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### HOW WE CAN MAKE IT WORK Early support program helps college success

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As superintendent in a high-poverty school district, I knew it was important to create a vision for higher education but soon realized that if we waited until middle school to encourage kids, it would be too late. To create a realistic vision, we had to plant the seeds early for both kids and their parents.

One great example of reaching kids and parents early is the College Academy for Parents, a partnership between the University of Arizona and Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson. Parents and their young children are presented a vision, and a plan, for postsecondary education.

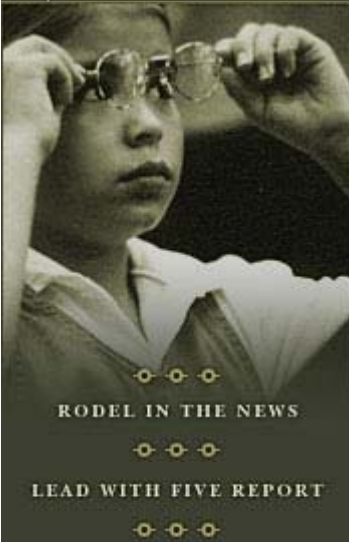
"Knowledge is power, and now I have the knowledge that will help me prepare for my children's future," said Martin Lincoln, parent of second-grade and fourth-grade students at Esperanza School.

The College Academy for Parents consists of two-hour parent sessions a week for 10 weeks to help parents prepare their children for college. One parent said, "Before, I thought it was impossible for my children to go to college. I learned that this is not true."

Professors from the University of Arizona volunteer their time to present information about what students need to know, how to get financing and how to prepare their children as early as kindergarten. While parents are in their sessions, their children attend College Camp, where they take part in a program similar to their parents', creating a vision for college education and talking about what they want to be when they grow up.

The program serves parents from low-income, minority and first-generation college-bound backgrounds. The College Academy for Parents is serving 93 parents from three elementary schools in Sunnyside. The academy is also provided in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents.



"After completion of the 10-week program, parents develop a powerful network with each other and with the UA," said Lori Tochihara, director of the UA Office of Early Academic Outreach.



Principals and teachers are rallying support for the program. "The College Academy for Parents is helping our parents transform dreams of college into a realistic game plan," said Steve Price, principal of Ocotillo Elementary School.

The University of Arizona and Sunnyside schools are providing kids and parents early support and encouragement for success. For more information, contact Tochiara at 1-(520)-626-2300.

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