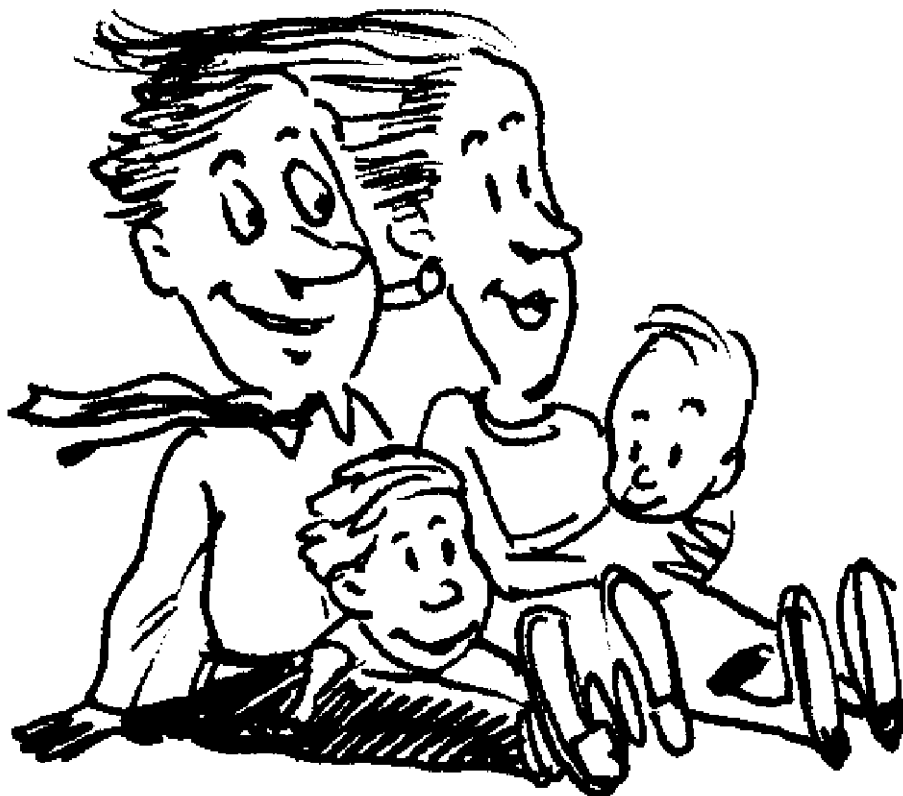


Working the Working

Parent into PTA



Parent/Family Involvement Increases Student Achievement and Success

National Education Goal #8 *Parent Involvement*

- According to the National PTA, “Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children.”
- Effectively engaging parents and families in the education of their children has the potential to be far more transformational than any other type of education reform.

However, the structures and supports for families are continually changing.

Family Diversity

- The predominant scenario in most households includes both parents working outside the home.
- These patterns of change in family structure indicate that the current needs of families are diverse, requiring heightened sensitivity to the increasing demands of home life.

When Parents Are Involved

- Students achieve more, as well as exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors.
- Students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance and complete homework more consistently.
- Educators hold higher expectations and opinions of both the parents and students.

So how do you get working parents involved?

What You Should Do

- **Develop a survey** to gather parent and family volunteer information including:

- special skills/talents/interests
- convenient times for meetings and activities
- ability to participate at school
- ability to help out at home

Follow up on a timely basis and **use this data to plan for the upcoming year.**

- **Develop a working parent committee** comprised solely of working parents.
- **Establish policies** that support and respect family responsibilities, **recognizing the variety of parenting traditions and practices.**
- **Develop a parent handbook** to provide positive, practical information about your school or program.
- Provide frequent and effective **communication** from the school or program **that working parents matter.**
- Recognize parent roles and responsibilities. This will **communicate a clear message** to parents: **“We value you and need your input”** in order to maintain a high-quality program.

- Create program **newsletters which** not only describe PTA and school activities, but **contain tips for helping children learn in the home when time constraints exist**, including:
 - “fun activities in 15 minutes or less”
 - “how to help your child focus on homework when time is of the essence”
- **Promote parent participation** on school district, state and national committees and issues that **do not take a lot of time away from the family.**
- Ensure all **meetings are productive.**
 - Keep them to a reasonable time limit.
 - Distribute agendas prior to the meeting.
- Work with **local companies to support a school based volunteer program.**
- **Invite parents to brown bag lunches** during the work week to discuss issues or volunteer.

How do you get working parents involved?

What You Should Not Do

- Do not **assume that** because a parent works outside the home, that **he or she does not want to or have the time to help out.**
- Do not **make the parent feel guilty for working** outside the home.
- Do not **hold all committee meetings**, planning sessions or activities **between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**
- Do not **have all fundraising activities during the day.**
- Do not **stop communicating** if you do not hear from a parent who has shown interest or who has volunteered in the past.
- Do not **wait for the working parent to contact you.**

Bottom Line - Your PTA should take the initiative to tap into the resources of your working parents.

If you do not - you will be guilty of missing an opportunity to benefit your school.

Good Luck!

Best Practices

- Be sensitive to cultural and language differences.
- Use the Internet.
- Ask! Ask! Ask!
- Do a job switch day.
- Go where the working parent goes.
 - Do a drop off breakfast!
 - Let's Do Lunch
 - The Brown Bag Café
 - Coffee and Cocoa Café
 - Chew and Chat
 - Eats and Education
 - Parents and pastries

Make school events/meetings a family affair

- Popcorn and Peanut Night
- Game Night
- Potluck Night
- Movie Night
- Friday Night Slipper/Sock Party
- Arts and Crafts Night
- Computer Night
- Book and Buddy Night
- Skit Parade
- Parents Show and Tell Time

...and don't forget middle and high school ideas.

- Scholarship/College Night
- Helping your child study in the higher grades
- Projects and You
- Community Service
- Parents go to class
- Parent/Student/Teacher Conferences

More good tips.....

- Get businesses to give time off to parents.
- Make meetings parent friendly for working parents as well.
- Make sure parents have as much advanced notice as possible about events, meetings, programs, and information.
- Do not assume.
- Parents Team Up Program
- Share the volunteer time - buddy system
- Where do I go for...
- Provide specific tips on how to best use/balance the time we have with our children.
- Create a working parent committee on your board, made up of just working parents.
- Collaborate with a work place event. This develops business involvement and can provide a source for volunteers in your school.
- Look out for each other and you will gain an understanding...and a community of each other.