**Best Practice #1: Parenting Skills: Help families create homes that get children ready to learn**

a) Be sure information gets to all families who want or need it, not just the few who can come to meetings at school.

b) Enable families to share information with the school about culture, background, children's talents and needs.

c) Encourage your school to provide workshops, videotapes or computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing, and to publicize community programs on nutrition, family literacy and adult education.

d) Find out where to refer parents for family support programs that help with health, nutrition or other services.

e) Participate in neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.

**Best Practice #2: Home-School Communication: Tell what's going on at school, and encourage parents to share home events**

a) Follow up the annual parent-teacher conference with regular communications with parents. Know how to get information translated into the languages of your students' families.

b) Consider parents who do not read well and arrange for phone calls in their native language.

c) Every week or every month, send home folders of student work for parents' review and comment.

d) Have a regular schedule to send home useful notices, memos or newsletters.

e) Respect parents' perspective on their child's abilities and progress. They know their own child in a different setting than you do.

f) Expect to disagree once in a while and embrace the opportunity to see things from a new point of view.

**Best Practice #3: Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support**

1. Arrange to use parent and community volunteers in your classroom. Recruit widely so that all families know their contributions are welcome. Provide training, and match time and talent with the work to be done
2. Implement a system of class parents, telephone tree, e-mail list or other way to let volunteers know what's needed
3. Plan lessons to include help from families at school or from home.
4. Communicate with parents at the beginning of each year to identify talents, times and locations of volunteers.
5. Recognize family members for the support they provide

**Best Practice #4: Learning at Home: Let families know the best ways to help students learn**

1. Be sure each family has information about the essential learning standards for their child's grade level
2. Be clear with parents about homework policies, and give them tips on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home
3. Assign homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families about what they are learning in class
4. If students have several teachers, coordinate homework assignments.
5. Provide calendars with activities for parents and students at home.
6. Send home summer learning packages.
7. Ask families to participate in setting student goals each year, and help them look ahead to college or work.

**Best Practice #5: Decision Making at School: Develop parent leaders and include them in school decisions**

1. Foster an active PTA or other parent group.
2. Involve students too, when appropriate.
3. Be sure school councils and other school governance committees include family representatives.
4. Nominate family members from your school for regional and district councils and committees.
5. Encourage parents from all segments of the school population to become leaders and to get leadership training.
6. Help establish networks to link all families with parent representatives.

**Best Practice #6: Collaborating with the Community: Seek out and use community resources that can strengthen school programs.**

1. Encourage your school to provide families with information on community activities that relate to learning skills, including summer programs, mentoring, tutoring and business partnerships.
2. Make sure students and families have access to information about community health, cultural, recreational and social support services.
3. Work with family representatives to find and apply for grants to further student learning.
4. Help organize a career fair in which community members expose students to future job possibilities.
5. Help match community contributions to school goals; align child and family services with learning standards.
6. Thank local merchants and other business owners who support activities at school.
7. As a class or school, have students, families and staff provide service to the community. Among the possibilities are recycling, art, and music or drama performances for seniors.
8. Bring alumni back to participate in school programs for students.