

Building Successful Partnerships

Best Practices

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Quick Tip: Put these great ideas and others on 3 X 5 cards so you can sift through them in a hurry. Code them with colors (one color for openers, one for activities, etc.). Exercise are on the front and credits are on the back. Easy to travel with and can be used discreetly in front of audiences.

National PTA Trainer Paula Pawlowski

Icebreakers

Non-Traditional Participant Introductions

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

Because we had a significant attendance and in light of time constrictions, I told them we were going to go around and introduce ourselves. Of course some rolled their eyes, thinking about how long that would take, but I asked them all to stand and say out loud who they were, where they are from, and why they came tonight. It was neat—a little loud—but neat. I finished with, “Well, now that we all know each other”...and of course that got a laugh!!!!!! But again, it was something they didn't expect. I also supplied “Hello, my name is...” stickers.

Common Ground: Get to Know Each Other and Explore Commonalities

Source: Mary Kenfield (Mkenfield@aol.com)

Have the participants in the group form a circle. Then ask a series of questions, and if they answer “yes” they step forward into the inner area of the circle. This is a great visual exercise in how we are alike.

Some questions might include:

- Have you had challenges when working on...?
- Do you worry about...?

After the last question, ask if there were any surprises for people. If so, what were they? This helps bring a diverse group together.

Yarn Web: Get to Know Each Other and Explore Commonalities

Source: Marianne Hudz (mhudz@otisart.edu)

I've successfully used a ball of yarn for an icebreaker—the Yarn Web. Everyone gets up out of his or her chairs (getting up is always a good start) and into a circle (another good trick). The facilitator starts by saying, "I don't know many of you, but I know that we all have things in common." Then the facilitator reveals something about his/her family (e.g., "I have two sons and a daughter. Who else has two sons and a daughter?") Holding one end of the yarn, the facilitator tosses the ball to that person, and then asks, "tell us something else about your family." Then, "Who has this in common with (name of person holding the ball of yarn)?" Thus, the ball gets tossed around the circle until everyone is holding the yarn at some point.

* Make sure that everyone gets to receive the yarn at least once, so that everyone feels included.

At the end, the facilitator takes scissors and cuts his/her own piece of yarn, then proceeds around the circle cutting and leaving participants with their piece(s) of yarn. Participants then can make a bracelet, or put the yarn on their nametag, or find another use for it. The debrief of this part is: "What we have in common unites us, ties us together, and is stronger than the ways we are different. Our participation in our children's lives is critical, even though the ways we are involved varies from parent to parent and from family to family. Now, let's talk about parent involvement...."

Balloon Train

Source: Carol Nafus (CDN4kids@aol.com)

This activity can be done with complete strangers or with an audience that knows each other; groups of 20 or more; great fun; outdoors or in a large room depending on numbers.

Level of Physical Activity: High

Estimated Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Props:

One balloon per person of varying colors (one color per group); one permanent marker per group of 6 to 20.

Participants will enjoy forming a “train” and picking up passengers. This activity encourages team behavior and creativity.

Instructions:

1. Distribute deflated balloons of varying colors around the space.
2. Organize participants into equal groups.
3. Ask groups to get into train formation (hands on top of shoulders of person in front of them) and give each engine a magic marker.
4. Tell groups that they are passenger trains that must pick up passengers (one per car).
5. Explain that balloons become passengers easily when one inflates them and creates a face on them with the magic marker.
6. Tell them to move around in train formation to a location where there is a balloon. Explain that groups will be competing to fill their trains with the passengers of the same-color balloon. (I encourage the engines to make train sounds!!) One person must inflate the balloon, tie it, make a face on it, and put it between their stomach and the person in front's back. Each car will eventually be carrying one passenger.
7. Remind participants that their train must stay still while a person is inflating a balloon and drawing a face on it. The train can then move on to find another balloon of like color. The only time trains can uncouple is when they are standing still.
8. The train that is filled first and pulls back into the train station wins!
9. After all participants have pulled into the station and returned to their seats, I begin by saying, “Now that you are all on board...”

An added bonus is that you can use the smiling balloons lingering around the room when referring to audiences that are not in attendance.

A Few of My Favorite Things: Participant Introductions

Source: Kelly Donaldson (Kinsey_M@msn.com)

Number of Participants: 12 or less.

Supplies: Flip chart/chalk board/white erase/etc. and writing utensil to match

Time: 10 minutes

On the flip chart, I've already written (before presentation) a list, similar to the following:

1. My favorite comfort food is:
2. The last movie I saw in the theater is:
3. What I like to do in my free time is:
4. My guilty pleasure is:
5. If I weren't here right now, I'd be:

Going around the room, I have people respond to the list. If the crowd seems reluctant, I'll start with myself. I then use examples to show how many things, besides our desire to help children, we have in common. Generally, I make a mental note of who likes to do what as a hobby or a guilty pleasure.

Later in my presentations I will refer back to the hobbies or other facts to demonstrate how people can find ways to connect others together. Generally, I use this for local units. I will specifically refer to the hobbies those attending mentioned as ways that PTAs can use people for programs or volunteering.

For example:

“You said you like to collect stamps. This could be something the PTA draws on to use to help math or social studies classes.” In effect, I let them know that it is their job to show people that they do have something they can offer the school even if they don’t know it, and that it is the PTA’s job to point that out. I’ve also used this in the How to Help Your Child Succeed workshop.

Another example:

“This person said if he wasn’t here, he’d be home writing resumes. This is someone you can ask to help lead a practical life-skills workshop for teens if you’re a PTSA in a high school. Many students don’t know how to do this or even how to fill out a W-4 form. Many adults even don’t know how.”

Introduce Standards: More Than Just “Volunteering” to Parent Involvement

Source: Winnie Doxsie (doxsie@athenet.net)

The speaker asks, “Please introduce yourself and tell the group about something you feel needs to be done to improve parent involvement in your school.” Each person responds in turn.

Ninety percent of the time the responses will revolve around volunteering. The speaker can then elaborate on the variety of the responses.

For example:

“When we think about parent involvement, most people generally think about volunteering opportunities, as demonstrated by your responses. But research tells us that there are five other types of involvement.... When a school has a plan incorporating all six types of parent involvement, our children will have better success in school—no matter what.”

or

“Wow! The variety of your responses tells me that you already appreciate that there is much more to quality parent involvement than just volunteering.

My goal today is to help you understand the six types of parent involvement that lead to greater student achievement and how you can start building a comprehensive parent involvement program for your school."

How to Help Your Child Succeed (3 Separate Icebreaker Ideas)

Source: Gayla Boomer (Gboomer102@aol.com)

At the beginning of How to Help Your Child Succeed, I request that participants select the age of one of their children and finish the statement, "When I was...." It makes that connection for them and they have to put themselves in the place of their kids.

You could also (depending on the size of your audience) ask for pictures of the kids, have the folks hold them up, and keep holding them up (i.e., holding = support). Or, use the whole exercise as an icebreaker: everyone share one thing about their children with three other people (they realize similarities) and they can only talk for 30 seconds about that particular child.

One way I've started the "How to Help Your Child Succeed" (and other workshops on advocacy) is to go around the room and ask everyone in attendance their child(ren)'s names. I turn to the audience and say, "You may be wondering why I'm here. I'm here because of...." Then I start listing all the names I've put on the flip chart. Turning, I add "I got involved in all of this because of..." and write my kids' names on the board. Then I talk about the connections and similarities we all have about our children—our concerns, our ideas, our questions....

Define Parent Involvement

Source: Kelly Donaldson (Kinsey_M@msn.com)

I hand out index cards and ask everyone to write down what they think the definition of "parent involvement" is. When I see that they are all done - (some write novels), I ask them all on the count of three to read their definitions out loud.

Then I tell them that while we may *think* we all have the same definition of parent involvement, we are obviously all thinking something different, and that the focus of the presentation following will be to get us all on the same page. Then, using either the overhead or the handout, we all read the National PTA definition of parent involvement out loud.

Openers

Role-Playing: Not Your Mama's PTA

Source: Gayla Boomer (g_boomer@pta.org)

A few minutes before we were slated to start, I walked around, introducing myself with an apron on and a tray of cookies. I had a tote bag with wrapping paper, ribbon, and candy, and was "selling" it. When it was time to start the workshop, our moderator used a director's clap board (like you see in the movies) and said, "Cut! If this is what parent involvement looks like to you, we think you'll leave the room with a little different viewpoint after this workshop."

Activities

Standard 1: Airplanes

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

On Overhead:

- Please don't talk.
- Please do as instructed.
- Please don't ask questions.

Each participant has received a blank piece of paper (no matter the color). Verbally relay these instructions relatively quickly, not stopping for anyone to catch up or ask questions.

- Fold paper lengthwise in half and crease fold (hold up your demo after each step)
- Fold left top corner into middle so that top of page and left corner are flush with center fold.
- Do the same with the right top corner.
- Fold on center crease and smooth.
- Open flat and again bring left side corner to center fold and crease.
- Do the same with right side corner.
- Fold on center crease and smooth.
- Fold side down (outside) to center crease.
- Do the same with other side.
- Smooth and crease all folds.
- Turn over and you should have a paper airplane.
- Ask all participants to stand and fly airplanes (not at each other).

Process/Debrief:

How did it make you feel when you could not ask any questions? When I continued to progress ahead even though I was aware some were struggling to understand the directions and keep up? How does this relate to this particular standard?

Standard 5: We Made It

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

According to today's regulators and bureaucrats, those of us who were kids in the 1940s, '50s, '60s, or even the early '70s, probably shouldn't have survived.

- Our baby cribs were covered with right-colored lead-based paint (PTA issue 1990)
- As children, we would ride in cars with no seatbelts or air bags (PTA issue 1984).
- Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm sunny day was always a special treat.
- We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.
 - HORRORS!

- We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank soda pop with sugar in it, but we were never overweight because we were always outside playing (PTA issue 2003).
- We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle, and no one actually died from this.
- We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forgot our brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.
- We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on.
- No one was able to reach us all day. No cell phones.
 - UNTHINKABLE!
- We did not have Play Stations, Nintendo 64s, X-Boxes, nor video games at all, no 99 channels on cable, videotape movies, surround-sound, personal cell phones, personal computers, or Internet chat rooms.
- We had friends! We went outside and found them.
- We played dodge ball, and sometimes the ball would really hurt.
- We fell out of trees, got cut, and broke bones and teeth, and there were no lawsuits from these accidents. They were accidents. No one was to blame but us. Remember accidents?
- We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and ate worms, and although they told us it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes, nor did the worms live inside us forever.
- We rode bikes or walked to a friend's home and knocked on the door, or rang the bell, or just walked in and talked to them.
- Little leagues had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointments. Some students weren't as smart as others, so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade. (HORRORS!! Tests were not adjusted for any reason.)
- Our actions were our own. Consequences were expected. The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law.
- This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers and problem solvers and inventors, ever. The past 50 years have been an explosion of

innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success, responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it.

- Our parents were involved.
- Lawmakers listened to advocates like National PTA when they were urged to consider issues, like seatbelts, bike helmets, and health and safety issues. Times have changed—issues have remained the same.
- The challenge is to include parent leaders from all ethnic and racial populations of the school.
- Many parents and families want to be involved but are not certain what steps to take, what they should know, or what questions to pose.
- It is paramount that we help parents learn to act as true partners and representatives, using good two-way communication in their discussions with educators and school and community leaders.

Standard 6

Source: Colleen Charaska (charfamily@worldnet.att.net)

One activity that I use to bring home the message of the sixth National Standard is that throughout the previous five standards, as I ask questions and people share their ideas or answers I give them a playing card. (Cheap ones from the dollar store). As they give more ideas and answers, they get more cards. When I get to the 6th standard and start talking about collaborating with the community, I talk about key players and who the community is. To define a community and point out that we are a community for the time we are together, I focus on communities working together to achieve one goal and use all the resources in the community. At this time I point out how many cards I've given out (usually two decks), then ask the group to themselves find the best poker hand they among themselves. I tell them I will give a prize to the winning hand. You explain that they can go to their community to find that hand. You will usually get someone saying they don't know how to play poker and I point out that they have identified a need and that they should look to their community to fulfill their need. (someone in the group knows poker and what beats what). The prize is usually a pound bag of M&Ms, and I have small ziplock bags on hand. I award the prize to the winning hand, and then remind them that when collaborating with the

community, everyone wins and shares in the prize. They really get it. And it keeps them wondering throughout your presentation what the cards are for.

Implementing the Standards

Source: Renata Witte (Rlbcsw13@aol.com)

This is an activity I use for larger groups and when I have a one-and-a-half-hour presentation time-slot.

- * First I present an overview of the six National Standards, giving examples on how schools have used them.
- * I then ask the attendees to arrange themselves in groups of five. I pass out five different-colored small squares of mat board to each group, and ask them to choose a color. I then explain that each color is representative of a member of the community (i.e., one color is a teacher, parent, administrator, student, or a community member). They must now take on the persona of that particular member of the community.
- * I then assign a standard to each group, and the assignment is to come up with a plan to implement the standard in their school by speaking as the person each is representing. I usually give the groups about 15 minutes.
 - * We then spend the remainder of the time reporting out, while I write their ideas on a white board (or whatever is available).

I find that most people are writing madly to catch all the good ideas that are generated by their peers. Having to put themselves in an assigned "role" also makes the participants think differently about implementing the standards. As an FYI, I've used this concept in other presentations as well...increasing membership, etc. Hope someone finds this useful!

Standards: Creative Way for Audiences to Retain Them

Source: Kelly Donaldson (Kinsey_M@msn.com)

The group representing...

- Standard 1: Communicating—I give them envelopes and ask them to hold them up and say “You’ve Got Mail!” whenever I mentioned their standard.
- Standard 2: Parenting—I give them baby rattles (from the dollar store) and ask them to shake their rattles when I mention their standard.
- Standard 3: Volunteering—Using paint stirrers and paper or foam signs, I created signs that say “We Can Do It!” and I ask them to hold up their signs and shout “We Can Do It!”
- Standard 4: School Decision Making—I would ask them to do the time tested method of deciding...using their fingers, point and say “Eenie, meenie, mienie, moe!”
- Standard 5: Student Learning—(I’m still working on this one, so feel free to throw out an idea)—I was thinking of finding paper cutouts of a graduation cap and ask them to throw them up in the air and “whoop” like a graduate when I mention their standard.
- Standard 6: Collaborating with Community—this one has me totally stumped! I can’t think of what to get them to do or say, or what prop to come up with for this. I’m hoping you can help me out.

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: Creative Way to Get Your Statistical Data Across

Source: Debbie Tidwell (TIDWELL74@cs.com)

We used a format similar to the popular TV program—but without the cameras! We used statistics from several sources and created questions, each with four answers (a, b, c, and d). Of course, most of the answers were exaggerated, except for the correct answer. We put each question with the four answers on overheads.

We asked for a volunteer contestant, who stood and was asked the question and then given the answers. They had to give the correct answer and could even poll the audience, 50/50, or “call” a friend. When they gave the correct answer, we had prize money.

Our prize money was a Hershey's candy bar with a "money" wrapper prize. We used increments of \$500, \$5,000, \$50,000, \$250,000, \$500,000, and of course, \$1,000,000. For the smaller dollar increments, we used regular-sized bars and for the \$1,000,000 prize, we used a giant candy bar. (Total cost of this was about 3 dollars.)

This is what we put on the wrapper (created on a label program) in a box with a child's handprint:

National PTA: Official Tender....Building Successful Partnerships ...
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?....
FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS***\$500.00*** Parent Involvement
. . .Pays Off!

Sample questions include:

\$500

73% of women with kids over age one

- a. have grey hair
- b. work outside the home
- c. head single-family households
- d. need a vacation

answer: b

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

\$5,000

1 in 4 Americans

- a. collect Social Security
- b. belong to PTA
- c. get their news from the *National Enquirer*
- d. are over age 3 and enrolled in school as of Oct. 2000

answer: d

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

\$50,000

43% of children

- a. live with 2 biological or adoptive parents
- b. have never seen an episode of *Rug Rats*
- c. claim their parents let them stay up as late as they want
- d. have parents that attend open house

answer: a

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001

Note: This number is drastically different than the number used in the book *Building Successful Partnerships* which lists its source as the U.S. Census. I could not confirm the number used in the BSP book, so I went with the less dramatic of the two. If anyone has better sources, please share!

\$250,000

Who's raising the kids?

- a. 9 million single mothers, 2 million single fathers and 4 million grandparents
- b. Television and the Internet
- c. Peers
- d. We're not quite sure because no one was home to answer the phone during the survey.

answer: a

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

\$500,000

High parent involvement

- a. benefits everyone.
- b. increases good grades by 24%, decreases suspensions by 13%, and decreases repeating grades by 15%.
- c. can make a teacher's job easier.
- d. All of the above.

answer: d

Source: National Center for Fathering, 1998 (and common sense)

One Million Dollars!

Teachers say the single most important thing schools need to help students learn is

- a. laptop computers.
- b. updated textbooks for every subject.

- c. principals as disciplinarians.
- d. involved parents.

answer: d

Source: Henderson & Berla, 1994

How to Help Your Child Succeed

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

- ✓ PLACE 1 TO 6 ENVELOPES UNDER CHAIRS ON THE FLOOR.
- ✓ PLACE HERSHEY'S HUGS AND KISSES UNDER EACH CHAIR.
- ✓ PLACE POST-ITS UNDER EACH CHAIR.
- ✓ GIVE A 1-10 ENVELOPE WITH THE DIRECTIONS TO EACH PERSON AS HE OR SHE WALKS IN.

START AT BACK OF ROOM

CHART PAPER: I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT

WELCOME TO "I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT," THE INTERACTIVE PARENTING PROGRAM WITH THE BUSY PARENT IN MIND. TONIGHT'S TOPIC

ON FLIPCHART _____ *HTHYCS*

(Plant in audience asks) "What is HTHYCS?"

"HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED"...AND I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT!!

BEFORE THE PROGRAM WE ASKED FOR SOME VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH TONIGHT'S PROGRAM. IN THIS GROUP, THAT WASN'T HARD TO DO!! SO LET'S THANK THEM RIGHT UP FRONT.

(APPLAUSE)

TAKE A LOOK UNDER YOU SEAT—YOU WILL FIND A FEW HUGS AND KISSES—THESE ARE FROM YOUR KIDS—THEY THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE TO COME HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO HELP THEM SUCCEED. SOME OF YOU WILL ALSO FIND A YELLOW ENVELOPE WITH A NUMBER ON IT—WOULD YOU PLEASE COME UP FRONT AND BRING THAT ENVELOPE WITH YOU.

GIVE THEM INSTRUCTIONS TO READ THE OUTSIDE (RAPIDLY IN A LARGE VOICE) -

AFTER #6 READS THE LAST?

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED THAT!
THEN THEY READ THE INSIDE

(APPLAUSE)

ON CHART PAPER

DECADES OF RESEARCH SHOW THAT WHEN PARENTS ARE INVOLVED, STUDENTS HAVE HIGHER GRADES, TEST SCORES, AND GRADUATION RATES; BETTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE; INCREASED MOTIVATION AND SELF-ESTEEM; LOWER RATES OF SUSPENSION, DECREASED USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL; AND GREATER ENROLLMENT RATES IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.

SO HOW DO WE HELP OUR KIDS OUT AT HOME? HOW CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WILL MY CHILD ACHIEVE MORE?

NATIONAL PTA'S BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPED IN 1994, IDENTIFIED 6 COMPONENTS THAT WILL ENSURE STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT. AN EXTENSION OF THAT PROGRAM IS HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED. BUT WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

NATIONAL PTA'S TOP 10 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED (flip chart drop down one item at a time)

After volunteer has read the card

GLOVES, ROCKS, GARBAGE BAGS

#10 CAN I HELP PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE?

YOUR CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE AND TALENTS, WHILE NOURISHED IN THE CLASSROOM, ARE RECOGNIZED WHEN PUT TO USE IN THE COMMUNITY. CHILDREN LEARN VALUABLE LESSONS WHEN HELPING OTHERS THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

- ✓ SERVICE LEARNING HOURS
- ✓ SENIOR CITIZENS' HOMES
- ✓ LIBRARY

YOU SHOW AN EXAMPLE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING IN THE PTA, CHURCH, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, AND WORK. WHAT ELSE ARE WE DOING TO REINFORCE THE VALUE OF CONTRIBUTING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY?

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING.

STEERING WHEEL

#9 STAYIN' ALIVE—KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE

BY IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL RISKS AND GIVING CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO AVOID RISKS, YOU ARE HELPING YOUR CHILDREN SIDESTEP DANGER. TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SAFETY ALSO INCREASES THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE.

- ✓ SEATBELTS
- ✓ HELMETS
- ✓ MOUTHGUARDS/PADDING FOR SPORTS
- ✓ INTERNET SAFETY
- ✓ COOKING/MICROWAVE OVENS

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE MORE SAFE.

STUFFED ANIMALS

#8 CIRCLE OF FRIENDS—HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

ALL CHILDREN WANT TO FIT IN, BE ACCEPTED, AND FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG. HELPING YOUR CHILD DEVELOP GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

- ✓ BULLYING
- ✓ SIBLING RIVALRY
- ✓ FAMILY TIES—AUNTS, UNCLES, COMMUNICATION WITH THEM.

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP GOOD RELATIONSHIP HABITS.

MAPS, BINOCULARS

#7 OH THE PLACES WE'LL GO—ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

BY ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILDREN TO DEVELOP THEIR INTERESTS AND SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO TRY NEW THINGS, YOU HELP THEM MAKE THE MOST OF THE WORLD AROUND THEM. THE WORLD IS THEIR OYSTER—HELP THEM OPEN IT UP.

- ✓ MUSEUMS
- ✓ THEATER
- ✓ HISTORICAL PLACES

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN TO EXPLORE AND DISCOVER MORE.

TELEPHONE, ENVELOPES, AND CARDS

#6 GETTING CONNECTED—COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

FREQUENT COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS. ATTENDING CONFERENCES, PTA MEETINGS, AND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS SENDS A MESSAGE TO YOUR CHILD THAT THEIR EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT TO YOU.

- ✓ SPYING ON THE CHILD
- ✓ WRITE WHEN THERE ISN'T ANYTHING WRONG
- ✓ FAMILY ISSUES

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO COMMUNICATE BETTER WITH THE SCHOOL.

BOOKS

#5 PARENTS, THE 1ST TEACHER—SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

SHOWING OUR CHILDREN THAT WE VALUE LEARNING AND EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT AND WILL PAY OFF IN THE LONG RUN AS THEY MATURE.

- ✓ CONCEPT OF IMPORTANCE
- ✓ EVERYONE HAS A JOB: PARENTS HAVE WORK, CHILDREN HAVE SCHOOL
- ✓ ATTITUDE

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME.

APPLE, BALL AND GLOVE, JUMPROPE

#4 AN APPLE A DAY—KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY

WHEN CHILDREN FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES, THEY ARE WELL-RESTED, WELL-FED, AND READY TO LEARN, AND THEY COME TO SCHOOL EMOTIONALLY, PHYSICALLY AND SOCIALLY HEALTHY. THEN YOU AS A PARENT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED, AND HAVE DONE YOUR JOB.

- ✓ SODAS, COFFEE, BREAKFAST
- ✓ SETTING EXAMPLES
- ✓ EXERCISE

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE A HEALTHY, LIFELONG LEARNER.

MEDALS

#3 I'M OK—YOU'RE OK—BUILD YOUR CHILD'S SELF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE

AS CHILDREN ACT INDEPENDENTLY, THEY MAKE CHOICES AND MISTAKES; THEY LEARN AND GROW. THINKING POSITIVELY ABOUT THEM AND ACCEPTING THEM UNCONDITIONALLY HELPS THEM DEVELOP A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT.

- ✓ CHOOSING FRIENDS, CLOTHES, SHOPPING

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM.

WAND

#2 REACH FOR THE SKY—SET HIGH BUT REALISTIC GOALS

THIS IS CLOSELY RELATED TO BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM, BUT GOES A BIT FURTHER. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU REALLY TOOK A LOOK AT YOUR CHILDREN AND NOTICED THEIR STRENGTHS, TALENTS, AND INTERESTS, AS WELL AS AREAS WHERE THEY MAY NEED ASSISTANCE?

- ✓ DISHWASHER
- ✓ CLEANING ROOM
- ✓ SPORTS

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD REACH FOR THE SKY.

HAND SIGNALS

#1 LET'S TALK—TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

OK, NOW, I SAID "WITH," NOT "AT" YOUR CHILD. IF WE TALK WITH OUR CHILDREN OFTEN, PROVIDING THEM WITH THE VALUES AND

MORALS WE WANT THEM TO HAVE, THEY WILL COME TO US FIRST BEFORE GOING ELSEWHERE FOR INFORMATION.

- ✓ TEENS
- ✓ HONESTY
- ✓ SET BY EXAMPLE

ON THE STICKY NOTE, WRITE DOWN ONE THING YOU WILL DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD.

GIVE OUR VOLUNTEERS A HAND *APPLAUSE*
CHART PAPER: C

THE POST-IT NOTES YOU HAVE BEEN JOTTING ON THIS EVENING—PLEASE DON'T TUCK THEM AWAY, ONLY TO FIND THEM IN 3 MONTHS AND WONDER WHAT IN THE WORLD THAT ALL MEANT.

TAKE THEM HOME AND PUT THEM UP ON THE REFRIGERATOR—IT'S YOUR HOMEWORK.

WE HAVE PROVIDED A HTHYCS PAMPHLET FOR YOU—THERE ARE RESOURCES ON THE BACK OF THE BROCHURE TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON PARENTING.

Encourage Parent Involvement: Audience Made Up of Parents

Source: Bari (RBJMGOLD@aol.com)

Here's one specific that I suggest for student learning and parent learning. I ask parents with older kids (this seems to get lots of chuckles) to think back what they were learning in middle school (a.k.a. junior high school) and then to think about what their kids are learning now. Since times have changed, some may not know and/or understand what our kids are learning today. I ask my own kids to sit down and show me and explain to me how to do their math, step by step. This provides very good one-on-one quality time when we get to play role reversal. You can usually tell how well they understand what they are doing by their enthusiasm. If they understand what they are doing,

they are definitely and anxiously willing to teach us. If they are having difficulty, it is a great window of opportunity to discuss possibilities (a window of them) to give them additional help. I have found this to be a great tool with my own kids (I like to try things out on them first). It also encourages them to share more on a regular basis.

Another one-on-one opportunity is going back to basics, reading the same book together and discussing it with them in detail. Books on tape are great when you have a road trip—but I prefer books that way so I can hear the expression in their voice. This leads to great Q & A for everyone.

At the beginning of a presentation I ask them to think about three simple things that take a minute or less. Then I start my presentation, taking the "minute challenge" and expanding on what we can do with our children for one minute. This seems to get things rolling. My point for the minute challenge is that one minute is all it takes to start a conversation with your kids. I then ask them simple questions (similar questions to what you gave me last week)—not "yes" or "no" questions, but questions that are friendly but general, that will usually get things started—and the door gets opened.

Jeopardy: Encourage Parent Involvement Using Statistics

Source: National PTA Trainer Kathy Handler
(Kathy_handler@birdville.k12.tx.us)

The one activity I almost always try to incorporate into teacher presentations uses some of the family statistics. These are found under tab 8, page 4 of the talking points titled Supporting All Families. This can be done in Jeopardy-game style. These statistics really drive home the changing family demographics and how important it is to get families involved. The point being: What kind of future parents are we raising if we aren't involving the parents of these kids today? What will be the shape of education for the next generation if we don't set the example for involvement today?

Student Teachers: Assessing Current School Programs

Source: National PTA Trainer Paula Pawlowski (pawfam@alaska.net)

Another exercise I like to do is "identifying good practices." I put the standards in separate places on the wall and I have them identify "good things happening" (because there always are in schools). They identify who started the event (PTA, administrators, teachers, etc.) they describe what happens, and then I ask them to move the description and choose which standard it will fit under the best. It is always a success if it will fit under more than one standard but rarely is that the case. Debriefing, I read through the events and consolidate, as several might list the reading program, etc. This also gives a quick and dirty "visual" of what standards are missing in a school's plan and where they might need to concentrate their efforts.

Parents' Homework: Assess School District Parent Involvement Policies

Source: Courtney Frick (Cortalk@aol.com)

I am planning to give parents homework to research each respective school district they work in to see if the district has a parent involvement policy (they all should, since it is mandated in Ohio), and to determine if it is an "active" policy, or if it is only "on the books." This is my typical homework piece, and I have received interesting replies from parents who have followed through. This is a good way to "continue the conversation" after the workshop is over, as there may not be any other contact with those who attended the workshop.

Gauntlet: Influences on Children

Have all participants gather in a circle, which will represent your community. In the middle of the circle, place objects (crumpled-up paper, paper plates, etc.) which will represent negative influences within the community (drugs, gangs, etc.). Assign roles ahead of time, so within the circle of participants there will be "good/helpful" roles and "negative" roles. One individual will be

assigned the role of “child” and one individual will be assigned the role of “parent.” The “child” will need to make his or her way blindfolded/eyes closed through the maze of objects or “negative influences” to the other side where the “parent” is waiting. All the time, the participants with “good/helpful” roles will be safely guiding the “child” and the “negative” roles will be misguiding.

Don't forget to debrief the “child”—one of the most important pieces. How did he or she feel? Was it hard to hear? Listen? To whom did they listen? What if you gave the 'helpful' roles a few minutes to plan ahead of time how they were going to be involved to get the child safely through the gauntlet? They would know their respective roles and how they intersected with each other and be able to smoothly lead the child. If the adults are working together and the “child” knows this, the “negative” voices take on a lesser voice. Most of all, have fun with it. The point of it is that parent involvement doesn't just happen on its own; it takes planning and thoughtful consideration if it is going to be successful, and not just everyone's interpretation of parent involvement is the same.

P.S. I have used napkins, Kleenex, scrap paper—almost anything—for the “pitfalls.” The best ones, though, are the small paper plates, easy to throw down, but more importantly, easy to pick up and carry with you (although not as dramatic as ripping paper, crumpling it, and throwing it over your shoulder!!:)

Break Down the Barriers to Parent Involvement

Source: DJ Stutz (Stutzlv@aol.com)

I just finished a workshop at our state Department of Education convention. I did the brick wall where we had everyone write on the side of a lunch bag something that creates a barrier to parent involvement. Then they used a second bag to fit inside the first to make a brick. We then built a brick wall. During our discussions we came up with ways to overcome those barriers and we tore down the brick wall.

Overcoming Barriers in Parent Involvement

Source: Source: National PTA Trainer Kathy Handler
(Kathy_handler@birdville.k12.tx.us)

One activity that can really hit home with teachers is a barrier exercise I learned from Carole Kennedy, director of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. The overhead is blank with a line drawn down the middle of it. As teachers name barriers to parent involvement, you write them down on one side or the other of the line. After all the barriers are listed by the group, you go back and add categories to the two sides of the overhead. One side is where you list what keeps parents from being involved that have to do with parenting and families, such as time, transportation, fear, and work. On the other side you list things about teachers or the schools that keep parents from becoming involved, such as lack of an inviting atmosphere, teachers not knowing how to utilize parent involvement, fear of parents doing teachers' jobs or looking over their shoulders.... Invariably, the teachers can come up with LOTS of things on the parent/family side, but are pretty blind to their own side. This is also an eye-opener to lots of teachers. This is also a good activity to accompany the parent/teacher academies we do here in Texas with one of the teacher associations that puts parents and teachers at the same tables talking about needs, barriers, and how to overcome them. Good luck in your presentations. Glad to hear we are getting the word out.

Inclusiveness: Make Involvement M & M (Meaningful and Manageable)

Source: Catherine Romano (cmr39@juno.com)

On being inclusive, my partners and I have adopted an activity called "Unequal Resources." We usually start with 3 to 4 cardboard puzzles, preschool-sized, though you may need more depending on the group size. We break into groups and offer a prize to the group that can complete its M&Ms. However, we have altered the puzzle bags so that no bag has all its own pieces, and we may even keep a few pieces out of the game entirely.

To process the activity, if a group shares its unneeded piece, look at who is "searching or reaching out for involvement," stealing from others, or finds the "set-up" unfair. In parent involvement one group doesn't have all the pieces, and needs to reach out beyond themselves to get the full picture.

The M&Ms message is to make parent involvement meaningful and manageable. For inclusion background, use what we have seen at national conventions. Whatever examples you use—Hispanic initiative, Poverty via the Ruby Payne aha! Process, or Generational Differences via Marilyn Moats Kennedy—each hinges on the same process. To include another "culture," you must first understand its hidden rules and how they differ from your own culture's hidden rules.

Your responsibility is to translate the rules to build the bridge to inclusion. Addressing the differences in the hidden rules overcomes the barriers to involvement and makes the personal connections that will increase involvement. You can find the Ruby Payne on www.ahaprocess.com and Generational Differences on www.moatskennedy.com. Good luck, and remember that you are the PI expert here!

Visual Aids

PTA Team-Building Workshop

Source: Grant Wells (gnjwells@clinton.net)

I used some old blueprints and a small toolbox as a centerpiece for each table. The boxes I made from scrap lumber, and on the side of the box is a sign that says "Team Building Tools," and inside is glue (for bonding), a clamp (for holding it all together), pencil and notepad (for sharing ideas), a pencil sharpener (for making your point), a ruler (to keep it all straight), and cloth (to make your team shine!). Most things were purchased at the dollar store, so it was all very reasonable.

Encouraging School Inclusiveness of Parents

Newsprint: Fill in the Blank

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

Another “middle” activity I like is a fill-in-the-blanks where the participants figure out what's missing. (This is already prepared on flip chart—I only display one section at a time.)

The way _____(schools) care about children is reflected in the way _____(schools) care about the children's _____ (family).

If _____ (educators) view children simply as _____ (students) they are likely to see the family as _____(separate) from the school. (*That is, the family is expected to do its job and the school will do its job.*)

If educators view students as _____ (children) they are likely to see both the family and community as _____ (partners) with the school.

Puzzle Pieces: Audience Input and Processing

Source: Sue Grodek (sgrodek@adelphia.net)

I noticed that certain audiences love to share their parent involvement activities. In an effort to allow more sharing time, my co-presenters and I came up with a new activity. We cut out puzzle pieces (out of tag board) in the six colors to coordinate with the six National Standards. As someone would share an idea we, as a group, would decide which standard it applied to. The presenters would write that activity on the puzzle piece and attach it with sticky tack to the wall. We would “graph” the pieces and then look at what standards we hit pretty thoroughly and which ones could use a little more work. We leave the ideas up until everyone leaves the workshop, allowing time for people to view the activities and jot down any they would like to try in their own communities.

Closing

Can you C the difference?

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

Recently I had the opportunity to use a “new” closing (at least it was new for me). The main focus for the session was Communication. Ahead of time I had a large red “C” (taking up the entire flip chart paper) prepared.

Remembering that you want your participants to leave the session feeling that they actually can do, have an impact; this is what I closed with:

Can You C the Difference?

In the space between the top of the C and the bottom of the C, I wrote words that began with C:

Care—As we build our successful partnerships, we must remember to CARE about each other and our community.

Courtesy—We respect and recognize that we each have a shared responsibility in the entire process.

Clarity—Always remembering that it takes two-way, meaningful Communication.

(and then I'd ask if they could C the difference—what other C's might be C'een?)

Cooperation—Assist each other and our students to improve our schools, strengthen our families, and ensure student success.

Collaboration—Maintain the comprehensive partnership throughout all six National Standards.

C the Connection?

Statistics

Important Statistical Websites
Appendix, p. 41

Reach of BSP Program: 2003

Source: Rebecca Olson (r_olson@pta.org)

BSP 2003 Overview

- New presenters trained in 2003 = **169**
- Active presenters to date = **641**
- Presentations that took place in 2003 = **494**
- Presentations since program launch = **2,831**
- Audience members reached since program launched = **42,636**

SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

Source: Lorenza DiNatale (l_dinatale@pta.org)

Here are some Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification stats to use in your presentations on certification:

- In 2003, 397 schools were certified and 41 received recognition of commitment.
- The program experienced a 200% increase in participation from 2002 to 2003.
- The certification area of the website received over 1 million hits in 2003.
- 89 articles were written in print media, with over 8 million total print impressions (11 publications with a circulation of over 100,000).
- To date, 443 schools have received certification and 52 have received recognition.
- Over 1,300 schools have registered.

This number changes constantly as more schools apply. To get an accurate up to date count and view a listing of all the schools that have received Certification of Excellence or Recognition of Commitment, visit our website at www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/certification/index.asp.

Parent Involvement

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

Some more stats to use—also, have you taken a look at the U.S. Census Bureau stats lately? It really is dependable and easy to use (www.census.gov).

- 1998—2 million homes nationwide with fathers as the only parent living with children.
- 1998—15 million single-parent households in the U.S.
- 1998—91% of parents surveyed felt parent involvement was important.
- 58% of parents strongly agreed that they were encouraged to be involved.
- 57% of parents felt teachers welcomed involvement.
- 39% of parents felt they had input in their child's education.
- 29% of parents felt educators had good ideas on how to involve parents.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor stat: 70% of employed parents spend more than 40 hours a week at work.
- 14 states require some teacher training in parent involvement.

Source: U.S. Department of Education (O. Moles, Ph.D.)

Marketing

Locating BSP Community Partners and Potential Presentation Audiences

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

My segment was to get feedback from participants on who, what, and where they would present this BSP program, whom they would like to see involved, etc. (I think you get the gist). Another trainer had set the stage well just before me regarding the six National Standards, their importance, etc. Each workshop participant was presented with a blank 3x5 card upon entering the session. I posed as an “on the scene” reporter talking about the standards, etc. I instructed each person to jot down one place he or she

would like this BSP presented at, whom the partner would be, and why. As with all workshops, time was tight, so many participants did not have time to share, but I shall share them here with you. Hope it helps.

New Principal: I would like her to be in on this discussion so she would understand that communication needs to be improved (in our school) among herself, the parents, and the children.

College Campuses: Impact incoming community teachers and stress the importance of BSP/parent involvement.

Senior Center: Forge connections between generations.

Kiwanis & Rotary Clubs: They work to better the community.

Teachers' Associations: Important to have their support.

Children's Hospitals: To teach parents how important student health issues affect learning.

Department of Human Services: Become a partner because together we can make a difference.

YMCA: They are child- and youth-focused, a recognizable organization, and could reach more families.

School Board: They are instrumental in forming school policies that would be fundamental in implementing a parent involvement program.

Military Base Commander: So that parent involvement is encouraged and that bosses allow time off for parents to help in the class.

Federal Agencies: Offer manpower, volunteers, speakers, and diversity.

Superintendent: "Our superintendent feels that parent involvement is not a key to student success. He feels that there should not be more money spent on parent involvement than on a football coach!" (I quoted that just as it was written. Wish I knew who and where that person is; I'd love to pay a visit to the superintendent's office!!)

Principals, Teachers, Parents, and Staff: So they can learn how to work as a team.

Large Companies and Corporations: (such as Ford Motor Co.) They have the resources and people to help the community. A large company should be involved because children are its future.

United Way: UW has contacts with most, if not all, nonprofit organizations in their service area, thus they could provide direct contact and/or refer to other agencies.

Tips on Tailoring Your BSP Message to Your Board of Ed

Source: National PTA Trainer Sharon Weigh (smweigh@aol.com)

So, you should ask yourself: "Self, what is the one thing I want these folks to walk away with?" And then focus your presentation on meeting that particular goal--with a few other things tossed in. Although the roles are different, both the PTA and the school boards share one common interest: Deep commitment to public education and the well-being of children and youth. Taking a look at our basic policy stated in the bylaws that the organization shall work with schools to provide quality education and participate in the decision-making process establishing school policy. Can you think of how you can tie in a BSP presentation with that in mind? Taking each standard and expanding it to meet that statement.

Have you thought about getting some statistics from the U.S. Census website that are particular to your state? (Stats are powerful!!) Something like the percentage of single parents, families with a percentage of children at home 18 years old and younger, etc.

Finish that part with a question: How are WE (emphasizing the "we") going to meet the needs of these families? What can WE do in partnership to reach these families? Brainstorm with an overhead or flip chart with your participants to answer some of these questions. Find out what they are doing (best practices) that they find are successful and can share with others.

How to Help Your Child Succeed: Quick Plug

Source: Gayla Boomer (GBoomer102@aol.com) via Kathy Handler

Looking for a quick way to "advertise" How to Help Your Child Succeed? We had a board in-service for our State Board of Managers last weekend and each of the presenters took one of the 10 items. We then used something symbolic for each one to drive the point home. It went quickly, but gave

people the idea and promoted the program. It could also be used as a demonstration under the second standard or as "reminders for part of the larger presentation." I have to give credit to Kathy Handler for the idea, though! Thanks, Kathy!

1. Talk with your child (sign language for talk, a doll to symbolize the child, pictures, cutouts of kids, etc.).
2. Set high but realistic expectations (a wand with a star, with the saying "Reach for the moon, you may land on a star").
3. Build your child's self-esteem and confidence (a heart; mine was one of those stress-ball hearts).
4. Keep your child healthy (apple, jumprope, or health-oriented materials from National PTA and other sources).
5. Support learning at home (a small blackboard, books, etc.).
6. Communicate with your child's school (phone, daily/weekly folder).
7. Encourage exploration and discovery (magnifying glass, flashlight).
8. Help your child develop good relationships (Care Bears).
9. Keep your child safe (bicycle helmet, fireman or policeman dolls, PTA materials on topics like critical TV viewing, Internet safety, and other materials).
10. Participate in community service (globe to show the interconnectedness, volunteer ID or gift).

Parent Involvement and Parent/Teacher Communication

Source: Kelly Donaldson (Kinsey_M@email.msn.com)

I was talking to a teacher today about how great it is to spend some time with a child's teacher other than during conference time, or even with a teacher their child doesn't have. Anyway, it made me realize that too often the first time a parent has a conversation with their child's teacher is when it's a negative. I thought maybe I could post a list of things like Lawyer, Police Officer, Emergency Room Doctor, a Child's Teacher, and ask "what do these professions have in common?" The answer would be: "Too often, the first experience with them is negative, even though they are all very noble and important professions." This would lead to a discussion on how teachers

can "invite" parents for a dialog before there's a problem or before conferences.

BSP Presentation Titles

Source: Sue Gatton

Getting Rich with No Money Down: BSP

Parents as Partners

We Can't Be a S_ccess Without U

I nvolvement = Success

Bridging the Gap Among Home, School, and Community

Which Piece of the Puzzle Are You?

Why Should Schools Be Parent-Friendly?

The Solution to the Parent I nvolvement Puzzle

Don't Be Puzzled with the National Standards

Aim High

You Can Make a Difference

Six Ways to Support Success

Partnering for Success

A Shot in the Arm

Working Together for Excellence

Parents + Schools = Success for All

Your Blueprint for Parent I nvolvement: Building Successful Partnerships

Marketing Template for BSP Presenter Training

Source: National PTA Trainer Paula Pawlowski (mila@ak.net)

State PTA Offers Free Parent I nvolvement Training

ESEA (No Child Left Behind) reauthorization strengthened the parent involvement provisions in the law. The law expanded opportunities for parent participation in school activities and defined what parent involvement is and what it includes, but doesn't provide the tools to implement good practices.

In an effort to empower schools to build successful partnerships with their parents, the state PTA is offering a one-day training on July 23 from 9 a.m.

to 5 p.m. at the BP Energy Center, 900 East Benson Boulevard, Anchorage, Alaska.

Schools with strong parent involvement programs experience profound benefits for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Research shows that when parents are involved in students' education, those students generally have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and more consistently completed homework.

The best parent involvement programs are well-structured and result in consistent parent participation, not merely a one-time event such as a parent-teacher conference or an annual back-to-school night. They engage parents in substantive tasks, such as school restructuring and setting higher learning standards. They also create an atmosphere where parents feel appreciated and welcome.

Registration information can be found at www.alaska.net/~akpta/bspapp.pdf.

Additional BSP and Presentation Resources

National PTA Websites and Staff Contact Information

Appendix, p. 40-41

Statistical Websites: Appendix, p. 41-43

U.S. Department of Education's Parent Involvement Guidance:

www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/legislation.html

Scroll down to the section on Policy Guidance. The actual guidance is posted in Word and PDF and is located at www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc for the Word document and www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.pdf for the PDF document.

It is also available on the Elementary and Secondary Education Policy Guidance page at www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/edpicks.jhtml.

Inclusiveness: Bridging the Generational Gap:

www.moatskennedy.com

Inclusiveness: Bridging the Poverty Gap:

Ruby Payne on www.ahaprocess.com

BSP Presentation Pointers: Appendix, p. 43-44

BSP Presentation Techniques: Appendix, p. 45-47

Suggested Places to Present BSP: Appendix, p. 48

BSP Presentation Titles to Excite: Appendix, p. 49

BSP Resource Binder for Administrators:

Source: Bonnie Mucha (muchabs@comcast.net):

Subject Categories: Appendix, p. 50-54

Books:

- ***100 Training Games:*** Gary Kroehnert (McGraw-Hill)
- ***101 More Training Games:*** Gary Kroehnert (McGraw-Hill)
- ***102 Extra Training Games:*** Gary Kroehnert (McGraw-Hill)
- ***Basic Training for Trainers:*** Gary Kroehnert (McGraw-Hill)
- ***50 Creative Training Closers:*** Lynn Solem & Bob Pike (Jossey-Bass)
- ***The Big Book of Presentation Games:*** Edward Scannell & John Newstrom (McGraw-Hill)
- ***101 Stupid Things Trainers Do to Sabotage Success:*** Nancy Stern (Richard Chang Associates)
- ***Dealing with Difficult Participants:*** Bob Pike & Dave Arch (Jossey-Bass)
- ***100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom:*** Jack Canfield (he has others, was quite popular in the 1980s. This book has one-pagers that are good).
- ***Facilitation at a Glance! Pocket Guide:*** GOAL/QPC publisher (and of course the Crisp Publications are always simple and brief, easy reading.)
- ***A Case Study of Principal Leadership for School-Community Collaboration:*** Mavis Sanders and Adia Harvey explore this and other dimensions of school-community relations in "Beyond the School Walls" at www.tcrecord.org.

Appendix

**National PTA's *Building Successful Partnerships*
Training for Presenters**

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Presenters' listerv. When you register online and provide an e-mail address, you will be added to this list within a week of training. → pipresenters@list.pta.org

National PTA's website → www.pta.org

Building Successful Partnerships area of the website → <http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/bsp/index.asp>

Private area of the website for presenters and trainers only. Check here regularly for updates to the CD-ROM, important forms, and updates. →

The *Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification* talking points can also be found in this private area under "Updates to the CD ROM". → www.pta.org/programs/bsp/presenter

The online registration area for presenters and trainers to submit and/or update profile and presentation information. There is also a link to this area on the CD-ROM. → www.pta.org/bspapp

National PTA Customer Service → info@pta.org
(800) 307-4782 (4PTA)

National PTA Field Service and Training Department: Questions on presentations, online registration, recommitting or becoming inactive, and reports. → Cassandra Tribitt, Ext.357

Questions on presenter training sessions or the CD-ROM → Rebecca Olson, Ext. 358

National PTA Parent Involvement Coordinator: Questions on program/workshop content, parent involvement, state funding, and accountability. → Programs Department

National PTA's *Building Successful Partnerships* Training for Presenters

Statistical Websites

1. **ChildStats.gov** <http://www.childstats.gov/> —This website offers easy access to federal and state statistics and reports on children and their families including, population and family characteristics, economic security, health, behavior and social environment, and education. If you are wondering where to begin, try the *About this site* link; it provides a brief description of the reports available.
2. **KIDS COUNT Data and Publications** from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/> —a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. The *2000 Kids Count Database Online* link allows you to view state profiles, graphs, rankings, etc.
3. **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** also known as the "The Nation's Report Card"

- <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/sitemap.asp> —Assessed the academic performance of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in a range of subjects since 1969. Allows you to view past assessments by subject and to view a particular state's testing results in several subjects.
4. **Education Week** <http://www.edweek.org/search/>—For seven years, Education Week, America's Education Newspaper of record has published the special reports *Quality Counts*. These special issues of the newspaper have reported on the most significant developments in education policy across the 50 states. The research team at *Education Week* has tracked and reported data on a variety of topics including, policies related to standards, testing, accountability, teacher quality, school climate, and education resources.
 5. **National Center for Education Statistics** <http://nces.ed.gov/> — A great place to start looking for various education statistics such as classroom size, drop-out rate, access to the Internet, school safety, etc. Selecting the *NCES Fast Facts* link is a great way to access frequently requested facts. The *Quick Tables and Figures* link allows you to search by keyword. With the *Encyclopedia of ED Stats* link you can locate several of the NCES publications including *The Digest of Education Statistics*.
 6. **National Center for Health Statistics** <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/> — Statistics on almost any health-related issue you can think of. The best place to begin is with the *Fast Stats A to Z* link, which is arranged in alphabetic order by subject. The *Data Warehouse* also contains several statistical resources.
 7. **FedStats** <http://www.fedstats.gov/> — The window on the full range of official statistical information available to the public from the Federal Government. Use the Internet's powerful linking and searching capabilities to access official statistics collected and published by more than 100 Federal agencies without having to know in advance which agency produces them.
 8. **U.S. Census Bureau—American Fact Finder** <http://factfinder.census.gov/> —Provides statistics on population, housing, and geographic data. Allows searching of the United States

as a whole, as well as by state and county, plus it is very easy to use. If you need more detailed statistics on similar topics look at the U.S. Census Bureau's main site, <http://www.census.gov/>.

National PTA's *Building Successful Partnerships* Training for Presenters

Presentation Pointers

Before you go

- ✓ Find out the exact place where you will be presenting, as well as directions and travel time.
- ✓ Allow plenty of time to get to your destination.
- ✓ Know who your contact person is. Have a "last minute" phone number to call in case you need additional directions or have an emergency.
- ✓ Know what the facility will be like. Arrange a visit if feasible. What presentation aids will be provided? (overhead, flip charts, etc.)
- ✓ Find out who your audience will be.
- ✓ Determine what the atmosphere will be and dress accordingly. Wearing a business suit to poolside training might not be appropriate, just as dressing casually for a more formal environment could undermine your effectiveness.
- ✓ If there is a pre-printed program, write your presentation description. If it is already written, ask for a copy of what has been published to make sure that your presentation is what the audience expects.
- ✓ Determine who is responsible for making copies. If the host is making copies, find out the deadline for getting the originals to him or her; honor the deadline.
- ✓ Know your time frame. Practice your presentation and note the amount of time needed for each segment. If you are trying a new activity, do a dry run first to make sure it works!
- ✓ Think about each thing that could go wrong and how you would handle it. If you've been promised a flip chart for instance, and none is provided, what would you do? (Hint: Bring and use your own; have blank overhead transparencies on which to write if there will be an

overhead, and post-its for brainstorming.) Once you've got a contingency plan, don't worry!

Once you're there

- ✓ Locate your contact person.
- ✓ Check the room to assure that it is set up the way you want it. Check sound levels and sightlines (so that you can be seen) from a variety of places in the room.
- ✓ Take a moment to "see" yourself doing your presentation and get acclimated to the room.
- ✓ Greet the participants as they come in. If you can, request that their name tags be written large enough so that you can read them from several feet away. Calling people by name makes it easier for them to relate to you.

After the presentation

- ✓ Drop a note of thanks to the host. Offer appropriate opportunities for follow-up.
- ✓ Make notes about your presentation, especially anything you tried that worked exceptionally well or changes you would make
- ✓ . Don't forget to report your presentation to National PTA using the CD-ROM and mail in the evaluation forms.

National PTA's *Building Successful Partnerships*
Training for Presenters

Presentation Techniques

Guiding Principles

1. Create Suspense! Do the unexpected. Grab their attention with an opening activity designed to make them want what you have to share!
2. Determine what it is that you want them to know when they leave and what it is you want them to do with it! Design your presentation around those two factors.

Remember to let your audience know *What's In It For Me* and *Make Me (them) Feel Important and Meaningful* to the process.

3. Have a road map. Using the information in number two, develop your road map and make frequent checks back to it during your presentation. This can be done in the form of goals for the presentation.
4. If, in checking the map and your audience, you find that you need to adjust, do so. Be flexible enough to change what you are doing to assure that you meet the goals of number 2 above.
5. Establish your credibility through anecdotes and other creative means throughout your presentation and in handout materials.
6. Plan your presentation around a theme that you can use as a transition from one part of the presentation to another. This also creates a memorable image that will make it easy for participants to remember your points. Example: Use puzzle pieces as nametags and other props to tie into the national standards' logo.

Other Techniques

Provide a variety of visual props. Alternate use of the overhead and flip charts. Use different colors to write on the flip chart.

Find props and activities that help to demonstrate the concepts you are trying to convey. Keep a "recipe box" of activities.

Put together a kit of materials to take to every presentation. Include in it items such as Post-It notes, pens, hi-lighters, colored sticky dots, flip chart markers, overhead markers, name tags, masking or drafting tape (drafting or stenciling tape does not stick to walls and is meant to be removed), blank overhead transparencies, and any other items you find useful on a regular basis. Replenish the kit after every presentation. You may want to include a copy of the *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs* booklet "just in case" you lose your notes!

Convey enthusiasm through movement, body language, and voice inflection.

Use a mixture of presentation techniques. For one portion it might be effective to use a lecture format, another might call for small group work, while another might call for group interaction. Varying the approach keeps the audience engaged.

Keep your sense of humor! It'll get you out of most tough situations!

Know how you might handle the difficult participant, the conversation hog, the person who would rather not be there. (See sense of humor.)

Overcome nerves by being prepared, knowing your topic, and practicing. Present with a partner if possible. This adds variety to the presentation and gives you someone with whom to share responsibilities.

Working With a Partner:

Spend time prior to your presentation getting to know your partner. Find out what he or she perceives as personal strengths and weaknesses and share yours with your partner. Find out what he or she likes and dislikes doing.

Prepare your outline so that each has a clear understanding of what he or she is responsible for, including presentation materials as well as the presentation itself. Know how you will transition from one person to another.

Make sure you discuss strategies for handling unexpected situations.

Make frequent checks of the road map with each other. Doing this during a participant activity is the least disruptive to the presentation.

Stay aware even when you are not presenting. We can often clarify something for the audience that the other partner didn't perceive because he or she was focused on presenting. It also helps to assure that you are aware of what your partner is saying so that you don't contradict one another!

Remember, this is a partnership! What better way to demonstrate what we are promoting than by doing it ourselves!

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Suggested Places to Present

State Opportunities

- Statewide meeting of school principals—elementary, middle, and/or secondary
- Statewide meeting of school superintendents
- Meetings hosted by other national parent involvement organizations (National Center for Parent Involvement in Education; Parents as Teachers National Center)
- State PTA conventions and/or summer leadership training sessions
- PTA region meetings
- Statewide task force meetings
- Statewide annual education conferences, symposiums, and summits

Local Opportunities

- Local PTA meetings
- Local school parents' nights, open houses, parent universities
- Local groups wishing to organize PTAs
- PTA district and/or council meetings
- Meetings and/or in-service training sessions for teachers within a school or district
- Meetings of administrators within a school district
- School board meetings and city/village council meetings
- Chamber of Commerce meetings
- Civic organizations expressing a wish to know more about parent involvement or civic involvement
- Religious groups wishing to know more about parent involvement
- Meetings of other community groups/organizations (YMCA, Girl Scouts, Lions and Kiwanis clubs, local realtors board, senior citizen centers)
- As part of a college class for pre-service teachers or school administrators
- As part of a parenting education class at community centers, public health departments, and community colleges

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Presentation Titles to Excite and Interest Others

Parent and Family Groups

- Parents are From Mars, Schools are From Venus
- Join the *Building Successful Partnerships* Team!
- The Young and the Involved
- Open the Door and Keep It from Closing in Your Face
- You Want Me to Do WHAT?

Community Groups

- A Shot in the Arm 4 Parent Involvement
- What are Schools Doing for My Grandchildren?
- We Want You!
- It Takes a Village....

Education Groups

- Making Teachers' Jobs Easier
- Dust Off the Books
- What? I Need to Work with Parents?
- Do Parents Have a Place in the Classroom?
- Parents—They Just Won't Go Away
- Those Pesky Parents!

Businesses

- School is Everyone's Business
- Today's Investment—Tomorrow's Employees!
- Do Schools Need Mentors?
- What Does Parent Involvement Have to Do with ME?
- What Goes Around...
- Linking Employees to Their Children's Schools

-----Original Message-----

From: Bonnie Mucha [mailto:muchabs@comcast.net]

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 2:04 PM

To: Parent Involvement Presenters

Subject: [pipresenters] BSP in Delaware

Dear all,

I am very excited to share with all of you what is happening in the Christina School District, Delaware. In 1998 I presented a parent/family involvement policy to the Christina Board of Education, which was adopted. I stated at the time that I hoped this policy would not be one that just sat in a binder on a shelf. Well, that is basically what has happened over the years. Even with persistent conversation on the subject, we were headed to nowhereville. Last June, the District hired a new superintendent. When I interviewed him for the position (yes, as president of the local PTA council, I requested that all candidates have interviews with PTA leaders only), one of the first issues discussed was parent involvement and the policy. I knew the right choice was made when, within his first 2 months on the job, he formed a department of family and community engagement. Needless to say, I initiated a meeting with the director and manager of the department. I brought to them everything PTA had to offer. Both were in agreement with me that if parent involvement strategies in school improvement plans were good enough for Title I schools, then all schools should follow. They were extremely impressed with what PTA had to offer.

Last Thursday, I made the first of two presentations to principals and vice principals (and some other District personnel), on Building Successful Partnerships. The first session was a review of the District policy, the Standards, and an activity on identifying and breaking down barriers. The second session will cover action plans and using the resources at their fingertips. I put together 60 binders for the administrators to use as desk references and to make it easier to share information when their

action teams are put together. The notebooks were divided into categories that included the following information:

Tab 1 Parent/Family Involvement

- Christina School District's Parent/Family Involvement Policy
- National PTA Position Statement on Parent/Family Involvement
- Defining Parent Involvement
- National PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement

Programs

- Benefits of Parent Involvement
 - Student Success
 - Parents
 - Teachers, Principals, and Schools
- Barriers to Parent Involvement
 - Roadblocks and Detours
 - Barriers for PTAs to Overcome
- Reaching Out to Specific Populations
- Reaching Out to Key Players
 - Principals and Teachers
 - The School Board and the Superintendent
 - Public Officials

Tab 2 Standard I : Communicating

- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- What PTAs and Administrators Can Do Together
- Project Ideas
- Possible Strategies

Tab 3 Standard II : Parenting

- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- What PTAs, Parent Educators, and Schools Can Do Together
- Designing Parenting Programs
- Project Ideas
- Possible Strategies

Tab 4 Standard III : Student Learning

- Conditions in the Home Associated with School Success
- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- Project Ideas

Possible Strategies

Tab 5 Standard IV: Volunteering

- Seven Steps to a Successful Volunteer Program
- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- Project Ideas
- Possible Strategies

Tab 6 Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy

- Parents as Advocates
- Effective Parent Involvement in School Decision Making
- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- Barriers to Effective Parent Involvement in School Decision Making
- Project Ideas
- Possible Strategies

Tab 7 Standard VI: Collaborating with the Community

- Quality Tips for Successful Programs
- What PTAs, Principals, and the School Community Can Do Together
- Building Partnerships with Businesses
- Building Partnerships with Colleges and Universities
- Project Ideas
- How to Talk to Businesses and Community Organizations
- Sample Worksheet Contacts
- Blank Worksheet Contacts
- Sample Worksheet "The Because"
- Blank Worksheet "The Because"
- Possible Strategies

Tab 8 Tools

- Forming Action Teams, Creating Policies, Developing Action Plans
- Team Development Chart
- Team Development Stages
- Survey: How Well Do You Listen?
- Evaluation Form: Group Process
- Evaluation for Schools - Quality Indicator Check List
- Sample Action Plan for Building Home-School-Community Partnerships
- Blank Action Plan
- Planning Calendar
- Developing a Parent/Family Involvement Policy

Sample Policy
Survey: Parent Involvement in Our Schools
Parent Survey
Faculty Survey
Evaluating PTA Parent/Family Involvement Activities
National PTA's Foreign Language Resources
Reproducible Brochures and Pamphlets
 An Overview of the New Education Law
 Parent Involvement Policies and Title I
 Report Cards for Schools
 Is YOUR School EFFECTIVE
 Helping Your Child Get the Most Out of Homework
 Making Parent-Teacher Conferences Work for Your Child
 Parent Involvement Increases Student Success
(English/Spanish)
 Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification
 100 Ways for Parents to Be Involved in Their Child's Education
 (English/Spanish)

In addition, the District ordered a copy of the book, Building Successful Partnerships, for everyone - I believe 125 copies were purchased. They also purchased everything necessary to put the binder together and made the copies.

Everyone was very receptive. In my monthly meeting with the superintendent today, he asked if there were any administrators that seemed to be holding out. I told him there were a few but I didn't want to give up their names as I wasn't finished yet and I wanted a chance to change their minds. He thought that was very fair.

The Public Information Officer for the District took pictures and we will be sending out a joint press release.

It is our hope to take this presentation to all the school districts in Delaware. A neighboring school district has already heard about it and is very interested - and it is a district that really needs to begin building better relationships.

Last year (summer) I asked if there were any states that had laws covering parental accountability. Those of you that I heard from were very surprised that our fine state wanted to look for ways to punish parents for their lack of involvement in their children's education. Our General Assembly had formed a task force to look at how parents could be held accountable in the education process. I was appointed by Delaware PTA to serve on that task force. I just want to let you know that the members no longer look at holding parents accountable but rather how they can include them. Not one of the recommendations that we will be presenting to the Delaware Department of Education or the General Assembly includes punitive actions against parents(which some t/f members wanted) but rather a dedicated process of involving them- beginning with a state-wide adoption of a pi policy.

Regards,
Bonnie Mucha