

Developing Positive Home to School Relationships Communicating with Families about Classroom Activities

Use the family's native language when communicating. This includes offering to have an interpreter available for conferences or meetings. Written communication should also be sent in the family's native language (which may differ from the student).

Establish a line of communication early in the year. Make an effort to personally speak to all parents and explain how to best get in touch with you.

Send home a questionnaire early in the year asking parents if they'd like to volunteer, and if they have any particular talents they'd like to share. Encourage a variety of opportunities, such as coming once a month to read to students, playing an instrument for the class, sharing a cultural practice that fits with something the class has been learning, joining the PTA, helping with a class project, coming to evening activities, etc.

Send home a weekly or monthly newsletter describing class topics, and how parents can contribute to their children's learning at home.

Make home visits with other school personnel to speak to families in their environment about positive things their children are doing and learning activities they can do at home with their children.

Encouraging Parental Participation in Their Children's Learning

Invite parents into the classroom to participate in activities. For instance, if the class is doing a project on character education, invite parents to attend. This may encourage them to implement the strategies at home, while also being familiar with what is being taught in class.

Don't assume parents know how to help their children with homework. Offer a short evening workshop to help parents learn skills for working with their children at home or provide short written strategies or instructions that the children take home attached to their homework.

Provide a calendar with activities that families can do together which reinforces what is being learned in the classroom. For example, if students are learning their multiplication facts, have them make a set of flashcards where they have to match an equation with an answer. Encourage them to play "Memory" with their parents using the cards to practice their math facts. If students are learning measurement, a recipe for something easy like English muffin pizzas might be a great way for families to practice those skills at home.

Provide learning packets that families can borrow over vacations or during the summer. Include fun learning activities such as word searches, crosswords, jumbles, family activities, recipes, academic games, etc. Include all necessary materials in the packet..

PIRC Pages

School-Wide Activities

Encourage your school to establish a parent resource center where they have access to books, learning materials, and can receive information free of charge.

School psychologists can provide family-school workshops and activities. Provide snacks and childcare and be sure to include directions for parents to take home regarding how to do the activities in the future. Example workshops include science, math, and literacy.

Encourage parents to join the school's parent association. This is a great way to meet other parents and stay involved in school activities.

Provide services for families at school, such as computer skills, GED instruction, budgeting, job training, etc. Provide health services for children on site.

This publication was printed in whole or in part, with funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parental Information and Resource Center program, under Grant #84.310A