

Creating knowledgeable and involved parents who will actively *promote a quality education for their children, in their schools, and beyond.*

School Smarts graduates have:

1. A strong working knowledge of the educational system
2. Enhanced communication and leadership skills and understanding of proven factors that increase student success
3. Skills to help build partnerships and community unity in support of quality education for all children that includes the arts
4. Knowledge about new opportunities for parents created by changes in California's education laws
5. Participated in creating an Action Plan that will make a difference for your school

This award-winning, research-based training program is specifically designed to assist school districts with their state and federal family-engagement requirements and support LCAP implementation.

Why is School Smarts a unique parent engagement program?

- Adaptability
- Professional local support for training and quality assurance
- Local PTA support and connection
- Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese

This fee-for-service program can be purchased using:

- Title 1 Funds
- English Learner Parent Involvement Funds
- LCFF/LCAP Funds
- Grant Funds

Parent Involvement: A Key Ingredient in Student Success

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In this session, parents will learn:

- Why parent involvement is all-important
- Different ways for parents to get involved
- How to help your child get ready to learn, at home and in school

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
Parent involvement and its importance	To understand the definition of parent involvement and the many ways it can make a difference in a child's life.	Read/review parent involvement sections. Introduce LCFF & LCAP requirements. Remind parents that any way they choose to be involved is valuable for their child.	Lead a brainstorm about ways to be involved at home and at school, and the benefits of involvement.
Family Values in Your Hand – Art Activity	To express values in a tactile and visual way creating an opportunity to share with others.	Pair up participants and ask them to discuss important family and personal values. Ask them to share and scribe the list for everyone to see. Lead the art activity. After the art activity, have the group discuss and reflect on their values. Ask: What do they have in common? What makes them unique?	Ask participants to trace their hands and place an important value on each finger. In the center have them draw a design or symbol representing something special.
The Six Types of Parent Involvement – Dr. Joyce Epstein, Johns Hopkins University	To discover the many different ways to be involved in a child's school experience.	Introduce types of involvement. Review 1-2 points in each type.	Ask participants to delve more deeply into each type Using collaborative and/or cooperative learning strategies (like think-pair-share and jigsaw). Have participants share out with the group.
Homework	To create a positive homework experience for your child (and yourself).	Ask participants to go over the "Parents' Homework Checklist" with their child.	Participants work with their child to figure out how they can check-off each item on the list.

Preparing for a Lifetime of Learning

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In this session, parents will learn:

- The different ways children learn
- How to prepare for a successful high school experiences
- Basics for college and career possibilities after high school

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
The Theory of Multiple Intelligences & Growth Mindset intro	To grasp that every child is unique and there is no single, one size fits all approach to effective teaching.	Review the most common learning styles. Review “The Stove Can Burn You” example and ask participants how they learned this lesson. Discuss fixed vs. growth mindsets and go over examples of each.	Give participants an opportunity to share both what they identify as their primary learning style and that of their children. Invite participants to share an example of when they had a growth mindset.
The Arts – An important path to learning	To understand the critical role arts play in enhancing student learning and lifetime success.	Discuss the critical role the arts play in enhancing student learning. Review the lasting benefits of arts education and how the arts prepare students for success in school, including at-risk students. Share the arts requirements in California education.	Use a facilitation strategy (like meta-planning or group dialogue) inviting participants to discuss why they believe the arts are vital to education.
Getting College and Career Ready – Success Starts Now 21 st Century Skills	To consider the large range of skills necessary for a child’s success (today and into the future) and how to encourage this learning.	Discuss 21 st Century Skills and the idea of “Linked Learning”. Ask: What are some ways they can support this learning?	In pairs, review the two common paths after high school -College/University or Career/Technical - and share their own experiences.

Understanding our Education System

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In this session, parents will learn:

- How California's public school systems is organized
- What your child will learn in school
- How your child's progress will be measured

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
Public School System	To be able to share with others how the public school system is organized.	Highlight the key elements of California's public school system including the local school district, school board, and superintendent.	Ask participants to draw a picture and label it showing how the public school system is organized. Ask volunteers to share.
California Common Core State Standards	To better understand what Common Core is and how the standards help build critical thinking and problem solving skills.	Discuss the Common Core State Standards. Lead a group discussion asking participants to share what they know and think about the Standards.	Turn to the Parents' Guide to Student Success at the end of Session 3. Have pairs or groups select a grade level and report out their findings about what they learned.
Homework, Report cards, Testing, and Assessments	To recognize the many ways in which students are evaluated.	Discuss how a student's progress is measured, including progress reports and report cards. Provide specific examples based on the method your school site and/or district uses.	Partner up participants with children in the same grade. Have them read through the CAASPP report explanation and discuss their experiences with these reports.
Homework	To have some fun with your child and learn some math.	Use the instructions to make an origami pinwheel with your child.	Share with your child how math is integral to this art project.

Understanding our Local School System

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In this session, parents will learn:

- How decisions are made at your school
- The roles of the school board, principal, teachers and staff
- Volunteer and leadership opportunities for parents
- Special academic programs and after-school activities

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
Our Local School System	To grasp the complexity of a school's governance system.	Ask participants questions like, who makes decisions at schools? How do parents play a role in decision making? After having pairs review diagram on page 3, ask participants to take turns reading aloud the bold statements on pages 1 – 5 defining the role of the school board, superintendent, principal... Pause to find out if participants know the person in this role at their school.	Ask participants to pair up to review diagram on page 3. Ask questions like: Which of these roles are you familiar with/which are new? Are the parent groups named ones you are aware of? Have guest speaker attend to share school governance from their perspective (Principal, Assistant Principal or other lead staff).
Parent Involvement at School	To understand the many ways parents can engage with their child's school.	Review the groups and committees where parents can volunteer to support their school and community.	Ask people to share their school volunteer experiences. Gauge their comfort level about volunteering by administering a simple survey.
LCFF/LCAP	To appreciate how parents can be involved in decision making at schools.	Define and explain DELAC, DAC/PAC, PTA Council/District. Introduce LCFF/LCAP and the eight priority areas.	Facilitate a group activity (like report out or buzz groups) to review the eight priority areas for the LCAP.
Midpoint Reflection	To offer participants a chance to reflect on what they have learned so far.	Ask participants to complete the reflection matrix noting: what I've learned, how I'm using it, and what more I need to know.	Facilitate a group discussion, scribing important take aways, and noting action items.

Becoming an Effective Communicator

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In this session, parents will learn:

- Why home-school communication is so important
- How to build strong communication skills

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
Home-School Communication	To gain understanding of the importance of home-school communication. To recognize the variety of home-school communications.	Remind parents they are in a long-term relationship with their school and that communication takes practice and commitment. Share how schools communicate with families.	Lead a group brainstorm listing all the ways schools communicate with families. Ask group to comment on what works best for them/what they find challenging about home-school communication.
Communication Styles and Methods	To recognize that communication styles and methods can be varied and challenging.	Demonstrate the different communication styles and methods that can be used to convey the same information.	Use the pair share facilitation method, ask pairs to individually to describe in writing how to get from their current location to the principal's office in the way they think makes the most sense. Ask pairs to read their instructions to one another. Have pairs note what is similar/dissimilar about their instructions. Share observations.
Communication Takes Practice – Art Activity	To realize that communication can be improved with practice.	Lead participants through the Chatterbox Game art activity.	Have participants make an origami “chatterbox”. Ask participants to put different types of communication messages inside the inner flaps of the chatterbox (like text message/email/poem). Instruct parents in pairs to play the chatterbox game and deliver specific messages (like graduation is at 1pm tomorrow or there is a district presentation next week) in the format they wind up with.

Standing up for a Quality Education

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In this session, parents will learn:

- What it means to be a leader and an education advocate
- How to take positive action to help your child and your school community
- How to set goals for your post-academy action school plan

TOPIC	OBJECTIVE	INSTRUCTION	PRACTICE (examples listed here are to be adapted to meet participants needs and learning styles)
Thinking Like a Leader	To grasp that anyone can become a leader by practicing good techniques.	Ask group what traits make a leader. Scribe ideas. After triad discussion, inform group that they are all indeed leaders and why. Define and discuss the leadership mindset and the five skills leaders possess.	Have triads discuss whether or not they see themselves as leaders. Ask same triads to talk about people they know that demonstrate leadership traits.
Being an Advocate	To understand the key principals of advocacy.	Have group take turns reading aloud the key principles of advocacy.	Invite a local advocate (PTA member, School Board Member) to share successful advocacy stories.
Setting Goals – Envision our Dream School – Art Activity	To create a blueprint of the very best school environment for their child.	Lead the group through an art exercise diagramming their school and the components they'd like to add.	Participants will work together to create a map of their “dream school” using colored paper shapes to represent things like playgrounds, gardens, buildings, etc. Using the map as a springboard, group will brainstorm other improvements they would like to see.

Taking Action/Graduation

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In this session, parents will learn:

- How to set SMART goals
- How to translate your fresh knowledge into action
- Understand how to craft an action plan
- Celebrate your new knowhow with friends and family



“I liked that I learned how to support my child’s learning at home. I also liked how my classmates and I exchanged ideas and I enjoyed their company. I really love the artwork.” Parent at Fairhaven Elementary, Orange USD