

Faculty and Parents Share Tips on Family Engagement Communities In Schools of Chicago Site Coordinator Forum March 29, 2011

Staff-Parent Relations

- Hire only parent-friendly staff
- Hire bilingual staff
- Print materials in the languages needed by parents and community
- Dedicate staff time to dealing with parents
- Create staff-parent collaboration opportunities
- Organize staff-parent luncheons
- Professional development for teachers on issues facing homeless/transient students and parents

Develop/update a parent resource room

- Computers/printers
- Library
- Potlucks
- Catering/cooking facilities
- Comfortable seating

Parent leadership

- Switch LSC meetings to a more accessible, open location (for example, one school stopped holding them in the principal's office)
- Create budget for paying some parents that are very involved
- Utilize existing parent leadership to recruit more volunteers
- Develop a parent leadership training program
- Parent mentoring and tutoring program
- Organize a parent safety patrol
- Green committee for parents
- Install an idea box for parents to share suggestions, and have LSC chair manage it
- Engage parents as "Secret readers" for grades PreK-3
- Monthly cultural heritage committee
- Café moms to work the lunch room
- Include a commitment clause in parent surveys
- Partner engaged parents with parents that want to be more involved

Special events

- Invite parents to see their student receive awards, then follow with a meeting
- Para-professionals can do mini-workshops at report card pick-up
- Give parent "thank you" awards for the successes of their child
- Add programs through partnerships with organizations and companies
- Field days: picnic or outdoor carnival
- Community sing-a-longs
- "Back to school bash" with jumping house, games, etc.

- Honor roll recognition night, present parents of recipients with flowers
- Monthly “teas”
- Hold a “picture with Santa” day
- Spring musical showcase
- “Celebration of Learning” to celebrate what’s being learned in classes
- Hold a turkey raffle near Thanksgiving
- Provide door prizes at events
- Movie nights
- Grandparent support program
- Develop public cultural programs

Managing parent involvement

- Make turn-out phone calls before meetings
- Create catchy fliers and emails
- Define different roles for parents: they don’t all have to do the same thing
- Parent involvement to help school run more smoothly – hall monitor, lunch room, tutoring
- Conduct a parent survey
- Provide child care at workshops
- Create a list of other duties that parents can do other than working with students
- Ask interested parent volunteers to complete background checks
- Serve food at parent meetings
- Give plenty of advance notice and reminders to parents about events
- Track parental involvement and create systems of rewards
- Out-of-uniform pass to students for if parents are involved
- Create a school-wide expectation that parents will volunteer
- Tap into a student’s extended family for volunteers

Services that may draw in parents

- Writing classes
- ESL
- CPR/First aid
- Sewing
- Hip hop dance
- Walking club (hand out pedometers)
- Yoga
- Line dancing
- Resume Writing
- Resources
 - CISC (of course!)
 - HW college tutoring
 - Loyola university tutors
 - Block grant “safe kids” program
 - America SCORES