



Reaching Out to Families

- **Good news cards:** Send home postcards or short, handwritten notes about something you really appreciate about a child in your program or something you noticed them doing well this week.
- **Do at home projects:** Create a project kit related to a theme you are covering in your program. Include all materials necessary and encourage children to share the project with an adult. Don't require that the project be brought back, this is just a way to share some of what you do in afterschool. Include information about what academic skills youth are practicing when they do the project.
- **School mascot:** Send a stuffed animal or small toy to "visit" a different family each week. Include a disposal camera so the family can take pictures of the toy in their home. Display the pictures at your program.
- **Family book reviews:** Send home a book that youth really enjoy. On the inside cover, tape a business envelope and fill it with blank cards. Ask youth to share the book and write down what the family thinks about the book and put the card in the envelope. The next family will get to read what others think and add their own comments.
- **Disposable cameras:** Send cameras home with "reporter" assignments. Ask youth to take pictures of their families enjoying meals, sharing customs, or doing a favorite activity. Display the photos in your program.
- **Family stories:** Ask adults to record stories about their families in their home language. Youth can interpret the stories for classmates.
- **Parent newsletter:** Send regular newsletters home highlighting program accomplishments.
- **Family collage:** Make a collage or sculpture with items that families contribute. Consider themes like "food we eat" or "what we see from our window."
- **Staff introductions:** Send home photos and short biographies to introduce staff members.
- **Take home menus:** Keep a stack of take-out or delivery menus by the phone in your program. Invite parents to call for take-out and play or talk with youth while they are waiting for the food to be ready.
- **Breakfast on the go:** Hand out granola bars or muffins and coffee in paper cups with lids one morning to families as they drop off youth.
- **Other:** _____