



Effective Problem-Solving Techniques for Working with Parents

Category: Working with Parents

Workshop Overview

Following is a general overview of this workshop, including desired participant outcomes, an explanation of the workshop’s alignment with the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, and resources that are included in print and electronic form.

Category: Working with Parents

Duration: Full workshop – 3 hours

Desired Outcomes:

Participants will...

- Identify the importance of working with parents to resolve problem situations in the classroom.
- Learn ways to relate to parents who complain or are angry and upset.
- Apply strategies for coping with parent pressure and dealing with parents and students who are in trouble.

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

- **Learning Communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- **Leadership:** Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
- **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.
- **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards

Resources in This Binder:

- Handouts:
 - Activity Sheet: Partnership Checklist
 - Workshop Agenda
 - Attendee Notes
 - 3-2-1 Evaluation Form
 - Certificate of Completion
- “Think About It” Exercise
- Ready, Set, Go Planning Activity





Topic Outline

Understanding the general flow of topics to be covered is an important part of giving a strong presentation. This allows the presenter(s) to lead effective group discussions and speak extemporaneously. Following are the main topics covered in this PowerPoint presentation. As you prepare to give the workshop, you may want to refer to this page often.



Main Topics:

1. Handling Parent Concerns
2. Dealing with Parent Difficulties
3. Reaching Out to Parents

Subtopics:

1. Handling Parent Concerns

- a. Parent Pressure
- b. Parent Complaints

2. Dealing with Parent Difficulties

- a. Upset Parents
- b. Angry Parents

3. Reaching Out to Parents

- a. Acknowledging the Issues
- b. Resolving Major Issues



Presentation Outline

This outline is designed for you to see the PowerPoint presentation at a glance. Note that slide numbers and the approximate amount of time needed per slide are shown in the right two columns. **The times in bold print show the approximate total time needed for that topic, which includes the approximate times for the activities, shown in parentheses.** You might consider keeping this page within reach during the presentation.

Section of Presentation	Slide #	Timing (mins)
Getting Started		
Introduce self, co-teacher, participants	1-2	
Explain materials issued to participants		
Cover objectives (from Workshop Overview)	2	10
Topic 1 – Handling Parent Concerns	3-13	60
Activity – Think and Share – Think and Discuss	5	(25)
Discussion Point – Pressure from Parents	8	(5)
Activity – Meet the Parents	13	(20)
Topic 2 – Dealing With Parent Difficulties	14-24	35
Discussion Point – What’s the most common issue that causes you to have difficulties with parents in your school?	14	(10)
Break		
Topic 3 – Reaching Out to Parents	25-30	50
Activity – Partnership Checklist	30	(30)
Closing Thoughts	31	5
Total of 2 hours and 40 minutes (not including break)		

Helpful tip!

This workshop can be broken up into shorter sessions so that you can adapt the presentation according to your time constraints.

Slide 7

PDXPERT HANDLING PARENT CONCERNS

Parent Pressure

To deal with pressure:

- Don't avoid the parents.
- Arrange a meeting with them.
- Let them examine, evaluate, and recommend solutions.

THE MASTER TEACHER

In coping with pressure, you must accept some realities and adopt these guidelines.

Don't avoid the parents. *Recognize that pressure exists. We shouldn't try to avoid parents who pressure, and we shouldn't put them down. They are real forces in the school and the community, and their concern for their children is normal.*

Arrange a meeting with them. *This is a way to defuse the pressure situation, which you must do before anything positive can happen. The best way to do this is to carefully arrange a meeting with parents who pressure. State a twofold purpose: to listen and to gather information about their concern. But be sure never to say, "I'll need some information first or I can't help you." Such words will only bring out the worst in parents because you have inadvertently laid the responsibility for resolving an issue back on them rather than resolving it yourself.*

Let them examine, evaluate, and recommend solutions. *Their involvement can be very effective. That's why inclusion rather than exclusion must be our stance. Our task is to reveal to parents the merits and demerits of their proposal—and how it fits into the total educational picture for the benefit of students.*

Failing to recognize the influence these parents can exert and being unprepared to deal with them are two mistakes we can make which will cause us the most problems.



“Think About It” Exercise



Have staff complete this exercise to begin implementing what they learned during the workshop. Distribute this document to staff by attaching the file to the Next Day Follow-Up Email, or make copies for the staff.

1. What was the most difficult parent concern that you have dealt with? Describe how you handled it and the strategies you used. Considering the strategies you’ve learned in this workshop, should you have handled the situation differently?

2. Are there any aspects of relating to parents that the workshop did not cover? What are they, and how do you suggest addressing these aspects?

3. With the subject(s) you’re teaching and your students’ individual needs, what do you anticipate will be possible sources of pressure or complaint from their parents? Identify specific ways to address these possibilities and encourage parent partnership.
