

"I CARE"™



Frequently Asked Questions Manual

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Developed for "I Care" Products & Services

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Introduction

The suggestions and questions addressed in this “I Care” Three-in-One Curriculum for Parental Involvement, Character Development, and Community Involvement Frequently Asked Questions Manual have been teacher, school, and parent tested with proven success. Education research continues to report that both children and parents benefit when parents are involved in their children’s education. The benefits most often reported include enhanced self-esteem, improved academic achievement, improved parent/child relationships, and parents with more positive attitudes toward school and a better understanding of the school processes.

While it is possible for teachers to implement the “I Care” Three-in-One Curricula and the Parenting Workbook Series alone, it is much easier and highly recommended that the whole school gets involved. We all know that the best predictor of parent involvement is what the school does to promote it. School attitudes and actions are more important than parents’ income, educational level, race, or previous volunteering experience in predicting whether the parent will be involved in the school.

Many schools and teachers have experienced the frustration of trying to involve parents—often times getting little response. Teachers complain that parents do not come to conferences and school open houses, check homework or answer notes. This leads some school leaders and teachers to conclude that parents do not care about their children’s education. While certain factors beyond the school’s or teacher’s control prevent some parents from becoming involved with their children’s education, most parents care a great deal.

The “I Care” Three-in-One Parental Involvement, Character Development, and Community Involvement Curricula and Workbooks can provide a systematic process to help parents learn how to plan and self-initiate more positive activities with their children at home. The parenting activities are designed to help parents increase their character-building parenting skills and the feedback process will help teachers better understand families’ lifestyles and cultural backgrounds. The “I Care” home activities also support parents’ need for flexibility in scheduling, reinforce the importance of children spending quality time with their parents in a relaxed setting of their choosing, and will strengthen relationships.

The “I Care” Curricula and Workbooks will provide parents with a forum to communicate important information to teachers monthly about their children. The information can easily be integrated into the overall classroom curriculum, providing teachers with tools to show parents how the positive activities they do at home impact academic achievement. School leaders will also be able to measure parental involvement and character development monthly for each student, classroom, school, and school district.

Successful implementation of the “I Care” Curricula and Workbooks will require leadership!

I. Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is “I Care”?*

“I Care” is a three-in-one curriculum for parental involvement, character development, and community involvement. “I Care” reinforces character education, reading, and total quality relationships between educators and parents. It provides teachers and administrators a systematic process to increase, measure, and evaluate parental involvement and character development monthly for each student, classroom, school and school district. Parental involvement is defined as the “frequency of positive interactions occurring between parents, or a caring adult, and their children *at home*.” Character is comprehensively defined to encompass the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspect of a moral life. Teachers are the catalyst for linking together, through the “I Care” curriculum, the school, the parent, and the child. The desired outcome is that parents will become self-initiators of more positive activities with their children.

2. *What are “I Care” Three-in-One Parental Involvement, Character Development, and Community Involvement Curricula?*

They are professionally designed curricula for elementary and secondary schools in grades Pre-K through 12 and for toddlers (2 & 3 year olds). They include monthly character traits, reinforced through grade appropriate books and corresponding activities that are sent home for parents and children to complete, then returned to the teacher to be integrated into the classroom instructions. The teacher also contacts each parent monthly with a positive message about the student. The frequency of these activities are tracked and correlated to the students’ academic performance and character development. On-line “I Care” Data Management Service is available for teachers and principals that document parental involvement, parent-child interactions, and facilitate the reporting of those interactions. Specially designed product incentives are also offered to encourage positive interactions. Student performance, parental involvement, social and character development, and teacher effectiveness significantly improve as a result.

3. *Are “I Care” Parental Involvement Curricula and Workbooks scientifically-based?*

All of the components in the “I Care” curricula and workbooks are scientifically-based. The curricula and workbooks were developed using researched-based, theoretical, and proven successful parental involvement and character development practices. There is evidence that “I Care” Curricula have been successfully implemented and have produced positive outcomes in a variety of school settings over the last twelve years of implementation.

4. *What are “I Care” services?*

“I Care” provides on-site implementation training and train-the-trainer certification conferences. Certification conferences are offered twice a year at designated locations, such as Atlanta; Washington, D.C.; Las Vegas, Atlantic City, New Orleans, etc. On-site implementation trainings are request-based and designed to meet customer needs.

- To schedule an on-site “I Care” implementation training, call 1.800.787.5818 or e-mail icare@icarenow.com.

- For certification conference schedule, visit the “I Care” web site at www.icarenow.com and click *Conferences*.

5. *Where is “I Care” used?*

“I Care” Curricula are now used in over 100,000 classrooms in 35 states. A list of schools along with other information is available at www.icarenow.com: Email: icare@icarenow.com/Phone: 800.797.5818/Fax: 229.928.9922.

6. *Who is “I Care”?*

“I Care” Products and Services, created in 1996, is a private educational company located in Americus, Georgia. It is devoted to integrating parental involvement, character development, and community involvement as a school and parent curriculum through its copyrighted products and services that transform the way educators, parents, and children interact.

II. “I Care” Capabilities

7. *What is the difference between “I Care” parental involvement and “I Care” parent participation?*

Parental involvement is defined as the number of positive interactions between the parents and the child; whereas, parent participation is the returning of completed monthly *Feedback Forms* or *Reflection Logs*.

8. *What is a positive teacher–parent contact?*

A positive teacher–parent contact occurs when the teacher contacts a parent for the sole purpose of giving positive feedback on the child (nothing negative is shared about the child during the contact).

9. *What is character development?*

Character is broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of the moral life (thinking, feeling, and behavior).

10. *How is “I Care” different from other parenting/mentoring programs?*

“I Care” builds on existing positive relationships between parents and children and increases the number of daily planned interactions. The parental feedback process enables teachers to link students’ life experiences to classroom lessons and strengthens school–home partnerships. “I Care” provides a clear definition of parental involvement and a quantitative way of measuring it.

11. *Why is “I Care” a classroom and/or Parent Center Program?*

All parents are provided with positive activities to do with their children at home. “I Care” has been designed to be integrated into the school and home curriculum such that students see it as a normal part of school work and homework. Also, when parents think of school, they think of teachers. Through “I Care” Curricula and workbooks, teachers can have a greater influence on positive activities that parents do with their children at home.

12. *Are the curricula and parenting workbooks for parents of poor, minority and/or low achieving students?*

The “I Care” curricula and workbooks are for all parents. They provide an opportunity for all parents to increase their character–building parenting skills and to teach their children character.

13. *Is “I Care” only for elementary students?*

“I Care” is for all children from Toddlers – 12th grade. Contrary to the popular belief that parent involvement and character development are only needed in the lower grades, research indicates that more parental involvement and character reinforcement are needed as the child matures.

14. *Can the “I Care” Curricula and parenting workbooks be easily included in the regular classroom curriculum?*

The “I Care” curricula and parenting workbooks are designed to be integrated into classroom instruction. The format makes it easy to integrate and provides teachers with tools to reinforce parental involvement and character development across the curriculum, at home, and in the community.

15. *How long has “I Care” been on the market?*

“I Care” has been successfully implemented in classroom settings nationally for 12 years in over 100,000 classrooms.

16. *Do the monthly parenting and character building activities have to be used as outlined in the curricula and workbooks or can they be interchanged at the teachers’ discretion?*

Since they are sequenced, it is recommended that the activities be used as outlined. However, teachers are encouraged to be creative.

III. “I Care” Feedback Forms

17. *How does a school get parents to return Feedback Forms and/or the Reflection Log?*

By using the parent–provided feedback to enrich classroom instructions and by making character development a necessary part of class work and homework.

18. *Why is it necessary to ask parents to provide the teacher with additional positive activities done outside of school?*

Research shows that linking actual life experiences to the lesson is an effective way to keep students engaged and enthused about learning and helps them to feel good about themselves. The additional activities will provide teachers with some valuable insights into their students’ cultural norms.

19. *How can I get parents involved in the school?*

“I Care” focuses on getting parents involved with their children at home. When parents are involved at home, they will see attending school events as a natural extension of parental involvement.

20. *Why do “I Care” schools provide only five activities per month that parents do at home with their children?*

Five activities were selected as a relative number to initiate parents’ cognitive thought processes. More importantly, parents are asked to share five positive activities each month they initiated and completed with their children.

21. *How can we get parents to come to the school for meetings, etc.?*

Research has shown that parents who perceive they will hear positive attributes about their children from teachers attend more school events. With “I Care,” teachers make monthly positive contacts with parents. Information that parents provide to teachers will enable them to personalize their communications with children and parents. This information will be more personal and important to the parents.

22. *Why does “I Care” suggest sending the activities home for parents on brightly colored paper or providing parents with a workbook?*

Color creates excitement. The colored paper provides teachers, students and parents a visible method of identifying the month’s activities. The parenting workbooks provide a year’s supply of parenting activities.

23. *Why is it important to have a specific return date for Feedback Forms and Reflection Logs?*

Teachers, parents, and students will learn the importance of meeting commitments. It enables the school to compile monthly data that can be used for recognition and reinforcement.

24. *How can teachers use the information from the Feedback Forms and Reflection Logs in the classroom?*

The information can be used for journal writing, story telling, project discussions, math (graphing), reading, etc.

IV. Integration

25. *How can the “I Care” Curricula and parenting workbooks be used with students who have no home support but want to participate?*

Assign students a mentor within or outside of school. The mentor can do the “I Care” activities and additional activities with the students. Teachers can reinforce the character traits across the curriculum. Teacher Lesson Plans in the Middle School and High School Curricula are designed to enhance cross-curriculum implementation.

26. *What are some ways we can share “I Care” in the community?*

Through all the communication forums that get results in your community: faith-based organizations, social organizations, local newspapers, other media outlets, etc.

27. *When is the best time to implement “I Care”?*

“I Care” can be implemented any time during the school year. However, starting at the beginning of the school year provides more data points and will have more impact on year-end academic results.

28. *What is the role of the Certified Facilitator?*

The role of the Certified Facilitator is to insure that “I Care” is implemented using total quality management principles, systems, and processes. The Facilitator can provide the empowerment leadership and focus necessary to keep school resources invigorated about “I Care.”

29. *How does the school get every parent involved?*

Ensure that all parents receive positive parenting and mentoring activities monthly to improve their skills. Also, insure that teachers include parent feedback in classroom instruction and share “I Care” Parental Involvement Data broadly.

30. *Is it okay for the teacher to maximize the monthly positive message and display it in the classroom?*

The “I Care” Curriculum provides a positive bulletin board message for the teacher to display for each character trait. If positive messages are kept in front of the students, the importance of the messages will quickly become internalized. The parenting workbooks have positive messages that parents can display at home.

31. *Can the positive parenting/mentoring pledges be used as affirmations or contracts between the school and the parents/mentors?*

These pledges were designed to serve that purpose. They provide something concrete that can be visibly placed in the home and at school to maintain focus on character development.

32. *How important is the reinforcing of “I Care” to parents and the school community?*

Reinforcement will increase the importance of the “I Care” activities. Therefore, the more “I Care” is reinforced to parents and the school community, the more receptive parents will be to supporting it.

33. *How can I help other teachers see the value of “I Care”?*

By sharing classroom and school results monthly and by reinforcing the value of building positive relationships with parents based on information provided by parents.

34. *How can I get my principals to make “I Care” important?*

Encourage principals to become certified facilitators, to make parental involvement an important topic of discussion in result reviews, and to require parental involvement results to be reported quantitatively. Principals can make parenting workbooks available to parents at cost if they do not have available funds to purchase them.

35. *Should the school data report be presented to the Superintendent and School Board monthly?*

We highly recommend that your “I Care” results be communicated to those in leadership at the highest level to gain their support and to all other levels to make “I Care” important.

36. *When should the “I Care” activities be sent home?*

We recommend the character-building parenting activities be sent home the first week of each month.

37. *When should Feedback Forms be sent home and returned?*

We recommend that Feedback Forms be sent home the third week and returned the day after distribution.

38. *Is it best to start “I Care” in the lower grades and add other grades later?*

We recommend that “I Care” be implemented as a whole school or district initiative such that all parents will be included. Research shows that whole-school district initiatives get better results than individual classroom or grade-level implementations.

V. Data Management Service

39. *Can I input “I Care” data from my home?*

Data can be entered by teachers or “I Care” Administrators from home via the “I Care” On-Line Data Management Service.

40. *Can I get a print out for each student to discuss with parents?*

Student graphs are available for each student and they are printable in color.

41. *What is the On-Line Data Management Service?*

The On-Line Data Management Service enables the tracking of parental involvement for each student, classroom, school, and school district from any computer that has access to the internet.

42. *How much does the On-Line Data Management Service cost?*

Annual subscription fees for the On-Line Data Management Service are based on the number of students enrolled in a school or center. For a list of annual subscription fees, see the box below or visit www.icarenow.com.

Annual Subscription Fees

Level	# of Children/ Licenses	Price per Child/ License
1*	25–749	\$1.50
2	750–1499	\$1.25
3	1500–2499	\$1.00
4	2500–4999	\$0.75
5	5000 or more	\$0.50

*Note: The minimum number of children that must be paid to obtain a license for any school, school district, Head Start, or any other organization is 25.

43. *If I have an On-Line Data Management problem at an odd hour, is there a contact number for non-business hours?*

“I Care” has a 24-hour voice messaging service and e-mail. Messages will be responded to as soon as possible.

“I Care” Service Center: 1-800-797-5818
Company e-mail address: icare@icarenow.com
IT Manager’s e-mail address: phillip@icarenow.com
Customer Service e-mail addresses: tracy@icarenow.com; valerie@icarenow.com

VI. Data

44. *What do I do with the data?*

Share it with parents during conferences; share it with the school staff; set annual goals; grant writing; relationship building; measuring academic achievement; Title I compliance; teacher performance; etc.

45. *Can someone other than the teacher enter the data?*

Anyone with basic computer knowledge can enter data. The teacher can complete the manual data entry form each month and provide it to a data entry person.

46. *How can we hold parents accountable for assisting the school with their children?*

With “I Care”, parents will be able to see the positive impacts of the positive activities they do at home as they relate to academic achievement. They will also gain the skills to become self-initiators of more positive activities.

47. *How can we measure parental involvement?*

By measuring the number of positive interactions between the parents and the child at home, the return rate of Feedback Forms, positive teacher contacts, and number/percentage of parents trained.

48. *Should the school data report be presented to parents?*

We highly recommend that your “I Care” parental involvement data be communicated to parents when they visit the school. Keep it visible.

49. *How do we use the data to improve our school’s rating?*

“I Care” focuses on improving student achievement which will improve school rating.

VII. Training

50. *What are the “I Care” training options?*

“I Care” Products & Services can provide on-site implementation training, renewal training, and Train-the-Trainer” (Certification Training is offered twice per year in July, and December).

51. *Why do you recommend having school leaders trained?*

It has been our experience that the paradigm shift required in organizations to successfully implement “I Care” requires leadership at the highest levels. A leader encourages individuals to think about things they don’t want to think about, to take steps they don’t want to take, and to endure pain, pain they thought was optional.

52. *Should principals become certified? Why?*

Yes. The principals need a knowledge level greater than the teachers to make “I Care” important and an integral component of the school curriculum.

53. *List some suggestions for training parents on “I Care.”*

We have developed a 15-minute Character-Building Training for Parents script, a Parent Training PowerPoint® Presentation, and a Parent Training Video and DVD that have been very effective. A Parent Training PowerPoint® Presentation with audio is included on the “I Care” software CD-ROM in each Curriculum.

54. *How can parents be trained?*

We recommend 15 minutes of training during open house, a special parent training annually, or send home an “I Care” Character-Building Training for Parents Video or DVD.

VIII. Results

55. *How long must we use “I Care” before we can expect to see improvement in test scores?*

Schools implementing “I Care” school-wide see improved results after the 1st year with increasing results in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.

56. *List some schools using “I Care” that are being successful.*

JKL Bahweting Public Academy—Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Sarah Cobb Elementary—Sumter County, GA

Rossville Elementary—Rossville, GA

Olinder Elementary—San José, CA

Dallas County High School—Plantersville, AL

Keith High School—Orrville, AL

Southside High School—Selma, AL

Martin Middle School—Selma, AL

Tipton Middle School—Selma, AL

Brantley Elementary School—Selma, AL

BK Craig Elementary School—Selma, AL

Five Point Elementary School—Orrville, AL

JE Terry Elementary School—Plantersville, AL

Salem Elementary School—Orrville, AL

Shiloh Elementary School—Sardis, AL

Southside Primary School—Selma, AL

Valley Grande Elementary—Valley Grande, AL

Lincoln Elementary School—Monroe, MI

Boomer—Ferguson Elementary—Boomer, NC

Mountain View Elementary—Hays, NC

CB Eller Elementary—Elkin, NC

Mulberry Elementary—North Wilkesboro, NC

CC Wright Elementary—North Wilkesboro, NC

North Wilkesboro Elementary—North Wilkesboro, NC

Millers Creek Elementary—Millers Creek, NC

Roaring River Elementary—Roaring River, NC

Moravian Falls Elementary—Moravian Falls, NC

Ronda—Clingman Elementary—Ronda, NC

Mt. Pleasant Elementary—Ferguson, NC

Traphill Elementary—Traphill, NC

Wilkesboro Elementary—Wilkesboro, NC

Eutaw Primary School—Eutaw, AL

Crystal Boarding School—Navajo, NM

Tuba City Boarding School—Tuba City, AZ

57. *Are results showing the improvement in the students’ academic performance after implementing the Curricula?*

Schools report an increase in performance on national standardized tests each year following “I Care” implementation, decreases in disciplining incidents, and increases in attendance.

58. *How much have the students' grades improved?*

The improvement in the students' grades is proportionate to the quality of "I Care" implementation, individual parent participation, and positive teacher–parent contacts.

IX. Time & Financial Obligations

59. *How long will it take to train parents?*

We recommend 15 minutes of training annually for parents during open house or a special parent training or sending home the "I Care" Character–Building Training for Parents Video or DVD.

60. *How long is the teacher training?*

2–4 hours, depending upon the size of the group. We recommend a two hour annual renewal workshop.

61. *How time consuming is the data entry?*

Data entry takes about 15 minutes/month/teacher once student and teacher files are setup.

62. *How much does "I Care" cost?*

All grade level "I Care" Curricula are a one–time cost of \$279.95 per classroom for English and \$299.95 per classroom for Bilingual (English & Spanish). The "I Care" Character–Building Parenting Workbooks are \$14.95 each. The workbooks are aligned with classroom curricula and eliminate copying. Workbooks are available for grades Pre–K through 5th in English and Spanish; Toddler and 6th grade workbooks are available in English only.

63. *What do I get for the \$1680.00 certification cost?*

It's an opportunity to learn a proven methodology that will enable you to increase, measure, and evaluate the impact of parental involvement for each student, classroom, school, and school district. You will be trained on state–of–the–art software. The fee covers workshop expenses for both Phases I (20 hours) and II (20 hours). Several books are included along with workbooks and incentives. Continental breakfast daily for both phases and lunch for the first two days of each phase (session on the third day ends before noon). The fee also covers facilitation costs. Phase I is \$995.00 and Phase II is \$695.00.

64. *Can I get help writing a grant to implement "I Care"?*

We can provide the information you will need for scientific justification along with curricula, workbooks, and training cost estimates.

65. *What is the cost of the on–site training?*

Standard training fees: \$2500/day for Implementation Training, \$2500/day for Renewal Training and \$2000/day for Data Management Service Training plus travel expenses at cost. Costs are adjusted for two or more consecutive days of training.

66. *What funds are used by school districts to purchase “I Care”?*

Grants, Title I Funds, Drug & Safe Free School Funds, CRSF, 21st Century, General School Funds, etc.

67. *What products are available?*

Curricula, Grade-level Parenting Workbooks, Book Packs, Videos, “I Care” Incentives, School & Community Character Posters, etc. See Products & Services section of the Training Manual for details, and review listings on the “I Care” web site at www.icarenow.com for the most up-to-date list.

X. Maximize Implementation Results

68. *Why is the alignment of school leadership important?*

Teachers, acting by themselves, cannot create the system-wide conditions under which maximum results from “I Care” Positive Parenting & Mentoring Curricula and Workbooks can be attained. That’s the job of school leadership. Administrators and other school leaders are essential in initiating and maintaining the required focus on parental involvement and character development.

69. *What are the advantages of school-based “I Care” Certified Facilitators?*

School districts who invest in having key educators and parents certified in the “I Care” methodology will have an added advantage in the implementation of the “I Care” Curricula and Parenting Workbooks. The Certification Training provides a framework for understanding Total Quality Management systems and processes, measurement tools, and education reinforcement strategies.

70. *Why should you train administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community stakeholders?*

It is essential that the major stakeholders in the learning process have a good understanding of what “I Care” is and how the “I Care” processes and systems work. Establishing clear expectations of each stakeholder on the front end will create empowering support to sustain “I Care.”

71. *Why is a good understanding of Total Quality Management important?*

A good understanding of the four essential elements of the new Total Quality educational paradigm will help educators optimize school improvements. The four characteristics are called the Four Pillars of Quality: a Customer/Supplier focus, constant dedication to continuous improvement, a process/systems approach, and strong and consistent Total Quality Leadership.

72. *What is the value of the data-based approach?*

Total Quality Management (TQM) tools and techniques can provide educators with a common way to better perceive, collect, analyze, and understand relevant data. “I Care” parental involvement character data for each student, classroom, school, and school district can provide the connection to academic achievement and parent accountability. The “I Care” data will also enable schools to set achievable parental involvement and character education goals.

73. *Why should teachers use information from parents?*

The ability of teachers to integrate information provided monthly by parents into the classroom instruction is critical to the empowerment of students who will influence parents to return the monthly Feedback Forms or Reflection Logs. The outcome of this process is enhanced parenting skills.

74. *Why is it important to celebrate “I Care” successes?*

Celebrate all successes, even small ones. You are only limited by the constraints of your imagination. “I Care” celebrations increase positive interactions between parents and child and/or caring adults. Keep “I Care” visible at home and at school.

75. *What is the value of the community involvement component?*

The community involvement component enables community stakeholders to teach, reinforce, and role model the same character traits being taught at home and at school. “I Care” provides businesses, faith-based, and service organizations a great opportunity to work toward a common goal for the benefit of students.