

A Hands-On Approach to Nurturing the Parent Partnership

By Edna Wallace

Parents and Teachers Working Together

Parents have good ideas. Together you can create a great environment for children.

Suggestion Box: Place the box, index cards, and pencils in an easily accessible location, but out of the way – a place that assures some privacy and anonymity.

Parent Survey: Make the survey short, conduct it yearly, and provide some type of incentive so that parents will return it.

Parent Advisory Council: Enlisting a group of helpful, concerned parents is one of the best ways to demonstrate that you want to create a true partnership.

Communication Connections

Including parents in day-to-day activities creates a sense of belonging, a foundation for building trust and loyalty.

Newsletters and Memos: No news is bad news. It's imperative to keep parents informed of what's happening.

Parent Support Programs and Seminars: Learning more about brain and child development, literacy, children with special needs, the power of play, and a host of other topics is important to parents.

Family Visits: A lot can be learned from visiting a child's home. This effort of reaching out can also break down barriers; families often feel most comfortable on their own turf.

Creating an Environment for Parents

Reaching out to parents, nurturing the strengths in their families, and creating an environment where they feel special and needed is a necessary step in creating partnerships.

Bulletin Boards and Picture Albums: Place picture albums on a table depicting field trip excursions, story time, or the ice cream social. Pass on information by posting interesting articles, reminders, and a calendar of events.

Lending Library or Resource Center: The child care setting is an excellent place to house the best books for children along with handouts for parents, parenting books, and videos.

Tapping Into Talent

Parents generally love to offer a helping hand, especially if they feel appreciated for what they do well.