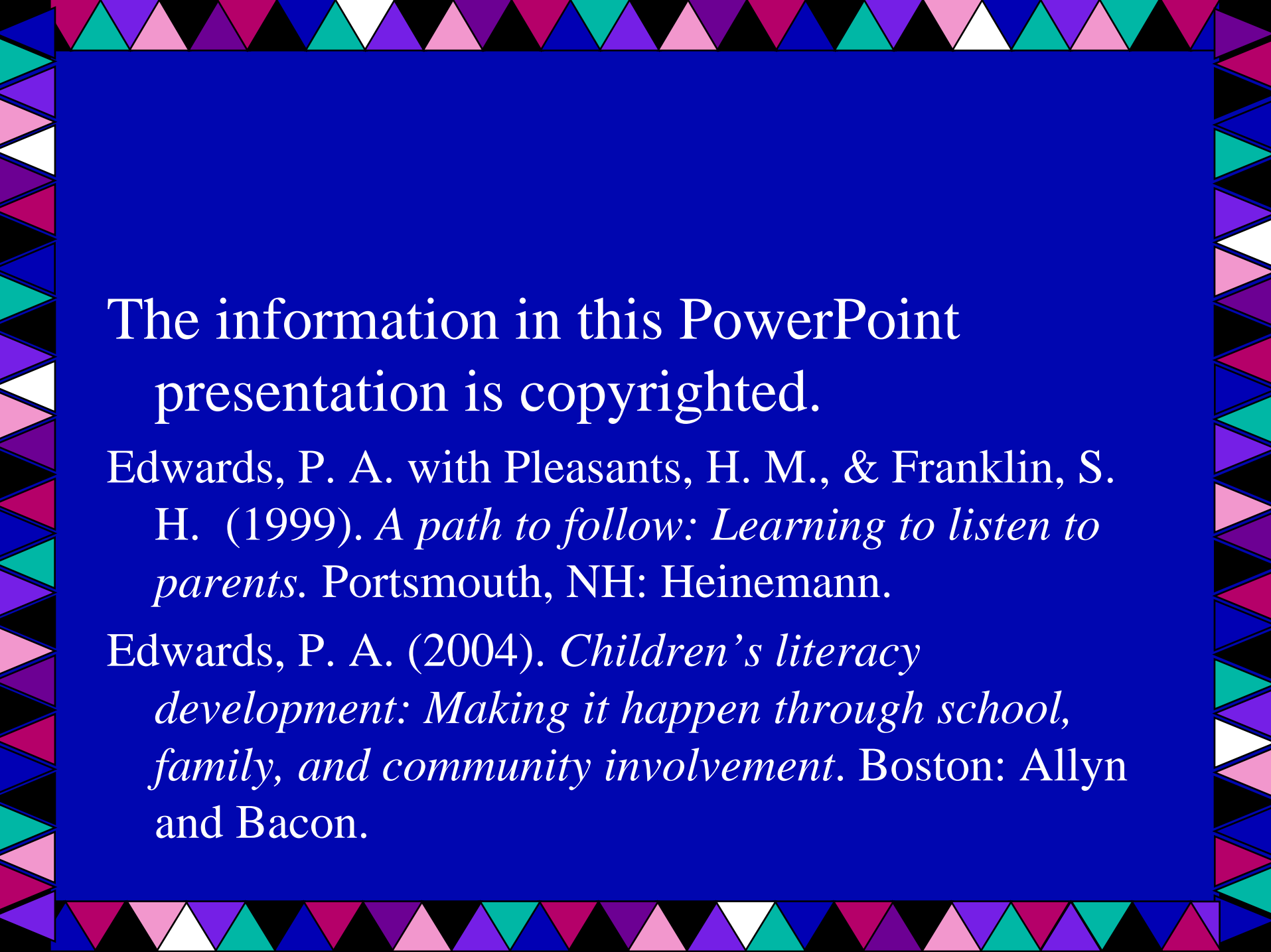


# Engaging Hard to Reach Parents

Patricia A. Edwards, Ph. D.  
Michigan State University  
Increasing Parent Involvement at Your School  
Winding Brook Conference Centre  
March 22, 2006



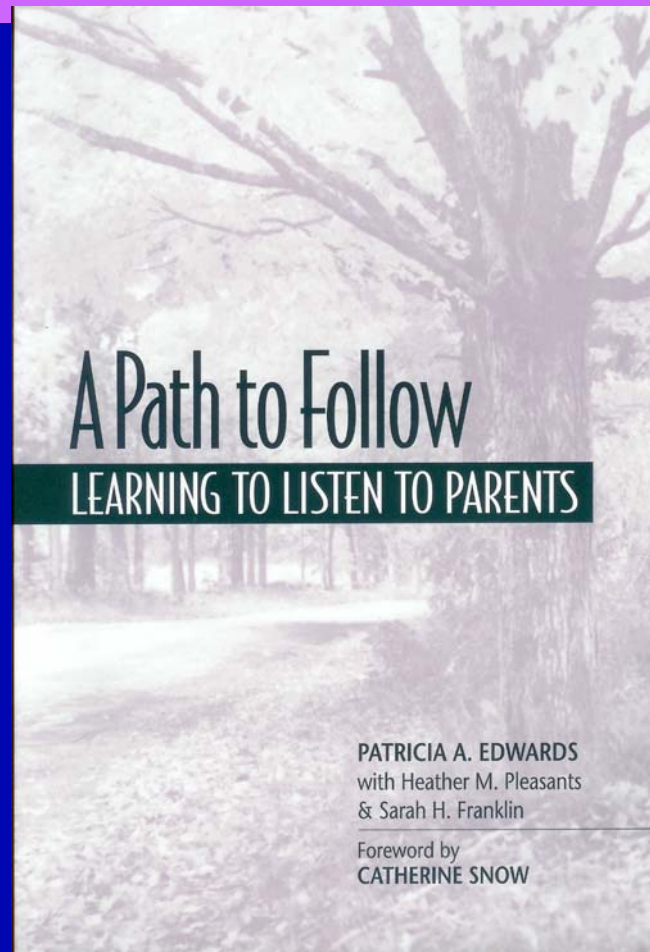


The information in this PowerPoint presentation is copyrighted.

Edwards, P. A. with Pleasants, H. M., & Franklin, S. H. (1999). *A path to follow: Learning to listen to parents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Edwards, P. A. (2004). *Children's literacy development: Making it happen through school, family, and community involvement*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

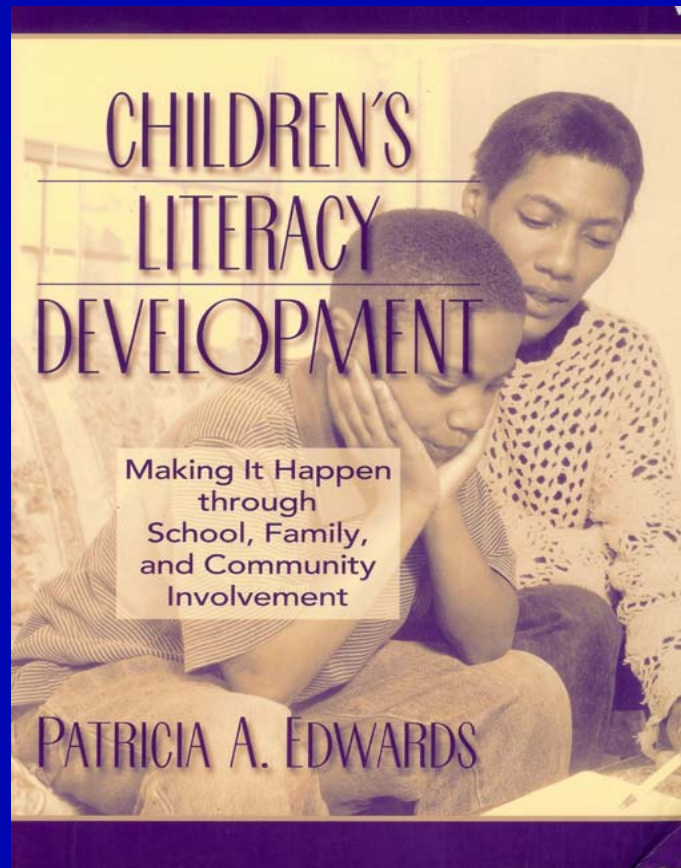
# **A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents (1999)**



PATRICIA A. EDWARDS  
with Heather M. Pleasants  
& Sarah H. Franklin

Foreword by  
CATHERINE SNOW

**Children's Literacy Development: Making It Happen Through  
School, Family, and Community Involvement (2004)**

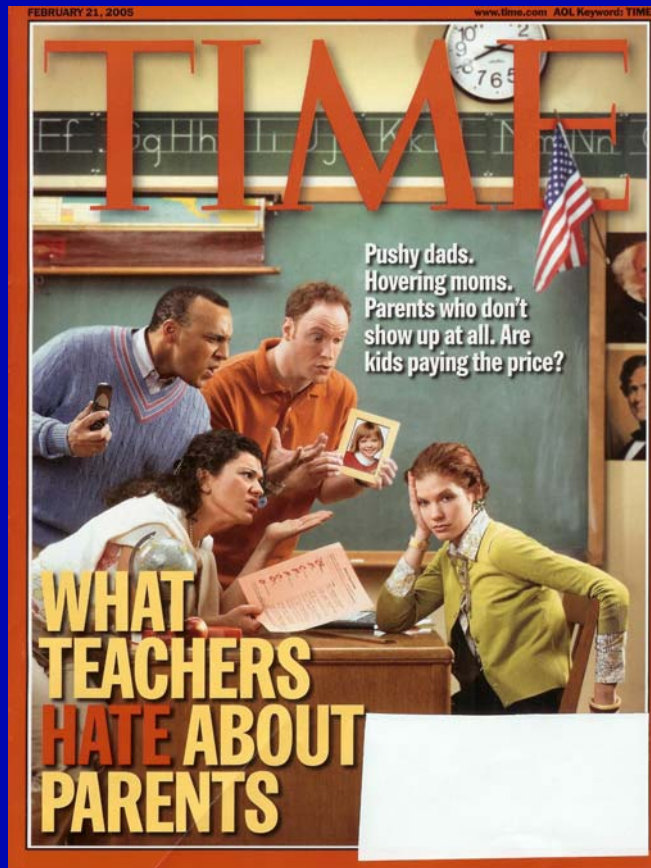


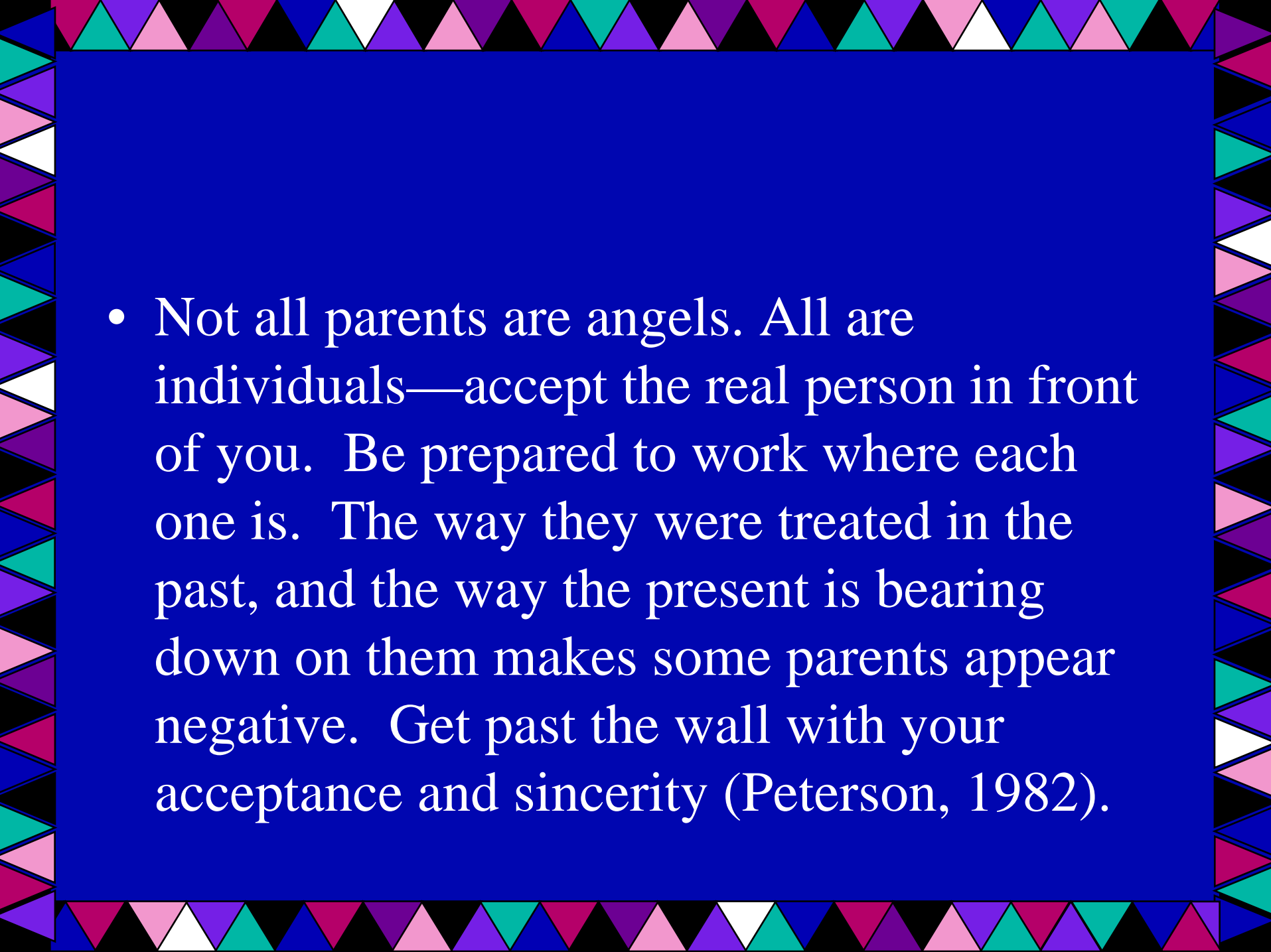
# Objectives

- The purpose of this presentation is to:
  - Identify characteristics of those families who are hard to reach
  - Help participants to better reach those families who are more difficult to reach

# Parents Behaving Badly—Nancy Gibbs

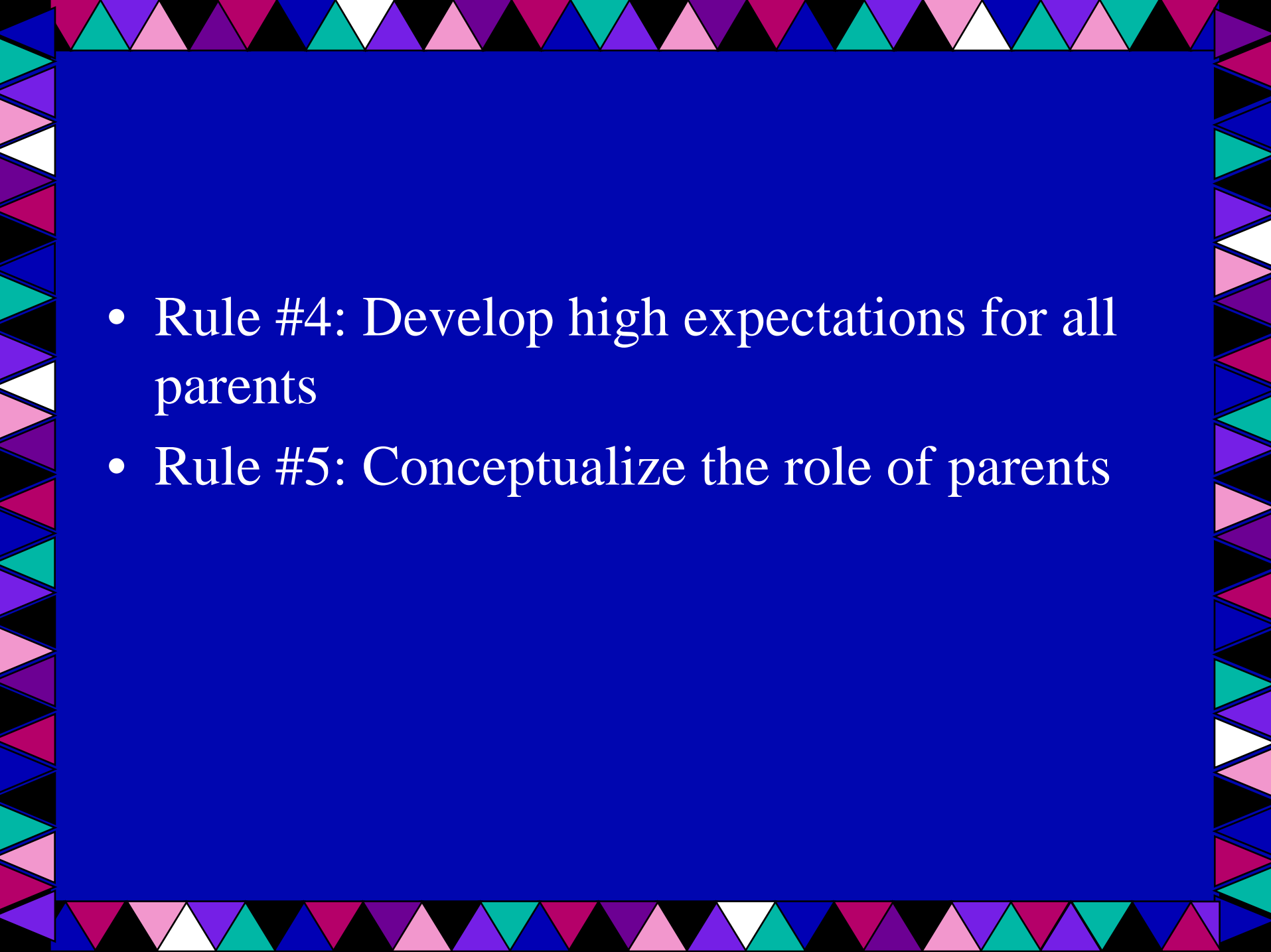
## February 21, 2005



- 
- Not all parents are angels. All are individuals—accept the real person in front of you. Be prepared to work where each one is. The way they were treated in the past, and the way the present is bearing down on them makes some parents appear negative. Get past the wall with your acceptance and sincerity (Peterson, 1982).

# The Hard To Reach Parent: Old Challenges, New Insights

- Rule #1: Believe in the importance of parent involvement
- Rule #2: Embody an ethic of caring
- Rule #3: Disregard “hard-to-reach stereotypes”
  - Believing that all children from non-middle-class families are troublemakers.
  - Believing that it is alright to contact families only when a child is in trouble.
  - Regarding poor families as deficient, seeing only their problems and not their strengths.
  - Believing that the problems of “hard-to-reach” families are the fault of the families themselves (Davies, 1988).

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small, colorful triangles in shades of purple, teal, pink, and blue, arranged in a zig-zag pattern around the perimeter of the slide.
- Rule #4: Develop high expectations for all parents
  - Rule #5: Conceptualize the role of parents

# Volunteers



# Helping with Homework



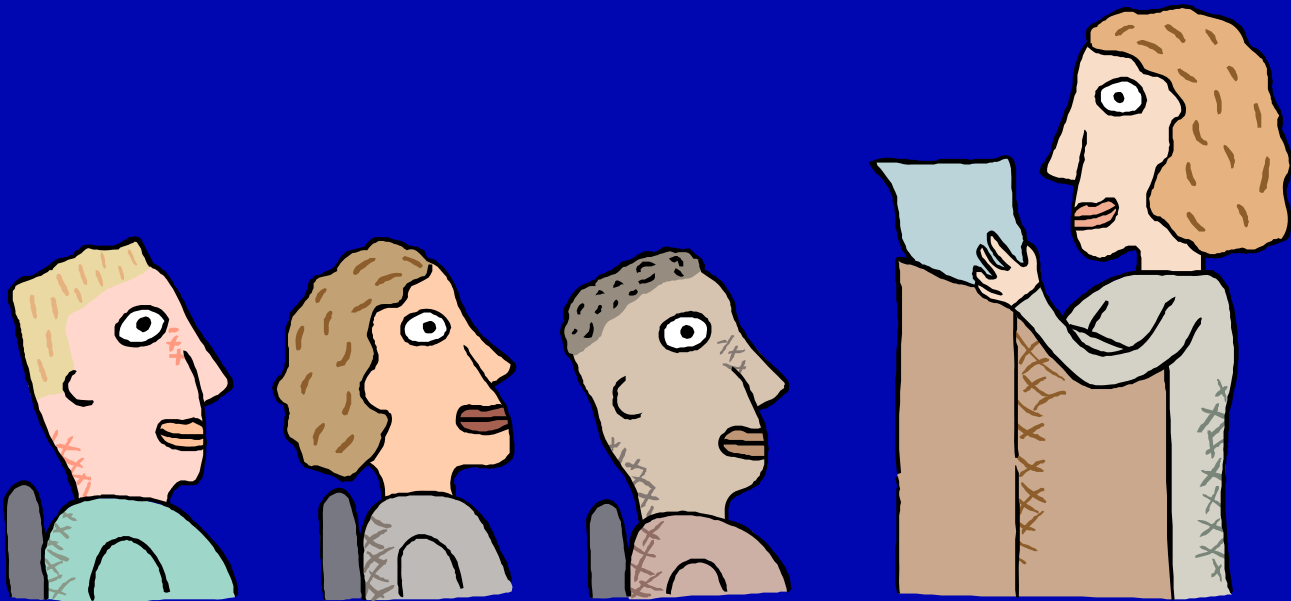
# Parents Sitting on Councils and Committees



# Participating in the Decisions and Operation of Schools



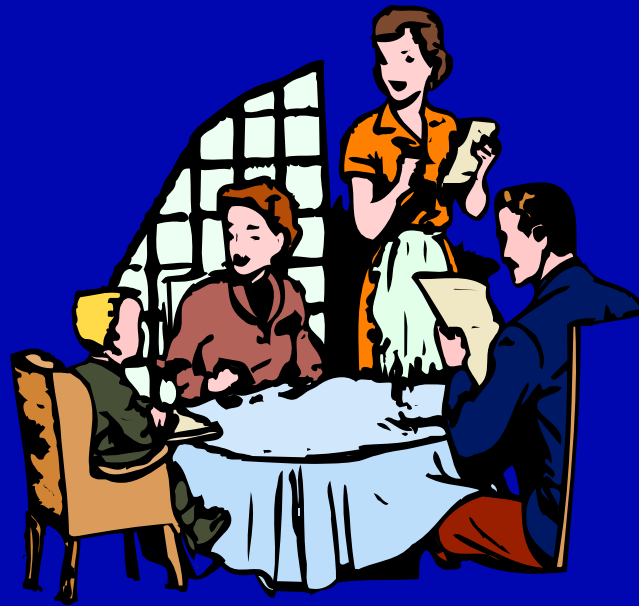
# Spectators



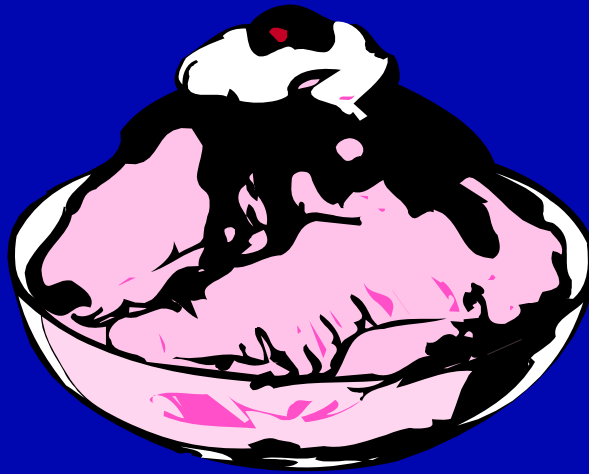
# Band Boosters



# Spaghetti Dinners



# Ice Cream Socials



# Collaborators/Problem Solvers



**Participating in Bake Sales and Fairs to  
Raise Funds for the Band Uniforms or  
School Computers**



# Adversaries



# Advisors and/or Co-decision Makers

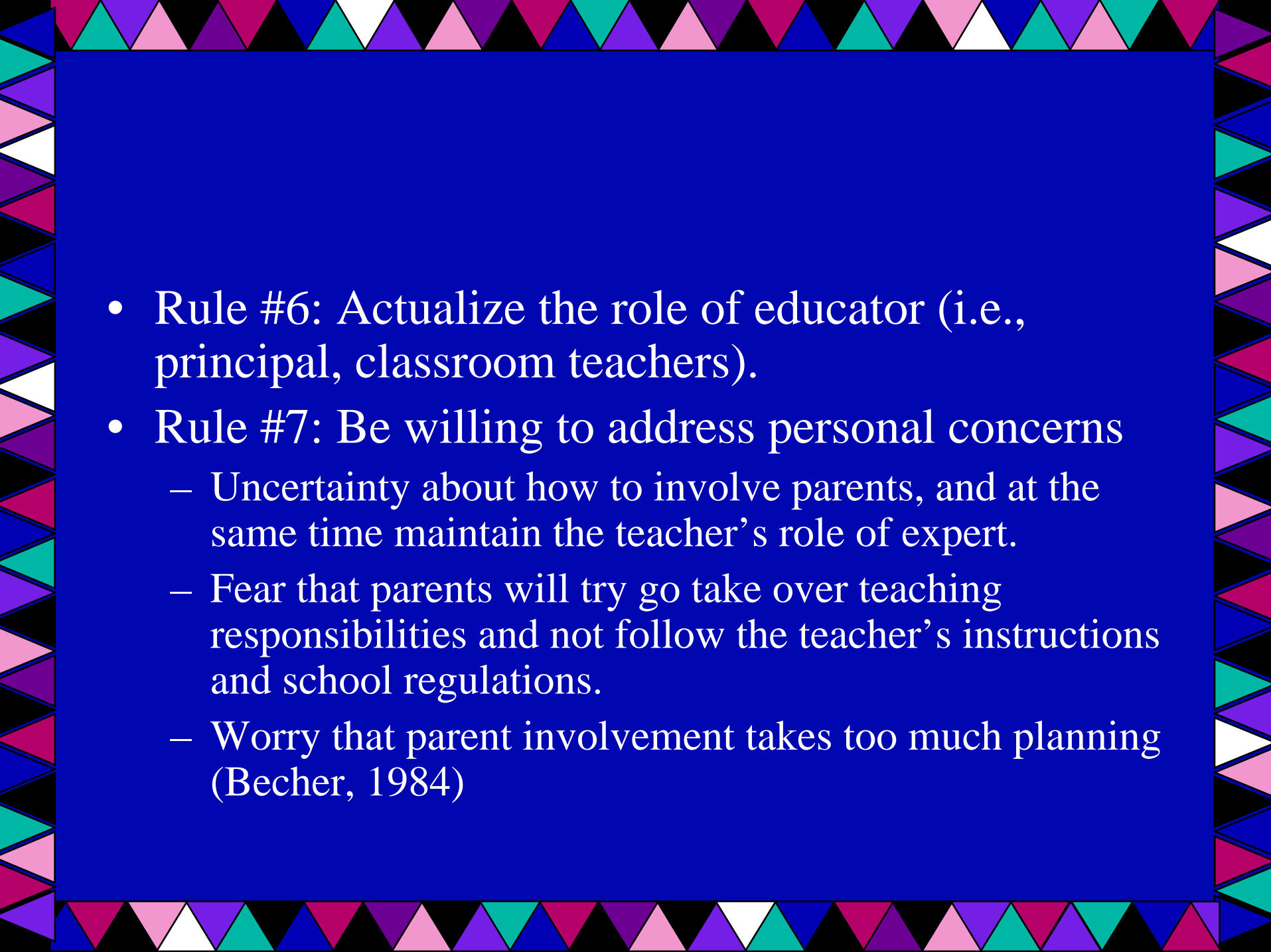


# Serving as Classroom Aids



# Accompanying a Class on an Outing



- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of colorful triangles in shades of blue, purple, pink, and teal, surrounding a central blue rectangular area.
- Rule #6: Actualize the role of educator (i.e., principal, classroom teachers).
  - Rule #7: Be willing to address personal concerns
    - Uncertainty about how to involve parents, and at the same time maintain the teacher's role of expert.
    - Fear that parents will try go take over teaching responsibilities and not follow the teacher's instructions and school regulations.
    - Worry that parent involvement takes too much planning (Becher, 1984)

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small triangles in various colors (red, green, blue, purple, pink, white) arranged in a zig-zag or chevron pattern around the perimeter of the slide.
- Rule #8: Be willing to work to improve parent involvement

## Breaking Down Barriers to Family Involvement in Schools

- More staff time to communicate with families
- Accommodating parent schedules, transportation, and child care needs.
- Resources for learning at home

# Three New Directions for Working with Families and Children

Demographic Profile

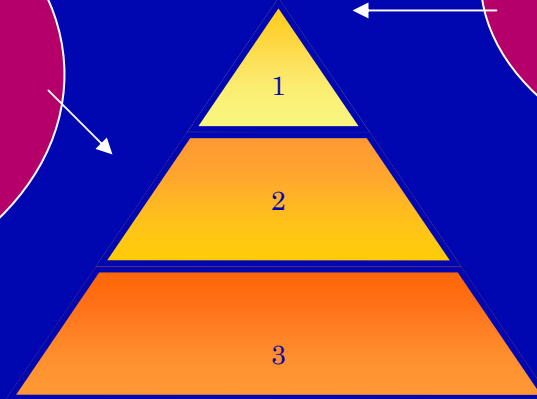
Parent Stories

1

2

3

Scope and Sequence of  
Parent Involvement



# Schools Are At The Crossroads

Yesterday's  
Traditions

Today's  
Demographics

Tomorrow's  
Technologies

This three-way intersection is, at this time, a hazardous crossing. We are seeing red to stop and head back toward traditional curriculum designs, We are seeing yellow signals of caution about innovative curriculum. We are getting green signals to go quickly in many directions with technological advances.



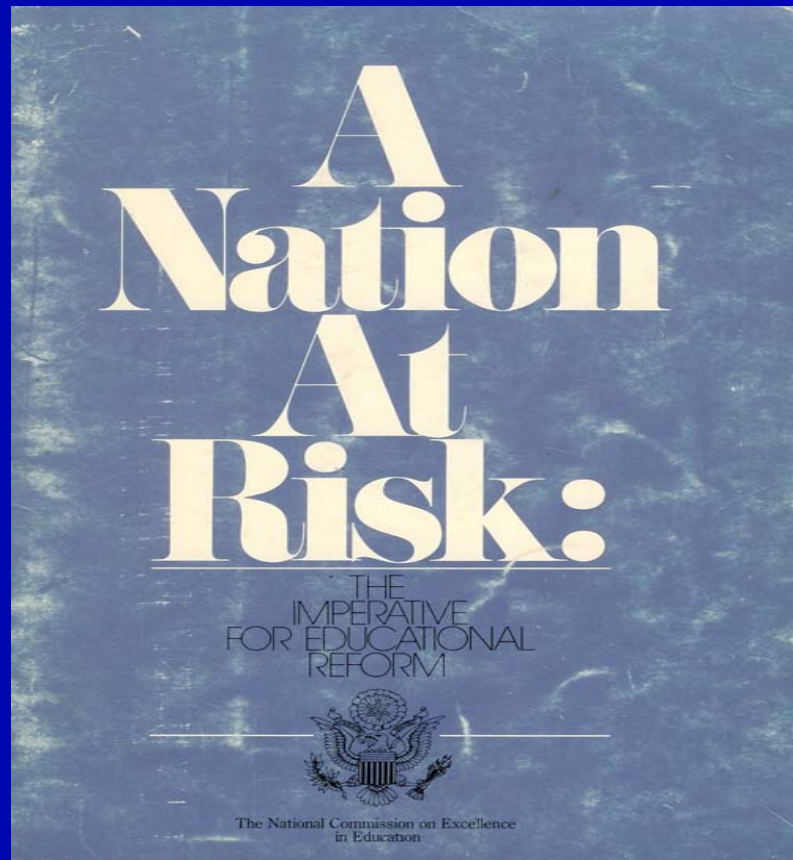
New Direction to Improve  
Education



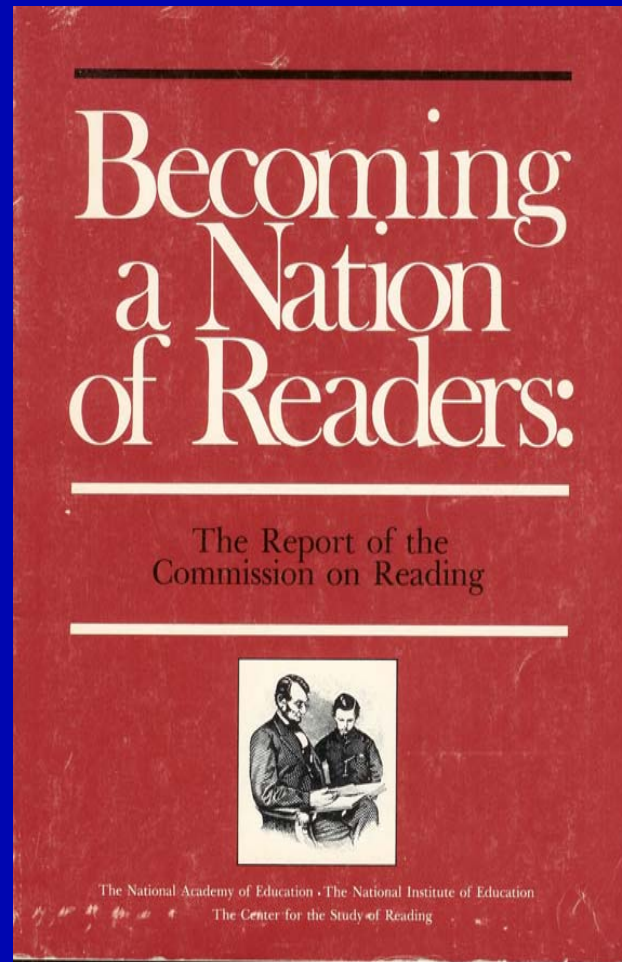
A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small triangles in various colors including purple, teal, pink, blue, and white, arranged in a zig-zag pattern around the perimeter of the page.

# National Reports

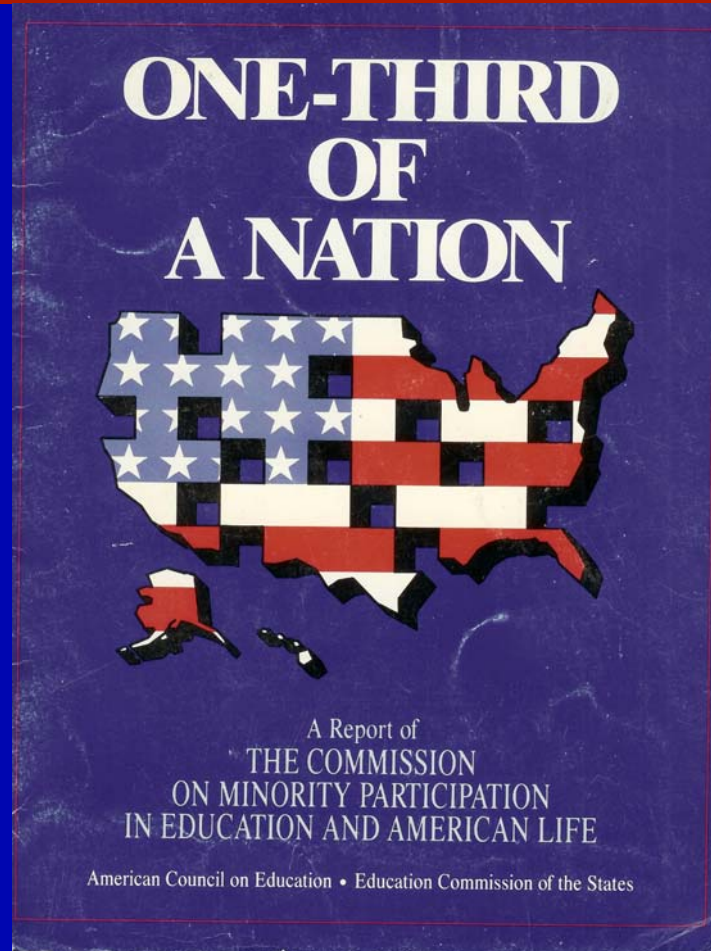
# A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform (1983)



# Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (1984)



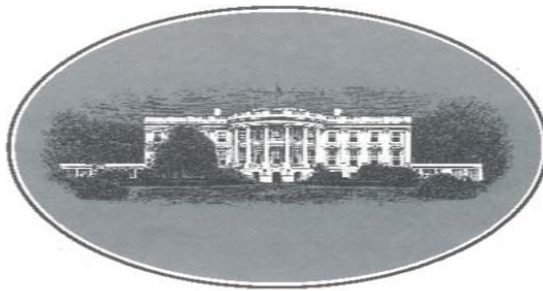
# One-Third Of A Nation: A Report of the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life (1988)



# Some Historical Trends

- America Reading Corps (President Clinton, 1997)
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (President Bush)
  - Reading First
  - Early Reading First

# No Child Left Behind Act of 2001



## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

*"The federal role in education is not to serve the system. It is to serve the children."*

# No Child Left Behind: Now What Do We Need to Do to be Culturally Responsive?

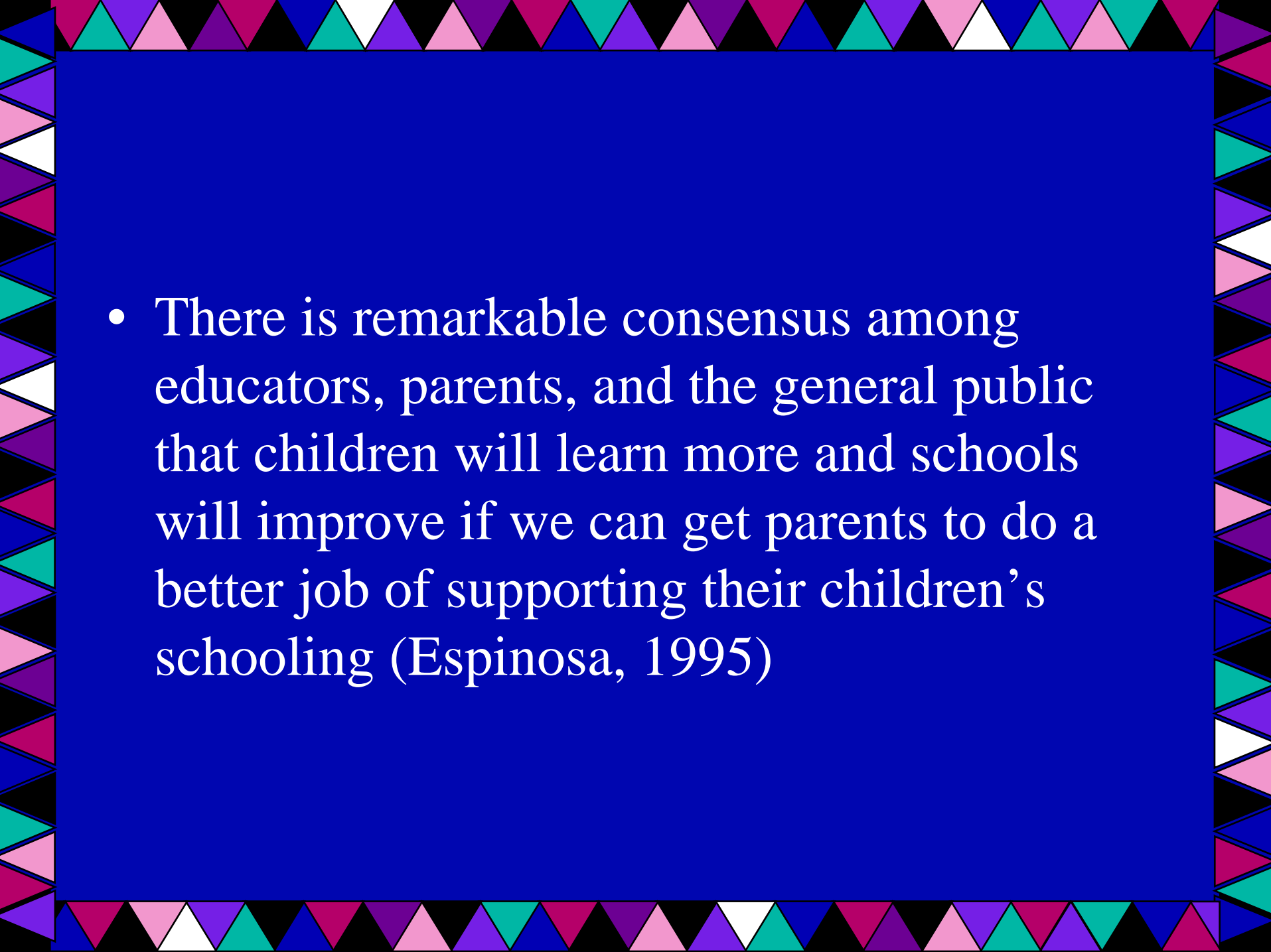
- Consider Own Attitudes, Biases and Assumptions
- Value Children's Language
- Recognize that the Culture of the School and the Culture of the Child's Family May Not Be Well Synchronized
- Recognize the Cultural Values Children Bring to School
- Consider the Importance of Code Switching Among African American Children

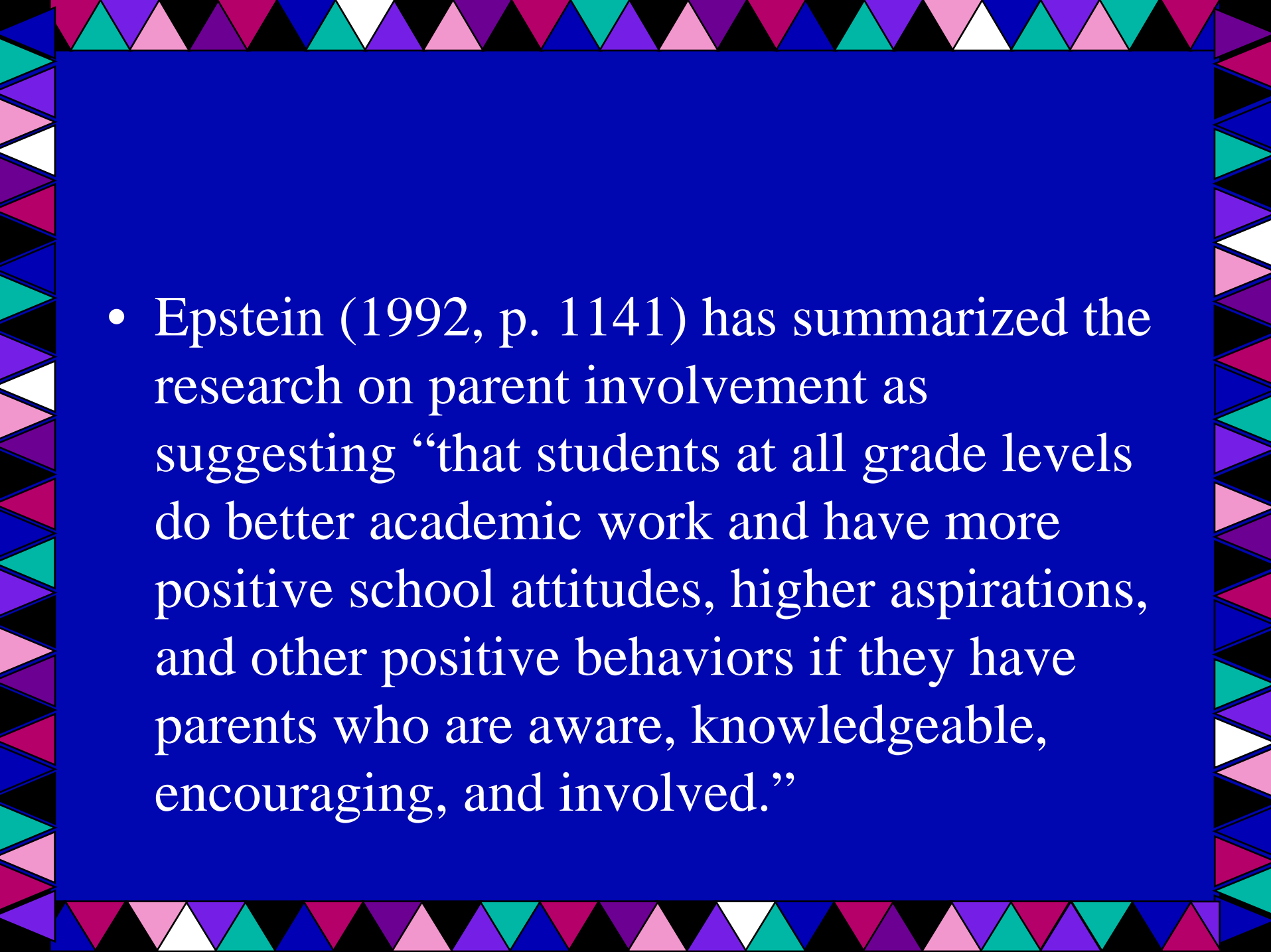
## No Child Left Behind: Now What Do We Need to Do to be Culturally Responsive?

- Incorporate African Children's Need for Multisensory Stimulation into Pedagogical Styles
- Provide Culturally Relevant Instructional Materials
- Affirm Students' Cultural Identity with Power-Enhancing Confidence Builders to Enable Their Successful Development
- Promote Family Involvement and Community Partnerships

# President Bill Clinton—State of the Union Address

- “Parents who know their children’s teachers and help with the homework and teach their kids right from wrong—these parents can make all the difference.”

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small, colorful triangles in shades of red, green, blue, purple, and white, arranged in a zig-zag pattern around the perimeter of the slide.
- There is remarkable consensus among educators, parents, and the general public that children will learn more and schools will improve if we can get parents to do a better job of supporting their children's schooling (Espinosa, 1995)

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of colorful triangles in shades of red, purple, blue, green, and white, surrounding a central blue rectangular area.
- Epstein (1992, p. 1141) has summarized the research on parent involvement as suggesting “that students at all grade levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, higher aspirations, and other positive behaviors if they have parents who are aware, knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved.”

## “Killer Phrases” Used Often Without Thinking, That Can Stop Parent Involvement Initiatives

- Some of the phrases that have been used are as follows:
- A good idea, but...
- The superintendent won't go for it.
- Against policy.
- All right, in theory.
- We have been doing it this way for a long time, and it works.
- *Source: Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms (1986), p. 67*

## “Killer Phrases” Used Often Without Thinking, That Can Stop Parent Involvement Initiatives

- Be practical.
- Why hasn't someone suggested it before, if it's a good idea?
- Costs too much.
- Ahead of the times.
- Don't start anything yet.
- Let's discuss it.
- *Source: Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms (1986), p. 67*

## “Killer Phrases” Used Often Without Thinking, That Can Stop Parent Involvement Initiatives

- It needs more study.
- Let’s form a committee.
- Let’s make a survey first.
- We’ve never done it that way.
- Let’s sit on it for awhile.
- That’s not our problem.
- *Source: Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms (1986), p. 67*

# Reasons for the Limited Participation of Families in Life Inside School and the Overall Lack of Commitment to Parent Involvement

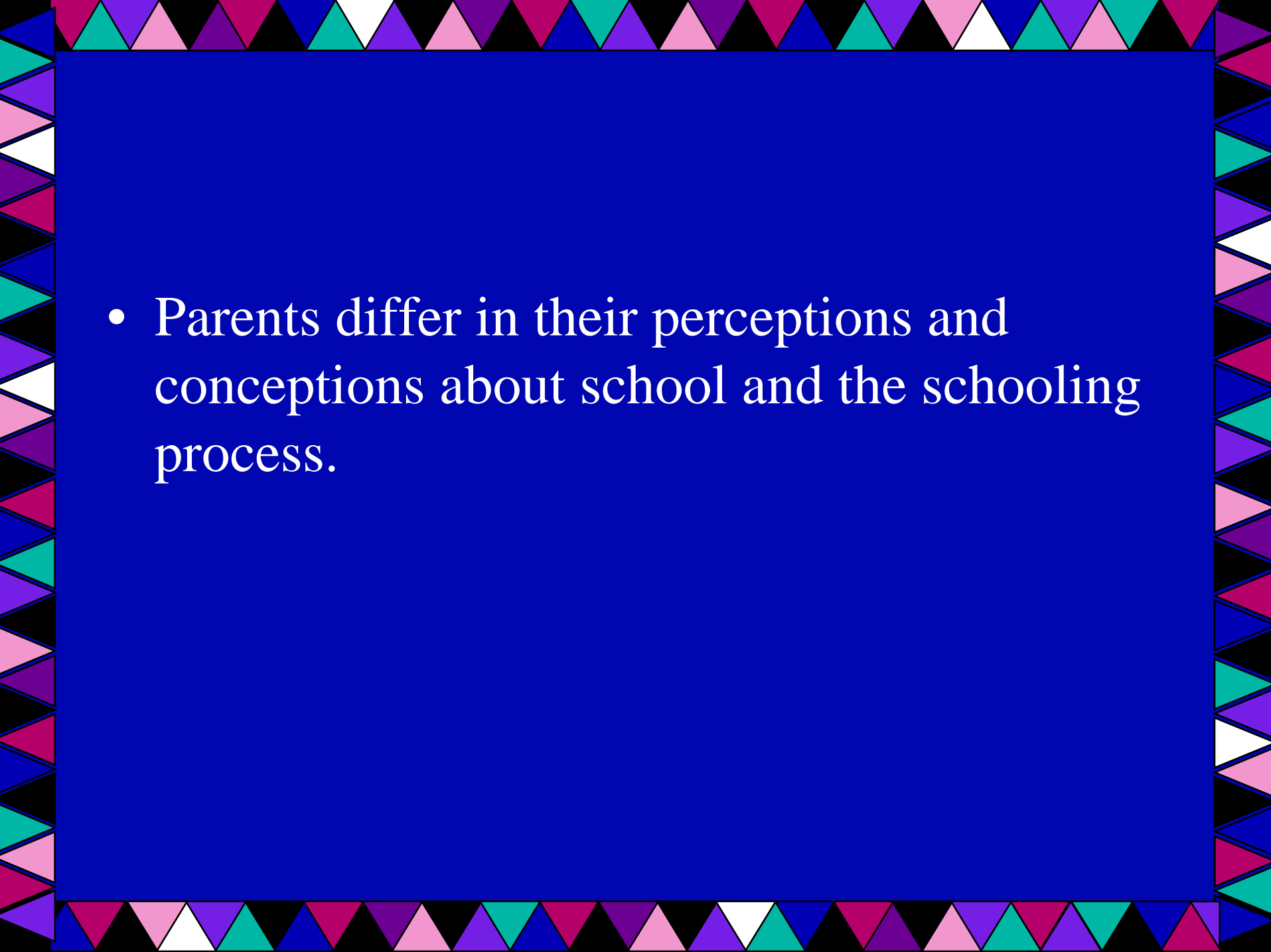
- The ill-defined nature of parent involvement
- The ambiguous nature of teacher expectations for parents
- Narrow views of school-family connections
- The lack of appropriate structures and strategies for involving parents
- Teachers' perceptions of parents and communities

Edwards (2004)

# Reasons for the Limited Participation of Families in Life Inside School and the Overall Lack of Commitment to Parent Involvement

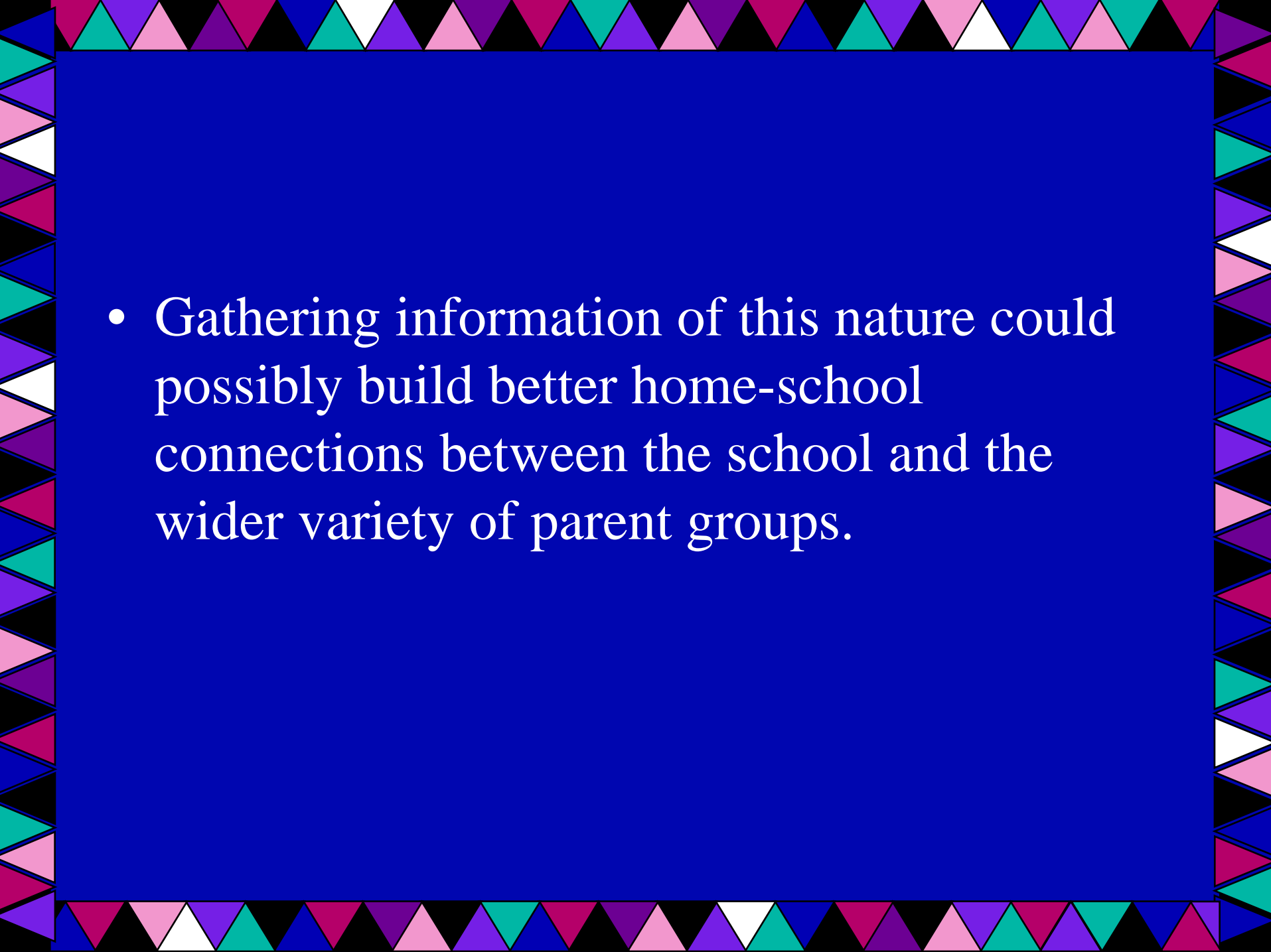
- A history of distrust in family-school interactions
- Parents' sense of inadequacy and powerlessness in schools
- The changing nature of parents' roles in children's lives
- An exclusion of parents from activities within schools reflective of parents' social class, race, and ethnicity

Edwards (2004)

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small triangles in various colors (red, green, blue, purple, pink, white) arranged in a zig-zag or chevron pattern around the perimeter of the slide.
- Parents differ in their perceptions and conceptions about school and the schooling process.

# Schools Need to Determine

- What activities parents feel **capable** of doing
- What activities parents are **willing** to do
- What activities parents feel **responsible** for fulfilling

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small, colorful triangles in shades of blue, purple, pink, teal, and white, arranged in a zig-zag pattern around the perimeter of the slide.
- Gathering information of this nature could possibly build better home-school connections between the school and the wider variety of parent groups.

## Schools are communicating with a variety of parent groups

- Unwed teenage mothers
- Two-parent homeless families
- Single-parent families
- Stepfamilies
- Working mothers
- Foster families
- Grandparents
- Families living in rural poverty



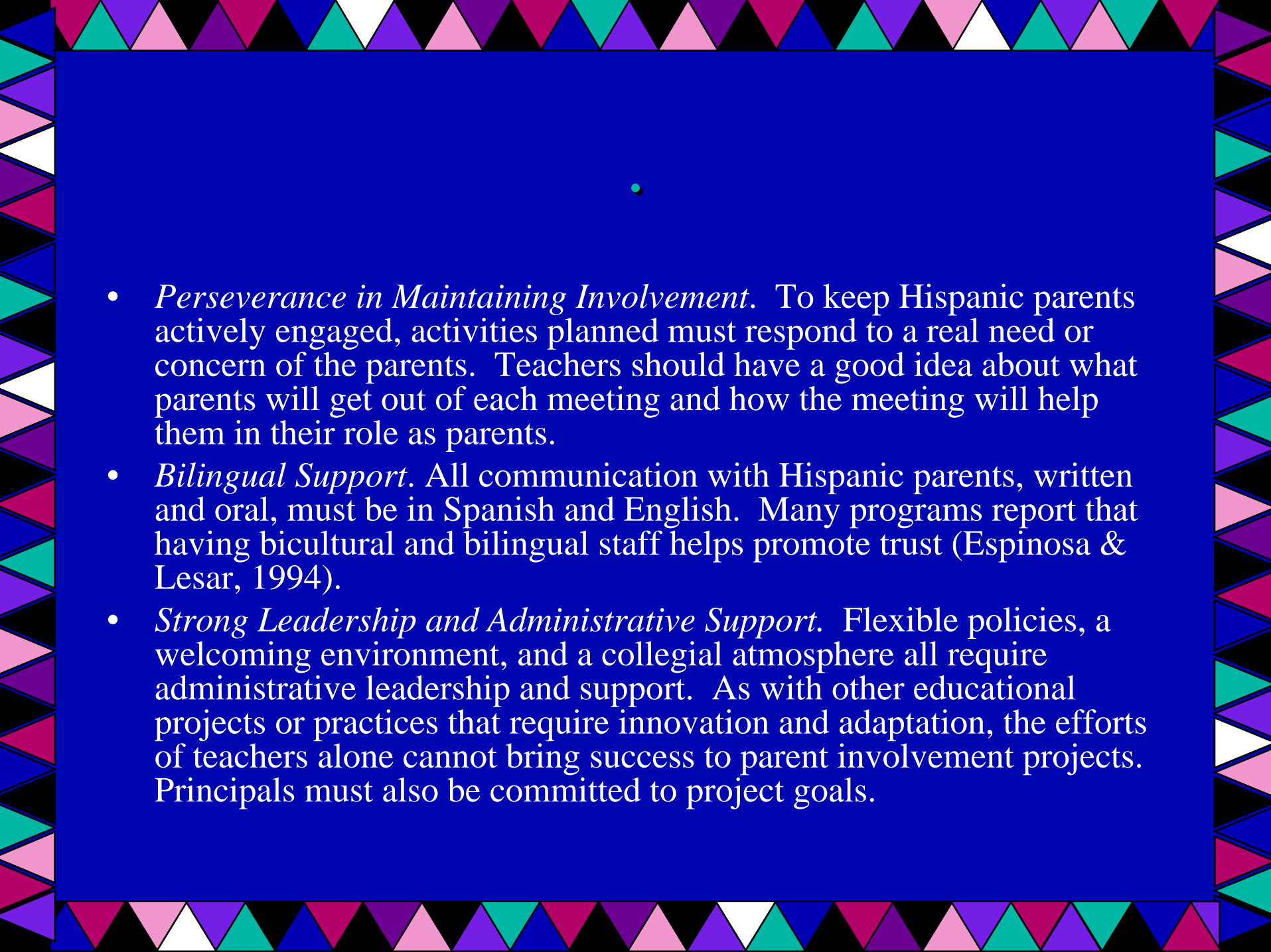
## Schools are communicating with a variety of parent groups


- Migrant families
- Two-parent families
- Low-literate parents
- Culturally diverse parent groups (i.e., Native Americans, African Americans, etc.)
- Extended, reconstituted or blended families
- Unemployed parents



# Hispanic Parent Involvement (Nicolau & Ramos, 1990, p. 9)

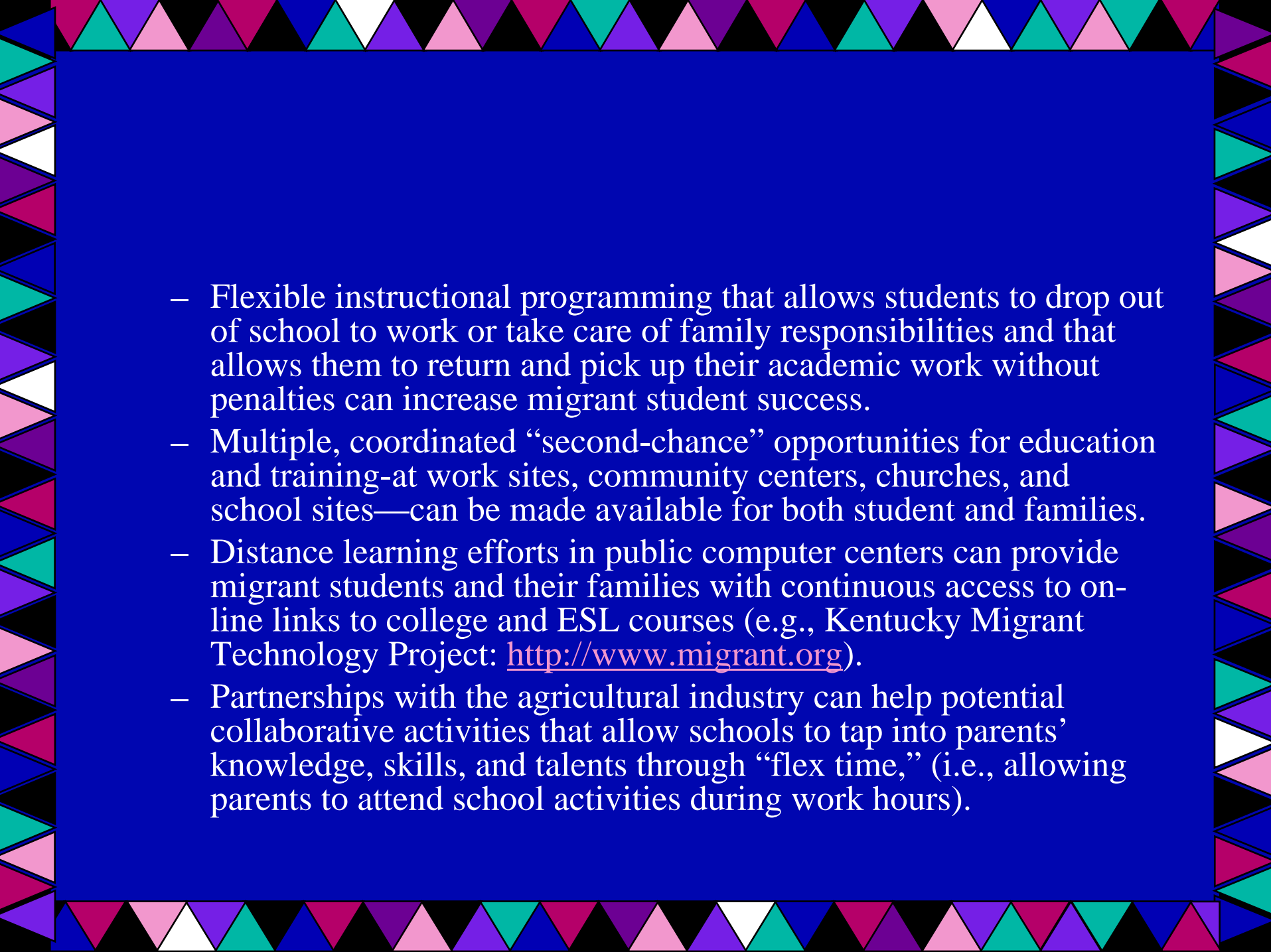
- *Personal Touch.* It is crucial to use face-to-face communication in the Hispanic parent's primary language when first making contact. Written flyers or articles sent home have proven to be ineffective even when written in Spanish. It may also take several personal meetings before the parents gain sufficient trust to actively participate. Home visits are a particularly good way to begin to develop rapport.
- *Non-Judgmental Communication.* In order to gain the trust and confidence of Hispanic parents, teachers must avoid making them feel they are to blame or are doing something wrong. Parents need to be supported for their strengths, not judged for perceived failings.

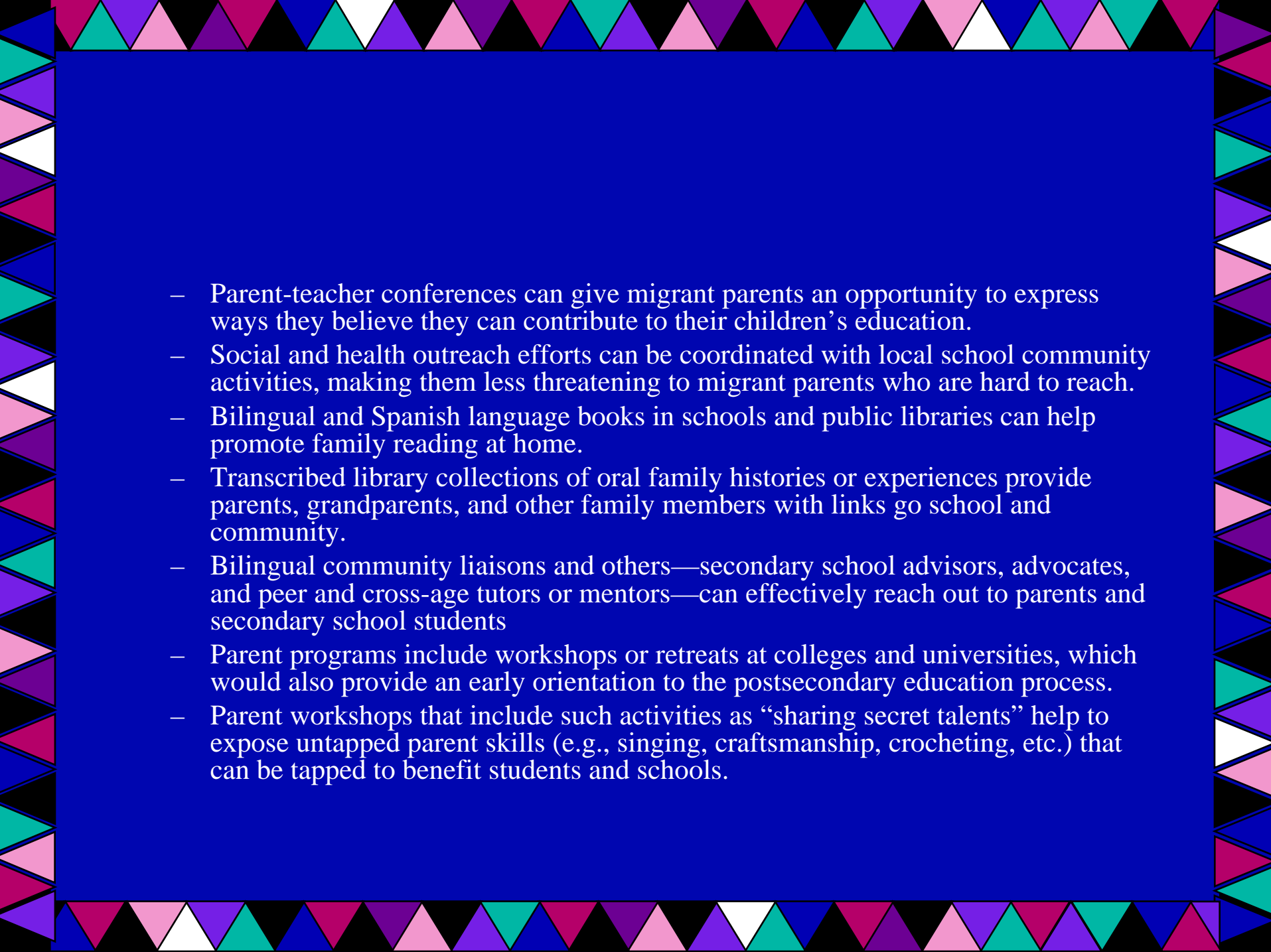
- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of colorful triangles in shades of blue, purple, pink, and teal, surrounding a central blue rectangular area.
- *Perseverance in Maintaining Involvement.* To keep Hispanic parents actively engaged, activities planned must respond to a real need or concern of the parents. Teachers should have a good idea about what parents will get out of each meeting and how the meeting will help them in their role as parents.
  - *Bilingual Support.* All communication with Hispanic parents, written and oral, must be in Spanish and English. Many programs report that having bicultural and bilingual staff helps promote trust (Espinosa & Lesar, 1994).
  - *Strong Leadership and Administrative Support.* Flexible policies, a welcoming environment, and a collegial atmosphere all require administrative leadership and support. As with other educational projects or practices that require innovation and adaptation, the efforts of teachers alone cannot bring success to parent involvement projects. Principals must also be committed to project goals.

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of colorful triangles in shades of blue, purple, pink, teal, and black, framing the central text area.
- *Staff Development Focused on Hispanic Culture.* All staff must understand the key features of Hispanic and its impact on their students' behavior and learning styles. It is the educator's obligation to learn as much about the children and their culture and background as possible.
  - *Community Outreach.* Many Hispanic families could benefit from family literacy programs, vocational training, ESL programs, improved medical and dental services, and other community-based social services. A school can serve as a resource and referral agency to support the overall strength and stability of the families.

# Migrant Family Involvement Strategies

- Opportunities for migrant student success can be nurtured through family involvement activities that are sensitive to their mobile way of life and culture (Whitaker, Salend, & Guiterrez, 1997; Romo, 1999; Murray & Velazques, 2000).
  - Bilingual community liaisons can help bridge language and cultural differences between home and school (i.e., they can train parents to reinforce education concepts in the native language and/or English).
  - Child care, transportation, evening and weekend activities, and refreshments can increase the likelihood of migrant parent participation.
  - Curriculum that reflects the culture, values, interests, experiences, and concerns of the migrant family can enhance learning—parents can more easily relate to such “homework” and will be more inclined to help their child with subjects that affirm their experiences (also increasing their confidence and self-esteem).

- 
- A decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of colorful triangles in shades of blue, purple, pink, teal, and black, framing the central text area.
- Flexible instructional programming that allows students to drop out of school to work or take care of family responsibilities and that allows them to return and pick up their academic work without penalties can increase migrant student success.
  - Multiple, coordinated “second-chance” opportunities for education and training—at work sites, community centers, churches, and school sites—can be made available for both student and families.
  - Distance learning efforts in public computer centers can provide migrant students and their families with continuous access to on-line links to college and ESL courses (e.g., Kentucky Migrant Technology Project: <http://www.migrant.org>).
  - Partnerships with the agricultural industry can help potential collaborative activities that allow schools to tap into parents’ knowledge, skills, and talents through “flex time,” (i.e., allowing parents to attend school activities during work hours).

- 
- Parent-teacher conferences can give migrant parents an opportunity to express ways they believe they can contribute to their children’s education.
  - Social and health outreach efforts can be coordinated with local school community activities, making them less threatening to migrant parents who are hard to reach.
  - Bilingual and Spanish language books in schools and public libraries can help promote family reading at home.
  - Transcribed library collections of oral family histories or experiences provide parents, grandparents, and other family members with links to school and community.
  - Bilingual community liaisons and others—secondary school advisors, advocates, and peer and cross-age tutors or mentors—can effectively reach out to parents and secondary school students
  - Parent programs include workshops or retreats at colleges and universities, which would also provide an early orientation to the postsecondary education process.
  - Parent workshops that include such activities as “sharing secret talents” help to expose untapped parent skills (e.g., singing, craftsmanship, crocheting, etc.) that can be tapped to benefit students and schools.

# Rural Poverty and the Importance of Place Value

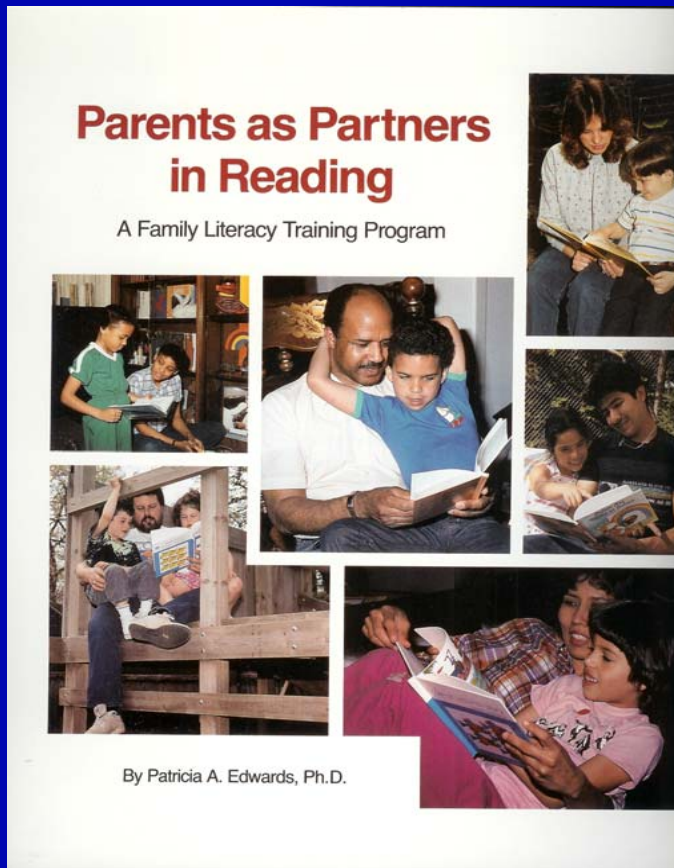
- **Facts About Michigan and Rural Poverty**
  - There are more than 2.5 million rural poor people residing in Michigan **Rural schools**.
  - **They make up 29.7** percent of Michigan Public Schools.
  - In Michigan, 8.7 percent of *children* live in rural poverty.

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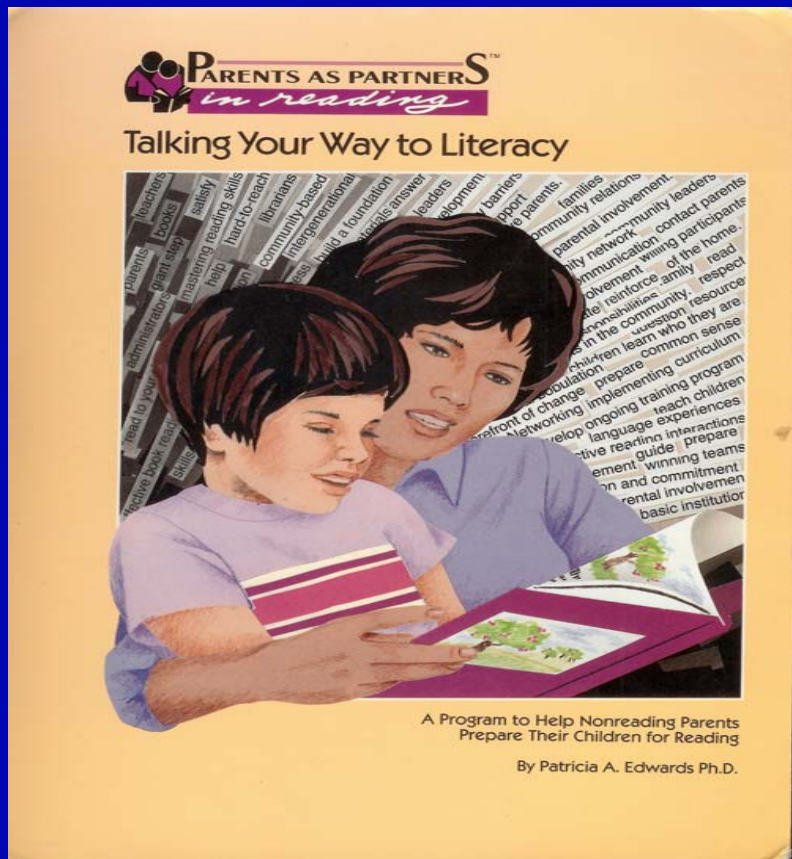
# **My Journey Into School, Family, and Community Involvement**

## **Donaldsonville Story**

# Parents as Partners in Reading: A Family Literacy Training Program (1990)



# Talking Your Way to Literacy: A Program to Help Nonreading Parents Prepare Their Children for School (1990)



## Suggestions Most Frequently Made for Parent Involvement

- Read to you child
- Be a good literate role model
- Provide book, magazines, etc. for your child to read
- Build a reading atmosphere at home (place, time, library area)
- Talk and listen to your child

## Suggestions Most Frequently Made for Parent Involvement

- Exemplify a positive attitude toward reading
- Provide experiences that are reading related, e.g., library trips, or that can be used to stimulate interest in reading
- Read environmental signs; capture reading opportunities in the environment

# Suggestions Most Frequently Made for Parent Involvement

- Provide contact with paper & pencils
- Be aware of your child's interests
- Point out similarities and differences in objects in the environment

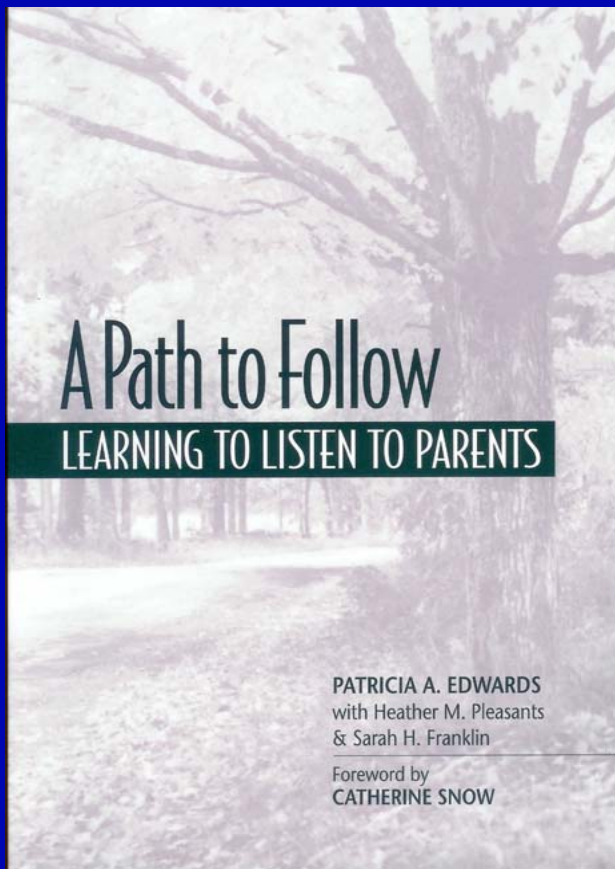
## Some Developmental Foundations of literacy

- Learn to mean
- Learn to talk
- Talk to learn
- Book awareness
- Familiar with book talk
- Aware of print stability

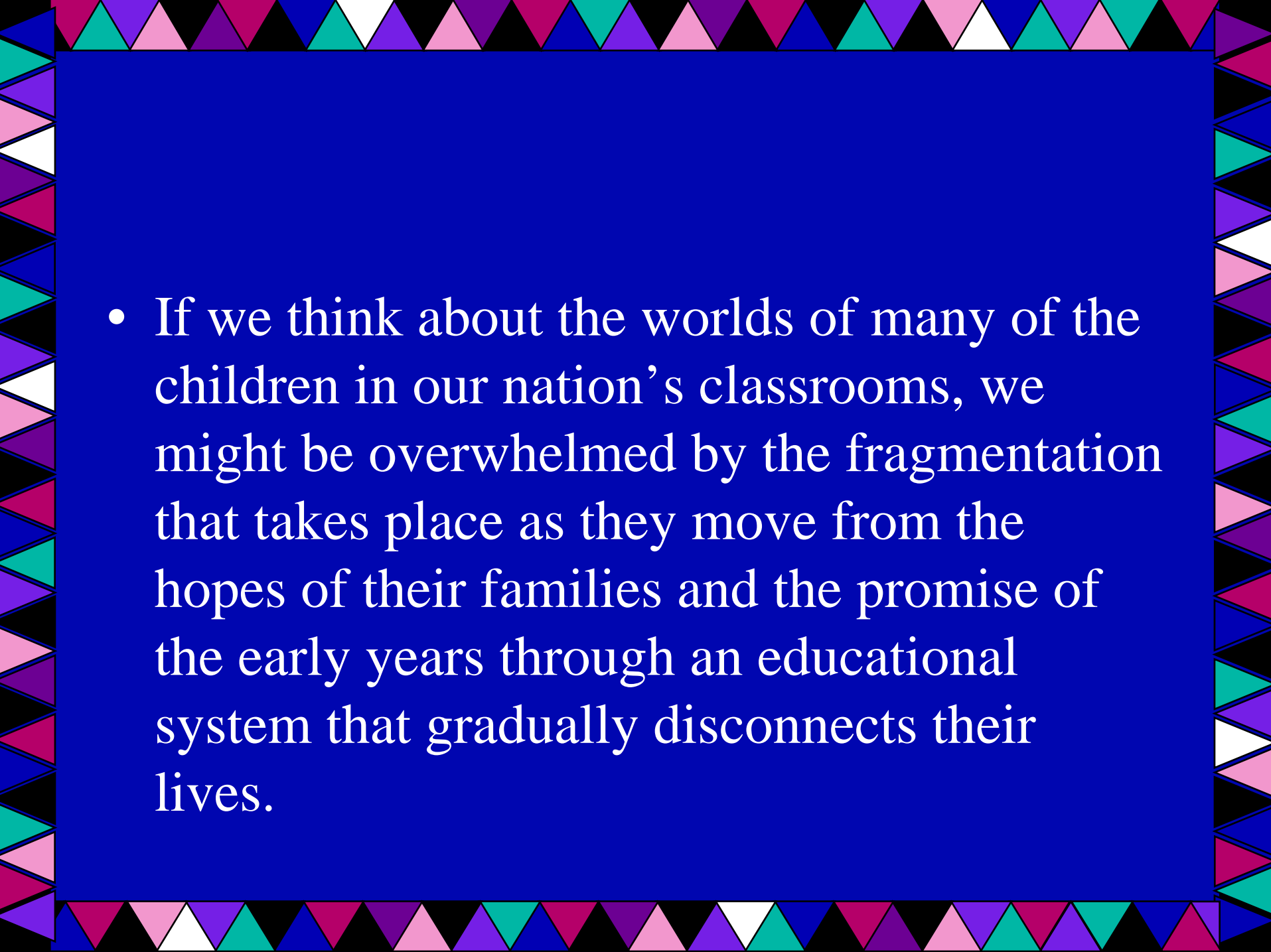
## Some Developmental Foundations of Literacy

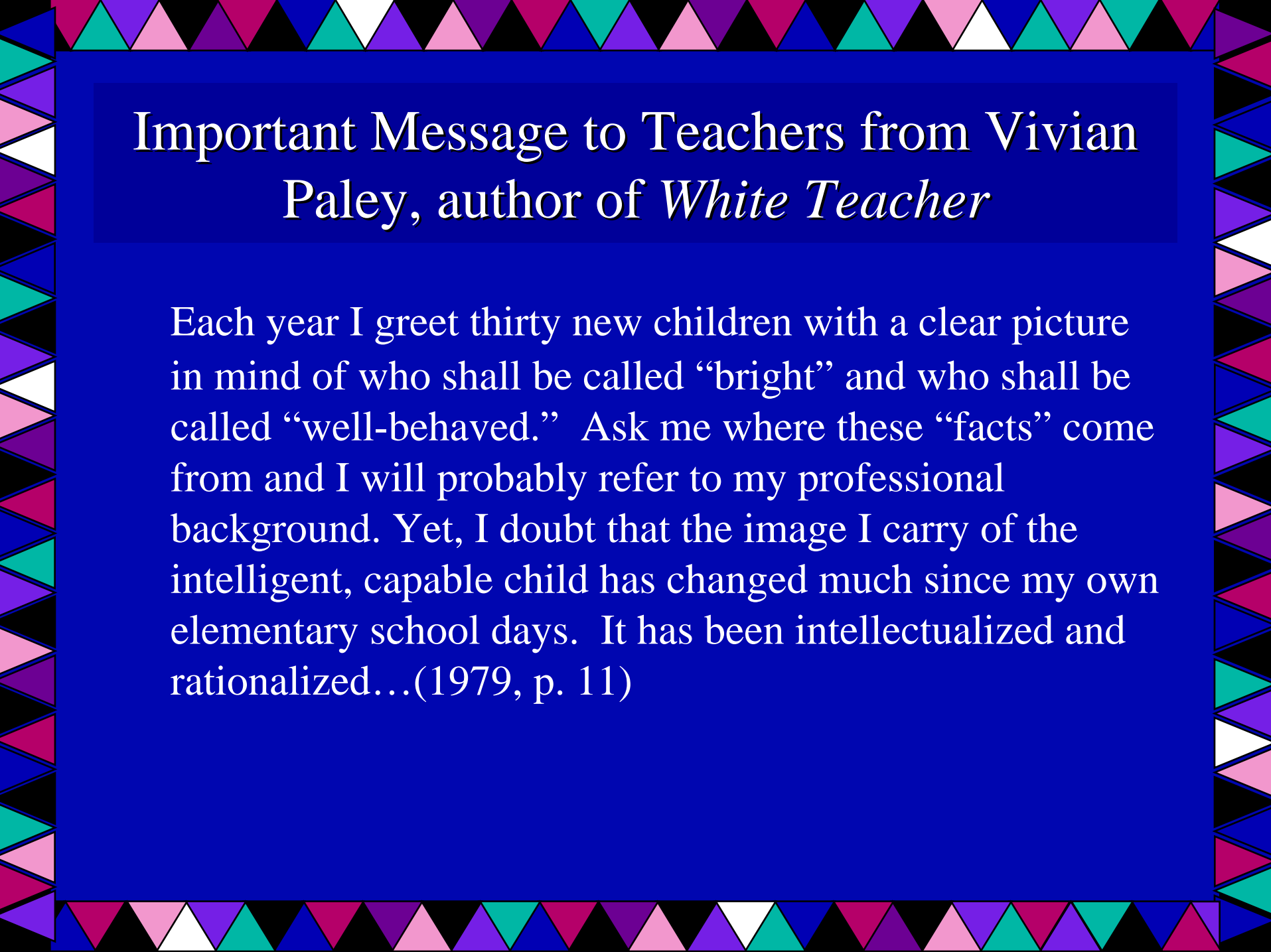
- Picture reading and pretend reading
- Aware of the functions of reading
- Recite from familiar books
- Print awareness
- Talk about reading

## A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents (1999)



Pat Edwards and her coauthors suggest in *A Path to Follow* that parent “stories” can be a highly effective, collaborative tool for accessing knowledge that may not be obvious, but would obviously be of benefit.

- 
- If we think about the worlds of many of the children in our nation's classrooms, we might be overwhelmed by the fragmentation that takes place as they move from the hopes of their families and the promise of the early years through an educational system that gradually disconnects their lives.

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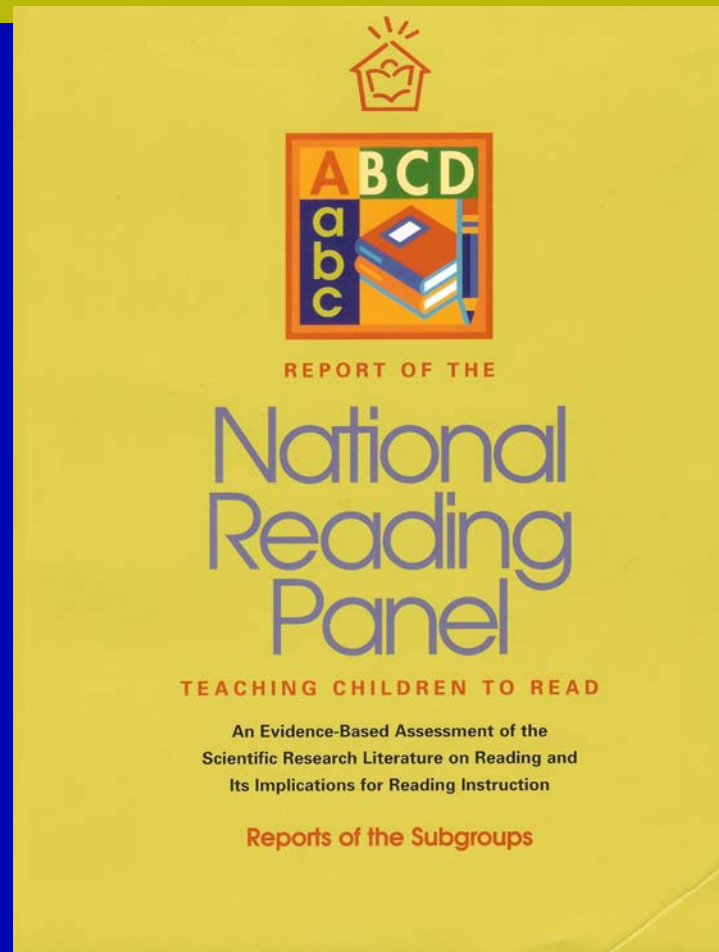
## Important Message to Teachers from Vivian Paley, author of *White Teacher*

Each year I greet thirty new children with a clear picture in mind of who shall be called “bright” and who shall be called “well-behaved.” Ask me where these “facts” come from and I will probably refer to my professional background. Yet, I doubt that the image I carry of the intelligent, capable child has changed much since my own elementary school days. It has been intellectualized and rationalized...(1979, p. 11)

The image features a central blue rectangular area with the text "Parent Stories" in a teal, serif font. This central area is framed by a decorative border composed of a repeating pattern of small, colorful triangles in shades of purple, teal, pink, and blue, set against a black background.

# Parent Stories

# Report of the National Reading Panel (2000)



# Joanne Yatvin (2000)

- I attended a presentation by Patricia Edwards, a member of the International Reading Association (IRA) Board, who has done research on the effects of home culture on children's literacy development. She did not have to persuade me; this area of early literacy development and literacy and world experience is the one I believe is most critical to children's school learning, and the one I could not persuade the Panel to investigate. Without such an investigation, the NRP Report's coverage of beginning reading is narrow and biased. (Appendix C, p. 6)



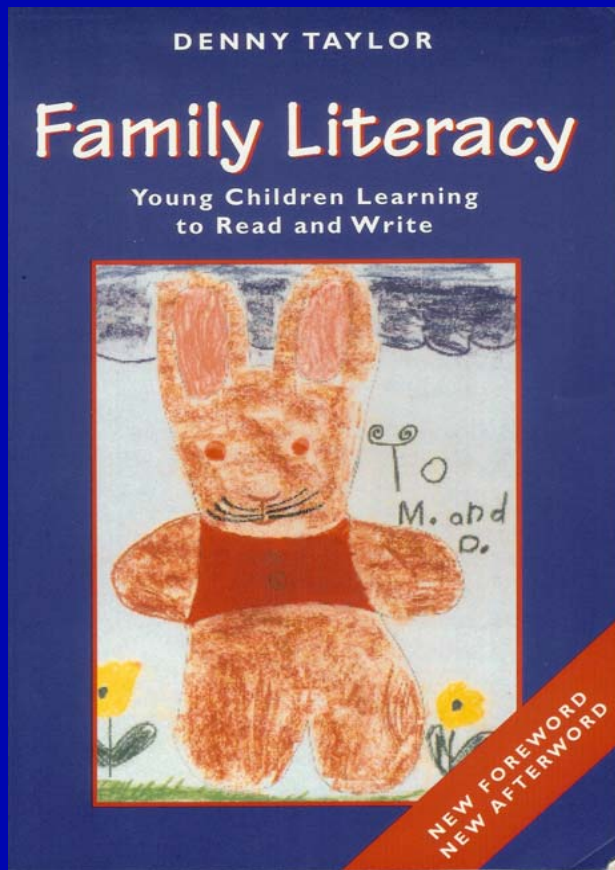
# Parent Stories

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# Using Homes as Resources: Some Sample Texts

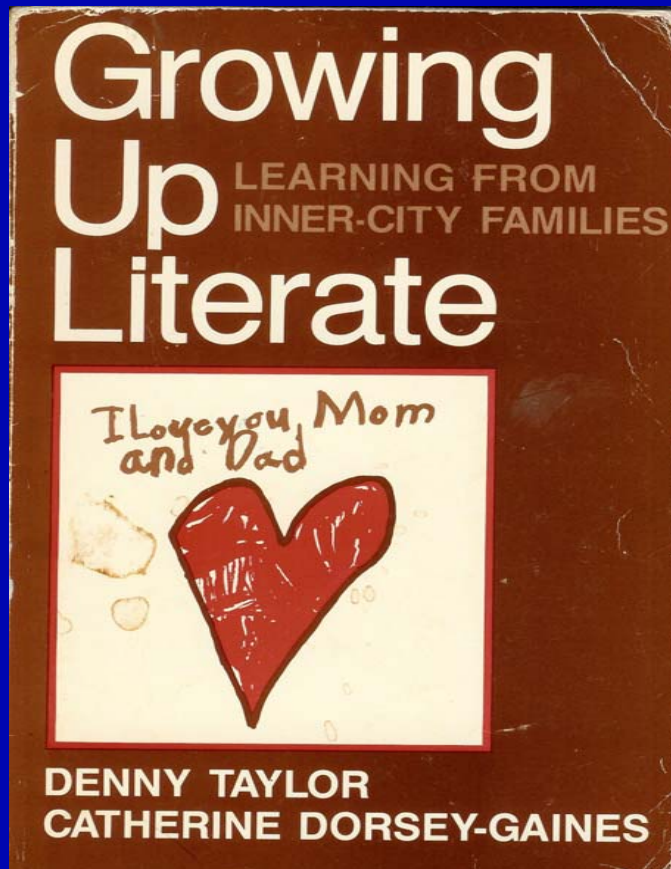


# Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write (1983)



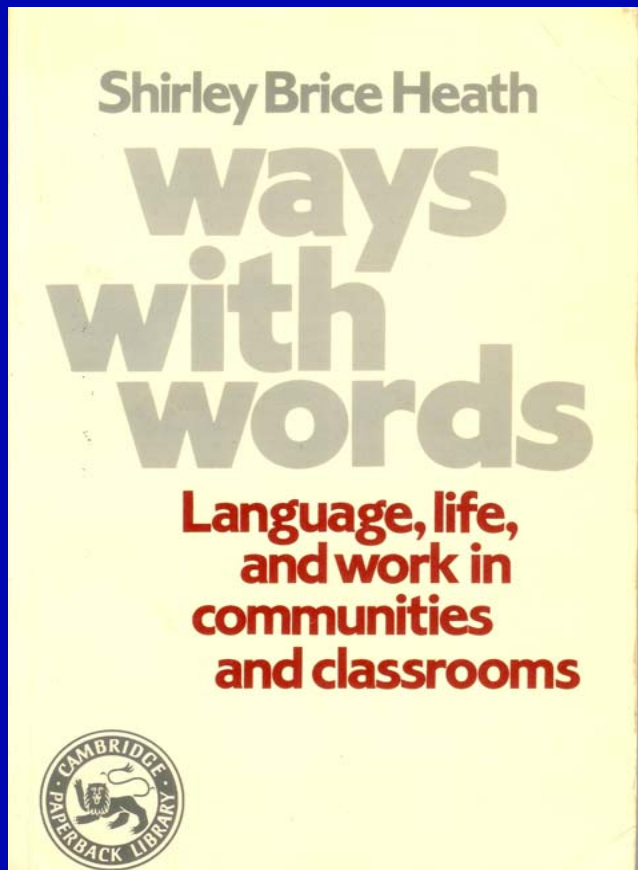
*Family Literacy* documents Taylor's three-year study of six families, each of which included a child who was considered by his or her parents to be successfully learning to read and write. Taylor offers an engaging story of the often complex interaction within each family and how that interaction contributed to the children's literacy development.

# Growing Up Literate: Learning From Inner-City Families (1988)



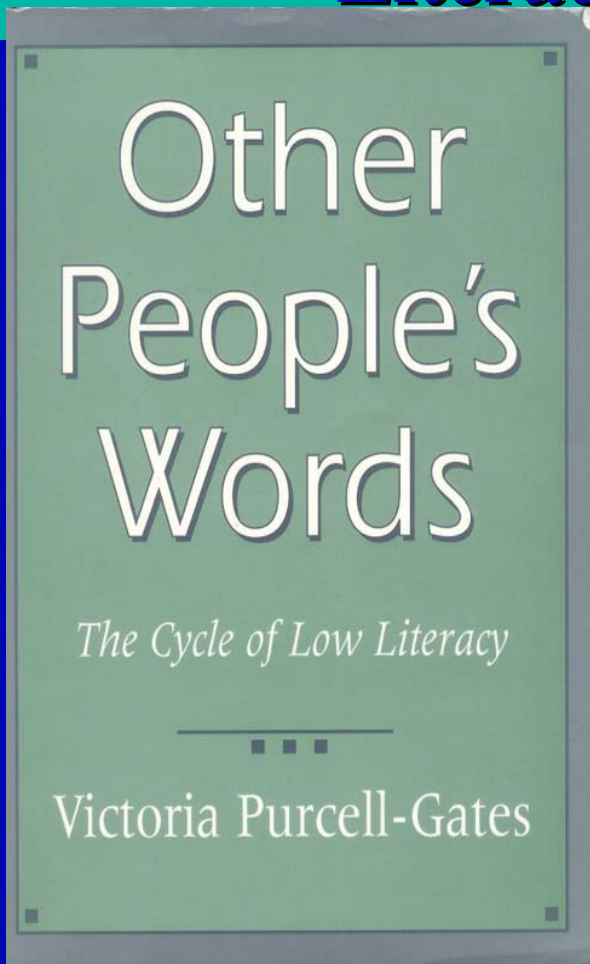
Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines aim in *Growing Up Literate* was to study the familial contexts in which young Black children living in urban poverty are growing up literate. Through their focus on children who were successfully learning to read and write despite the extraordinary economic hardships of their lives, they present new images of the strengths of the family as educator and the ways in which the personal biographies and educative styles of families shape the literate experiences of children.

# Ways With Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms (1983)



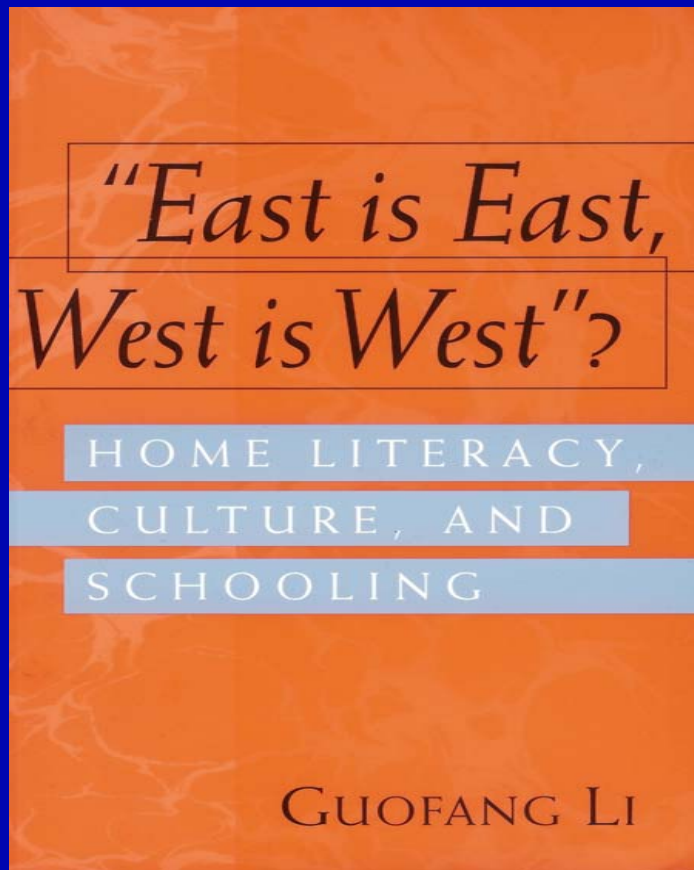
Heath's groundbreaking research focuses on literacy language learning in three different communities: Trackton, Roadville, and Maintown.

# Other People's Words: The Cycle of Low Literacy (1995)



If asked to identify those children who rank lowest in relation to national educational norms, who have higher school dropout and absence rates, and who more commonly experience learning problems, few of us would know the answer: white, urban Appalachian families who migrated to northern cities in the 1950s to look for work. Literacy researchers have rarely studied urban Appalachians, yet, as Victoria Purcell-Gates demonstrates in *Other People's Words*, their often severe literary problems provides a unique perspective on literacy and the relationship between print and culture.

# “East is East, West is West”? Home Literacy Culture and Schooling (2002)



*“East is East, West is West”?*  
*Culture and Schooling* takes us into the homes of four families and allows us to look closely at four Chinese children as they begin schooling in Canada. Guofang Li does an excellent job of describing the challenges facing both academic both academic and entrepreneurial families as they try to make sense of an educational system that is very different from the one they experienced.

# What are Parent Stories?

- According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992) “every parent has his or her own story to tell” (p. 57)
- Coles (1989) further contends that “one’s responses to a story is just as revealing as the story itself” (p. 18).

# One Dimensional Questions

- How many hours per week do you routinely spend reading stories to your child?
- Have you set aside a certain time every day to read to your child?
- Do you encourage your child to read or tell you a story?
- Do you provide books and magazines for your child to read?
- Do you talk and listen to your child?
- Do you and your child visit the library regularly?
- Are you selective in the TV programs your child can watch?
- Do you talk about and discuss the program with your child?

# What are Parent Stories?

Although multicultural curriculum in teacher preparation programs has helped “the cultures” of school accommodate the customs of other cultures; multicultural education has not permeated pedagogy. Too often teachers focus on large or historical cultural traditions in their classrooms and fail to consider the “personal knowledge” of students that accompanies those traditions. Therefore, I offer parent stories as a mechanism for helping teachers consider the “personal knowledge” of families and children. (Edwards, 1999, *A path to follow*)

# What are Parent Stories?

Parent “stories” are the narratives gained from open-ended conversations and/or interviews. In these interviews, parents respond to questions designed to provide information about traditional and nontraditional early literacy activities and experiences that have happened in the home.

(Edwards et al., 1999, pp.xxii-xxiii)

# What are Parent Stories?

- Victoria Purcell-Gates (1995) states: “When we seek to understand learners, we must seek to understand the cultural contexts within which they have developed, learn to interpret who they are in relations to others, and learn how to process, interpret, or decode, their world” (p. 5).
- Courtney Cazden (1989) states: “Teachers, like physicians and social workers, are in the business of helping others. But as a prerequisite to giving help, we have to take in and understand” (p. 26).
- Resnick (1990) contends that school is only one place where literate activities occur: To understand the literacy crisis and imagine possible solutions, it is essential to examine the nature of literacy practice outside school as well as within” (p. 170).

# What are Parent Stories?

Brandt (1985) stated that:

- School may have the official mission to bring literacy to students, but it is much more accurate to say that students bring literacy—or rather literacies—to school. Home literacy comes embedded in complex social and emotional meanings that need to be acknowledged and built upon, not ignored or dismantled, in school. (p. 135)

# What are Parent Stories?

- ...Not all people read and write with equal ease and fluency or use writing and reading in the same ways or for the purposes. In the long run, it may be useful to think of “multiple literacies.” The notion of multiple literacies recognizes that there are many ways of being—and of becoming—literate, and how literacy develops and how it is used depend on the particular social and cultural setting. (McLane & McNamee, 1990, p. 3)

## What Happened During the Parent Interviews?

...A thinking voice: thinking to remember, thinking to get what happened into words, thinking to understand it and fit it together with present experiences... The inner voice would come as the [parents] became interested in rendering the past. It moved in as they came to trust [me] and out as they suddenly wondered what [I was] thinking of what they were saying (Cleary, 1991).

# What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

- Routines of parents and children
- Parents' recollections of their children's early learning efforts
- Parents' perceptions as to whether their occupations determine how they raise their children
- Descriptions of parents' "teachable moments"
- Artifacts of children's literacy histories (scrapbooks, audio cassettes, videotapes, photographs, etc.)

*(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xviii)*

# What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

Parent stories can also provide teachers with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the “human side” of families and children (i.e., why children behave as they do, children’s ways of learning and communicating, some of the problems parents have encountered, and how these problems may have impacted their children’s views about school and the schooling process).

(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xviii)

# What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

Further, parent stories offer a route out of the blame cycle and the justification teachers sometimes give for not successfully teaching labeled at-risk. Parent stories allow teachers to identify what it means, specifically, when we use the words “home literacy environment” to talk about students’ success or lack of success in school. By using parent stories in this way, teachers are able to look at specific issues, problems and strengths of homes, which influence the literacy development of students. This is the first step towards making connections between parent stories and how they can be used to better educate every child.

(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xxiv)

## What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers? --A New Way to Listen to Parents

- Can you describe “something” about your home learning environment that you feel might be different from the learning environment of the school?
- Can you describe “something” about your home learning environment that you would like the school to build upon because you feel that this “something” would enhance your child’s learning potential at school?
- Is there “something” about your child that might not be obvious to the teacher, but might positively or negatively affect his/her performance in school if the teacher knew? If so, what would that “something” be?

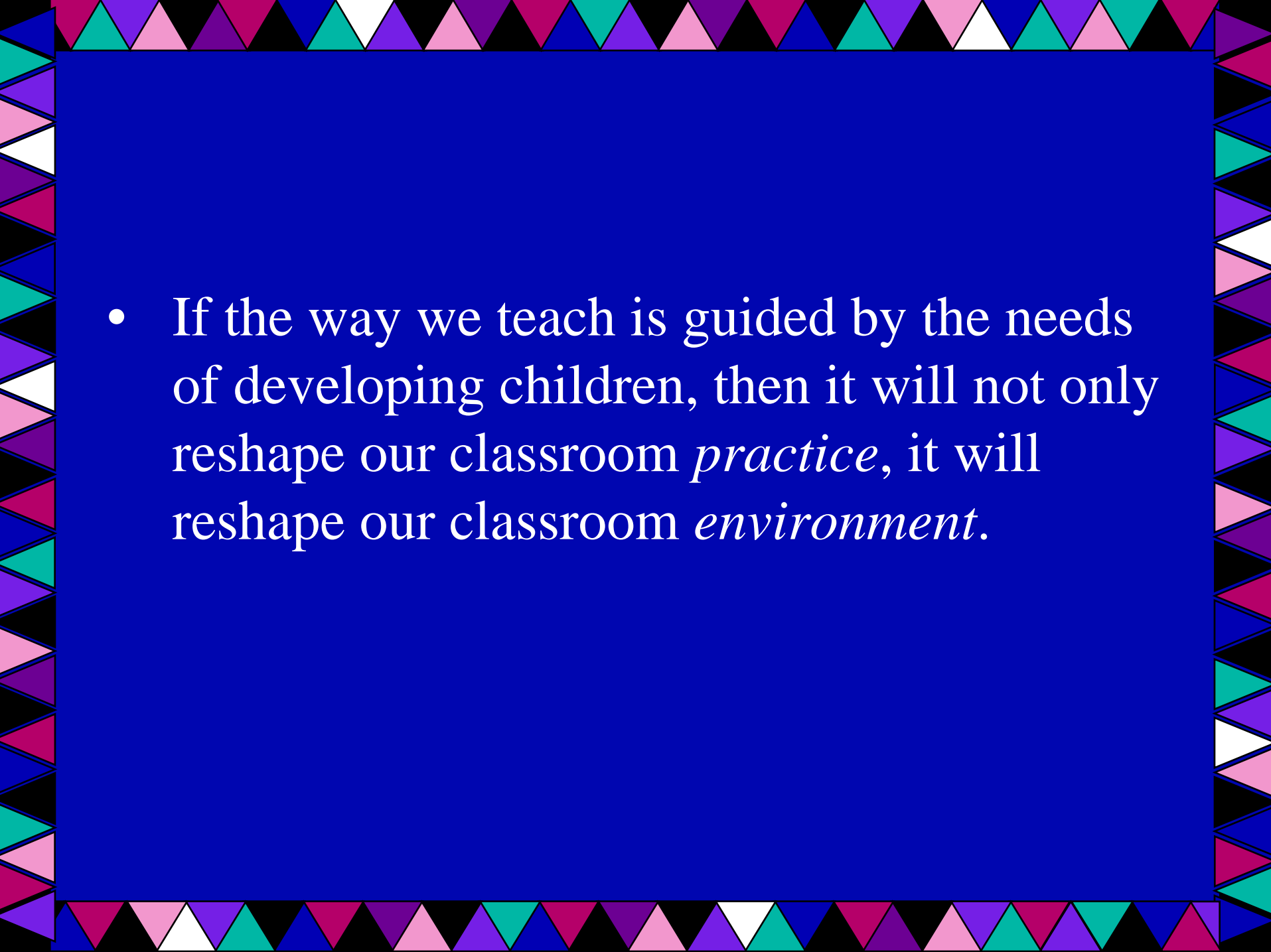
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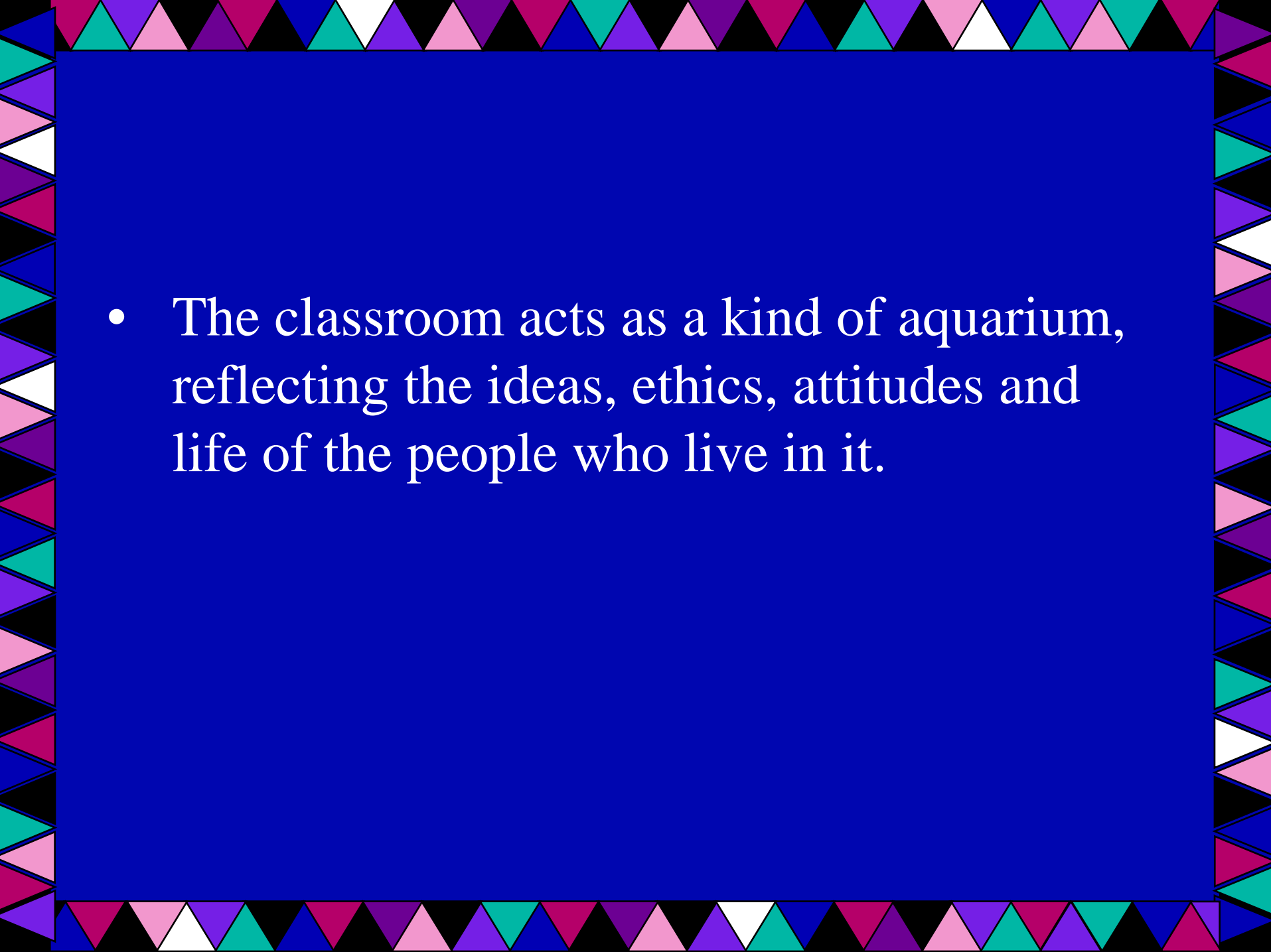
# Some Closing Thoughts About Parent Stories

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According to P. D. Pearson (1996),

Children are who they are. They know what they know. They bring what they bring. Our job is not to wish that students knew more or knew differently. Our job is to turn each student's knowledge and diversity of knowledge we encounter into a curricular strength rather than an instructional inconvenience. We can do that only if we hold high expectations for all students, convey great respect for the knowledge and culture they bring to the classroom, and offer lots of support in helping them achieve those expectations (p. 272).

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- If the way we teach is guided by the needs of developing children, then it will not only reshape our classroom *practice*, it will reshape our classroom *environment*.

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- The classroom acts as a kind of aquarium, reflecting the ideas, ethics, attitudes and life of the people who live in it.

- 
- All too often the classroom fails to act as a kind of aquarium.


# Cultural Variables

- Sociolinguistics
- Social Organization
- Cognition
- Motivation

# Areas of Potential Cultural Conflict

- Learning style
- Interactional or relational style
- Communication
- Differing perceptions of involvement

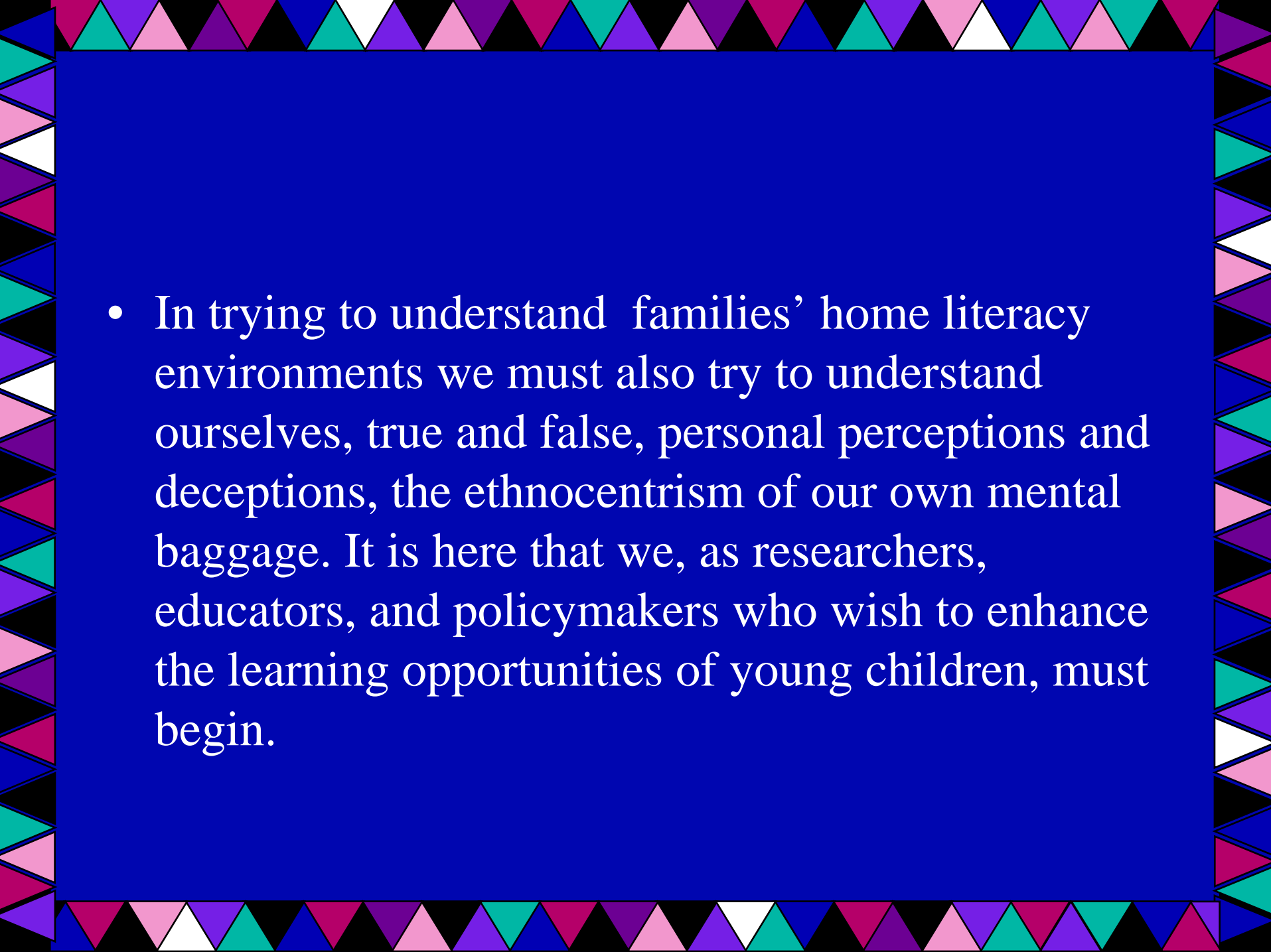
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- Living
  - Communicating
  - Thinking

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- Learning
  - Interactions
  - Perceptions

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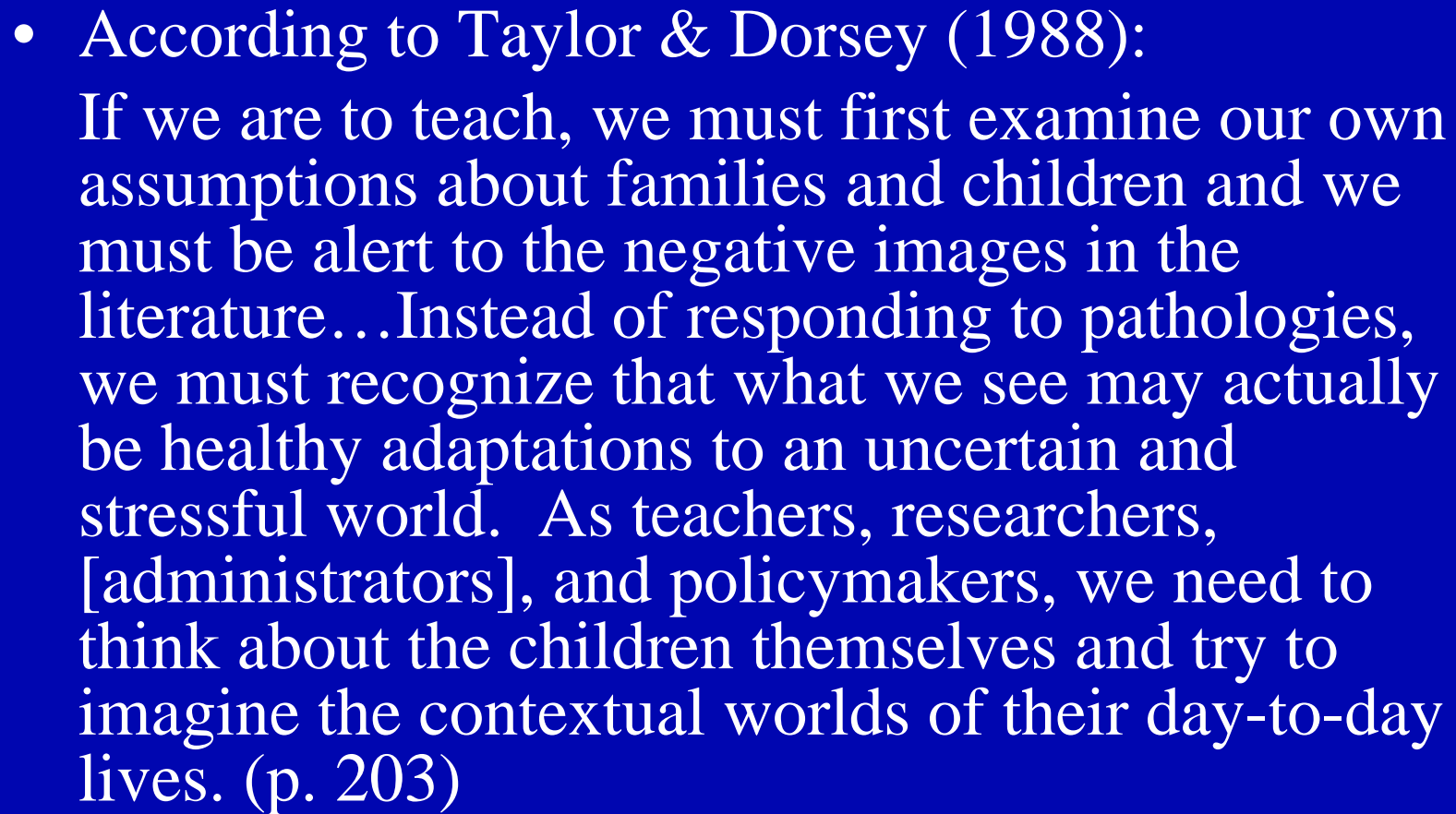
*A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to  
Parents*

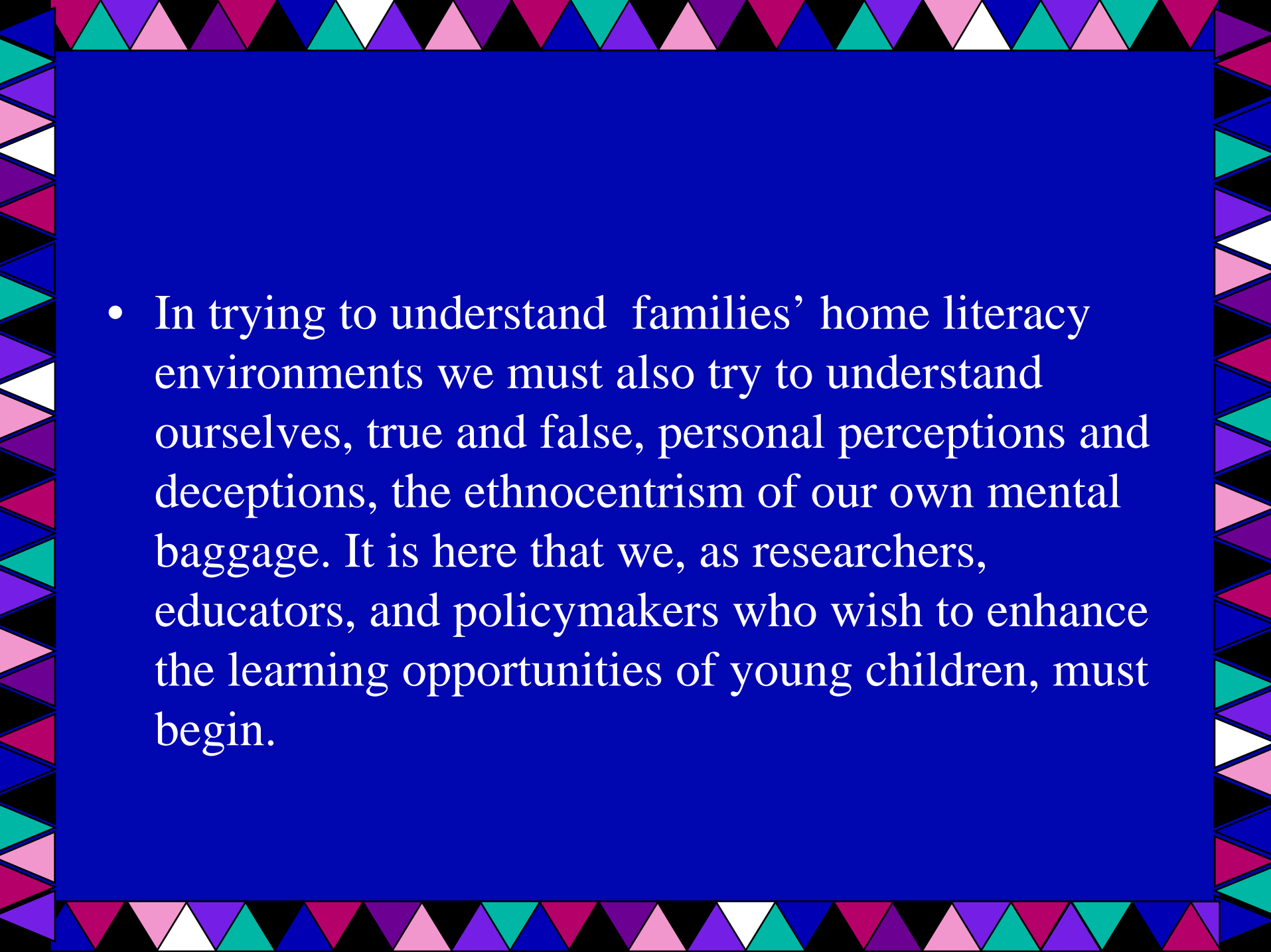
- According to Taylor & Dorsey (1988):  
If we are to teach, we must first examine our own assumptions about families and children and we must be alert to the negative images in the literature...Instead of responding to pathologies, we must recognize that what we see may actually be healthy adaptations to an uncertain and stressful world. As teachers, researchers, [administrators], and policymakers, we need to think about the children themselves and try to imagine the contextual worlds of their day-to-day lives. (p. 203)

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- In trying to understand families' home literacy environments we must also try to understand ourselves, true and false, personal perceptions and deceptions, the ethnocentrism of our own mental baggage. It is here that we, as researchers, educators, and policymakers who wish to enhance the learning opportunities of young children, must begin.

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*A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to  
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*May the force be with you*



# Demographic Profile

# What is a Demographic Profile?

A short questionnaire that compiles information about the school's families.

There are two different types of demographic profiles – school and classroom level





# Why are Demographic Profiles of Families Important?

- Allow teachers to develop tailored-made parentally appropriate activities
- Help teachers take a look at the history of parent involvement at the school level
- Allows teachers to determine whether parent involvement has been effective or not

## How can we use a Demographic Profile?

- Gives teachers a way to pinpoint where problems may be occurring
- Allows teachers to interact with families in a way that is specific to their needs
- Provides teachers with an in-depth look at the strengths of a family/community
- Gives teachers real data and removes the guesswork/judgments/assumptions about families
- Allows teachers to connect families on a grade-by-grade basis

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# **Scope and Sequence of Parent Involvement**

## Why Develop a Scope and Sequence of Parent Involvement?

- Capitalize on the curriculum as a means of communicating with parents. It is an ongoing way to keep parents totally informed of their child's day, the school's goals and objectives...It's one way to begin to establish close, meaningful communication with busy parents... (p. 25)

# Why Develop a Scope and Sequence of Parent Involvement?

Parent involvement is everybody's job but nobody's job until a structure is put in place to support it. (Epstein, 1987, p. 10)

# Developing a Scope and Sequence of Parent Involvement: Some Advice

- Folk theories about students and families
- Cohesiveness of your instructional network
- Developing a shared vision

# Sample of a Scope and Sequence of Parent Involvement

- Kindergarten – Sharing Time
- First Grade – Emergent Literacy
- Second Grade- Reading and Writing Connections
- Third Grade– Writing Process
- Fourth Grade- Content Area Reading
- Fifth Grade – Content Area Reading

# Closing Comments

- Schools must be willing to work with new approaches to home-school interaction...[and] willing to restructure in ways that address families' needs for flexible times frames, childcare, and transportation. Schools may need to adopt an expanded definition of their mission and collaborate with other community service providers in providing educational services to parents whose life circumstances prevent them from being involved as they want to be ...If some parents are not going into the school, the school may need to go where the parents are and provide them with incentives and the support to become involved (Freedman, 1989)

Questions?



# For More Information...

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**Thank you**