

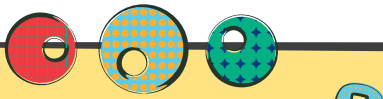


Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING

Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. **Parent involvement in schooling** is one of six support assets.

29% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Respect what parents are capable of in terms of time and aptitude.
- Be creative in your use of parent support and help.
- Make learning fun for all.
- Be proactive in parent-teacher communication.

Getting Parents On Board

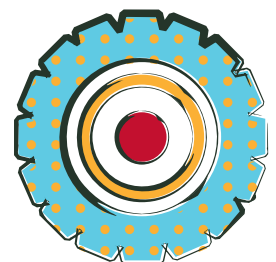
It takes a multitude of methods and ideas to make sure more parents are supportive of what we're doing with their children for eight hours a day, and proactive communication is an essential piece.

Consider:

- Contacting parents periodically to share their child's successes with them.
- Making sure your communication with them isn't aggressive or directive.
- Listening carefully to a parent's complaint or concern, even if you think it is unfounded.
- Asking parents for their help and support when something negative occurs.

All of these things will help set a positive tone and ensure that parents are more receptive to your expectations.

In addition, think about creative ways you can get parents involved. Create assignments, projects, or take-home tests that somehow require parental involvement. Invite them to classroom presentations. Set up classroom projects they can volunteer for. Keep in mind that you may be working with parents who didn't graduate from high school as well as parents who are Ph.D.s,

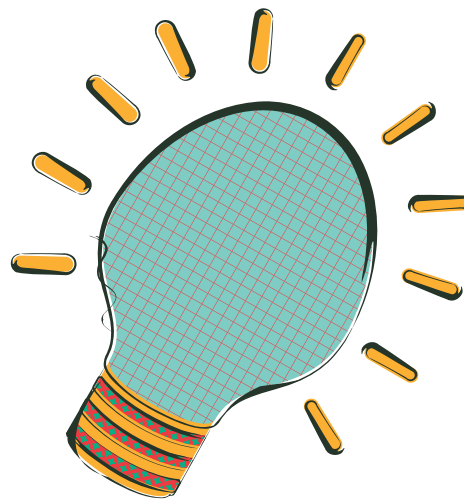


parents who don't have to work, and parents who are working two jobs. If you provide them with options that fit their schedules and skills, you will get a more willing set of participants. Be creative in your approaches and embrace the support you receive.

Positively Connecting

There is something inherently daunting about reaching out to parents. The work of raising and teaching young people is deeply personal and emotional to all involved. It is little wonder that our dealings with parents can often be so charged and intense.

One of the most important steps you can take to make sure that your interactions with parents are positive and nonthreatening is to personalize yourself—right from the beginning of the relationship. If you are reduced to a name, room number, grade level, and subject area and left undefined as a person, you are already set up for struggle.



It is critical to you and the parents that you be a *real* person for them. Shared interests and hobbies, a clear definition of how you view this work and your relationship with your students, and some background information about who you are as a person can help create connections that are positive and friendly.