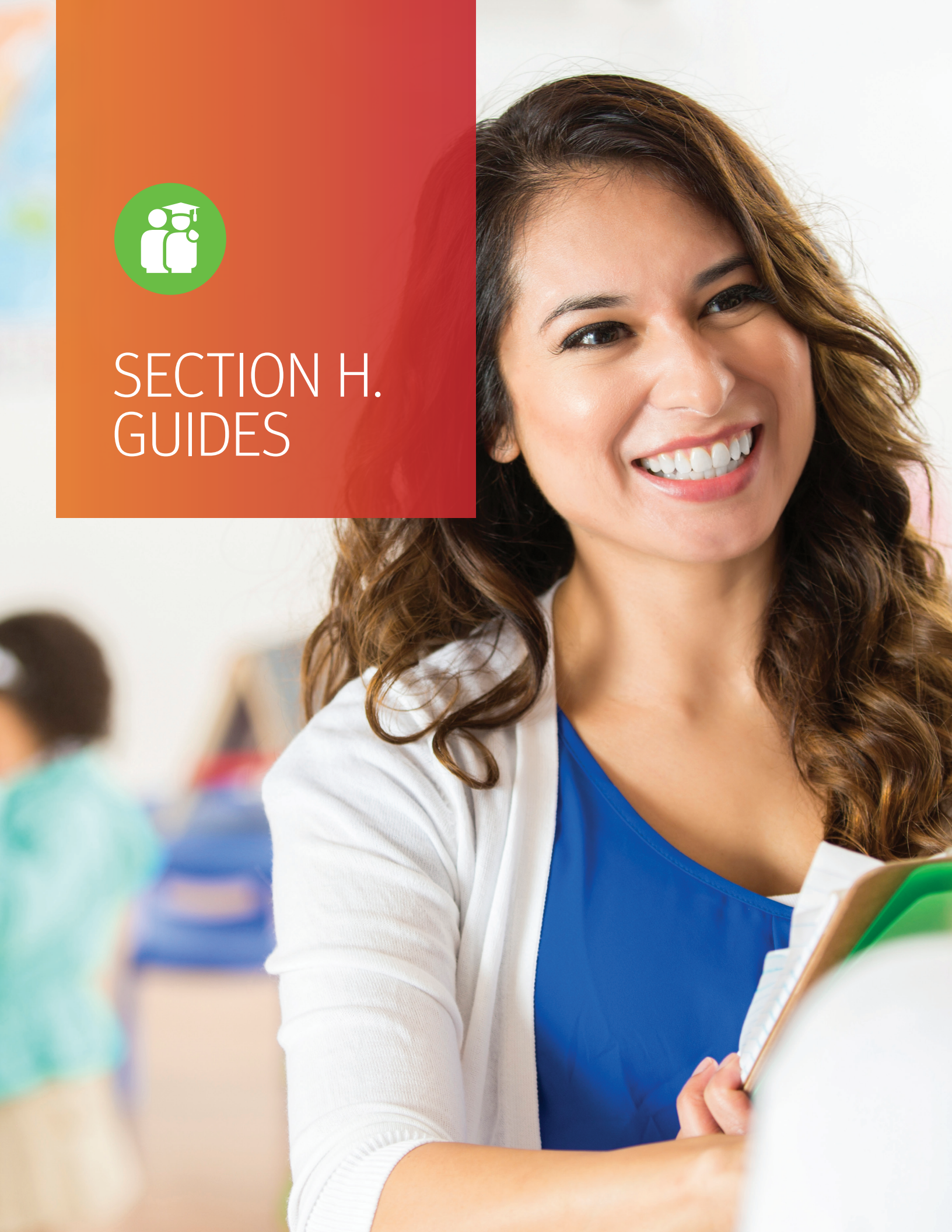




SECTION H. GUIDES



H. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND GOALS

Traditionally, parent workshops have been information-based, with parents and family members sitting in an audience and quietly listening to a presenter. The room is normally set up in a traditional classroom or theater style, where the presenter is up at the front and parents are all facing in one direction – toward the presenter. Although parents may have the opportunity to ask questions, these workshops do not normally give parents the opportunity to engage and interact with the speaker or with other participants. The following workshops are meant to encourage intimate community gatherings where groups of people engage in dialogue for the purpose of exchanging ideas and providing support. These parent gatherings, or Community Conversations, move away from the educator-as-expert parent-meeting model by embracing parents' thoughts and experiences as central to any conversation regarding their children's futures.

Similar to the student curriculum, Community Conversations encourages educators to work collaboratively with students' families and community members to strengthen student academic engagement and educational achievement and encourage successful transitions throughout the academic pipeline.

Each of the five Community Conversations is divided into four parts:

- Facilitated discussion
- Small-group brainstorming sessions
- Sharing of insights
- Distribution of resources

The purpose of Community Conversations is to build upon families' and communities' wealth of knowledge to integrate this knowledge with what students learn in school.

IMPLEMENTATION (General suggestions for Community Conversations facilitators)

The language utilized in the Community Conversations lesson plans and handouts is designed to facilitate participation of any family member or adult interested in helping children achieve success.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:

- Provide parents and participants with a voice in the dialogue
- Encourage a mutually informative relationship between educators and families
- Encourage parents to seek and identify resources and answers to their questions

It is likely that participants will make additional requests of Community Conversations facilitators regarding additional meetings and resources. While some answers may be found in the curriculum, facilitators are encouraged to think about how they will address these requests.

It is important for facilitators to remember that, just as they may have to adjust to this parent-centered approach, parents too may be initially uncomfortable with the methods of learning these Community Conversations promote.

If you can identify parent leaders, you may consider asking them to help facilitate Community Conversations.

Whenever possible, the student curriculum and Community Conversations should be delivered concurrently. In this way, students and parents engage in similar discourse and can supplement and share their learning with one another. Should both curriculums culminate around the same time, facilitators can create a *Believing the College Dream* event that recognizes the achievements of all (see section G3).

ENCOURAGING PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Create a planning team including parent leaders who can assist in planning, delivery and outreach.
- Send personalized fliers home (created by students).
- Introduce Community Conversations at back-to-school night and implement shortly afterward.
- Encourage educators to personally invite participants when they drop off and pick up students.
- Encourage educators to make personal calls inviting participants.
- Provide incentives for participation, such as refreshments or childcare.

RESOURCES

➔ *Breaking through the Barriers to College*

- De La Rosa, Mari Luna, and William G. Tierney. *Breaking through the Barriers to College: Empowering Low-Income Communities, Schools, and Families for College Opportunity and Student Financial Aid*. Los Angeles: Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, University of Southern California, 2006.

➔ *Parent and Family Involvement in Education*

- Herrold, Kathleen, and Kevin O'Donnell. *Parent and Family Involvement in Education, 2006-07 School Year, from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007*. Washington: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2008.

➔ *Parent Expectations and Planning for College*

- Lippman, Laura, Lina Guzman, Julie Dombrowski, Keith Akemi Kinukawa, Rebecca Schwalb, and Peter Tice. *Parent Expectations and Planning for College: Statistical Analysis Report*. Washington: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2008.
- ➔ "Promoting College Enrollment through Early Intervention"
 - Perna, Laura. "Promoting College Enrollment through Early Intervention." *Early Intervention: Expanding Access to Higher Education*. Ed. Kevin Mitchell. Washington: Educational Resources Information Center, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 2000.

