

How will this study circle program help?

Good communication is essential to finding solutions that work. Study circles promote good communication by:

- Building trust and connections between the school, home, and community.
- Helping families and educators respect each other and listen to different ideas.
- Deepening our understanding of why students do, or do not succeed in school.
- Sharing concerns and ideas, finding common ground, and looking for ways to make things better.

Whether your school is struggling or a success story, these elements can help improve your community's schools as well as schools all across Arkansas.



## Praise for Building Partnerships with Schools and Families

*Parents inherently want what is good for their children but often they don't know what to do to make their child have a good experience at school. Schools must reach out to parents and parents must respond so that children can succeed with the consistent guidance of the most influential people in their lives, their parents and teachers. When parents and teachers become teaching partners then a child will achieve academic success!*

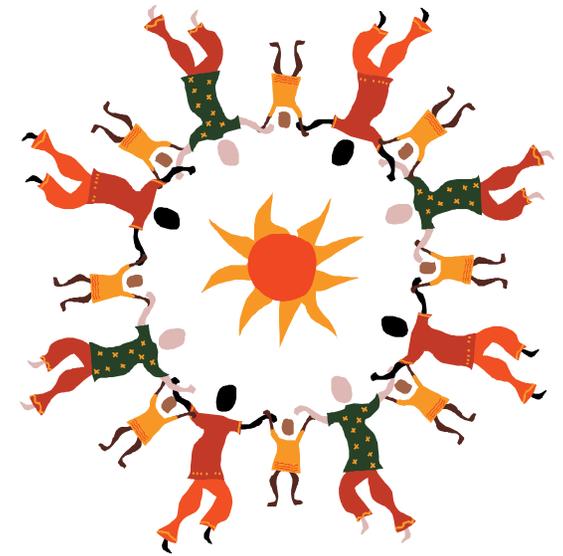
- Amy Rossi, Executive Director  
Advocates for Children & Families

Do you want to be part of the action?

If you are interested in having study circles in your community, contact Arkansas Study Circles Project at (800) 482-1212 or (501) 372-1415 or [studycircles@arsba.org](mailto:studycircles@arsba.org)

Building Partnerships  
with  
Schools and Families

Schools & Families  
Working Together to Help  
Every Student Succeed



A guide for public dialogue & problem solving.

A program of the Arkansas Study Circles Project.

# Study Circles on Building Partnerships with Schools and Families

Partnerships between schools and families can make all the difference in a child's educational success. This has been shown over and over in research during the past thirty years. When educators and families support each other at home and at school, children from all backgrounds will achieve more and schools will perform better. This discussion is designed to help schools, community members, and families explore the meaning of family involvement and develop action steps to build stronger partnerships.



## What are Study Circles? Study Circles:

- are groups of 8-12 people who meet multiple times to discuss a critical issue facing their community, school district or school.
- bring people from many viewpoints and backgrounds together for honest and helpful talks.
- give people a chance to build trust and find common ground for solutions and action.
- build on good work that is happening already.
- are organized by a diverse working group of people within the community.
- are guided by a neutral facilitator, recorder and a discussion guide.

## What does this guide offer?

In addition to four discussions sessions written in clear, simple language, the guide for this discussion also offers:

- tips for study circle facilitators and recorders.
- tips for study circle participants.
- pointers on how to move from dialogue to action.
- resources for further discussion and action.

## The Discussion Topics:

### 1. What Does Family Involvement Mean to Each of Us?

- Explore family involvement from a personal perspective.
- Explore National Family Involvement Standards.

### 2. Why Are So Many Families Not Involved in Our Schools

- Explore different views on how schools and families relate to each other and what they think their roles and responsibilities should be in the education of their children.

### 3. Picture a Community Where All Schools and Families Are Partners in Helping All Students Do Their Best

- Explore how a school looks if all families are involved in their children's education.
- Explore the definition of family involvement.

### 4. Making a Difference: What Specific Actions Do We Want to Take?

- Explore and prioritize specific action ideas for building partnerships between schools and families.