

PARENT INVOLVEMENT TIPS SHEET

- Designate or hire a parent liaison or community liaison that is a regular participant of SAP. If not possible, discuss each participant's role in working with parents.
- Create a parent/teacher outreach team, Action Team, or other team structures in schools to focus on parent involvement
- Utilize current structures and support services to facilitate communication with parents, including: parent centers as a place for communication; parent liaison, parent coordinator, family-school coordinator, and other para-professional positions designed specifically to enhance communication
- Offer workshops to parents and families on school-related issues as well as parenting issues.
- Encourage parents and community members to share their skills and experiences with students as part of classroom activities.
- Develop a program to provide information to parents and caregivers whose first language is not English. Make sure that the program involves staff members and school volunteers from diverse backgrounds so that families feel comfortable asking questions or reaching out to a contact person.
- Make the school building available to parents and community residents for educational, recreational, and social activities. Regularly assess family involvement efforts using questionnaires, telephone interviews, meetings, and discussions to learn which efforts are most productive and to improve those that are not.
- Communication Examples:
 - Written Communications such as: letters from teacher and school (often with a section for the parent's response); newsletters from the teacher and school; a school calendar filled with useful information; information booklets and pamphlets.
 - Phone Calls by the teacher, principal, or parent liaison - not just when there are problems, but also to share good news about the students' accomplishments and encourage parent attendance at upcoming events.
 - Using Technology to enhance communication, including creative use of voice mail and voice messaging, homework hotlines, email, and school web-sites.
 - Home Visits by the teacher, principal or parent liaison.
 - School Events for the purpose of communication, including: a student-parent orientation before school begins; student-parent-teacher days; open house and back-to-school nights; parent-teacher conferences; and required report card pick-up meetings.
 - Enhanced Quality of Communication, through: translating letters and written materials into the language of the parent; providing language interpreters at parent meetings; giving faculty and staff human relations and communications training to help them communicate more effectively with parents; training teachers and administrators in conflict resolution skills.