

Early Childhood Programs:  
Empowering Our Parents to Become  
Collaborative Team Members

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Welcome!

- Let's take a quick early Saturday morning quiz!



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Question #1

- Do you get nervous when parents seem knowledgeable about the IEP process?



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### Question #2

- Do you get nervous when parents want to visit your classroom or observe a therapy session?



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### Question #3



- What percentage of your parents do you have contact with at least once a week?

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### Question #4



- What percentage of your parents do you see only once or twice a year?

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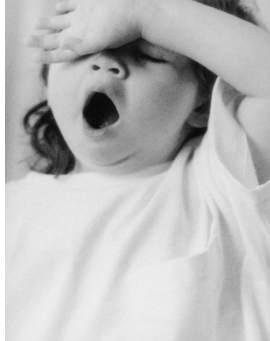
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### Question #5

- Do you feel like your efforts to include parents in your program:
  - Have been exhausted
  - Are about average
  - Need a little help
  - Makes you tired to even think about it



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### Infant-Toddler Services

- What role do parents play in infant-toddler services?



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### Transition to 3-5



- What takes place at a transition meeting?
- How are parents involved?

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### Parents – Who Are They and Why Do We Need Them?

- Research shows that early childhood programs involving parents and children are more effective than programs focusing exclusively on children. Educators and psychologists agree that it is vital for early childhood programs to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children. Involvement prior to kindergarten encourages parents to play an active role in their children's learning throughout their entire education. Children whose parents are involved in their education have been shown to be more successful in school.

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### Barriers for Parents

- Times for involvement are inconvenient for working parents.
- Transportation and babysitting costs.
- Cultural and language barriers.
- Previous negative experiences or attitudes towards schools.
- Feelings of inadequacy, failure and poor self-worth.

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### Barriers cont.

- Confusion with education jargon.
- Failure by school to use multiple and innovative forms of communication.
- Communications from school often focus on problems or the negative.
- (Fullan, 1991; Durkin & Kingdon, 1995; Mangham, 1992; White et. Al, 1992; Hahn et al, 1996; Liontos, 1992).

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### Natural Times for Parent Contact

- Open House
- Conferences
- IEP Meeting
- Home Visits



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### IEP Meeting

- Introductions
- Agenda
- Sit by parents
- Ask for their input
- Questions/comments throughout the IEP
- Make sure everyone remembers that the meeting is about a real child (name wrong)

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### IDEAS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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### Common Communication

**Phone Calls**



**Email**



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**School Site Council/Advisory Board**



**PTA**

- Fundraising
- Playground Equipment
- Room Parent – not necessarily Room Mother

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### Monthly Communication

**Homework Calendar**

- At-home activities linked to the curriculum.
- Stories associated with unit.

**Newsletter**

- Reading
- Math
- Important Dates
- Motor Tips
- Speech-Language Tips
- Important Events
- Reminders

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**Star of the Week**



- My Family (family photograph if available)
- My Favorite Food (child can draw a picture of his/her favorite food or you can cut out a picture of it from a magazine or grocery store ad)
- My Favorite Thing to Do (a photograph, drawing or picture from a magazine)
- Where I Was Born (just write on a piece of paper and we'll transfer it to an index card)
- My Favorite Toy (a photograph, drawing or picture from a magazine)
- My Favorite Color (just write on a piece of paper and we'll put up that color)
- My Pets (bring picture of photograph of your child's favorite pet(s))
- My Favorite Movie (just write on piece of paper and we'll transfer it to the board or a picture of a character)

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**Parent Information Classes**

- Developmental Milestones
- Speech and Language Development
- Development of Play Skills
- Schedules
- Behavior Issues
- Toileting
- Daily Routines
- Certificate of Completion

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**Remnant Notebook**

- 3 ring binder
- Pencil pouch
- Letter to parent explaining purpose of notebook
- Sample of activity, project, etc. that was focused on during the week.

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### Communication Books



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### Invitation to Visit Classroom

- Parent volunteer for activities
- Guest reader



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### Fieldtrips/Family Day



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### Photographs



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### School Events

- Parents Night Out
- Fun Night
- Boxtops
- Dr. Seuss/Green Eggs and Ham

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### Transition to Kindergarten



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