

MODULE 12: MOTIVATING RELUCTANT PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED IN SCHOOL



Reluctant parents seem to have very little desire to engage with their child's school. They do not attend school meetings, rarely respond to communication, and do little to nothing to motivate their kids to stay involved in school. Therefore, they may be slightly intimidated or uncomfortable in an environment with professional staff. Many of these parents may have issues that they need to resolve, such as low self-esteem and a history of neglecting their parents themselves when they were in school. It is up to school personnel to find a way to engage these parents in school and on campus; listed below for some recommendations.

1. Identify parents that are hard to reach

It is essential to reach out to the parents that are reluctant to get involved. Schools should initiate attempts to contact these parents to find out what interests they have. Many parents may have skills to offer on campus; these parents should be encouraged to help other students on campus or other school activities. Some parents may have skills in language, special art skills, cooking, etc. This may be useful in specific afterschool activities, so each campus needs to identify these parents.



2. Initiate activities that bring parents and family on campus

Schools can create after-school activities or activities on Saturdays, which are for the entire family. This could be having a game night, holiday dinners, cookouts, talent shows, parenting workshops, drug awareness, and other activities that parents and students can benefit from.

3. Identify parents' communication preferences

Schools must identify the ways that parents prefer to get their communications from the school. Schools need to use communication methods that work best for the parents, such as mail, personal phone calls, emails, electronic notifications, in-person communications, etc. It is essential not to get caught up in setting up methods of communication that are only convenient for the school—the school should make it suitable for the parents.

Schools need to set up times during the school year to verify that parents have updated contact information. Schools need to be prepared to assist parents when they need help with online classes, related material, etc. Teachers should be encouraged to contact parents when they have issues with their children and do positive work.

4. Connect with parents

It is essential to keep parents and guardians informed promptly about what is happening on campus. Not knowing what is happening with their kids on campus is probably one of the parents' biggest complaints regarding schools. It is not unusual for school personnel to send correspondences to parents through their kids, and usually, these never make it to the parents.

5. Provide After-school workshops

After-school workshops are a great way to support parents with their personal needs and their child's learning needs. These workshops can be after school or on Saturdays where the student can get extra help. They may even seek advice on issues concerning parenting that leads to workshops for adults.



6. Make campus a welcoming place

It is critical that parents are respected and welcomed when they enter any school campus. The expression “You get one chance to make a first impression” indeed rings true here. If parents have a terrible experience visiting the school campus, this cannot be easy to turn around. It is essential when parents walk through the doors to receive a warm welcome from all school staff.

They need to feel respected and should be provided the assistance that they deserve. When sending out notifications to parents, it is critical to personalize some part of the correspondence to encourage parents to visit the school.

7. Have flexibility for families

School campuses often schedule meetings convenient for the school, but to increase participation and make parents feel like they have stock in what happens, you need to have sessions suitable for parents. In addition, parents with no transportation or physical disabilities need to have a conference at their location.

8. Have resources tailored to parents or guardians

Schools should provide parents with a resource helpline that they can call twenty-four hours a day if available. The school should also have a working list of community services for parents to obtain information regarding technology, personal issues, and any other support they may need. Identify staff that can help parents with technology regarding monitoring student attendance and grades online which topics parents or guardians are interested in so that the workshops can be based on their interests.



9. Have parental expectations

Each campus should clearly understand each parent's expectations from their school and school staff regarding assistance and help with their child. In addition, schools need to ask parents what is critical to them concerning their child in school.



WORKBOOK SECTION

1. What are the communication methods school needs to use?

2. What will happen if parents have a terrible experience visiting the school campus?

3. What happens when parents have a little desire to engage with their child's school?
