

Parent Involvement

For purposes of enhancing school-home relations the following suggestions are offered:

A. Parent-Teacher Conferences

The parent-teacher conference should serve to:

1. Provide a progress report on a child's achievement, e.g., academic (SLO progress), social-emotional (zest for learning, study habits).
2. Enable the teacher to learn more about the child from the parent's perspective.
3. Improve the academic conditions in the home by discussing the role of the parent in parent-child conversations about school and everyday events; encouragement and discussion of leisure reading; monitoring and joint critical analysis of television viewing and peer activities; deferral of immediate gratifications to accomplish long-term goals; expressions of affection and interest in the child's academic and other progress as a person, and, efforts to strengthen the climate of the home through laughter, caprice, serendipity and spontaneity.

Effort should be made to achieve 100% contact. To accomplish this, it may be necessary to contact parents in the evening--by home visit or by telephone. In some instances, it may be advantageous to maintain contact on a regular basis, e.g., every two weeks.

B. Open Houses

This event can be used to "showplace" the accomplishments of the school. Parents, students and staff, as "stockholders", should "celebrate" their accomplishments so that all have pride and ownership in the accomplishments.

C. Building and Room Newsletters

Such communication should let the respective audiences know what is going on. The room newsletter should explain the curricular progress so that parents know what is going on and can correlate that information with homework assignments and the information conveyed by the child. Newsletters should be "proofread" to avoid grammatical and spelling errors.

D. Parent-Staff Meetings

Such meetings can be used to discuss child development issues-homework, study habits, positive-image building, active listening, motivating, etc. In some instances, resource specialists may be helpful in providing an additional perspective. In some instances, it may be beneficial to meet parents on their own "turf" by holding a "coffee klatsch" for a group of parents in a home.

E. School Improvement Projects

School improvement projects are most successful when parents, staff and students collaborate. Improvement committees should receive a specific assignment or "charge" so that the committee members have and understand the common purpose.

F. Preschool Education

Parent education can contribute to the success of the child when he/she enters school. Informational meetings accompanied by support materials are beneficial to the parent of a preschool child. Such sessions can also be incorporated with the Child Find component of special education.

Some schools have also found it useful to develop a "home visitor" program to help the parent get their child ready for school.