

10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act

1. What will Title I do for my child?

Title I is a federal program that provides funding to schools with a high percentage of low-income children. Title I schools must provide “high quality curriculum and instruction, in a supportive and effective learning environment,” so that all children will “meet the state’s student academic achievement standards.” Ask if your school receives Title I funds.

2. How will I know if my child is meeting the standards?*

Each year, children in several grades take a state test to see if they are making adequate yearly progress (AYP). By 2005, students in all states in grades three through eight must be tested every year in reading and math. High school students will have to be tested in these subjects at least once. Each test must be tied to the state standards and must use several measures, including thinking skills. Each child who takes the test will get a report on the results. The goal of this law is for all children to be proficient in reading, math and science by 2014.

3. How can I find out how my child’s school is doing?*

Your school district must give out report cards on school performance, beginning in the 2002–03 school year. The report cards should tell you how different groups of students are doing, by grade and subject. You can find out if your school is performing as well as, worse than or better than other schools, and if students are making AYP.

4. What happens if achievement doesn’t improve?*

Schools where children are not making AYP must improve or face consequences. Title I schools that are not making AYP face consequences such as changes in staff and governance, or being taken over by the state.

5. What can I do if my child is in a Title I school that is not making progress?

If a school is low-performing and not making AYP, you can request a transfer for your child to another, better-performing school. The district must provide free transportation to the new school. If you want to keep your children in the same school, you can ask for supplemental services for your child. Supplemental services include tutoring, before and after-school programs, and special classes to help your child learn. The school must involve parents in developing a school improvement plan.

6. What if my child’s school is not safe?*

If a school is “persistently dangerous” or if your child has been the object of a violent criminal offense at school, you can insist that your child be transferred to a safe school. The state must inform parents if a school is dangerous.

7. How can I be involved in my child's school?

All Title I schools must involve parents and consult with them about the program and how parents will be involved. They also must: hold an annual meeting for parents to explain the program and parents' rights to be involved; work with parents to develop and approve a written parent involvement policy; offer information and training to help parents and teachers work as partners to improve children's achievement; and have a school-parent compact that spells out how the school and parents will work together to support student learning.

8. What if the school does not involve parents?

School districts must make sure that Title I schools follow the law. The district also must have a written parent involvement policy that describes how it will help Title I schools plan and implement effective parent involvement activities. If you believe that your school is not doing what the law requires, get a copy of the district policy to find out what action to take. Send your written comments to the district Title I office, then insist on a meeting to discuss them. If your district does not comply with the law, by all means appeal to the state.

9. What if my child has an unqualified teacher?*

By 2005, all teachers in Title I schools must be "highly qualified." That means being certified by the state in the subject they are teaching. All new teachers must be qualified starting in the 2002–03 school year. Parents have the right to see the teacher's credentials.

10. What if my child has trouble learning to read?*

Reading is the most important basic skill. Programs to teach reading in the primary grades (kindergarten–third grade) must be based on scientific research showing they are effective. Insist that your child get extra help, such as tutoring or other special instruction. The school-parent compact should list the kind of help the school will offer. Find out what reading program your school uses and ask for evidence that it is scientifically validated. Ask your child's teacher for reading materials to use at home to help your child.

Note: Points marked with an asterisk (*) apply to children in all schools, not just Title I schools. Points 7 and 8, about parent involvement, discuss Title I requirements, but parents can press the district to apply these requirements to all schools.