



# Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice

An Affiliate of Appleseed

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## **No Child Left Behind: Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice Outlines Real Solutions for Parental Involvement in Illinois**

*Report Details School-Initiated, Parent-Cultivated, and Community Group-Facilitated  
Model to Improve Student Achievement throughout Illinois*

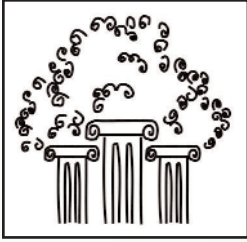
Chicago, IL-- Few people would argue with the notion that parental involvement improves student success in school. Until now, however, little effort has been made to come up with systematic solutions for increasing the role parents play in their children's education. In a new report, *Improving Parental Involvement in Illinois Under the No Child Left Behind Act*, Chicago Appleseed offers a model for creating organizational structures that foster parental involvement even in the most disadvantaged school districts.

Based on examination of three Illinois school districts (Bloomington, Evanston/Skokie and Waukegan), as well as interviews with parents, educators and community groups, Chicago Appleseed has developed the "**Top-Down/Bottom-Up**" model for parental involvement that works to address the weaknesses and challenges of Section 1118 in the No Child Left Behind Act. This model of parental involvement is based on: 1) the terms of NCLB, 2) the essential elements of successful parental involvement programs as detailed by leading policy and education experts, and 3) the priority of increasing student achievement on the part of districts, schools, and parents.

Schools and districts must work from the top to initiate parental involvement and create organizational structures to make parental involvement possible in schools and a priority with educators and parents. Parents must be responsive to the efforts of schools. In addition, there must be action and outreach to build the capacity of parents to participate in meaningful ways. Community groups can help make this relationship work. They can facilitate interactions and act as a bridge between parents and schools.

The Chicago Appleseed report, *Improving Parental Involvement in Illinois Under the No Child Left Behind Act*, contains specific and achievable recommendations for improvement in Illinois school districts based on impact research and expert testimony. This is the follow-up report to the Appleseed publication *It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act*. The work involved 18 school districts in eight

**"Sowing the Seeds of Justice"**



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states and was done as a collaborative effort by Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice and Appleseed public interest centers in Connecticut, Georgia, Texas, and Washington. A full copy of both reports and their executive summaries can be found at our website: [www.chicagoappleseed.org](http://www.chicagoappleseed.org).

Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice will be represented at the statewide NCLB conference taking place February 14-16 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel. The Chicago Appleseed information booth, which will focus on the “**Top-Down/Bottom-Up**” model, will be open in the exhibitors’ hall from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm each conference day. Staff will be available to answer questions and discuss report recommendations.

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**Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice (Chicago Appleseed)** is an impact research, education and advocacy organization that works to achieve fundamental, systemic reform by addressing policies and practices that relate to social justice and government effectiveness issues. Chicago Appleseed is part of a national network of public interest law centers working through and with Appleseed in Washington, D.C.

“Sowing the Seeds of Justice”