

## Welcome Parents

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**Carmen:** Very good. One more.

**Lupe:** There... was... a... prin... cee-ess.

**Carmen:** Princess.

**Lupe:** Princess.

**Carmen:** Very good. Keep going.

**Lupe:** Who... leaved... lived... in... a... big... house... in... the...  
in... the... meeowntains?

**Carmen:** In the mountains.

**Lupe:** In the mountains.

**Carmen:** Look. The mountains.

**Lupe:** And there's the princess.

**Carmen:** And now, my princess, it is time to go to sleep.

**Lupe:** Good night, Mommy.

**Carmen:** Sweet dreams, Lupita.

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**Carmen:** Juan, the school is having the parent-teacher conferences again. Next month!

**Juan:** That's nice.

**Carmen:** Nice? Do you remember what happened to me last time?

*(flashback, in Carmen's memory)*

**Teacher:** Your daughter is doing fine, Mrs. Díaz. You should work with her every night to make sure that she understands what she is reading. You should also review all her homework. Okay? Do you have any questions? Do you have any questions?

**Carmen:** (to the teacher, in Carmen's flashback to last year) Ummm... No.

(back to the present)

**Juan:** Carmen? Carmen? Don't get so worried. Everything will be fine.

**Carmen:** What? Last time was a disaster. I couldn't understand anything the teacher said.

**Juan:** That was last year. Your English is much better now.

**Carmen:** Really? Do you think so?

**Juan:** Of course. You go to English class every week, don't you?

**Carmen:** Yes. My English is better. But talking to the teacher isn't easy. It makes me feel so... What's the word?... Helpless.

**Juan:** Helpless?

**Carmen:** Yes. Juan, I'm worried about Lupe's reading. She's having trouble.

**Juan:** If Lupe's having trouble reading, her teacher will take care of it. That's her job.

**Carmen:** We have to help Lupe. Why did we come to this country? For her education. Not only to watch *fútbol*.

**Juan:** Honey, in this country, they call it soccer.

**Carmen:** Juan... Are you paying attention? I can't help Lupe if I can't talk to the teacher and ask questions.

**Juan:** So think of the questions to ask the teacher and say them out loud. You have to practice, just like soccer.

**Carmen:** Like soccer? What are you talking about, Juan?

**Juan:** I'm talking about practice. You've got to practice saying your lines like, um... actors on TV.

**Carmen:** Okay. If it's so easy, show me.

**Juan:** Okay. Teacher. My daughter, Guadalupe... How is she?

**Carmen:** How is she?!

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**Fatima:** Sayeed, what does this say?

**Sayeed:** Ismael, tell your mother what this says.

**Ismael:** I think it's a good report, Mother.

**Fatima:** Ismael?

**Ismael:** The teacher is very happy with me.

**Fatima:** I'm sure the teacher is very happy with you, Ismael. But I don't think that's what this letter says.

**Sayeed**

**& Ismael:** And goal!

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*(on the phone)*

**Fatima:** Carmen? It's Fatima.

**Carmen:** Yes, Fatima, I am sure. The note is about the parent-teacher conferences. Lupe brought the same note home. ... Are you going? ... We have to go. It's our job. ... Don't worry, Fatima. Last year, I didn't understand anything either. ... This year will be different. ... Yes, you are right. We must do something. ... A parent what? ... Coordinator. ... Call 311 for the number? ... Yes. I will do it right now.

**Carmen:** *(writing in notebook)* Parent coordinator. *(on the phone to 311)* Hello, 311? I want to help my daughter with school. ... She goes to PS 303 in Brooklyn. Can you give me the number for the parent coordinator? ... Yes, I have a pencil. Give me the number, please.

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**Parent**

**Coordinator:** I know exactly what you mean, Mrs. Díaz. People here talk so fast. When I first came to New York City, it was hard for me to understand anything.

**Carmen:** I know. The problem is... there are so many questions to ask at the parent-teacher conference. I get nervous.

**Fatima:** Yes, me too.

**P.C.:** Here. This family guide has some good questions you can ask. We have it in eight languages... Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Urdu and Bengali.

**Fatima:** Thank you.

**P.C.:** And remember... if you need an interpreter, just ask for one.

**Fatima:** Really, an interpreter?

**P.C.:** You can ask for an interpreter at the school anytime you need one.

**Carmen:** Thank you.

**P.C.:** You are natural leaders.

**Carmen:** Leaders? I didn't even finish high school.

**Fatima:** And my English isn't so good.

**P.C.:** You don't need to speak perfect English to be a

leader. If you can talk to me and to your friends about the school, you can talk to anyone.

**Carmen:** Maybe... Thank you.

**P.C.:** Goodbye.

**Fatima:** Thank you. Goodbye.

**P.C.:** Goodbye.

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**Fatima:** These questions are long and difficult even when I read them in Arabic.

**Carmen:** Well, what else can we do?

**Fatima:** I have an idea. Let's call some other parents.

**Carmen:** Yes! Let's call Pierre.

**Fatima:** And Ming!

**Carmen:** Let's go! Come on.

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**Pierre:** Hi.

**Carmen:** Hello, Pierre.

**Pierre:** Hello.

**Ming:** Sometimes asking questions is not easy.

**Fatima:** Yes. Especially when you are nervous.

**Pierre:** That's why I always bring a notebook. I take notes when the person is talking.

**Carmen:** I think it helps if you repeat back what you hear. Let me show you. You are the teacher, Ming. Tell me about my daughter's homework.

**Ming:** Well, Mrs. Díaz... Sometimes your daughter's homework is late. And sometimes, she doesn't

answer all of the questions. And sometimes, it's a mess!

**Carmen:** So, in other words, you are saying to me that... my daughter should do her homework on time, answer all the questions, and be neat.

**Ming:** Exactly!

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**Carmen:** Hello.

**Juan:** Carmen, where were you? I was worried.

**Carmen:** I met with the other parents. We are getting ready for the parent-teacher conference.

**Juan:** I keep telling you. Let the people at the school do their work. You are just a parent.

**Carmen:** Exactly. And parents need to get involved. Juan, we are getting together again on Saturday, and you should come.

**Juan:** Me?

**Carmen:** Yes, you!

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**Carmen:** Okay, everyone... we have the questions. Now, we have to practice asking them out loud. Who wants to go first? Come on! We have to practice our lines... like actors on TV!

**Pierre:** Is... there... any... extra... reading... I... can... give... my... son?

**Carmen:** What's the matter, Pierre?

**Pierre:** I don't think I can do it.

**Fatima:** Yes, you can. Remember, you are an actor. Say it with emotion.

**Carmen:** Ready? And...

**Pierre:** Is there any extra reading I can give my son?

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**Sayed:** *(playing soccer with Juan)* That was great!

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**Fatima:** Okay, go.

**Ming:** Is my son doing his homework?

**Fatima:** Repeat that, Ming, like a movie star!

**Ming:** Is my son doing his homework?

**Fatima:** One more time.

**Ming:** Is my son doing his homework every night?

**Fatima:** Every night? I like that!

**Ming:** But sometimes I can't understand my son's homework.

**Pierre:** My parents didn't understand my homework either. But you know? I still did it. And in third grade, I did extra work.

**Fatima:** Extra work?

**Pierre:** That year, I fell in love with my teacher. She was so kind, so beautiful... I wrote a love poem to her every night.

**Juan:** Love poems? That's not homework!

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**Carmen:** Are we finished?

**Fatima:** *(holding the questions for the parent-teacher conferences)* Done! We did it! Let's give this to the parent coordinator.

**Carmen:** She can make copies, and give it to the other parents.

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**Juan:** What is this a picture of, Lupe?

**Lupe:** It's the princess.

**Juan:** And... what is she doing? Is she playing soccer?

**Lupe:** Soccer? Nobody in this story plays soccer, Papi.

**Juan:** Oh well. Maybe someday she will. ... The title of this book is... *The Soccer Princess of Sunset Park*.

**Lupe:** That's not what it says, Papi.

**Juan:** Are you sure?

**Lupe:** Just read the words, Papi. Just read.

**Juan:** Okay. Look! And the prince said... *I love you, princess*.

**Lupe:** And the princess said... *I want to play soccer!*

**Juan:** Soccer?

**Lupe:** Yes, soccer.

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**Carmen:** Please, Juan! Do you know what time it is? The conference is starting.

**Juan:** Carmen! Take it easy.

**Carmen:** Are you coming or not?

**Juan:** I can't decide.

**Carmen:** I'm leaving.

**Juan:** Wait! I can't decide. What do you think? The



red one? The green one? The blue one? Which one will the teacher like?

**Carmen:** It doesn't matter. You don't need to wear the tie. Let's go.

**Juan:** Carmen, this is important! This is our daughter's education!

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**Ming:** *(practicing a question)* Is my son doing his math homework? Does he ask questions in class?

**Parent:** *(practicing a question)* Excuse me. Can I have an interpreter? Can I have an interpreter? Can I have an interpreter?

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**Sayed:** *(to his son's teacher)* How can I help my son with his reading?

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**Ming:** *(to her child's teacher)* I'm sorry. Can you please slow down and explain what you mean?

**Teacher:** Of course.

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**Teacher:** And did you know... Jean Claude won the poetry contest last week.

**Pierre:** Oh! Jean Claude didn't tell me. *(to his son)* You won the poetry contest?

**Teacher:** He writes the most beautiful poems. A new one every day.

**Pierre:** *(to his son)* Every day? *(to the teacher)* He takes after his father.

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**Juan:** Can I get my daughter's report card in Spanish?

**Teacher:** Of course. You can also call me anytime. The door is always open.

**Juan:** Thank you.

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*(after the parent-teacher conferences)*

**Juan:** So?

**Carmen:** That went well.

**Fatima:** Carmen... How was your conference?

**Juan:** Wonderful.

**Carmen:** And how was your conference?

**Sayed:** It was great.

**Carmen:** Well, congratulations to you both.

**Sayed:** What this school needs is more parents like us!

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