



Transforming our Roles as Co-educators: A parents guide to meaningful engagement

An interactive workbook aimed to encourage and guide engagement efforts of parents through out the academic year.

Middle School Edition



Parental Engagement is an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success across all grade levels.

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Master of Social Work Program

*My deepest thanks go to my amazing children, Elijah and Sophia, who remain my motivation and inspiration in everything I do! Mommy hopes I have made you both proud and have shown you that anything is possible with hard work and dedication.
Follow your dreams my loves!*



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Notes:





As your child enters middle school they will go from having one teacher to multiple teachers. This is a unique factor of your transition to middle school. Your child's school schedule is important, it will list all of the classes your child will take during the school year, as well as the teachers assigned to your student. Knowing your child's teacher for each class and how to contact them will be very important . Tell your child's teacher the best way you can be contacted as well.

Period	Teacher Name	Email	Phone
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
After and before school			





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Conference Check list

Preparing for a Parent -Teacher Conference can help insure you get the best out of your time with your child's teachers. Below the questions reflect common areas of concern among parents. Use this guide to prepare for your conferences. Be sure to talk with your child as well to see if they having anything they would like to add as well. Check any question you may want to ask your teacher and use space below for any additional or specific thoughts and/or teacher responses.



Date and Time: _____

- How is my child doing in your class? What are my child's grades?

 - Is my child in any special classes, groups, or programs? Why?

 - How does my child's work compare to the work of other students?

 - Is my child working up to his or her ability?
-
-

-
-
- What goals have you set for my child this year? Do you anticipate that my child will meet those goals? Why or why not?

 - What programs are available if my child needs extra help?

 - Has my child missed any classes or failed to complete any assignments?

 - Does my child participate in class discussions and activities?

 - How well does my child get along with others? Have any incidents at school involved my child?

 - What concerns do you have about my child's behavior or academic progress?

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EXAMPLE OF
Parental Involvement Policy
Working together: Home, School, and Community

We believe that families, the community and the school working together will ensure quality experiences for our students. As part of our school improvement plan, we have a full slate of parent and community activities planned to address the needs and concerns of our biggest supporters.

To make our relationship with the community more permanent, we created a parent and community room that will allow community members a place to call home as they work with our staff and students. We encourage you to be involved with our school, please call your school.

- 1. Your school will take the following actions to involve parents in the joint development, review and improvement of its school parental involvement plan:**
 - a. Representation on School Improvement Team*
 - b. Representation on School Centered Decision Making Team*
 - c. Policy made available at all parents*
 - d. Policy made available for parents to review in main office*
 - e. Representation on District's Parent Involvement Council*

- 2. Your school will take the following actions to involve parents in the process of school development, review and improvement of the school/parent compact.**
 - a. Representation on School Improvement Team*
 - b. Representation on School Centered Decision Making Team*
 - c. Compact made available at all parent/students events and parent conferences*
 - d. Compact will be posted in all classrooms and made available for parents to review in main office*
 - e. Compact will be printed in the Student Handbook*

- 3. Your school will hold an annual meeting to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I program and to explain the Title I requirements and the right of parents to be involved. The school will convene the meeting at a time convenient for parents and will offer a flexible number of additional parental involvement meetings, such as in the morning, afternoon or evening, so that as many parents as possible are able to attend. The school will invite all parents of children participating in Title I program to this meeting and encourage them to attend by:**
 - a. Translators*
 - b. School Newsletter*
 - c. Additional Meetings*
 - i. Back to School Night*
 - ii. Math Night*
 - iii. WASL Information Night*
 - iv. Literacy Night*



4. **Your child's school will provide parents of participating children information in timely manner about Title I programs that includes a description and an explanation of the school's curriculum, the forms of academic assessment used to measure children's progress, and the proficiency level students are expected to meet by inviting parents to attend and participate in:**
 - a. *Back to School Night*
 - b. *Math Night*
 - c. *WASL Information Night*
 - d. *Literacy Night*
 - e. *Parent Workshops*
 - f. *Program Nights*

5. **Your child's school will at the request of parents, provide opportunities for regular meetings for parents to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible by:**
 - a. *Individual requests through principal/counselors/teachers*
 - b. *Open invitation for parents to attend community connections meetings*
 - c. *Opportunity to serve on school decision-making committees*
 - d. *Parent/Teacher Conferences*

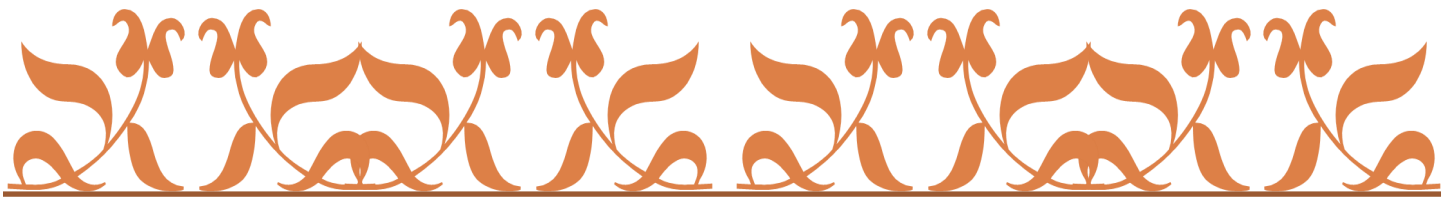
7. **Your child's school will provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, and ways parents may be more effectively involved, to foster parental involvement by:**
 - a. *Math Nights*
 - b. *Literacy Night*
 - c. *WASL Information Night*
 - d. *Parent Involvement Coordinator*

8. **Your child's school will, with the assistance of its parents, educate its teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools, by:**
 - a. *Partnering with the District's School/Family/Community Partnership Program*



9. Your child's school will take the following actions to ensure that information related to the school and parent-programs, meetings and other activities is communicated to parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request, and to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand:

- a. *School newsletter*
- b. *School calendar*
- c. *School Website*
- d. *Student Handbook*
- e. *Individual phone call made by staff and volunteers*



Communication-Understanding Each Other

So why don't our kids want to tell us about their day at school? And why do we think we need to know every detail? And how can we become more effective listeners? To find out, take a look at the situation from your child's perspective and compare it to your own.

"How was school?" and "how are you?" are not really questions — they're greetings. A problem arises because we expect an answer. But the question is so general that it's difficult for kids to answer, particularly when they are on overload from a challenging day at school. "What parents are trying to do when they ask 'how was school?' is to make contact with their child," explains Michael Thompson, Ph.D. But we don't realize that the question "how was school" may not be the most effective way to connect.

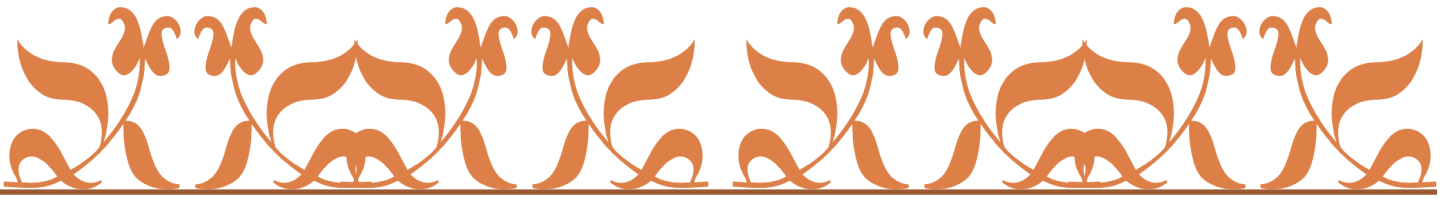
Kids often think adults ask too many questions. "And they are right," adds Thompson, "we do. Adults are often just trying to start a conversation and don't understand that their questions make a child feel put on the spot. Be aware that a question from a big person like you can place demands on a small child, even though you don't mean it that way. "It's important to also be clear why you are asking children about school. Is it merely chit chat, are you looking for something more meaningful, and are you communicating in ways that relate to your child's experience?" notes Diane Levin, Ph.D.

School can be hard for kids and that's why it's hard for them to talk about it. Every day at school, kids get things wrong and make mistakes. That's how they learn. But generally, kids don't want to come home and say, "I was frustrated by my mistakes but I learned from them." They would rather come home and say, "I got everything right." Their feelings about meeting the expectations of their teachers, their parents, and themselves can make school a challenging topic to discuss.

So — should we stop asking questions? No. But you might ask fewer ones and try not to get crazy when your kids don't respond the way you want them to. Remember that if your kids don't want to talk, it's not a rejection of you. When you do speak, try to find ways to discuss what's meaningful to both your child and you, because this shows that you care.

Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/going-to-school/talking-with-kids-about-school/understanding-each-other/>





Communication-Talking Strategies

There isn't one right way, one perfect question, or one right time to have these conversations. Here are some suggestions to try:

Greet your child with an enthusiastic hello. Try saying "great to see you!" or "I missed you!" or simply, "I hope you had a good day," instead of "How was school?" These statements communicate what you really feel without instantly putting your child on the spot with a question. As a result, your child is more likely to speak about her day.

Allow your child not to talk right after school. Many kids don't want to talk the minute they walk in the door. They want to have a snack, call a friend, or just chill out. (Think about how you feel when you walk in after a long day at work. Wouldn't you rather put your feet up and talk later?)

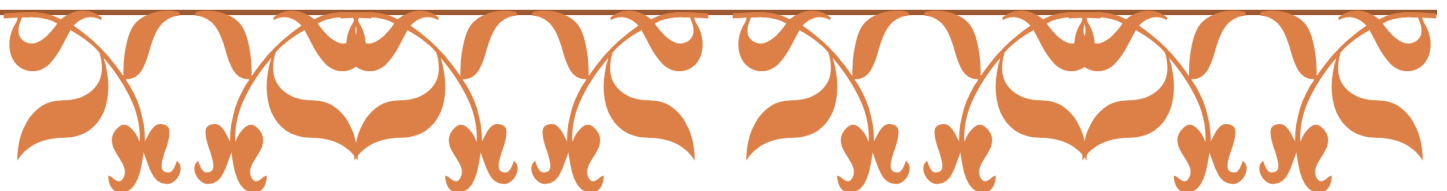
Learn about your child's life at school. The more details you know about your child's school experience, the more valuable your questions will be. If you know the teacher reads a story every day, ask "What story did Mrs. Younger read today?" If you know the teacher's newsletter comes home on Wednesday, set up a ritual to read it together at dinner. If you visit your child's classroom, make note of new things you might want to discuss with your child later.

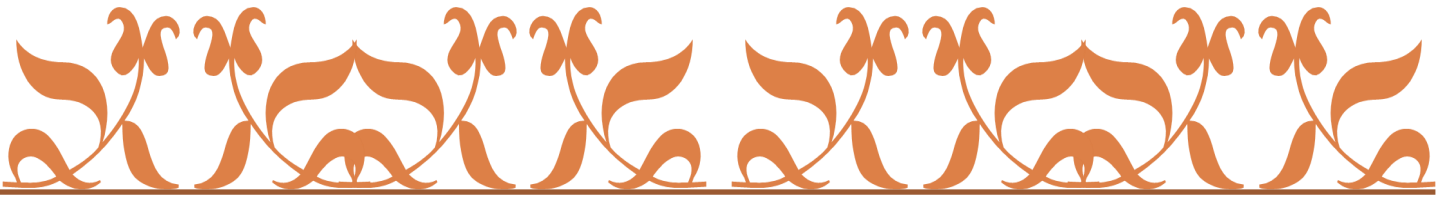
Say what's on your mind. If what you really need to know is "How did you do on the math test?" just ask. If you fish around, your child will resent it more. "But keep in mind that if you frequently ask questions about tests, that's all kids will think you care about," notes Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D.

Avoid face-to-face interrogations. You might do better in situations where you're not face-to-face like the car, when your child takes a bath, or when you are cooking. In this way, your child won't feel put on the spot.

Let the talk emerge naturally. Discuss the day while you cook dinner, read together, or check homework. But try not to use dinner as a time to talk about problems like homework or tests. Everybody needs a break.

Continued on next page





Listen before you talk. Let your child lead you into conversations on her own. Sometimes your child will drop hints without your asking, like “We planted seeds today!” or “Where’s the atlas? I need to find Antarctica.” These are perfect openings to talk together about school.

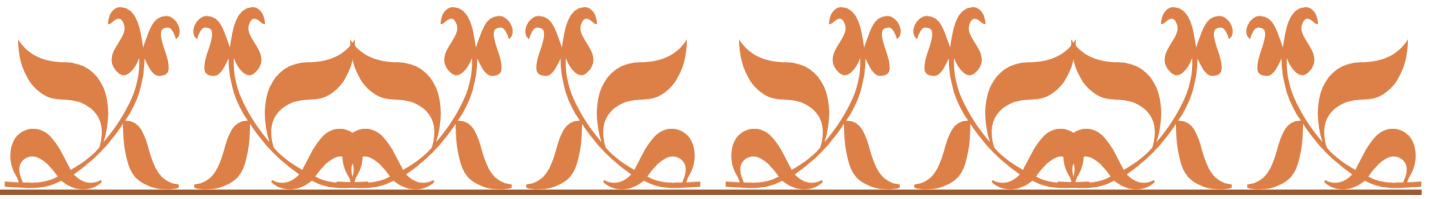
Try communicating without words. The best way to make contact with your child isn't necessarily through talking. “We want our children to talk with us — because talking is our way of communicating. But talk is not how all kids express themselves: play is,” notes Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D. “If we insist they talk our way, we may not get much information, but if we play on their terms, we might. Many children would prefer to reconnect with a hug, by playing a game, or rough housing. Some are more physical than verbal, so you might ask them to give you thumbs up or thumbs down about school, instead of describing it.”

Talk about funny things that happened to you. One of the best ways to stimulate conversation is to talk about funny stuff kids can relate to. “A great way to start conversation is to describe an interesting and funny event from your day. Kids will then respond and talk about interesting things that happened to them,” adds Cohen. Talk about the skunk you passed on the way to work. Talk about the toilet paper that got stuck to your shoe. Talk about the booger you saw hanging from your boss’ nose. Your kids will laugh and probably start talking to you — even the older ones.

Don’t jump in to fix your child’s problem immediately. If your child brings up a problem like “I hate my teacher!” take it in stride. First, find out what *else* your child has to say and what he wants to do about it. You might encourage your child to figure out solutions by asking, “What do you think you want to do about this?” and “Is there something you’d like me to do?” Follow up later with “How did your new strategies work?” or “You haven’t mentioned math class lately, does that mean it’s going better?” If the problem is serious, discuss it with the school.

Help children develop their own solutions. Don’t feel you need to supply the right answer yourself. Instead, share ideas about possible solutions that will help your child feel better. “This is a way to help your child see you as an ally who will support him when problems come up. By helping your child figure it out for himself, you are also giving him a whole set of tools for solving the problems independently as he gets older,” advises Diane Levin, Ph.D. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/going-to-school/talking-with-kids-about-school/talking-strategies/>





Communication- Questions That Work

Whatever your child's age, a specific question, or even a specific statement, may prompt more of a response than the more general "How was school today?" If you listen to your child's answer, and (if the opening is there) ask another question, you'll be on your way to a meaningful conversation.

Ask kids about what interests them:

- "What did you do that was fun today?"
- "Did anything funny happen?"
- "What did you like best today?"
- "Did you read any new books in library?"
- "How did the science experiment turn out?"

Ask about specific people and events in your child's life:

- "Did Mrs. Stone go over that math test?"
- "What did Mr. Zeiner talk about in social studies?"
- "Who'd you sit next to on the bus?"
- "Did Mrs. Davis call on you today?"
- "Are you and Helen still having a hard time?"
- "How are you and Charlie doing?"
- "What do your friends think about the substitute teacher?"

Ask kids about what bugs them. Everybody likes to complain, so if your child is in a bad mood, ask what's wrong. You might find that within a few minutes, your child is telling you what she likes. You might ask:

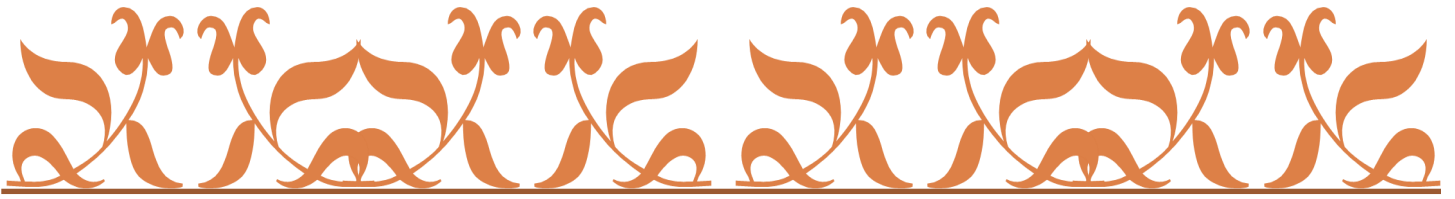
- "Anybody get on your nerves today?"
- "Was your teacher annoying again?"
- "Was there anything really hard for you?"

Make comments about schoolwork. You can look over your child's work or the teacher's weekly class note, and ask:

- "Wow, what a cool picture of a squirrel. I like the bushy tail. What does he use it for?"
- "Can you explain photosynthesis to me?"
- "What is a whole number, anyway?"

Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/going-to-school/talking-with-kids-about-school/questions/>





Additional Good Reads

Ask around with other parent or school staff about informative article or helpful websites. Track your suggestion or good finds here to look back or share with others. There is a wealth of information out there just waiting for you

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Notes for parent/teacher meeting



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Notes for parent/teacher meeting



A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, framed by a thick orange border on the top and left, and a thick brown border on the bottom and right. The lines are spaced evenly down the page. There are three orange circles on the left side of the page, aligned with three of the lines. On the right side, there are three small dark brown squares, also aligned with three of the lines. A thick brown L-shaped bar is located at the bottom right corner of the page.

Notes for parent/teacher meeting



A series of horizontal lines for writing notes. The lines are spaced evenly down the page. On the left side, there are three orange circles and three dark brown squares. On the right side, there are three dark brown squares and a dark brown vertical bar at the bottom right corner.

Notes for parent/teacher meeting



Lined writing area for notes, featuring horizontal lines and decorative elements including a vertical orange bar on the left, a dark brown vertical bar on the right, and a dark brown horizontal bar at the bottom right corner. There are three orange circles on the left side of the lines and three dark brown squares on the right side of the lines.

If possible, keep these items together in one place. If you can't provide your child with needed supplies, check with her teacher, school guidance counselor or principal about possible sources of assistance.

Suggested Supply list:

- pencils
- pens
- erasers
- writing paper
- dictionary

Other supplies that might be helpful include:

- Stapler
- paper clips
- maps
- calculator
- pencil sharpener
- tape
- glue
- paste
- scissors
- ruler
- calculator
- index cards
- thesaurus
- almanac

Supply List



My Behavior Goals

A behavior I would like to change or improve is

I want to change that behavior by _____(Date)

To change that behavior I will

In the table below, record the actions you take to change that behavior.

Date	Action	Result

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Meeting a Mini-Goal

Usually, many small goals or objectives must be met in order to achieve a more important goal. If you want to qualify for the school baseball team, for example, you might first need to improve your pitching. In that case, you'll need to consider how you can improve your pitching and what resources are available to help you. Do you need more time to practice? How much time? What will you have to give up to get that time? Does the baseball coach have a book on pitching that you can borrow? Can a friend or relative coach you?

Of course, improving your pitching probably is only one of the small goals you need to achieve before you can make the baseball team. And meeting even that small goal requires many small steps. Answer the questions below for each of the small goals you need to meet to achieve your main goal.

My main goal is

A mini-goal or objective I need to meet before I can achieve that goal is

To achieve that mini-goal or objective, I need to

In the table below, record the resources and actions you use to achieve your objective.

Date	Action	Result

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My main goal is

A mini-goal or objective I need to meet before I can achieve that goal is

To achieve that mini-goal or objective, I need to

In the table below, record the resources and actions you use to achieve your objective.

Date	Action	Result

My Career Goal

Some day, I might want to pursue a career as

I've chosen that career because

To pursue that career, I'll need the following skills

Some things I can do now to prepare to acquire those skills are

To pursue that career, I'll need the following education/training

Some things I can do now to prepare to acquire that education/training are

Resources I can use to learn more about that career include

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My Wildest Dream

If you could have or do anything in the world, what would it be? Would you visit Disneyland? Compete in the Olympics? Go to college? Play in a band? Own a scooter? Does that dream seem impossible to you? Why? What obstacles stand in your way? Can you overcome those obstacles? How? The questions below will help you decide what you can do to achieve your dream or how you can change your dream to make it achievable.

My wildest dream is to

That is my dream because

I want to achieve my dream by _____ (Date)

The obstacles I need to overcome to achieve my dream are:

To overcome those obstacles, I need to _____

(Complete a Mini-Goal worksheet for each of the obstacles above.)

The obstacles I cannot overcome are:

To get around those obstacles, I can _____

(Complete a Mini-Goal worksheet for each of the obstacles above.)

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