



Key Points

- One of the greatest struggles school personnel have is getting families engaged in the educational process.
- It is essential to establish a strong working relationship with parents and families of the children in your program and there are ways to reach out to families Even during challenging times!
- If you share the same values and beliefs, have similar life experiences and personal characteristics as families ... you probably will interpret what they say and do correctly;
- If you share different values and beliefs, or know very little about them and their life experiences and personal characteristics ... miscommunication and misunderstandings may take place.
- Through acceptance, compromise and sensitivity to a family's culture, values and beliefs, you may avoid making children feel torn between practices and home and at school.
- **Key Steps to Resolving Differences Constructively**
 - Seek first to understand the family's position.
 - Validate the family's concerns and wishes.
 - Explain how your program addresses their concern.
 - Make a plan to check with one another to assess progress.
- **Get to Know Families**
 - Acknowledge their differences
 - Ask questions and learn about families
- **Help Families Feel Welcomed into the Program**
 - Create a welcoming environment
 - Explain your program
 - Build trust
 - Include all family members
- **Communicate Regularly with Families**
 - Daily
 - Use a variety of methods

○ Develop a Partnership with Families on the Child's Learning and Development

- Offers ways for family to contribute to learning
- Conduct regular conferences
- Encourage families to help with planning
- Have Resources & Information Available for Families
- Up to date list of community agencies
- Brochures and resources on loan
- Lists of support groups in the community
- Lending library

Resources

Biddle, Julie K. (2012) *The Three Rs of Leadership*, HighScope Press, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Child Care Information Exchange, (September/October 2003) Bruno, Holly Elissa, *Hearing Parents in Every Language: An Invitation to ECE Professionals*.

Dodge, Diane Trister, Colker, Laura J., Heroman, Cate. (2002) *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Fourth Edition*. Teaching Strategies, Inc. Washington, DC.

Graham-Clay, Susan () *Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers*.
Harvard Family Research Project (2010) Cambridge, MA.

Michigan Department of Education (2001) *What Research Says About Parent Involvement in Children's Education: In Relation to Academic Achievement*

NAEYC – Young Children (2009) *Communications Skills for Challenging Conversations, a training for program administrators*

*For more information on this training or other
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