

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

EXAMPLES OF MICRO-CHANGES IN ROUTINES AND PRACTICES

- Send regular communications home to families – let students write and illustrate the notes, newsletters, or entries on a classroom webpage.
- Have students write letters or make phone calls to their family to celebrate their successes. Or take a photo of the classroom celebration and send it to the family.
- Every once in a while, assign activities in which one part can be completed at school but the second part is completed at home with a family member.
- Hold regular 1-hour ‘open class’ times when families can come in to discuss different topics of concern to them and their child.
- Videotape a classroom presentation or activity and let students take the video home to show their families.
- Construct book bags holding a book, an object or picture related to the book, and a journal notebook. Students will read the book with their families, talk about the object, and the family will write a note in the journal to send back to class with the book bag.
- Keep a classroom website where families can go to find out what the students are learning, and what homework has been assigned. To ease the work of a website, have students help compose it and keep it up to date.

EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

- Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (Sheridan, 1997). This is a unique form of systematic consultation in which teachers and parents meet together with a behavioral consultant to devise solutions to student learning or behavior problems. The intervention uses systematic data-based problem solving procedures and requires adequate meeting time. However, the time is well spent; results show significant improvements in students’ success and improved communication between home and school.
- The Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers Program (LIFT; Eddy, Reid, & Fetrow, 2000). This preventive intervention has been shown to be effective in reducing rates of conduct problems and substance use among children living in communities with high rates of delinquency. Students participate in classroom lessons promoting positive behaviors while parents are instructed in the use of similar discipline strategies in the home, and teachers are taught more effective classroom management strategies.
- The Seattle Social Development Project (Hawkins et al., 1992). This intervention also provides parent management training for parents while teachers learn strategies in proactive classroom management and cooperative learning. Variations on the training are provided at each of grades one through six. When implemented across all school years, evidence shows that the program reduces delinquency and strengthens children’s prosocial attachments to families and school.

IDEAS FOR ADDITIONAL MICROSTRATEGIES

- Provide parents with access to “PowerSchool” to track their student’s progress.
- Create a “Buddy the Bear” assignment for your class. Have a stuffed bear that each student takes turns bringing to their home for the weekend. Each child and family must write a journal entry in the bear’s notebook to share with the teacher.
- Have a classroom newsletter that goes home to parents once or twice a month.
- Use the student’s assignment notebook as a resource for parents to check their student’s work.
- Design “Caught being good” notecards for the class. The teacher or adult write what the student has done well in class on a notecard. The notecard is then sent home for the student to share with his or her parents. It would be a good idea to design these notecards so they are colorful and appealing.
- Invite parents to a celebration assembly, family reading/math night, or team night in which the parents can attend different sessions, talk with other parents, and meet other teachers.
- Provide adult language classes in the school building for parents to attend and learn.
- Create an email or texting scrapbook between the parents and teacher to keep track of discussion.
- Implement a mentor program between parents.
- Plan parent teacher conferences during the day, so parents can see what is going on in the classroom.
- Videotape student behaviors to share with their parents.
- Have the student initiate phone calls home.
- Hold student led conferences.
- Use twitter and other social media devices to keep parents updated.
- Send out electronic newsletters.
- Send a weekly journal home—have the students write and invite the parents to respond.
- Use the iPad for communication—prob2quo2go (app).
- Video Mail(app).
- Invite parents/family to celebration of work.
- Remind 101 (app)
- Have students text parents.
- Take pictures of groups with successful work and send an email to parents.
- Make it a point to make positive phone calls, positive calls home once per week/month/quarter.