

Getting & Keeping Parent Support

Course Outline

Course Description

Getting and Keeping Parent Support presents proven and innovative methods to gain and keep parent support. This model emphasizes interventions through a cooperative team approach between teachers and parents. Based on research endorsed by the National PTA, the skills and procedures taught in this course and practiced in applied assignments will enable educators to maintain supportive involvement from parents of even the most challenging students.

Objectives

- Discuss the different types and the importance of parent involvement in education.
- Explore research relating parent involvement and student achievement.
- Explore the changing demographics in American families.
- Discuss the barriers to parent involvement in education.
- Recognize barriers for teachers involving parents.
- Compare and contrast strategies for reducing barriers and roadblocks to partnerships between teachers and parents.
- Label critical elements for early parent contacts.
- Evaluate successful and recommended parent contact practices.
- Justify successful points to consider in "back to school night" presentations.
- Design a "first call" to targeted parents.
- Define proven techniques for positive communication with parents.
- Describe channels of communication appropriate for your setting.
- Document the value of making positive phone calls home.
- Create a homework policy.
- Cite examples of specific suggestions that may be given to parents to involve them in the homework process.
- Formulate strategies to help parents solve their children's most common homework problems.
- Gain ideas for preparing for a parent conferences and meetings.
- Identify methods for involving parents and students in planning individualized education plans.
- Explore the pros and cons of having students at a conference.
- Conduct and evaluate the success of a parent conference.
- Identify strategies to maintain control during stressful contacts with parents.
- Learn methods of de-escalating conflicts.
- Gain techniques to use in difficult situations.
- Identify risk factors that can lead to conflict in relationships between parents and teachers.
- Understand the importance of mutual respect and trust in reaching agreements.

- Explore methods of building trust with parents and families from nondominant cultures.
- Identify factors that lead to successful negotiation.
- Plan, arrange, and carry out a problem solving conference and/or a conference with a family member from a nondominant culture.
- Recognize the importance of systematic record keeping especially when a student is experiencing academic or behavioral problems.
- Write anecdotal records distinguishing between observations and inferences.
- Explain the shift from punishment-focused discipline to teaching and supporting appropriate behavior in schools.
- Explore methods for empowering parents in helping their students adopt academic and social behaviors required in school settings.
- Apply research-based principles in writing a formal paper on parent-teacher relations **OR** prepare a parent handbook for the final project for this course.

Curriculum Design & Time Requirements

Getting & Keeping Parent Support is a 3 credit graduate level or forty-five hour professional development course taught on weekends or over five full days. The following methodologies will be used during the course: lectures, readings, group and individual discussions, and applied practice assignments and papers.

Course Materials

The required textbook for this course is *Parents On Your Side, A Teacher's Guide To Creating Positive Relationships with Parents* by Lee Canter and Marlene Canter. A variety of readings will be referenced throughout the course.

Session Outline

Session 1: Overview Of Parent-Teacher Cooperation Issues

Contents:

1. Parent-Teacher Conferences as a Major Challenge
2. Frustrations of Both Sides About Conferences
3. A Look at the Current Situation
4. Avoidance is Not the Answer
5. The Necessity for Cooperation
6. If Not Us, Then Who?
7. Advantages of Reforming the Relationship Between Schools and Parents

Session 2: Importance Of Parental Involvement

Contents:

1. Parental Involvement and Student Achievement
2. Parental Involvement and Behavior
3. Cultural and Age Factors in Parental Involvement
4. Importance of Involvement at All Grade Levels
5. How Involvement Helps Students, Parents, and Families
6. How Involvement Helps Teachers, Schools, and Communities
7. How Involvement Improves School Quality

8. Involvement in form of "Reading to Children"

Session 3: Current Stressors Affecting Families And Schools

Contents:

1. Changing Demographics in America
2. The Changing American Family
3. Stresses From Outside the Home
4. Lack of Support for Parents and Children
5. Pressures facing today's schools
6. Lack of Support for Teachers and Discipline
7. Bridging the gaps between home and school

Session 4: Parent Conference Issues and Approaches

Contents:

1. Issues and Needs of Parents and Teachers
2. Setting the Stage for a Successful Conference
3. Ways of Remaining Positive and Constructive
4. Appreciating and Supporting Each Other
5. Keeping the Focus on Helping the Student
6. Setting Realistic Agendas and Goals
7. Sharing Fair and Reasonable Responsibilities

Session 5: De-Escalating Conflict During Conferences

Contents:

1. A Model for Understanding Emotional Reactions
2. Predicting Escalation and De-Escalation
3. You-Messages vs. I-Messages
4. The Power of Really Listening to the Other Person
5. The Necessity to be Proactively Professional
6. The Practical Advantage of Communication Skills
7. Achieving Your Goals in a Conference

Session 6: Making the Most of Early Parent Contacts

Contents:

1. Making First Impressions Count
2. What do Parents Want From Teachers?
3. Do's and Don'ts for "Back to School Nights"
4. What do Parents Need to Know?
5. What do We Need From Parents?
6. The First Phone Call and How to Make the Most of It
7. Planning for a Successful Start

Session 7: Methods for Involving Parents

Contents:

1. Communications That Reach and Support Parents
2. Helping Parents be Successful in Their Difficulties
3. Ways Parents can Support Student Learning
4. Gaining Support Through Parent Volunteering
5. Involving Parents in School Improvement and Decision Making

6. Utilizing Community Resources
7. How cultural differences effect teacher/parent relationships

Session 8: Strategies for Reaching Consensus

Contents:

1. What the Parties Want/Don't Want in Negotiations
2. The Importance of Fairness and Impartiality
3. Resistance to Pressure or Imposed Solutions
4. Resolution Methods and Cautions
5. The Importance of Identifying Each Party's Needs
6. The Power of Brainstorming
7. Methods of Reaching Consensus
8. Investing in a Long-Term Solution That Will "Stick"

Session 9: Documentation and Referral

Contents:

1. Advantage of maintaining objective data
2. How to set up routine record-keeping procedures
3. What an anecdotal record is and what it is not
4. Recognizing legal rights of parents under IDEA
5. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality of records
6. Working to build a cooperative team approach
7. How to involve parents in team meetings

Session 10: Presentations, Final Exam and Closure:

Contents:

1. Explore parent involvement research
2. Present professional research article findings
3. Combine knowledge of school district characteristics with national research findings to develop an action plan for improving parent involvement in an individual classroom or school
4. Present and discuss action plans presented by classmates
5. Review course content and applications

Grading

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale
Group & Classroom Participation	30	100 – 93 A
Reading Assignments	20	92 – 85 B
Final Integration Project	30	84 – 77 C
Final Exam	20	
Total Points	100	

Student Requirements

1. Attend all class sessions for the requisite number of hours (45) and actively participate in all class activities.

2. Complete all reading assignments. Keep a journal, reflecting upon the major ideas in the assigned readings and the application of those ideas in your school and classroom. This journal should have a minimum of five entries of one-half page in length.
3. Complete the Final Integration Project. Review research and literature on parent involvement and student achievement, and identify several major findings or themes. Consider the concerns identified in the course on the part of both teachers and parents regarding teacher-parent communication. Based on these key themes and concerns, design a communications plan for winning and keeping parent support. This action plan should include a set of goals and objectives, outline of a back-to-school night presentation which deals positively with parent concerns and teacher needs, outline of a way of beginning parent conferences which connects with the parent and gets the teacher "hired" upfront, and strategies for keeping parents informed and involved throughout the year-both in general and in specific instances where parent and teacher interventions may be required to help a student succeed.
4. Pass the final Exam.

Student Academic Integrity

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.