

Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for School Staff

Issue # 7

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement...what does it look like?

Parent involvement is a wide range of behaviour, everything from helping their child with a project or homework, through attending meetings at school, volunteering, fundraising, and engaging the whole school community to get involved.

Why is it important? Research shows that a parent's involvement in their child's education/school helps improve the student's behaviour and academic performance. Yet parent involvement is often seen as a challenge.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most parents want to be involved but don't know how or think their skills aren't useful.

What helps parents to get involved?

- Create opportunities for them to visit the school and make them feel welcome. Most parents make every effort to see their child perform in front of an audience.
- Communicate frequently: reach out, inform, & invite. Use a variety of ways to reach parents. Children can also be good conduits to encourage parent response/attendance.
- Update them on their child's progress. Good news calls or notes home are a welcome change!
- Listen genuinely to their concerns.

- Let them know how their involvement helps improve their child's behaviour and academic achievement.
- Enlist their help with:
 - * crafts
 - * reading groups
 - * reorganizing a class book collection
 - * chaperoning on a field trip
 - * a class "phone tree" to call parents about class events
 - * getting a donation from their work
- Ask what skills, talents and experiences they can share - then have them sign a parent involvement pledge (e.g. see www.three4me.com) to help with certain tasks.
- Remind them to read your school's newsletters and keep them informed about upcoming events.
- Link parents together. Have an involved parent buddy-up with an isolated parent. This can encourage participation.
- Develop parent projects that have visual impact, perhaps a mural or new playground equipment. This helps ensure individual efforts are noticed and appreciated.



Continued....



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What helps parents get involved?

- Keep volunteer groups small. Each parent will feel more responsible for their task knowing that the group depends on them. They can also see more easily what they have accomplished.
- Encourage them to sit on the School Climate Committee or school council.
- Have "strategies for reaching out to other parents" as a standing agenda item on your school council agenda.



- Support school rules and follow the same rules at home re: respect, caring, responsibility.
- Address bullying when it is seen - name it, help to stop it, encourage their child to share their experiences/concerns, inform school staff.
- Attend school events like an *Imagine* assembly or parent info night on bullying.
- Encourage community groups to follow the same principles of bullying prevention - e.g. sports teams, child care programs, Scouts, etc.

If your parents are already quite involved, what's next?

Suggestions you can give parents to use at home:

- Share how classroom meetings are helping students learn to resolve their problems. This can be continued at home by having regular family meetings to discuss issues and plan together.
- Read a book or view video on relationships, then discuss it with their child.

Challenge your parents to come up with new ideas:

- Sponsor a speaker to do a community talk on bullying prevention.
- Take on the challenge of refurbishing the playground.
- Make bullying prevention kits (books, videos, and/or games) for each class. Students can take these kits home on a rotational basis to help discuss relationship issues with their parent(s).
- Share experiences with other schools.

Resources Available

The Imagine Manual - See pgs. 20- 21, 43-48, 69, 72-74, 118, 181 and Step 3 Resource Sheets #12-16 Available at your school or online with other resources at www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying

Book - "Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs", by National PTA - available at the Public Health Resource Centre (call 519-883-2256)

Websites - Ideas that Work http://www.k12.hi.us/~konawahs/ideas_that_work.htm - See 92 ways to involve families
Parent Involvement is as Easy as P.I.E. http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/archives/parent.shtml
Three for Me (parent involvement pledge) www.three4me.com
My Child's Education www.edu.gov.on.ca/abc123



For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying