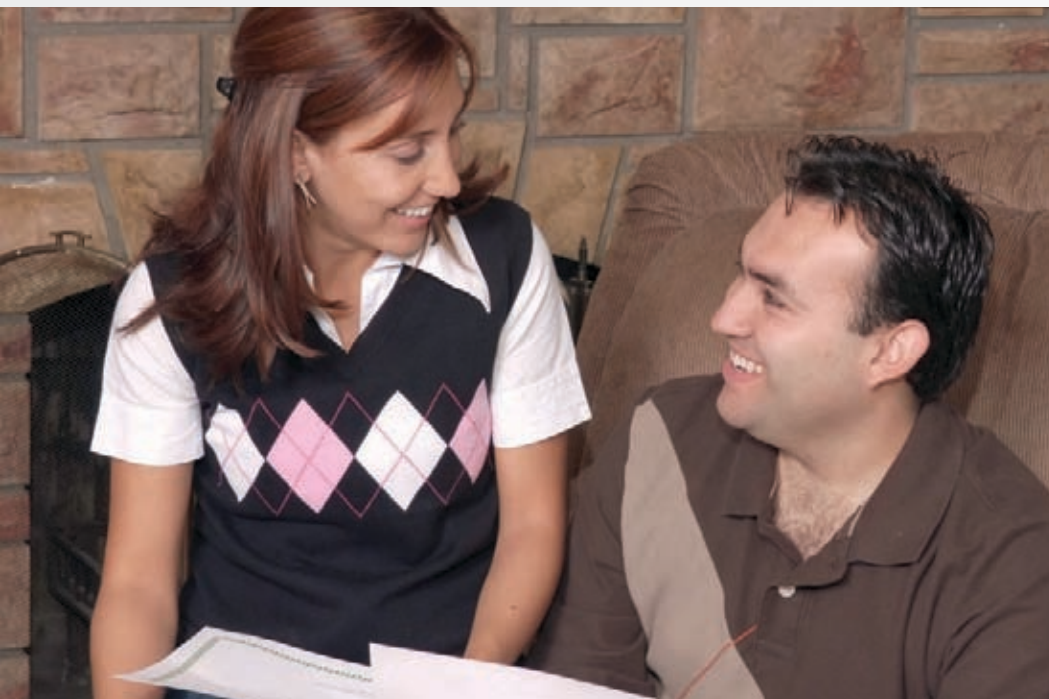


Parents + Schools = Successful Children

Get Involved!

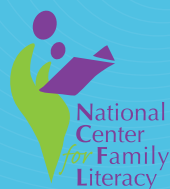


This project was designed and developed by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) with generous support from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.



The *Parents + Schools = Successful Children* series is a project funded by Dollar General to develop bilingual materials to promote the importance of parent involvement and literacy support at home. In addition to these foto-novelas for parents, the project features a practitioners' guide for teachers and tutors and audio-enhanced versions of the foto-novelas available free online (www.famlit.org/foto-novela) to provide additional language and learning support for parents who speak Spanish.

For information about NCFL or to find a family literacy program near you, visit www.famlit.org or call 1-877-FAMLIT-1.



CARMEN VISITS HER FRIEND CELIA AT THE MORALES HOME...

GOOD MORNING CELIA. I BROUGHT SOME BLUEBERRY MUFFINS FOR OUR COFFEE.

HI CARMEN, BLUEBERRY WHAT?

MUFFINS. THEY ARE VERY POPULAR HERE IN THE U.S.

YOU ARE SUCH A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO TEACH ME ABOUT ALL THE AMERICAN CUSTOMS. PLEASE SIT DOWN.

WELL THERE IS SO MUCH TO LEARN. IT WAS VERY HARD FOR ME WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE SO I LIKE TO HELP NEWCOMERS WHEN I CAN. SO, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO ASK ME ABOUT THE SCHOOL?

OH CARMEN, I AM SO WORRIED. YESTERDAY ROBERTO BROUGHT HOME THIS NOTE FROM HIS TEACHER.

Abraham Lincoln Elementary School
From the desk of Mrs. Porter, 5th Grade Teacher

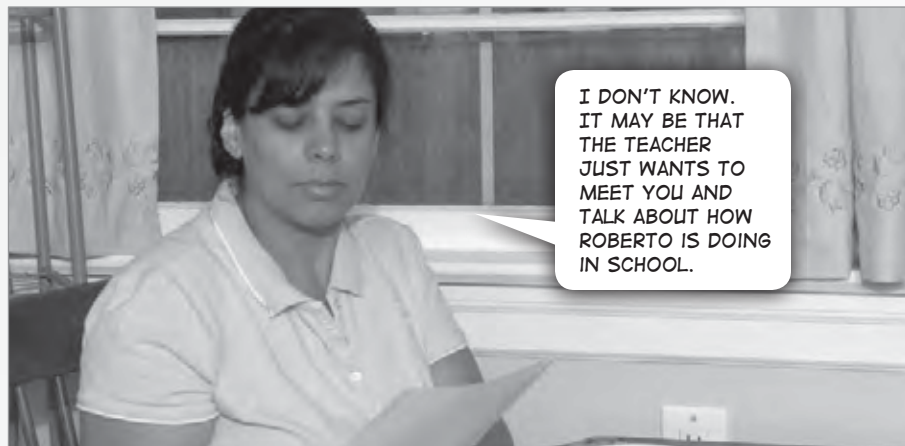
Dear Mrs. Morales,

I would like to schedule a meeting with you to discuss Roberto's progress in class. Please call me at your earliest convenience to set up an appointment. My telephone number at the school is 555-4623.

*Thank you,
Mrs. Porter*



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? IS ROBERTO IN TROUBLE?



I DON'T KNOW. IT MAY BE THAT THE TEACHER JUST WANTS TO MEET YOU AND TALK ABOUT HOW ROBERTO IS DOING IN SCHOOL.



WHY? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES. I DON'T EVEN SPEAK THE LANGUAGE!



THAT DOESN'T MATTER. HERE IN THE U.S., SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS FORM A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, SO THAT CHILDREN LEARN AT HOME AS WELL AS AT SCHOOL. THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM HOW WE VIEWED EDUCATION IN MY COUNTRY, AND PROBABLY YOURS.



THAT'S TRUE. IN MY COUNTRY, PARENTS WEREN'T EXPECTED TO BE INVOLVED AT SCHOOL.

I THINK IT HAS TO DO WITH THE CULTURE. THE SCHOOLS WANT PARENTS TO VISIT AND MEET WITH THE TEACHERS. IN FACT, TEACHERS WANT PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, THE CURRICULUM AND THE THINGS THEY DO IN THE CLASSROOM. IT'S OK TO ASK QUESTIONS, LIKE NOW, WITH THIS NOTE FROM ROBERTO'S TEACHER.



THAT'S SO INTERESTING. HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS, CARMEN?



I WAS THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION VICE-PRESIDENT WHEN MY DAUGHTERS WERE IN SCHOOL. YOU KNOW, THE PTA.

YOU WERE? HOW DID YOU DO THAT?



ONCE I LEARNED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE SYSTEM, I REALIZED THAT I HAD TO GET INVOLVED. THE WAY THE SCHOOLS WORK HERE IS NOT BETTER OR WORSE, JUST DIFFERENT. THEY HAVE STUDIED HOW CHILDREN LEARN BEST, AND CHILDREN DO BETTER IN SCHOOL WHEN THEIR PARENTS UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE BEING TAUGHT AT SCHOOL.



I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT THAT. CARMEN, THANK YOU SO MUCH. I'M STILL WORRIED, BUT I DON'T FEEL SO SCARED ABOUT GOING TO MEET ROBERTO'S TEACHER, MRS. PORTER.



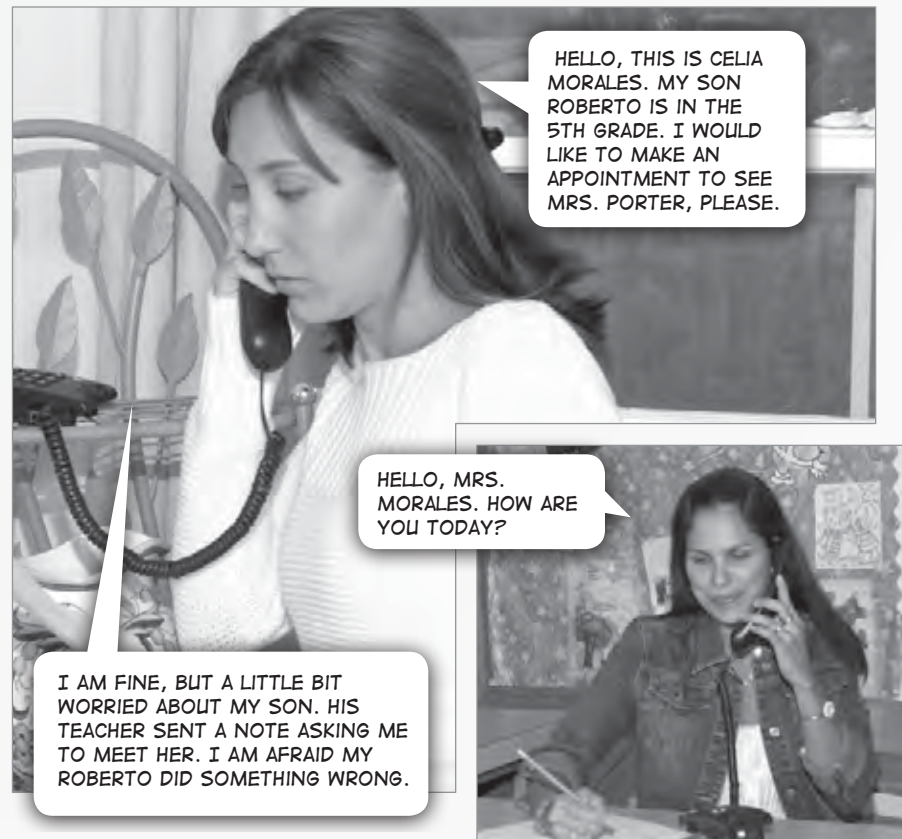
DOES SHE SPEAK SPANISH?

I'M NOT SURE.



WELL, WHEN YOU CALL TO MAKE THE APPOINTMENT, BE SURE TO ASK IF THERE IS A TRANSLATOR OR IF THE TEACHER IS BILINGUAL. NOT ALL SCHOOLS OFFER THIS, BUT MANY DO.

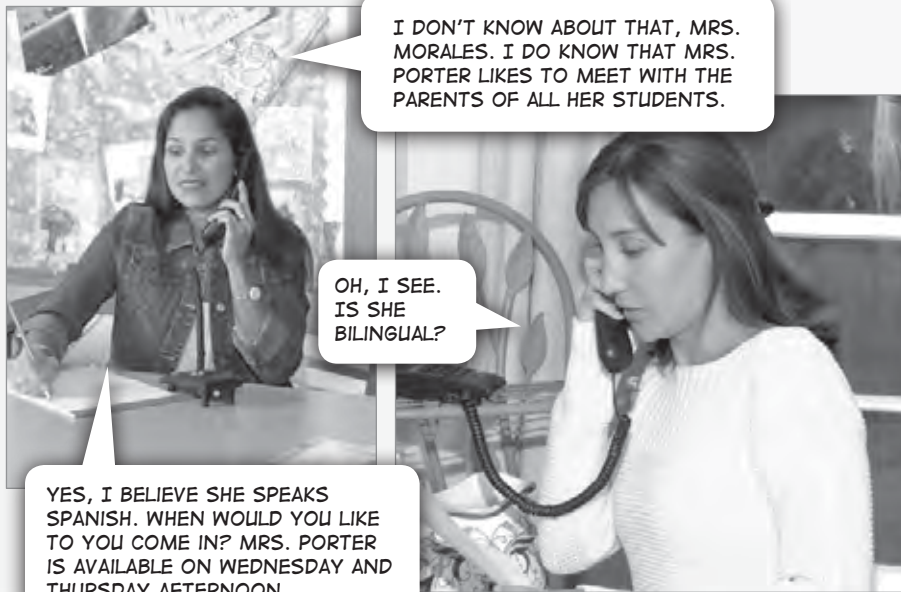
OK, CARMEN, THANK YOU SO MUCH. I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER.



HELLO, THIS IS CELIA MORALES. MY SON ROBERTO IS IN THE 5TH GRADE. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE MRS. PORTER, PLEASE.

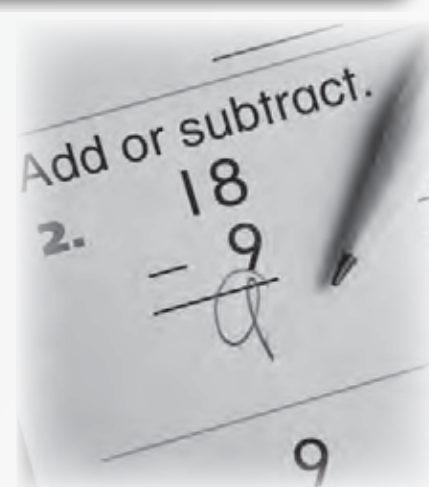
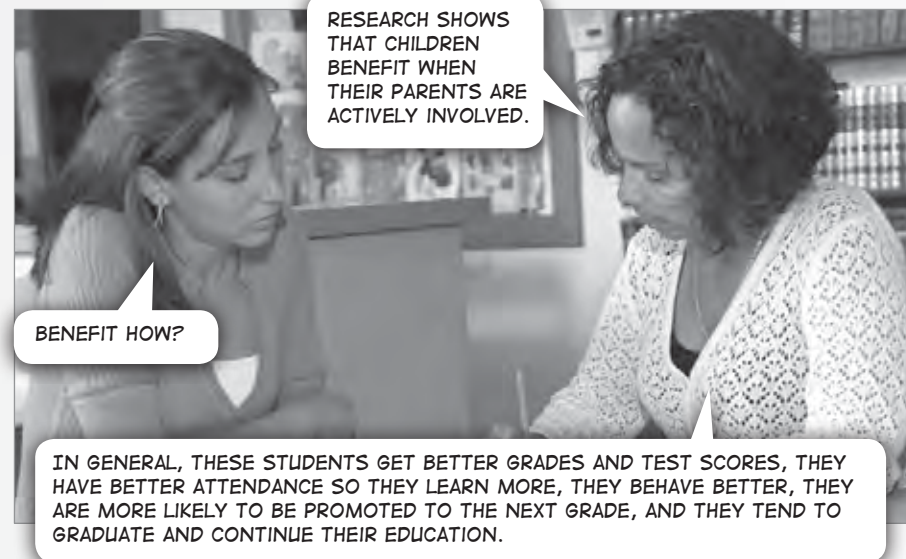
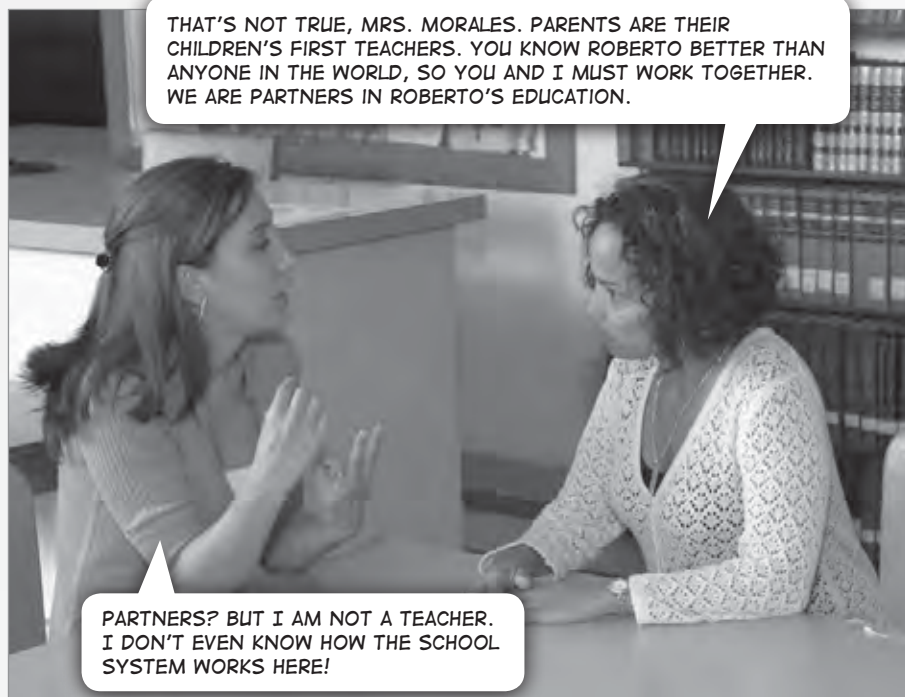
HELLO, MRS. MORALES. HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

I AM FINE, BUT A LITTLE BIT WORRIED ABOUT MY SON. HIS TEACHER SENT A NOTE ASKING ME TO MEET HER. I AM AFRAID MY ROBERTO DID SOMETHING WRONG.



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON AT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...





SPELLING						
HOME EC.						
SHOP						
VOC. GUID.						
GEOGRAPHY						

Explanation of Marks		
A-83-100.	B-85-92.	C-77-84.
F-Below 70 or Failure		

ATTENDANCE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
NO. DAYS PRESENT						30
DAYS ABSENT						0
DAYS TARDY						0





OH MY GOODNESS, I NEVER KNEW ABOUT THIS. MY HUSBAND RAMON NEEDS TO KNOW THIS, TOO.



HERE IS A HANDOUT THAT EXPLAINS WHAT I JUST TOLD YOU. WHY DON'T YOU SHARE IT WITH YOUR HUSBAND?

BENEFITS OF *YOUR* INVOLVEMENT FOR YOUR CHILDREN

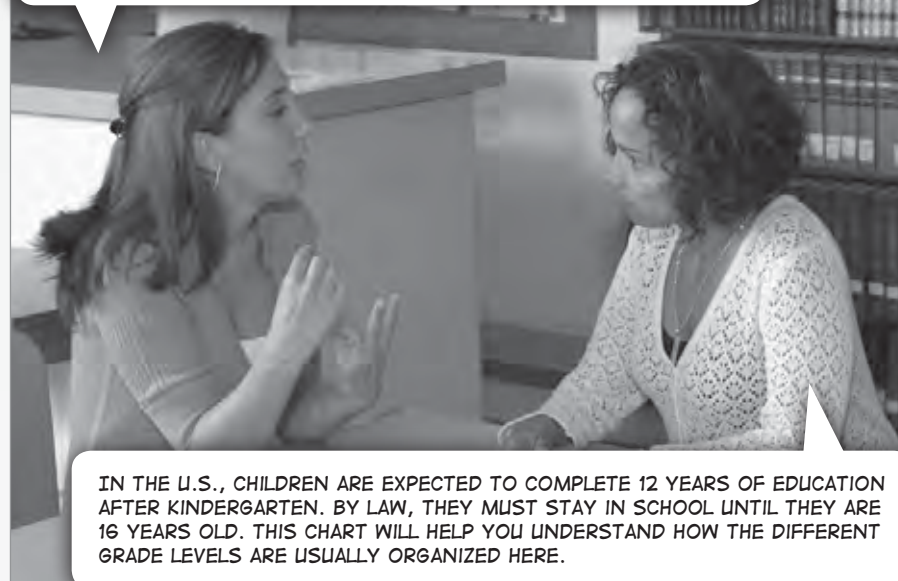
- * HIGHER GRADES
- * BETTER TEST SCORES
- * GET PROMOTED
- * REGULAR ATTENDANCE
- * BETTER SOCIAL SKILLS
- * IMPROVED BEHAVIOR
- * BETTER ADAPTATION TO SCHOOL
- * GRADUATE AND CONTINUE STUDYING

MRS. PORTER, I NEED TO LEARN SO MUCH! I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN.



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW FIRST?

WELL, ROBERTO TOLD ME THE OTHER DAY THAT HE IS GOING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL NEXT YEAR. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THAT IS. IN MY COUNTRY, WE WENT TO SCHOOL UNTIL THE 9TH GRADE AND THEN WE WERE FINISHED. THERE WAS NO MIDDLE.



IN THE U.S., CHILDREN ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE 12 YEARS OF EDUCATION AFTER KINDERGARTEN. BY LAW, THEY MUST STAY IN SCHOOL UNTIL THEY ARE 16 YEARS OLD. THIS CHART WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND HOW THE DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS ARE USUALLY ORGANIZED HERE.

KINDERGARTEN

PRIMARY SCHOOL: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - 1ST-5TH GRADES

SECONDARY SCHOOL: MIDDLE SCHOOL - 6TH-8TH GRADES
HIGH SCHOOL - 9TH-12TH GRADES

AFTER GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, MANY STUDENTS GO TO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY AND STUDY FOR 4 YEARS TO GET A BACHELOR'S DEGREE. SOME STUDENTS GO TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR 2 YEARS TO GET AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE.



THIS IS VERY HELPFUL, THANK YOU. I ALSO DON'T KNOW WHO WORKS AT THE SCHOOL AND WHO IS IN THE OFFICE. THIS IS MY SON'S FIRST YEAR HERE.

EVERY SCHOOL HAS A PRINCIPAL AND ONE OR MORE ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS



IN THE OFFICE WE ALSO HAVE A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR,

A PART-TIME NURSE, A SECRETARY AND AN ATTENDANCE CLERK.

EVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS A SCHOOL BOARD THAT IS ELECTED. THE SUPERINTENDENT IS THE LEADER OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.



WHO WORKS AT *YOUR* SCHOOL?

PRINCIPAL
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
SCHOOL SECRETARY
ATTENDANCE SECRETARY OR CLERK
TEACHERS
MEDIA SPECIALISTS/LIBRARIANS
INSTRUCTIONAL/READING COACH
RESOURCE SPECIALIST
NURSE
CUSTODIANS

I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE! MY NEIGHBOR TOLD ME ABOUT THE PTA. CAN I JOIN?

OF COURSE YOU CAN! YOU HAVE TO FILL OUT A FORM AND PAY A SMALL FEE. THEY WILL PUT YOU ON THE MAILING LIST AND LET YOU KNOW ABOUT THEIR MEETINGS AND EVENTS.

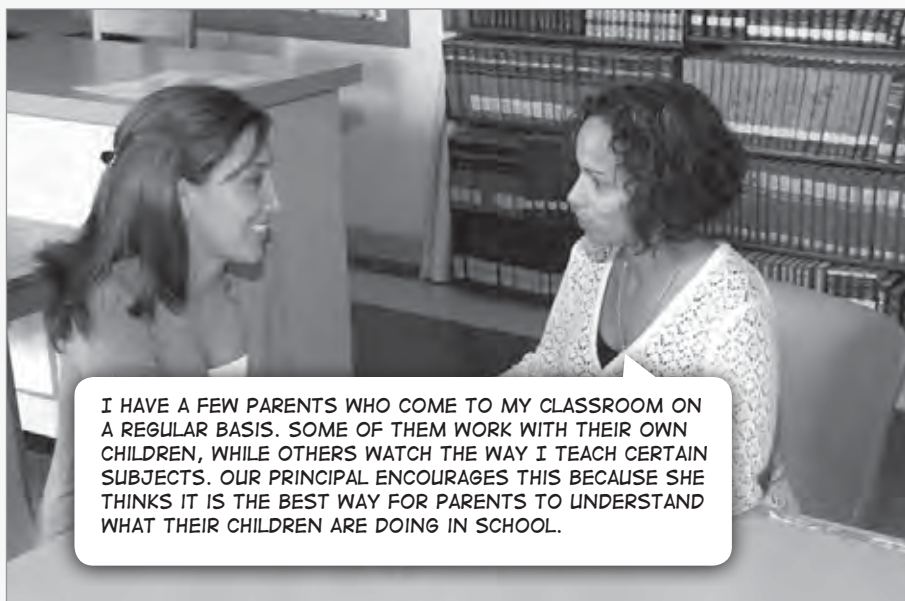
ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO BE INVOLVED?



ABSOLUTELY! I WILL SEND HOME INFORMATION WITH ROBERTO FROM TIME TO TIME ABOUT WHAT WE ARE STUDYING IN CLASS. YOU ARE ALSO WELCOME TO COME ON OUR FIELD TRIPS TO THE ZOO, THE MUSEUM, AND OTHER PLACES. YOU CAN EVEN COME TO CLASS WITH ROBERTO AND WORK WITH HIM WHILE WE DO SOME ACTIVITIES.



DO YOU MEAN THAT IT'S OK FOR ME TO COME TO ROBERTO'S CLASS? WON'T I BOTHER YOU?



I HAVE A FEW PARENTS WHO COME TO MY CLASSROOM ON A REGULAR BASIS. SOME OF THEM WORK WITH THEIR OWN CHILDREN, WHILE OTHERS WATCH THE WAY I TEACH CERTAIN SUBJECTS. OUR PRINCIPAL ENCOURAGES THIS BECAUSE SHE THINKS IT IS THE BEST WAY FOR PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE DOING IN SCHOOL.

MRS. PORTER EXPLAINS THE BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT...



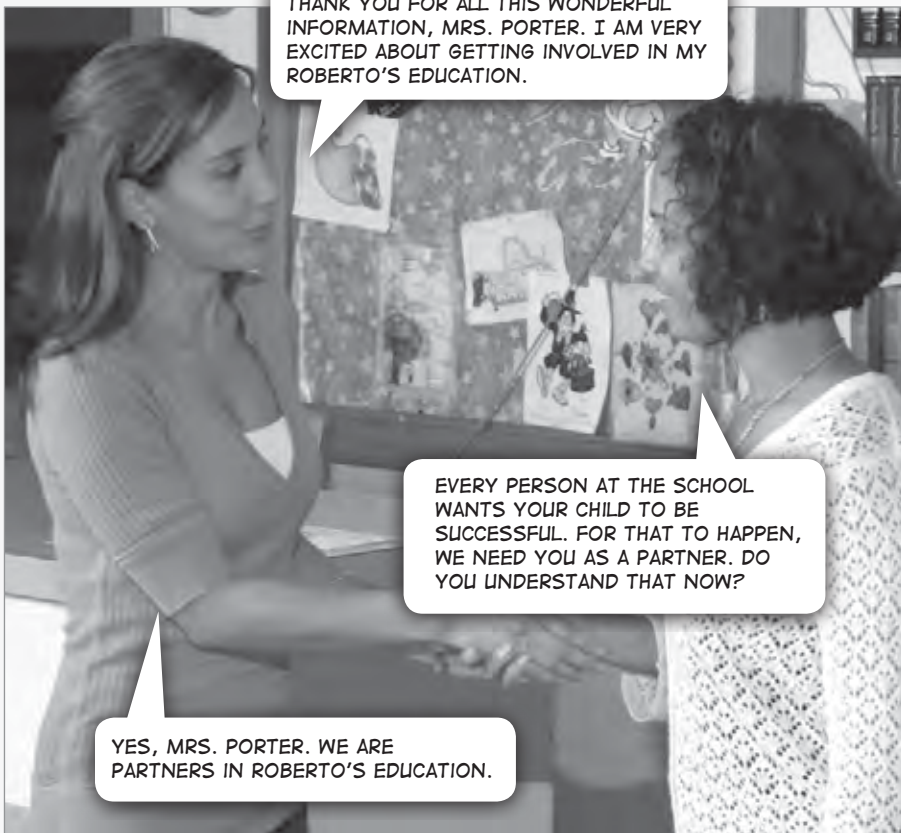
HOW CAN I WORK WITH ROBERTO IN YOUR CLASSROOM WHEN I DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH VERY WELL?



I ALWAYS MAKE SURE THE PARENTS UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE DOING. IT DOES NOT REALLY MATTER WHICH LANGUAGE YOU USE-IT IS THE INTERACTION THAT IS IMPORTANT. HERE ARE SOME OTHER IDEAS ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT FOR YOU TO TAKE HOME AND SHARE WITH YOUR FAMILY.



THANK YOU FOR ALL THIS WONDERFUL INFORMATION, MRS. PORTER. I AM VERY EXCITED ABOUT GETTING INVOLVED IN MY ROBERTO'S EDUCATION.

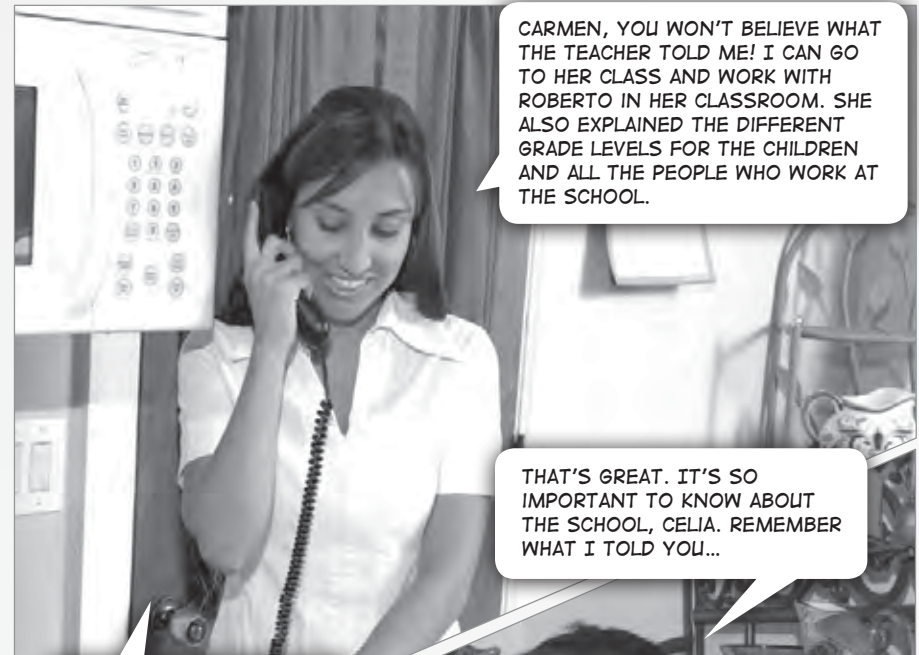


EVERY PERSON AT THE SCHOOL WANTS YOUR CHILD TO BE SUCCESSFUL. FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, WE NEED YOU AS A PARTNER. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT NOW?

YES, MRS. PORTER. WE ARE PARTNERS IN ROBERTO'S EDUCATION.

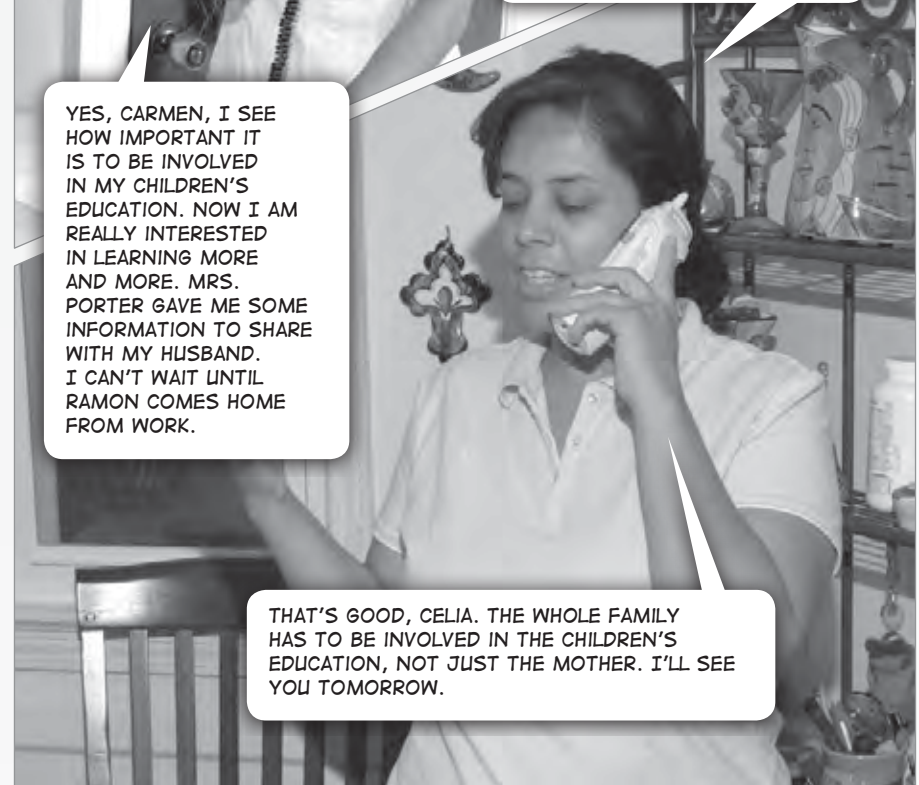
BACK AT HOME...

CARMEN, YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT THE TEACHER TOLD ME! I CAN GO TO HER CLASS AND WORK WITH ROBERTO IN HER CLASSROOM. SHE ALSO EXPLAINED THE DIFFERENT GRADE LEVELS FOR THE CHILDREN AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WORK AT THE SCHOOL.



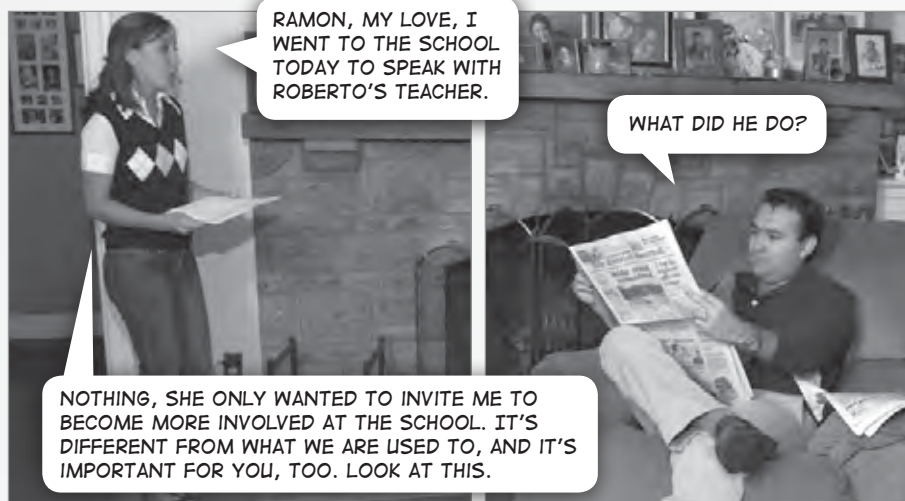
THAT'S GREAT. IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE SCHOOL, CELIA. REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU...

YES, CARMEN, I SEE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO BE INVOLVED IN MY CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. NOW I AM REALLY INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE AND MORE. MRS. PORTER GAVE ME SOME INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH MY HUSBAND. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL RAMON COMES HOME FROM WORK.



THAT'S GOOD, CELIA. THE WHOLE FAMILY HAS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, NOT JUST THE MOTHER. I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.

LATER THAT DAY...



RAMON, MY LOVE, I WENT TO THE SCHOOL TODAY TO SPEAK WITH ROBERTO'S TEACHER.

WHAT DID HE DO?

NOTHING, SHE ONLY WANTED TO INVITE ME TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED AT THE SCHOOL. IT'S DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE ARE USED TO, AND IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU, TOO. LOOK AT THIS.

IDEAS TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN

- * READ TO EACH OTHER IN YOUR HOME LANGUAGE
- * TELL YOUR CHILDREN STORIES ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD
- * WORK ON THE GROCERY LIST TOGETHER
- * WHEN YOU WATCH TELEVISION, DISCUSS WHAT IS HAPPENING
- * ASK YOUR CHILD QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN SCHOOL
- * WRITE THE STORY OF HOW YOU CAME TO THE U.S. AND ILLUSTRATE IT
- * TAKE A WALK AROUND THE BLOCK AND DISCUSS WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT CAN ***YOU*** ADD TO THIS LIST?



WHAT SHOULD WE ADD TO THE LIST, MY LOVE?



I KNOW, LET'S ALL DRAW A MAP OF OUR COUNTRY AND SHOW WHERE WE LIVED.

YES, AND WE CAN GET PICTURES OF ALL OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS TO SHOW OUR FAMILY HISTORY.

THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!

WHAT WILL ***YOUR FAMILY*** ADD TO THE LIST?