

UNLOCK THE POWER OF PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS FOR INCLUSIVE LEARNING

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to consider the following scenario:

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.

Please note that the layout of the diary entry may appear confusing, but this is intentional. We want you to experience the same sense of frustration that a parent may feel when trying to navigate a complex and overwhelming school situation.

As you read the diary entry, try to put yourself in the shoes of a parent who feels unheard and frustrated. Imagine what thoughts and emotions may be going through their mind as they write this entry.

The main questions you need to consider for the final activity are provided below in a format that includes before, during, and after the meeting.

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GETTING READY FOR THE MEETING

Reflect on the following questions and explain your answer.

Question	Answer & Explanation
<p>What is the purpose of the meeting? Who is present and why?</p>	<p>The purpose of the meeting is to rewarm the relationship with the parent and to establish new bases of trust and cooperation, where the parent will feel respectful and that their opinion counts.</p> <p>I would ask the parent which person they consider confidential and if they want me to invite that person in the meeting in order to feel safer. From the school side I would be only me, the classroom teacher, because they felt uncomfortable on our last meeting with the presence of other people.</p>
<p>What type of collaboration will you try to achieve? What's your vision?</p>	<p>My vision is to build a strong partnership with the parent. I want to create a two-way collaboration. Make the parent feel safe to talk to me whenever they want, feel unique and not just another one parent, and feel that they matter to me and that I consider what they say.</p>
<p>How do you ensure that parents have the opportunity to prepare? What communication do you have beforehand?? What preparatory question(s) do you give?</p>	<p>I will talk to them before the meeting in order to settle together the time of it so they have the time to prepare. To help them I will ask them some preparatory questions such as "What do you need to create an open, safe, and pleasant climate?," "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?".</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>The time and the location of the meeting will be decided by the parent and the teacher. I think this is crucial because it shows that the meeting will be held on an equal atmosphere. Additionally, I will ask them some questions before the meeting to ensure the safety and confidentiality, such as "What makes you feel involved as a parent?," "What do you need to create an open, safe, and pleasant climate?," "Is everything clear for you?" etc. And I will make sure that their demands will be satisfied,</p>

<p>What plans do you have in place to provide the parents with frameworks to encourage their involvement?</p>	<p>First of all I am going to discuss with them which communication channel works best for them. Secondly, what time works best for them in terms of communication. I will make some proposals about how we can communicate all over the year. For example via email, messenger etc. We can have a "communication box" if they aren't familiar with digital technologies, in which they can leave me a note whenever they want something or I can leave something for them.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>They can visit our blog for general information and watch the projects we run in our school. For interpersonal communication we can use viber, email, messenger. We can use e-me or e-class in order to give them helpful material. We can choose whichever is more familiar to them. I can also launch a seminar to introduce them some of that tools.</p>



DURING THE MEETING

Reflect on the following questions and explain your answer.

Question	Answer & Explanation
<p>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?</p>	<p>I start the conversation with a warm welcome. I am trying to not use jargon and keep the conversation short and simple. I will give them the opportunity to choose their seat so as they don't feel "LOCKED IN" like the last time. I will foster a friendly atmosphere during the meeting by implementing the things that they have told me in the preparatory questions I have asked them. By that way they will feel respectful from the beginning of the meeting.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>The crucial things that I have to communicate to them are the positive things about Robbe and how we can together as a team help Robbe even more. From their perspective I want to hear whatever they have to say. I should show respect to their family choices and their history. I should acknowledge their invisible pedagogical work. To promote the exchange of information I should make them feel safe and that they can trust me. I will be prepared to actively listen to them and help the conversation with some questions such as "How do you as a parent see that your child is happy?, How do you notice that your child feels safe with someone (new)?".</p>
<p>What do you focus on during the meeting? How do you ensure that the conversation stays focused on the goals?</p>	<p>I focus on how we can both help Robbe as a team. I want to collect information and exchange information on how we can do it. I ensure that the conversation stays focused on the goals by asking specific questions such as "What activities does your child enjoy doing (both active and calm)?, What is the obstacle that your child is facing? What have you learned that can help with this?, What do you see that works to support your child in learning (something new)?".</p>



<p>How can you ensure that your vision for inclusion is aligned with the feelings, the needs and expectations of the parents?</p>	<p>I can ask some questions to understand what is their vision. For example "What is important to you in terms of inclusion?, Are my actions as a teacher/ as a team in line with your inclusion vision? What would you like to see done differently? We can create a shared vision that will emerge from the conclusions of our discussion.</p>
<p>How do you end the conversation?</p>	<p>I end the conversation by asking them if they want to ask something else, if everything was clear enough, if they want me to summarize what we have said. If they agree with the continuation of our communication, I don't forget to make a positive comment about Robbe at the end.</p>



AFTER THE MEETING

Reflect on the following questions and explain.

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?	I am planning to make a schedule together in which we will agree the form of our communication for now on. We can use some digital technologies for instant messages or/and the "communication box". I think that if they feel welcome in the meeting the possibilities to still be involved are high.
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?	I am planning to keep a diary before the meeting and after the meeting and each meeting. I will observe Robbe and write down the possible changes in their behavior.
What does the reporting look like after the parent-teacher meeting?	I would prepare a summary about all the things we have discussed during the meeting. I would focus on Robbe's achievements till now and the goals we will set for now on. I would make a schedule in collaboration with the parents for our next meeting and the steps we are going to follow in order to be more helpful to Robbe.

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