

Parent Involvement & Gee Whiz



When we talk about “parent involvement,” what does that actually mean? Well, first we need to define what a “parent” is. When we talk about parent involvement in the Gee Whiz curriculum, we define “parent” as a child’s biological parents, step-parents, adoptive parents, grandparent... in other words... a child’s primary caregivers. This is going to vary from child to child and family to family. In some families, a child’s “parents” might be grandma and grandpa. In another family, it might be a single parent father. It is important for you to know who each child’s primary caregivers are so you can work hard to actively involve them.

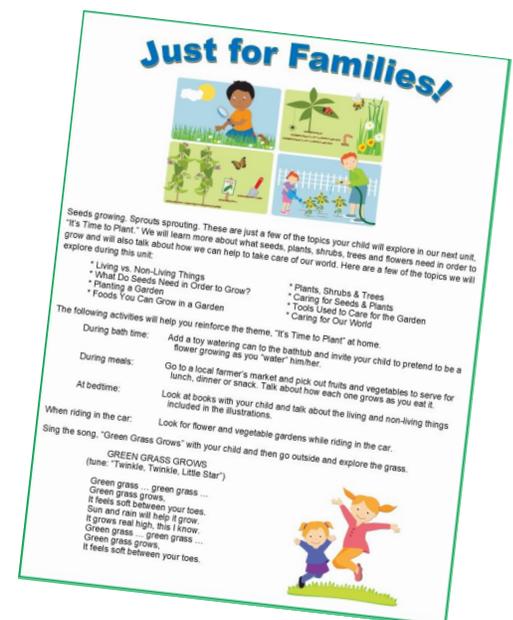
So ... step 1 is to find out who are a child’s primary caregivers if you do not know this information already!

Parent involvement is exactly what it sounds like ... helping parents become more involved in your program. This might be something as simple as sending home a newsletter to keep parents informed or inviting parents to participate in a special event. You might also share resources about child development or point a parent in the right direction if they need help with providing a service for their child. The Gee Whiz curriculum includes specific tools to help you enhance parent involvement in your program. These include the following components:

Family Letters - Available in English & Spanish

These letters are included with each Gee Whiz unit (2 per month). As a PDF file, they can easily be printed OR emailed to parents/guardians. Each Family Letter includes:

- An overview of the unit
- Skills/Topics to be addressed
- Activities parents/guardians can do at bath time, mealtime, bedtime and when riding in the car that enhance the unit concepts
- Simple song, rhyme or chart parents/guardians can do with their child/children at home



Parent Involvement & Gee Whiz

Digital Family Notes

Available in English & Spanish

Digital Family Notes are unique! There are 2 Digital Family Notes with each Gee Whiz unit. These are JPEG images that can be printed, emailed or even texted to parents/guardians. Each Digital Family Note includes a very simple experience parents can do with their children at home that link back to the monthly unit. The goal of many of the Digital Family Notes is to help parents turn every day routine times into learning times. This further reinforces their role as their child's first teacher!

When riding in the car with your child, see how many different colors of vehicles you can "spy" together. Can you find all of the colors?



All About My Week Reports

Available in English & Spanish

These notes are designed to be used by you to help parents learn more about their child's week. There are 2 All About My Week Reports for each Gee Whiz unit. You will want to complete a note at the end of the week to send home on Friday. It would be an excellent idea to make a copy of each completed note before sending it home. Then you can add it to each child's portfolio. At the end of the year, you will have a running record of each child's interests, growth and development!

Please see the Gee Whiz User's Guide for printable English & Spanish versions of our "All About My Weekend" Report that parents complete and send in on Mondays.

In addition to the components detailed here, Gee Whiz also supports parent involvement in other ways. Here are just a few ways Gee Whiz encourages parent involvement:

- Inviting parents to participate in special events (e.g., Wheels Day, Family Celebration Day, etc.)
- Challenging parents to help gather and send in needed items (e.g., family photos, paper towel rolls, etc.)
- Recipes sent home parents can prepare with their children
- Games sent home parents can play with their children at home (e.g., lotto, patterning, etc.)
- Encouraging parents to share feedback (e.g., via the All About My Weekend Report—see GWE User's Guide)
- **Use our printable, "Just a Note" (next page) to help you communicate about things you need and/or special events. Available in both English & Spanish.**