

PARENTS-TEACHERS COLLABORATION

AN ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

You are a regular teacher at a local school. You have recently received a [diary entry](#) from the parent of one of your new students, who has expressed their frustration and disappointment at not being heard at school so far. The parent's child has special education needs, and they feel that their concerns and opinions are being ignored by the school staff. As the teacher of this student, you are about to meet with the parent to discuss their concerns and to work together to build a new relationship that is based on mutual respect and understanding.

NAME & SURNAME:

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GETTING READY FOR THE MEETING

Question	Answer & Explanation
What is the purpose of the meeting? Who is present and why?	The school is organising a trip, so the teacher invites the pupil's parents to a meeting. The special needs coordinator or school psychologist is present as well.
What type of collaboration will you try to achieve? What is your vision?	It is important to foster mutual understanding and respect. It is also important to agree on the code of conduct concerning e.g. the timeframe - what the right time to call is or when to expect a response to a message.
How do you ensure that parents have the opportunity to prepare? What communication do you have beforehand? What preparatory question(s) do you give?	The teacher makes a phone call to say how well the child did with something, to share some good news or praise. This leaves the parents happy, and helps build the good relationship. Some of the preparatory questions for the parents could be: What are your expectations as a parent towards me as a teacher? Do you feel that I can adequately support your voice during meetings and discussion moments? What could help? The teacher sends the parents a reminder a couple of days before the meeting, asking the parents to confirm the time and place.
How do you decide on the time and location of the meeting? How do you ensure that the meeting can take place in a safe and confidential atmosphere?	The teacher and the parents agree on the time and place of the meeting. The teacher provides a quiet meeting room, where the parents can come, meet and talk to the teacher. Some of the questions to foster a safe environment could be: Which communication channel works best for you as a parent? (e.g. email, phone, etc.) What time works best for you as a parent in terms of communication? (e.g. being



	informed at a set time, during the week, at the weekend, etc.)
What plans do you have in place to provide the parents with frameworks to encourage their involvement?	The teacher agrees with the parents on how to continue their communication. They agree on the frequency of their meetings or consultations. The teacher asks the parents to e.g. act as volunteers on a trip, encourages them to share their experiences and views with the other teachers and parents, and includes them in decision-making groups.
What digital technologies are available to assist with cooperative projects and simplify communication with parents? How would you go about introducing these tools to the parents?	The teacher can send the parents a simple e-mail or make a phone call first. The teacher finds out what kind of communication the parents prefer - coming in person, talking on the phone or online, via a certain platform, or by e-mail. If the parents need support with any of the tools, the teacher can organise a workshop or provide them with a video tutorial or detailed instructions.

DURING THE MEETING

Question	Answer & Explanation
How do you start the conversation? (consider your own body language) Where is everyone seated? In what ways are you fostering a friendly atmosphere during the meeting?	The teacher greets the parents in a warm, but professional tone, by their names to establish connection, and thanks them for their time. It can build trust among the parents. Everyone is seated to face each other. This way, everyone has direct eye contact which creates a safe zone. The teacher shares the good news first, and makes sure that the conversation is positive all the time. The teacher also shows care about the child. This will allow the parents to relax and they will appreciate it.
What are the crucial things that should be communicated from your perspective and from the parents' perspective? How can you promote this exchange of information?	The teacher asks questions, thus giving the parents a voice and a chance to offer insights into how the teacher can help their child. The teacher makes sure to acknowledge the parents' ideas are listened to and valued. The teacher gives the parents the opportunity to ask questions, too. If the teacher does not know the answer, he/she makes a note and provides answers in a day or two. The teacher and the parents make decisions together.
What do you focus on during the meeting? How do you ensure that the conversation stays focused on the goals?	The teacher tries to find out what the parents would like to see done for their child in the classroom or what they might find helpful. The teacher encourages the parents to share what works for them at home, or they find challenging, and agree on some techniques. It can show that the teacher and the parents are working as a team, and can contribute to the well-being of the child.
How can you ensure that your vision for inclusion is aligned with the feelings, the needs and expectations of the parents?	The teacher tries to listen actively. The teacher asks questions and summarises what has been said in order to avoid misunderstanding. For example, 'What I understand from what has been said is... Am I right?' When the parents see that their thoughts and feelings are acknowledged, they feel valued.
How do you end the conversation?	The teacher recaps the important points talked about, ends with an action plan, and thanks the parents for coming and for their support. The teacher asks the



	parents for their feedback to ensure that everyone is on the same page.
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AFTER THE MEETING

Question	Answer & Explanation
How are you planning to follow up after the meeting? How do you ensure that the parent can still be involved after the meeting?	The teacher sends a quick e-mail or note thanking the parents for coming. The teacher and the parents agree on the frequency of their communication. The teacher can send a folder of the pupil's work or information about the pupil's conduct every week, or month, as previously agreed, for the parents' review and comments. The teacher encourages the parents to act as volunteers during the planned trip. This can be a proof to the parents that they are valued.
How are you planning to evaluate the partnership effort and keep a record of the outcomes considering the following question: What impacts, effects or consequences has the partnership had for the student?	The teacher agrees with the parents on some action steps, timelines and a follow-up meeting. Both the teacher and the parents agree to work together to enhance the child's social functioning and address problem behaviours. Some of the questions the teacher can ask the parents to facilitate shared responsibilities can be: What do you want to prioritize in the actions we come up with? Are my actions as a teacher/ as a team in line with your inclusion vision? What would you like to see done differently?
What does the reporting look like after the parent-teacher meeting?	The teacher and the special needs coordinator or school psychologist summarise what has been discussed, including the action plan, conclusions and goals, and provide the parents with a copy.

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