

PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM FOR TEACHER

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Abstract

Parent Involvement program for Teacher is a program with a family approach as a part of the educational system of children. Teachers and parents have an important role in children's education through communication. The key of communication is awareness and sensitivity. The aim of this paper is to give an understanding of parents empowerment as an asset in educating children through the role of the teacher. The method is used in this paper is qualitative by collecting data. Teacher not only teach but also empower parents as one of golden rule in children's education. Teachers are led to face numerous families through professionalism, ability and confidence to increase parent involvement in children's education. Parent involvement in children's education absolutely must be done, so effective communication support for teachers to parents through direct involvement, demonstration or display and communication so that the relationship between parents and teachers can give a good impact for children. The ability to resolve difficulties with parent involvement can be resolved through ability confidence, and lead to a productive impact.

Keywords : Parent Involvement Program, Communicate, Teacher, Empowerment Parent.

Program Keterlibatan Orangtua bagi Guru

Abstrak

“Parent Involvement Program for Teacher” adalah sebuah program dengan pendekatan keluarga sebagai bagian dari sistem pendidikan terhadap anak. Pengajar dan Orang tua memiliki peran yang sangat besar dalam pendidikan anak melalui komunikasi. Kunci dari komunikasi adalah kesadaran dan sensitivitas. Tujuan dari tulisan ini adalah memberikan sebuah pemahaman akan pemberdayaan orang tua sebagai asset dalam mendorong edukasi pada anak melalui peran dari pengajar. Metode yang digunakan dalam tulisan ini adalah kualitatif dengan melakukan pengumpulan data. Pengajar selain sebagai seorang yang mengajarkan dituntut untuk dapat memberdayakan orang tua sebagai salah satu dalam “golden rule” pendidikan anak. Pengajar dituntut untuk menghadapi berbagai macam keluarga melalui profesional, kemampuan dan kepercayaan diri guna meningkatkan keterlibatan orang tua dalam pendidikan anak. Keterlibatan orang tua dalam pendidikan anak mutlak harus dilakukan oleh karena itu, komunikasi efektif dukungan pengajar terhadap orang tua melalui keterlibatan secara langsung, demonstrasi atau peragaan dan komunikasi sehingga hubungan antara orang tua dan pengajar dapat memberikan dampak yang baik bagi anak-anak. Pada akhirnya kemampuan dalam menyelesaikan kesulitan dengan keterlibatan orang tua, namun dapat terselesaikan melalui kemampuan dan kepercayaan diri serta bermuara pada dampak yang produktif.

Keywords : Program Keterlibatan Orangtua, komunikasi, Guru, Pemberdayaan Orang Tua.

A. INTRODUCTION

The education of children is a responsibility that must be shared by you the teacher and parents alike. We need to recognize what a powerful asset a parent can be; what a powerful component parents are to a child's success. To work effectively, you need parents to support your academic, disciplinary and homework efforts.

Experience has no doubt shown you that you will encounter many types of parents during your teaching career; parents who gladly give the support you need; parents who want to help, but don't know how; parents who are angry at schools in general; parents who seem to be incapable of handling their own lives, let alone the lives of their children; and, finally, parents who really just don't care.

Reaching all of these parents, and gaining their support, may seem to be a tough assignment at best. But you can do it. Our goal in writing *Involvement parent program for teachers* is to empower you to be a more successful teacher by showing you how to get the support you need from parents.

Every parent, in his or her own way, can support you. The value you place on each child's education, and the manner in which you communicate that attitude to parents, can transcend varying family circumstance, ethnic and cultural diversity, poverty and apathy. You can expect and receive cooperation. By establishing positive relationships with parents, and by conscientiously maintaining these relationships throughout the year, you will find that even the most difficult or apathetic parents can be motivated to give support.

What could you anticipate if you could get all the parents to support your academic, discipline and homework effort? Take a look at the students you

deal with today. Think of the difficulties you are having motivating some of these students to reach their full potential. Now imagine for a moment that you had all the parents of your students backing you 100%. Imagine that you could pick up the phone and get parents to give you the cooperation you need when their child is not doing his or her work, not behaving in class, or not completing homework assignments. Think of the results you would achieve with your students. The results would be dramatic. If and when you had all the parents backing your efforts, your ability to help your students succeed would increase profoundly.

I hope that *Involvement parent program for teachers* will help you reach this goal, and in doing so help your students achieve their highest potential.

- **Theoretical Base, Why you need parents involvement**

How important is parent support? Think about this: Why did you behave in school? Why did you strive to succeed academically? If you were like many others, your parents were an important factor in shaping your attitude toward school. Parents are the most important people in a child's life. Their love, affection, support and approval are a fundamental need of all children. Parent involvement isn't just a nice idea. For the sake of our children, it's essential

Ann T. Henderson summarized nearly 50 studies of parent involvement programs and concluded the following:

- a. Programs designed with strong parent involvement components produced students who performed better than otherwise identical programs that did not strongly involve parents.
- b. School that relate well to their communities have student bodies that outperform other school.
- c. Children whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with schools score higher than children of similar aptitude and family

background whose parents are not involved. Schools in which children are failing improved dramatically when parents are called in to help.

There is no doubt, the research shows, that when parents are involved and supportive, students benefit.

An uninvolved parent, justifiably or not, gives a child the message that the child just isn't important enough to warrant close attention. An involved parent, on the other hand, can provide the boost to a student's self-esteem that will lead to greater success in school and a more fulfilling and accomplished adulthood.

This paper is hopefully a step-by-step program developed to give you, the educator, the ability to work effectively with today's parents. You can't solve society's problems. You can't right all the wrongs. But you can learn how to communicate effectively with parents.

There are teachers today who consistently receive support from all kinds of parents in all kinds of situations. We have studied these educators and found that there are common elements that are critical to their success.

The vast majority of parents of your students really do want to be involved. They do care about their children and want to provide needed support. In many cases, however, they just don't know what to do or if they should do it at all. To put into perspective, only 25% of parents report receiving systematic requests or directions from teachers on how they can help their children academically. However, when requested to give additional assistance, over 85% of parents immediately responded and were willing to spend at least 15 minutes per day working with their children. In short, when parents are contacted by skilled, trained teachers who communicate effectively, they will respond.

If students are to reach their full potential, they need the support and encouragement of an entire community of concerned, caring adults. That community includes all of us. And it especially includes student's parents. To do your job effectively, you need to get those parents on your side.

Effective teachers don't just get parents on their side, they have an attitude that enables them to work with parents.

The best way to learn how to get parents on your side is from teachers who already are successful at getting parents support. We studied teachers who consistently get the support they need from parents. We discovered that these teachers may differ greatly in where they teach, how they teach and whom they teach, but they do not differ at all in their attitude regarding parents.

- a. Effective teachers know they must have parent support.

Effective teacher understand, without a doubt, that when parents are involved, their students do better academically and behaviorally.

Effective teachers also unequivocally believe that they owe it to themselves to receive support from parents. Teachers are often faced with the responsibility of not only educating students but of helping solve their emotional and behavioral problem, too. It is not in anyone's best interest to struggle endlessly over student problems without the involvement of parents. It's emotionally draining, time consuming and ultimately non-productive.

For your students and for yourself, you must have parent support. Parents are in a unique position to deliver the help that is needed. Effective teachers recognize some basic truth about a parent's role in a child's life.

- Parents are the most important, influential people in a child's life. No one – teacher, principal, counselor or psychologist can have as profound an impact on student behavior as can parents. Parental love and approval are fundamental needs of each and every child. All children want and need the praise and positive support of their parents.

Parental approval is a powerful motivator for students, one that can bring dramatic results. And yet parents may not be aware of the influence they have over their children, or how to use this influence to their best advantage. When necessary, you must be prepared to guide parents towards positive reinforcement techniques that will motivate their child to greater success in school.

- Parents have the most time to work one-on-one with their child. No matter how dedicated you are, you have a limited amount of time to work individually with students. For example, in a typical elementary classroom you may spend a maximum of five minutes per day giving students individual attention on their reading or math skills. When you can encourage a parent to spend 15 minutes a night helping a child, you are tripling the amount of individual attention that child can receive. Likewise, the one minute of personal attention a secondary teacher may be able to give a student could be increased as much as fifteenfold when the parent helps at home.
- Parents can offer disciplinary backing. Realistically, you are limited in what you can do when a student chooses to misbehave. Techniques such as time out, detention, and in-school suspension work for some students. There are, however, other students who need to know that parents will also follow

through with disciplinary measures at home for misbehavior exhibited during the day. Students need to know that if they choose to misbehave in class, it's as if they are misbehaving in front of their parents. When misbehavior at school means loss of privileges at home, there is a much greater likelihood of a student's choosing to improve his or her behavior.

To illustrate more clearly, let's look at the parent involvement issue from the perspective of another group of professionals that deals with children – pediatricians:

The pediatrician knows that it is his or her responsibility to diagnose a child's problem, prescribe treatment, and carefully explain to parents what they must do to help their child. The pediatrician then fully expects that parents will support his or her efforts. If a parent complains that "I work, I can't make sure he takes his medicine," or "I'm too busy to get her to her checkup," the doctor will lay it on the line: "I cannot make sure your child gets better unless you do your part."

The issues that you deal with are every bit as immediate and important as those the pediatrician faces. Children who experience school failure have a higher probability of ending up on drugs, in jail or on welfare. These outcomes can be as serious as most physical problems as child will encounter, and you have every bit the right to parent backing as a doctor does. Remember, teachers and doctors are both professionals responsible for the well-being and growth of a child.

- b. In every interaction with parents, effective teachers demonstrate concern for students.

A great concern of parents is that their child's teacher will not put in the time and effort necessary to ensure that their child succeeds in school. Effective teachers know this and take steps to alleviate these parental worries. Experience has shown them that when a parent believes that a teacher really cares about their child, that parent is not as likely to argue, make excuses or question the teacher's competency. Instead, the parent will make every effort to support the teacher.

Here are some strategies that effective teachers use to demonstrate concern for their students:

- From the beginning of the school year, communicate your concern. It is never too early to show parents you care. Some teachers begin even before the school year starts. A welcoming phone call or note home to parents of incoming students can go a long way toward demonstrating your interest in their child.
- Establish positive communication with parents. The key to showing genuine concern is to contact parents when the child is doing something right. When parents hear good news, it's easier for them to believe that you really do care. You will also find that once you've established positive communication with parents, they will be much more receptive when you have to call them with a problem.

Most parents report that they only hear from the teacher when there is a problem. When every communication is negative, it's easy to understand why parents avoid contact with teachers. After all, most parents would like to believe that their child is doing something right at school, at least some of the time.

- Take every opportunity to show you care.

In every interaction with parents, all eyes are on you. Don't miss any opportunity to let parents know that you care about their child. Failure to show concern may miscommunicate to the parent a lack of caring on your part. From the start, look for occasions that will show your interest and concern. Notes home, phone calls, birthday greetings and get-well cards not only address the occasion but also consistently demonstrate to parents that your commitment to their child is genuine.

- c. Effective teachers demonstrate professionalism and confidence.

You can be the most skilled teacher in the world, but if parents don't recognize your competence you'll have a difficult time getting their support. What can you do to demonstrate your professionalism and let parents know you have confidence in your ability?

- Involve parents.

A confidence teacher welcomes the support and involvement of parents and is not intimidated by the help a parent can offer. A confident teacher views education as a team effort, and parents as a part of that team.

Professionalism in dealing with parents requires that you have a plan for working with parents all year long. Parent involvement is not a twice-a-year event. It is a daily part of your responsibilities. It cannot be left to chance encounters and sporadic conversations. You need to know exactly when, how and why you will contact parents from the first day of school to the last. You need to develop a parent involvement plan.

A parent involvement plan is your plan of action for dealing with parents throughout the year. This plan is not a strict, step-by-step

prescription. A successful parent involvement plan is one that you develop to meet your specific needs, and the needs of your students and their parents.

- **Demonstrate.**

Show your confidence in every interaction with parents. Each time you meet with a parent, speak on the phone or send a note home, you have a new opportunity to shine. Make the most of these opportunities. Stop and think a minute before you speak or write a note. Be professional, confident and assertive. Then let your words and attitude carry that message forth.

- **Communicate**

Assured communication-communication that says “I know what I’m doing” is vital to working effectively with parents. Would you hire an attorney who vacillated on how to advise you? Why should a parent be expected to support a teacher who does not appear to have confidence in his or her abilities? You have to impress upon parents that you do in fact know what you’re doing. You have to learn to project the attitude of self-assurance that earns respect and promotes confidence. That means learning communication skills.

- **Methodology**

The key to parent involvement is communication. The key to successful communication is awareness and sensitivity. A teacher today works with many kinds of families, including stepfamilies, single-parent and two-parent families, families torn by poverty or wrestling with divorce and transient families.

Today, a teacher can’t assume that one method or style of communication will fit the needs of all. An effective teacher must be sensitive to the varying realities of the families of his or her students at all times. Throughout this paper you are given a wide variety of parent

communication suggestions. Before you put any of these to use, take time to think about the person with whom you will be communicating. Make every effort to satisfy yourself that you are, to the best of your ability, communicating in an appropriate manner.

Take special care to be aware of the cultural diversity of your students and make every effort to gain an understanding of their varying cultural expectations and values. Let that knowledge guide your words and actions throughout the year. What are acceptable behaviors, or manners, in one cultural may not be in another. Your professional judgement must lead you as you communicate with each and every parent.

Teacher who are most successful in getting parent support adhere to the “golden rule” of positive parent relations: treat parents the way you would want to be treated if you had a child in school. This common-sense approach to positive parent involvement is one of the most valuable qualities you can develop. Through your words and actions, you will consistently demonstrate to parents that you are a concerned and caring teacher. You will have a guideline for determining how you will approach and deal with parents in all situations.

Putting yourself in the parent’s place can take the guesswork out of determining how to handle many situations. You will find the golden rule mentioned throughout this paper.

Do you find that you avoid dealing with parents because you’re just not comfortable working with them? You’re not alone. Most teachers will agree that they were trained to teach students and that parents were never even mentioned in their education classes.

Teachers know they need training in working with parents if they are to do their job effectively. Most teachers indicated that they felt they should be trained how to work with parents. Teachers felt this training should be required in their undergraduate program. Principals felt this training was even more important.

Given the perceived need for training, what is provided in a typical teacher education program? A recent study indicates that education program provided as much as one class period on how to work with parents.

In the past, teachers did not need this training. In most instances a phone call home could solve a problem. Teachers asked for help and parents followed through. The situation has changed today. Without training, you may find that you do not have the skills and confidence necessary to get the backing you need from parents.

Just as you need to know how to develop lesson plans for curriculum and create a discipline plan for behavior management, you also need to know how to work with parents. This requires special skills. You must be trained to work with all kinds of parents, including those who question or challenge your professional competence.

To accomplish this, you must learn to listen effectively and respond accordingly. A teacher, just as any business manager, needs to be trained in effective communication skills.

B. DISCUSSION

If you haven't already, sooner or later you will encounter parents who make things difficult for you. They may be angry at you or angry at the school. They may be upset by years of perceived or actual injustices. They may be frustrated by their inability to deal with their children, or they may just be overwhelmed by

the stress in their own lives. Whatever the reason, these are parents whose roadblocks threaten to undermine your teaching efforts.

- Preparation is the key.

“this parents came in and just read me the riot act. I had lowered her daughter’s grade on a term paper because it was turned in late. But according to the parent, I was to blame. She said I was such a lousy teacher that her daughter didn’t know how to do the work. I didn’t know how to respond. I was just shaking. And the worse part of it was that all of my students were watching!”

You can’t avoid situation like these. You can’t even anticipate them. When they occur you have to be prepared to stand your ground and proceed with confidence. You have a lot riding on this moment, and you need to handle it carefully, professionally and effectively. The well-being of your students depends upon your ability to reach the parent then and there.

As you probably told your students, the more thoroughly you learn your lessons, the easier they will be to apply. Those same words pertain to you here. When a difficult situation arises, you won’t have time to check in this book for the right technique or the most effective phrases to use. You must have already learned the words, the attitude and the techniques and made them part of your teaching style.

Here are some specialized communication skills that will help you handle challenging situations. Learn them now, before you need them.

Communication skills for difficult situations:

- How to disarm criticism
- How to keep a conference focused on your goal

- How to get a commitment from non-cooperative parents.
- How to handle a parent who makes an unscheduled visit to school.
- How to handle phone calls from parents

One of the most distressing situation you encounter as a teacher is to be on the receiving end of a barrage of criticism by a parent. It's usually unanticipated, generally uncomfortable and almost always hurtful. Though comments like these may sting at first, don't become hurt or angry. Stay in control. Recognize that you're dealing with a very distraught parent and that you've got to keep a clear head. Maintain a professional attitude. Unpleasant reactionary statements are not the words of a confident professional. They inspire neither respect nor understanding from the parent. Defensive responses will not help you break down a parent's anger. They only shut down communication and leave the parent no choice but to continue his or her criticism. You need to know how to quickly disarm the criticism and get the parent back on a more productive track.

Remember, justified or not, the parent's anger is real. People who are angry need to feel they are being listened to. Let the parent talk it out.

If the previously mentioned techniques do not work, and the parent stays in the classroom or continues to follow you through the halls, get help from the principal or vice principal immediately. If necessary, give a note to a student to take to the office asking for assistance. This is especially important if a parent is out of control and making threats. Under no circumstances should you stand there and allow a parent to verbally abuse or threaten you.

Sample case : A teacher is meeting with a parent about a behavior problem. As the teacher begins discussing the problem, the parent responds;

Parent: Believe me, I'd do something if I could. I know how John behaves at school is wrong; he's the same way at home. I just don't have any idea what to do to help him stop. And what difference would it make anyway? He doesn't listen to a thing I say.

Here are two possible responses;

Teacher A: Well, John needs to behave at school. I can't have him disrupting my class.

Teacher B: I hear you saying that you really want to help John learn to behave at school. And I know it's not always easy to know how to do it. If you'd like, we can work together to come up with some solutions. I've worked with lots of kids just like John. I can promise you that if we put our heads together, we will come up with some solutions that will get John back on track.

- Teacher A has pushed the problem, not a solution, onto the parent. If he had listened more effectively, he would have heard that the parents is really at a loss for what to do.
- Teacher B realized that she was speaking with a parent who was willing to help but just didn't have any idea what to do. Knowing she had to move the parent past this roadblock, she responded by offering further suggestions for what the parent could do to remedy the problem. Through her words, this teacher let the parent know that she was concerned enough about the student to take the time to help solve the problem.

C. CONCLUSION

Dealing with difficult parents may be unsettling, but when handled with skill and confidence, you can move toward a productive outcome. These situations are the ones that will really test your professionalism and confidence.

If you speak and act with confidence, if you've learned to recognize and deal with your own roadblocks, if you've practiced and honed your own listening skills so you can recognize and move parents past their own roadblocks, then you have indeed achieved the ability to handle difficult situations and , in doing so, improve the student's chances for success.

If you are unclear about any of the procedures mentioned in this paper, now is the time to review them. Get them clear and working for you now. The key to being prepared is having your skills in place before you really need them.

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