Parental Involvement: From Communication to Conferences
Objectives

• Develop strategies for involving parents in your classroom.

• Develop strategies for communicating with parents.
Objectives

• Identify the purposes of parent-teacher conferences.

• Identify and use effective communication skills during parent-teacher conferences.

• Create your own plan for parental involvement.
Parental Involvement
Why is parental involvement important?

- When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school — and the schools they go to are better.
- The family makes critical contributions to student achievement from preschool through high school. A home environment that encourages learning is more important to student achievement than income, education level or cultural background.
- Reading achievement is more dependent on learning activities in the home than is math or science. Reading aloud to children is the most important activity that parents can do to increase their child's chance of reading success.
- When children and parents talk regularly about school, children perform better academically.

http://www.nea.org/parents/index.html
Why is parental involvement important?

• Three kinds of parental involvement at home are consistently associated with higher student achievement: actively organizing and monitoring a child's time, helping with homework and discussing school matters.

• The earlier that parent involvement begins in a child's educational process, the more powerful the effects.

• Positive results of parental involvement include improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, improved behavior, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling.

• [http://www.nea.org/parents/index.html](http://www.nea.org/parents/index.html)
Involvement is different...

- Culturally responsive teachers understand that parents from different cultural background interact with schools differently.

- Offer parents a variety of ways to be involved in school
  - Schedule events at different times of the day
  - Be mindful of religious and other holidays
  - If possible, translate school documents into home languages
Communication
Communication is Key

- Make time to communicate with parents
- Plan for positive communication
- Make yourself available
Ways to Be in Contact

- Written Notes
- Phone Calls
- Email
- Web pages
  - [http://teacherweb.com/](http://teacherweb.com/)
  - Mr. Waller - [http://www.johnston.k12.nc.us/education/staff/staff.php?sectionid=2205&](http://www.johnston.k12.nc.us/education/staff/staff.php?sectionid=2205&)
Professional Communication

• Professional communication is different than calling, texting, or emailing friends and family.

• Be aware of the weight your words carry with students and their parents, verbally or in writing.

• Avoid using educational jargon.
Parent-Teacher Conferences
On a sticky note…

Write down what you think is the purpose of a Parent-Teacher Conference.

Short, 3 word phrases
Parents have the right to...

- Review student records
- Talk with their child’s teacher
- Take time off for school-related matters
Preparing for the Parent-Teacher Conference
Activity

What should teachers share with parents?

What should teachers ask parents?
The Importance of Basic Communication Skills in a Parent-Teacher Conference
Active Listening

- Tends to be more difficult than most realize
- Requires the listener to focus on the speaker in order to understand the speaker’s message
- Requires the listener to suspend judgments and direct her energy into listening attentively
Skills for Active Listening

- Focused attention
- Verbal feedback
- Open mindedness
- Questioning techniques
- Expressed interest
Just the Facts
10 Ways to Improve Listening Skills

1. Stop Talking
2. Concentrate on the Speaker
3. Put the other person at ease
4. Remove Distractions
5. Be patient
6. Hold your temper
7. Do not argue; reserve your criticism
8. Make eye contact
9. Ask questions
10. Stop talking

Adopted from the University of Minnesota Extension Service
## Put ANOTHER Way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’T</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Use active listening skills</td>
<td>• Yell</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Remain calm</td>
<td>• Use profanity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write a thank you note that reflects the</td>
<td>• Threaten anyone</td>
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<td>outcome of the meeting</td>
<td>• Throw tantrums</td>
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More Do's and Don't's

Review this list before each Parent-Teacher Conference.
What Might Parents Ask?
What Might Parents Ask?

- At what level is my child performing?
- How does my child perform in class, academically and behaviorally?
- Did your school make ABC/NCLB goals?
- What can I do to help my child?
Questions to prepare for....

• What skills and knowledge will you expect students to master this year?
• How will you assess your students?
• How will you differentiate lessons for all students?
• How will you encourage students to look ahead?
• What can parents do to stay more involved in their child’s academic progress?
Now It's Your Turn...
Questions or Concerns

Working with parents is challenging…

…any concerns?
Develop your Parent Involvement Plan

- How will you welcome parents into your classroom at the beginning of the school year?
- Does your school have a protocol for parent-teacher conferences?
- When will parents be invited to participate in class?
- Will you provide opportunities for participation that are culturally responsive?
- What are your concerns? How will you address them? Who can you turn to for assistance?
THANK YOU!!
Dr. Diana Lys
Office of Professional Development
and Student Outreach

ECU College of Education

www.ecu.edu/cs-educ/opd/