

# It Takes Caring Adults...

By Meagan Rothschild



**A**ssisting youth to become healthy and responsible adults has been a traditional role for adults in all cultures. But in today's changing world, it is not unusual to find adults struggling to support youth in appropriate ways.

It has been the challenge of the Nā Hoa Ho'ōla (Partners Who Work to Bring Health) program at PREL to create effective prevention education that considers the importance of critical role groups in a child's environment, including the school community and parent or adult influences. To achieve a well-rounded approach, the Parents' Pūpū Platter, a parent education supplementary curriculum, was created to support school-based prevention goals.

## What We Know about Implementing Prevention Education Today

- To implement any curriculum in a school-day framework, the curriculum must support broader academic and developmental goals.
- With the increasing academic pressures of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), teachers are finding less time to focus on "soft skills" and a greater need to focus on math and literacy.
- Meaningful prevention education can be effectively implemented through interdisciplinary approaches, fusing prevention education content with core academic learning strategies and standards.
- Effective prevention education is not limited to the classroom experience; quality programs must support what happens inside *and* outside the classroom.

## What the Research Says

In developing a parent support curriculum, it is important to distinguish the difference between parent training and parent education programs. Parent education programs generally involve fewer sessions than training programs and include minimal role play or assigned work. In Kumpfer's 1999 literature review, training programs are generally described as being held over a longer period of time and allowing opportunities for active participation and the practice of learned skills. While research indicates that parent training programs achieve greater long-term success, community resource personnel experience significant obstacles in connecting with the families most in need of parenting support.

Research has also shown clear connections between parent involvement at school and student achievement. NCLB includes parental involvement as a centerpiece, giving it a specific statutory definition that includes commu-

nication and involvement in school activities. By including parents in school prevention efforts, families are better equipped to support academic success and healthy decision making.

## A Culturally Relevant Approach

The Parents' Pūpū Platter targets Hawaiian families whose culture offers much practical insight into the goals of prevention and resiliency education. Consider the following 'Ōlelo No'eau (traditional Hawaiian saying) about the strength of the 'a'ali'i flower:

*He 'a'ali'i ku makani mai au; 'a'ohe makani nana e kula'i.*

*I am a wind-resisting 'a'ali'i; no gale can push me over.*

*Meaning: "I can hold my own even in the face of difficulties." The 'a'ali'i bush can stand the worst of gales, twisting and bending, but seldom breaking off or falling over.*

Though environmental circumstances may be fierce, the foundation of the plant is secure, and the flower is able to endure the storm. The family and community provide strength in prevention and resiliency education. As parents root themselves in relevant cultural values and strong parenting practices, the result will be resilient children who can persevere and succeed in the face of difficulty.

## Making a Difference

The pilot curriculum was implemented with over 60 participants from O'ahu and the island of Hawai'i. By linking community support tools with school-based prevention education efforts, students are supported in developing critical resiliency skills and making healthy life choices.

The Parents' Pūpū Platter may be downloaded for free from the Nā Hoa Ho'ōla program website, [www.nahoahoola.org](http://www.nahoahoola.org).

The Parents' Pūpū Platter is designed to serve as a bridge, bringing together families and community resource agencies, thus supporting community recruitment and retention goals. The resource name stems from the format of offering small samples of strategies that span a wide variety of topics. The short sessions will hopefully give parents a craving for the full course—courses that can be found in community programs.

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