

Many educators would agree that creating active partnerships with parents leads to greater student success. We know the powerful impact parental involvement has when it comes to changing and improving student performance, whether we're discussing academic performance or behavior. As educators, finding the time to initiate and maintain positive relationships with students' families and keeping them active in academic learning can be tough. So encouraging parents to prioritize the social-emotional learning of their child can be even more challenging.

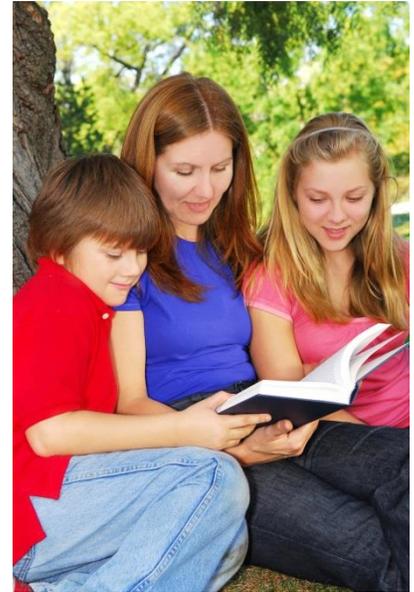
The good news is that building these relationships is not impossible. With trust, communication and collaboration a powerful partnership can be forged between school and home.

**Build Trust.** Taking the time to build a trusting relationship with parents is well worth the investment. Parents want to know their child is respected and educators are focused on helping the child succeed.

- *Welcome parents.* When parents and guests enter the school building, they should be welcomed warmly with a smile and eye contact. This simple gesture goes a long way in establishing a positive school climate and helps parents know they are truly welcome in the school. Greeting parents by name is an added bonus!
- *Accentuate the positive.* Too often, when parents are contacted by their child's teacher or school, it's because there is a problem. Be proactive, make it a point to contact every parent about something positive their son or daughter has done. And do this as often as possible! Having positive relationships with parents lets them know you care about their child and see the good in them. When challenges do arise they will be more open to discussing and working through these difficult times as a team.

**Build Communication.** In order for parents to truly be partners in students' learning goals, they need to understand what the expectations are for their child. Academically, this typically involves being able to access homework expectations, projects and tests, and grading. But when it comes to social and emotional learning, it's important that parents understand what social skill teaching is and how to support these lessons at home. Keep in mind that many of the parents with whom you work may not have mastery of these skills themselves, so take extra care to ensure the understanding is there by following some of these suggestions:

- *Parent Information Nights.* Most parents are willing to be active participants in the learning goals of schools, but may not have enough information to do so. Parent Information Nights can be an opportunity to provide information to parents by showing them how social skills will be taught and reinforced throughout the school day and how parents can extend and reinforce the learning at home.
- *Newsletters.* School newsletters are an excellent way to highlight social skill lessons. Reserve a specific place in the newsletter to post the specific skills students have been working on, provide tips on praise and strategies to help with correcting challenging behavior.
- *Social Media.* This is a quick and easy way to keep families informed. Post information about the social and emotional lessons and goals of the school. This not only lets parents know what you are working



on but can help them support the learning at home. Follow our social media pages to find helpful strategies, tips and resources that can easily be shared to help parents better understand and support social skill teaching.

- [National Training and Press Twitter](#)
- [National Training and Press Facebook](#)
- [Boys Town Parenting Twitter](#)
- [Boys Town Parenting Facebook](#)

**Build Collaboration.** Once you have established a positive relationship and parents are well-informed of their child's learning goals, it is important to keep the momentum going. Whether it is an impromptu meeting, regularly scheduled conference or a more formal intervention meeting, it is important to work with families as a team.

- *Put parents at ease.* Start all meetings by articulating 2-3 strengths you have seen in the student. Even students who struggle greatly will have a number of things they do well. Give parents the opportunity to articulate their child's strengths as well. They may be seeing positive changes at home that you are not aware of, you can then look for opportunities to praise students for these same behaviors in the classroom.
- *Give parents an opportunity to provide input.* At times, educators can be "overly helpful" when it comes to resolving problems. This can lead to teachers directing parents on how to help at home when parents might not have the resources or abilities to follow through. This can also make parents feel as if the educator does not respect their input, values or parenting. Take the time to ask parents for their thoughts and come up with realistic solutions together.

Working with parents to help their child succeed academically and behaviorally provides a powerful team that will ensure students learn the competencies that will make them successful. For more tips and strategies, watch our FREE on-demand webinar '[Connecting with Parents](#)'.