Families and Teachers: Partners in Education

Historical Precedent
- Early and Mid 19th Century
  - Pestalozzi
    - 1801 gave an exposition of his ideas on education in the book *How Gertrude teaches her Children*.
  - Froebel
    - 1840 established the word *Kindergarten* known as the Father of Kindergarten.
    - Both detailed many of their teaching procedures for home use.
    - Both believed that the involvement of the mother in the education of the children was most important.

Historical Precedent
- Late 19th Century
  - Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst
    - Founded an organization—a nationwide movement—in a time when social activism was scorned and women did not have the vote.
    - They knew there is no stronger bond than that between mother and child.
    - They felt it was up to mothers of this country to eliminate the threats that endangered children.
    - In 1897 they held the 1st meeting in Washington DC.
    - More than 2,000 people attended.

The Mission of the Parent Teacher Association
- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governamental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children;
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation.

Decades of Change
- 1930s
  - Parent involvement in education was actively discouraged.
  - Teachers were considered to be experts who wanted to be left alone.
- 1940s
  - Parent support was encouraged.
- 1960s
  - Head Start programs required parental involvement.
  - Began developing parent education and parent training programs.
Decades of Change

- **1990s**
  - Parent involvement and education were largely ignored in the education reform movement

- **Mid 1990s**
  - With the creation of Charter School parent involvement resurged.

- **2000s**
  - Early childhood education renewed the effort to extend the role of families in their children’s educational process.
  - Serving children and their families.

Strengthening the Partnership

“Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers.”

- Work with your table group as you respond to each of the following questions. Record your thoughts on the chart paper and be prepared to share your responses.
- What do you consider to be the most important reasons for teachers and families to have good relationships?

Parent Bill of Rights

We believe that parents have rights and that their concerns are reasonable and important.

- Parents have the right to know that their child will be safe at school, both physically and emotionally.
- Parents have the right to know that all children will be treated fairly regardless of race, creed, national origin, economic status, gender, or age and that each child will be treated as an individual.
- Parents have the right to know that the staff is experienced and trained in child development.
- Parents have the right to know that any negative or cruel behavior among students or between students and staff will not be tolerated.

A Healthy Learning Environment

- Parents have the right to be treated with courtesy by all members of the staff.
- Parents have the right to participate in meaningful parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's school progress and welfare.
- Parents have the right to visit schools and classes.
- Parents have the right to know that they can approach a staff member with a concern and that the staff member will listen carefully and will do everything possible to address the issue.

Clear, Courteous Communication

- Parents have the right to information on academic requirements of the school program.
- Parents have the right to inspect their child’s record and respond to any statement.
- Parents have the right to be informed of and to appeal school policies.
- Parents have the right to be informed of and to appeal administrative decisions.

Information on School Policies
Parents have the right to be informed of all programs in special education.

Parents have the right to appeal the placement of their child in a special education class.

Parents have the right to extra assistance from the school, including counseling, tutorial, and remedial programs.

Parents have the right to give feedback on any changes in scheduling of extracurricular activities.

Parents have the right to meet and give feedback on final candidates for principal.

Parents have the right to participate in faculty evaluation, recognizing that the responsibility for final evaluation rests with the principal.

America’s Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2008

Discuss with your partners, then share with the rest of your classmates:

- How has the American Family Changed in Recent Years?
- For me, the most difficult part of being a parent today is or would be …
- When I have children, I plan to (work/stay at home/do both) because …
- As a single parent, I will …
- When I have children, I will raise them (just as my parents raised me/ the opposite of the way I was raised) because …

Changes in US Diversity

- Racial and ethnic diversity has grown dramatically in the United States in the last three decades.
- This increased diversity appeared first among children and later in the older population.
- This diversity is projected to increase even more in the decades to come.
- In 2007, 57 percent of children were White, non-Hispanic, 21 percent were Hispanic, 15 percent were Black, 4 percent were Asian, and 4 percent were of all other races (Figure 1).
- The percentage of children who are Hispanic has increased faster than that of any other racial or ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in 1980 to 21 percent in 2007.
- By 2020, it is projected that nearly 1 in 4 children in the United States will be of Hispanic origin.

Figure 1: Percentage of U.S. children ages 0–17 by race and Hispanic origin, 1980–2007 and projected 2008–2020

http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp

http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/demo.asp
Parent/Family-Teacher Conferences

“All families want their children to do well, yet may feel uncertain when dealing with a language and culture that is not their own.”

- Cultural Competence in Working With Children and Families
  - http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/cultural/families/
- Gordon and Browne: Video View Point - Disk 2
- School-age Family Interactions, School, and Community
  - How would you encourage families to participate in your classroom?

Difficult Parent Interactions

- Dealing with hostile or critical parents is rated as one of the least favorite tasks teachers deal with in their profession. There are several strategies that can aid you when working with this type of parent/s.
- Select a physically safe place to meet. If you feel the meeting may become confrontational ask an administrator or counselor to meet with you.
- Pleasantly Greet Parent/Guardian
- Use Active Listening to Defuse Emotions
- Appear Genuinely Interested/Listen Carefully
- Maintain A Calm, Professional Manner
- Ask What Parents Wish to Accomplish in the Conference
- If Necessary, Set a Time Limit
- Ask Parents If the Student Is Aware of the Problem
- Be Honest
- Emphasize Specific Data
- Communicate What Will Be Done about the Problem

Dealing with Difficult Situations

- Read the Situations found in Wolfgang, pages 307-309
- As a group role play each situation:
  - Situation 1: “The hole in the Doughnut”
    - Relationship Listening
    - Wolfgang page 312
  - Situation 2: “New Role Demands and Family Separation”
    - Confronting-Contracting
    - Wolfgang page 314
  - Situation 3: “Aggressive Behavior”
    - Rules and Consequences
    - Wolfgang page 317
  - Situation 4: “Sexual Actions and Apparent Injuries”
    - Coercive-Legalistic
    - Wolfgang page 321

Maintaining Confidentiality

- Take a look at the Code of Ethics and the Principle of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.
- Identify the principles that address confidentiality.

Additional Resources

- Communicating with Parents
- Guidelines for Conferences Concerning Angry Children
  - http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip11.htm
- Got Family Involvement?
  - http://files.2ma.net/19944/assets/docs/microsoft_word_25_tips_for_schools_to_involv_parents.pdf
- 10 Tips for Involving Parents
- 6 Tips for Teacher Student-Parent E-Mail