

## The Parent Academy

Launched in August of 2005 as an initiative of Superintendent Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D., and the School Board, **The Parent Academy** is a free, year-round, parent engagement and skill building program of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).

**The Parent Academy** was created with the goals to:

- educate parents about the importance of their role;
- strengthen the family unit;
- unite families and schools; and
- inform parents of their rights, responsibilities and the educational opportunities available to their children and to them personally.

The functions of **The Parent Academy** include:

- classes and workshops for parents;
- Family Learning Events;
- promotion of M-DCPS resources that are available to parents and students;
- information regarding community resources and services available to parents and their children; and
- professional staff development for school personnel on how to create parent-friendly schools.

Within this framework, **The Parent Academy** offers **classes and workshops**, which are developed around nine subject area strands, which are listed below along with a brief sampling of relevant course offerings:

- Help Your Child Learn (*Example: PASSport to Success – 8 module series*)
- Parenting Skills (*Example: Positive Discipline*)
- Early Childhood (*Example: Developing Early Literacy Skills*)
- Arts & Culture (*Example: Enrich Your Child through Arts and Culture in Miami*)
- Languages (*Example: American Sign Language for Families*)
- Computer Technology (*Example: Parent Portal*)
- Health and Wellness (*Example: Preventing Substance Abuse*)
- Financial Skills (*Example: Financing Your Child's College Education*)
- Personal Growth (*Example: GED Preparation – offered through Adult Education*)

Monthly calendars are posted in the *Course Directory* section on The Parent Academy's Web site at [www.theparentacademy.net](http://www.theparentacademy.net).

**Family Learning Events** are held in culturally enriching venues to provide educational activities for families with children of all ages, and foster strong relationships between parents and children. "Family-strengthening interventions impact both parenting processes and child outcomes. Successful programs promote parent-child bonding..." (American Educational Research Association, 2007). Typical venues include Parrot Jungle Island, Miami Children's Museum, and Miami

Metrozoo. Families have the opportunity to visit cultural venues that they many not otherwise be able to afford. Workshops and resource fairs are built into the event so that families can learn and have fun together at the same time. School sites can help promote these events by sharing the flier with parents. Principals will receive credit towards their metrics when parents attend a family learning event. All Family Learning Event fliers are posted in the *Upcoming Events* section on The Parent Academy's Web site at [www.theparentacademy.net](http://www.theparentacademy.net).

**The Parent Academy** "campus" is spread throughout every corner of this community, and offers free classes and workshops at over 201 local sites such as public schools, libraries, parks, colleges, private businesses, and neighborhood centers. Parents have the opportunity to enroll in classes that are aligned with their needs and convenient to their homes and workplace. Principals will receive credit towards their metrics from parent participation at any Parent Academy workshop or event.

Schools may host workshops at their site; however, **The Parent Academy** has standard requirements to qualify a workshop as a Parent Academy workshop. The Parent Academy is funded, including staff salaries, solely by private donations and grant funding. ***All attendance sheets are subject to auditing, especially for state and federal grant funded programming.***

- All workshops must be pre-approved with Parent Academy staff by submitting a **Request for Class** form, and receiving confirmation, **prior** to offering the workshop.
- All workshops must align with one of the nine subject strands.
- The workshop must be promoted as a Parent Academy workshop.
- Parent Academy sign-in sheets must be used for attendance reporting. Parent and child information needs to be legible for the school to be credited appropriately.
- Parent Academy workshops must be at least 60 minutes in length.
- Parents must be provided with a certificate of completion at the end of the workshop.
- Schools are responsible for assisting with promoting and advertising the workshop via Connect Ed, flier distribution, marquee posting, and additional communications methods utilized by schools.

Examples of activities that are **not** accepted as a Parent Academy offering include:

- attendance at student recognition events
- EESAC meetings
- PTA/PTSA meetings
- parent-teacher conferences
- report card pick-up
- attendance at student performances
- parent visits to schools or parent resource centers

- book fairs

Examples of activities that **are** accepted, **when pre-approved**, as a Parent Academy offering include:

- workshops aligned to one of TPA's nine subject strands that are at least 60 minutes in length
- family reading night or family story telling activity
- family science night
- family math night
- PTA/PTSA meetings that include a pre-approved Parent Academy workshop
- New Student Orientations, when content provided by The Parent Academy is included in the presentation

**The Parent Academy** is not intended to be viewed as a separate entity or office. Many schools have successfully launched their own "mini" Parent Academies through their parent resource centers, using The Parent Academy logo and other branding materials.

**The Parent Academy** staff members are available to provide school sites with guidance and assistance in scheduling workshops and engaging parents. Staff can be reached at (305) 995-2680.