Key Points

- One of the greatest struggles school personnel have is getting families engaged in the educational process.
- It is essential to establish a strong working relationship with parents and families of the children in your program and there are ways to reach out to families. Even during challenging times!
- If you share the same values and beliefs, have similar life experiences and personal characteristics as families ... you probably will interpret what they say and do correctly;
- If you share different values and beliefs, or know very little about them and their life experiences and personal characteristics ... miscommunication and misunderstandings may take place.
- Through acceptance, compromise and sensitivity to a family’s culture, values and beliefs, you may avoid making children feel torn between practices and home and at school.

Key Steps to Resolving Differences Constructively

- Seek first to understand the family’s position.
- Validate the family’s concerns and wishes.
- Explain how your program addresses their concern.
- Make a plan to check with one another to assess progress.

Get to Know Families

- Acknowledge their differences
- Ask questions and learn about families

Help Families Feel Welcomed into the Program

- Create a welcoming environment
- Explain your program
- Build trust
- Include all family members

Communicate Regularly with Families

- Daily
- Use a variety of methods
● Develop a Partnership with Families on the Child’s Learning and Development

○ Offers ways for family to contribute to learning
○ Conduct regular conferences
○ Encourage families to help with planning
○ Have Resources & Information Available for Families
○ Up to date list of community agencies
○ Brochures and resources on loan
○ Lists of support groups in the community
○ Lending library

Resources


Graham-Clay, Susan ( ) *Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers.*


NAEYC – Young Children (2009) *Communications Skills for Challenging Conversations, a training for program administrators*

For more information on this training or other Kaplan Professional Development
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