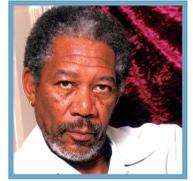


# A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS

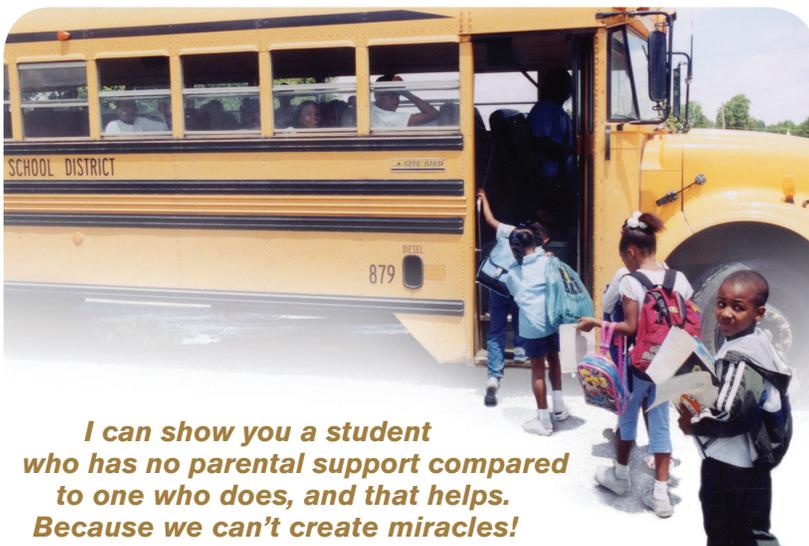
## Parents' Discussion Guide

narrated by  
Morgan Freeman



In Jill Todd's class in Mississippi, Ryan Hawkins was one of the most successful students, and it was no surprise to find that he had an involved mother and father at home. Parents play a critical role in their child's reading achievement. Kids who start school knowing their letters, having been read to for hours and hours, are ready to learn to read.

Kids who haven't been exposed to books, who haven't experienced nursery rhymes and word games and conversation with adults, are at a great disadvantage. What happens before a child enters kindergarten is vital to reading success. And research shows that when parents play a role in their child's academic career, students have better attendance, make greater achievement gains, and have fewer behavior problems.



*I can show you a student who has no parental support compared to one who does, and that helps. Because we can't create miracles! We need some help here!*

**Ruby Jackson, Reading Teacher**

For more information about **A Tale of Two Schools**, please visit [www.pbs.org/twoschools](http://www.pbs.org/twoschools).

And to find out everything you ever wanted to know about reading, please visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org).

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*One third of poor readers nationwide are from college-educated families.*

**American Federation of Teachers, 1999**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tavares missed most of kindergarten and came to school with very little experience with books and print – and it showed. What can parents do to ensure that their children enter school ready to learn?
2. When reading started to come together for Tavares in February, part of the change may have been his father's decision to get involved. What can parents do to supplement the work of the school?
3. Tavares's teachers, Ms. Morgan and Ms. Jackson, were willing to share books and materials from their reading curriculum with Tavares's father and his aunt. What happens if parents leave instruction to the schools and just read aloud at home?
4. Walton Elementary and Bearden Elementary both use systematic, research-based reading programs. How can parents find out if their child's school has a good reading program in place?
5. While only ten parents attended the first PTA meeting of the year at Bearden, hundreds of parents turned out to support the school's book fair in the spring. How does an event like this improve the chances for young readers at a school like Bearden? What are some other things schools like Bearden can do to get parents involved?

