Benefits of Teacher-Family partnerships for Children, Parents and Teachers
The education and care of a group of children are serious responsibilities for any teacher in any program or setting requiring enormous amounts of time and energy. The prospect of adding to this already heavy load by taking time to find ways of communicating and working with families may be daunting. Without the establishment of a positive working relationship with families, much of what teachers would like to do does not get done, or does not get done as well as it could. Everyone in a productive relationship gains and grows. Teachers have to see for themselves that the effort of working with families really supports and enhance everything else they do.

Benefits for Children
Security in a new environment
In their early years children are dependent on the key adults in their lives to foster first a sense of security and then feeling of self-worth. Children develop a sense of trust in the people and world around them as they perceive a predictable and consistent response from their caregivers. Most researches conclude that this parent-child attachment is crucial for development of a healthy personality. This task is made easier if the child’s familiar, trusted adults are comfortable with the new adults. A young child’s anxiety in a new school experience may be lessened if there is not an abrupt division between home and school. It is essential and possible for teachers to respect all parents for their caring and efforts and their central position in their children’s lives.

Sense of Self-worth
Children also gain feelings of self-worth if they perceive that their families are valued and respected by others. If her parents receive positive feedback she also feels worthwhile and valued. If a child observes a teacher ignoring her parents or treating them with obvious disdain, her own self-esteem suffers.

Many teachers still cling to stereotypical expectations that parents from minority or low-income families will not become involved in communication. Recent studies that the school success of African American children is directly related to their parents’ values and expectations, as well as the active participation and emotional availability of their parents.

Knowledge and Consistent Responses
Parents and teachers who can comfortably share personal observations and insights, general knowledge and ideas and specific incidents, and reactions expose each other to a wealth of information that may help them provide the most appropriate response for each child. The three benefits to children when parents and teachers work together are:
1. Increased security in the new school environment
2. Increased feeling of self-worth
3. Increased number of helpful responses and appropriate learning experiences.
Benefits for Parents
Feeling of Support for Parenting
An immediate benefit is the feeling of support in carrying out the responsibilities of parenthood. Having an adult who cares about their children, to share both the good and the not-so-good times of day-to-day life, is extremely helpful in alleviating anxieties.

Knowledge and Skills
There is no question that families possess firsthand knowledge about their children, but frequently the experience of living with them is their only opportunity to learn about child development. Many parents never have the opportunity to learn relevant developmental information and often misunderstand the nature of developing children (Lally, Lerner, & Lurie-Hurvitz, 2001). When teachers share their knowledge of child development, they help parents respond more appropriately to their children’s developmental needs. Teachers have specific education in the principals of child development and are trained in effective guidance techniques. When parents converse with teachers and watch and listen to teachers working with children, they can expand their knowledge and ideas and become more effective as parents.

Enhancing Parental Self-Esteem
It is essential that parental self-esteem develop in a positive way. Parent who believe in themselves are far better able to develop and use appropriate parenting skills; parents who felt self-confident are far better able to provide their children with a secure environment and foster positive feelings of self in their children. The most important predictor of children’s school success is related to positive parental self-esteem. A positive feeling of parental self-esteem is also nurtured when parents feel they are a vital part of their child’s school world as well as home world. Teachers who help parents feel included in the education process contribute to feelings of competence in parents.

The three ways that parents benefit from positive teacher-parents relationships are
1. Feelings of support in the difficult task of parenting.
2. Knowledge and skills gained by parents to help them in child rearing.
3. Enhanced parental self-esteem from receiving positive feedback on their parenting actions and feeling an important part of their child’s life away from home.

Benefits for teachers
Teachers have learned much that is applicable about the general characteristics of children at particular ages, stages and grade levels; but are effective with each child, additional information is needed. Each child comes to the classroom with a history-year of reactions, experiences, and characteristics styles of behaving that are unique. Teachers who blind effective communication with families are less likely to be frustrated while working with the many unknowns in children and are more likely to meet realistic goals for each child and support each family in reaching their own particular goals. When teachers are open to learning from families there is much knowledge about the particular aspects of living with children that can be learned.
Positive Feedback Increases Confidence
Teachers’ self-confidence will from as positive feedback is received form others regarding their job performance. The reaching out may be difficult especially for teachers who are not very comfortable in social situations. One effect of enhanced teacher self-confidence is that personal social skills may develop and expand.

Parental Resources for Enriched Learning Experiences
Teachers have only the resources of one person, with individual limitations on time, energy, knowledge, creativity, experiences, and other resources. Families may offer additional resources in all these commodities, as well as others. Learning experiences teachers can offer children in the classroom are multiplied and enhanced by parents who feel invited and included in the educational process. Families who are included in the educational process will also continue learning experiences with their children at home, strengthening teachers’ efforts.

The three benefits for teachers of working with parents are
1. Increased knowledge, which enables teachers to be more effective with each child.
2. Positive feedback, which increases their own feeling of competence in their profession, and advocacy of their interests.
3. Parental resources to supplement and reinforce their own efforts in providing an enlarged world of learning.

Because it is the children that bring families and teachers together, the benefits for children alone should be motivation enough to work to create effective partnerships.