



Parent Involvement



POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

Parent involvement is important at all ages of a student's education and the more actively parents are involved, the more benefits the child receives. As parent involvement programs have evolved and been accepted by school stakeholders, research strongly indicates that one of the most effective forms of parent involvement is when schools engage parents to work directly with children on learning activities. It does not matter whether the parent involvement engages parents actively at the school or home. Communication with parents must be meaningful, on-going, two-way, and filled with mutual respect.



**Applying New Knowledge:
Learning & Transfer**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC

Accredited by International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)

Parent Involvement: Positive Communication

Theresa Vadala, Ed. D

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC

Las Vegas, Nevada 89139

The thumbnail shows the cover of the training manual. At the top left is the 'Applying New Knowledge: Learning & Transfer' logo. To its right is the publisher information: 'Child Care Training Consultants, LLC Accredited by International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET)'. The main title 'Parent Involvement' is written in large, bold, red letters. Below it is a photograph of a group of people in a meeting, with some raising their hands. Underneath the photo is the subtitle 'POSITIVE COMMUNICATION'. A white text box contains the following text: 'Parent involvement is important at all ages of a student's education and the more actively parents are involved, the more benefits the child receives. As parent involvement programs have evolved and been accepted by school stakeholders, research strongly indicates that one of the most effective forms of parent involvement is when schools engage parents to work directly with children on learning activities. It does not matter whether the parent involvement engages parents actively at the school or home. Communication with parents must be meaningful, on-going, two-way, and filled with mutual respect.' At the bottom left of the cover, the author's name 'DR. THERESA VADALA' is listed.

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PRESCHOOL Module 1

CKA 5: Family, Community and Cultural Relationships

Title: WY 5.B Parent Involvement: Positive Communication

2 Hours

0.2 CEUs



**Dr. Theresa Vadala
(Instructor & Curriculum Designer)**





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Child Care Training Consultants LLC., Goal

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

Mission Statement

“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

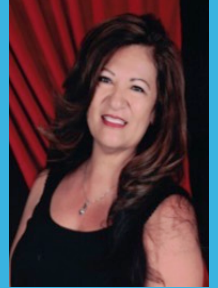
Vision

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.



About the Instructor

Theresa has over 30 years experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. During that time, she served as a Preschool Teacher, Disabilities Coordinator, Program Facilitator, and Director of an Early Childcare Program. She has a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with Specialization in Curriculum and Instructional Design. Theresa is a Professional Growth & Development Trainer and Curriculum Designer and offers web-based courses internationally. She is the Executive Director/Owner of of the training organization Child Care Training Consultants, LLC., (CCTC).



Business Description

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC. (CCTC) is an accredited provider (AP) with the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) that provides Continuing Education Units (CEU) for adult education nationally. The business is also a recognized training organization with the Council for Professional Recognition, Child Development Associate Council (CDA), National Credentialing Program.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

By the end of this training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize the benefits of parents given research on benefits to parent involvement to review.
- 2) Identify the 3 dynamics of parents and decide how to support every parent.
- 3) Implement effective communication with every parent given 10 strategies on how to communicate with parents.
- 4) Describe tips for parents by developing positive contact with parents.
- 5) Develop a parent involvement plan by establishing a plan that includes desired results, evidence of involvement, activities, resources, and a timeline.



AGENDA

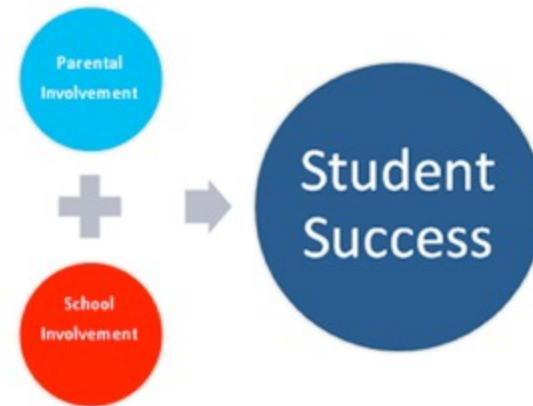
- I. Benefits of Parent Involvement
 - a) Fewer Behavior Problems
 - b) Better Academic Performance
 - c) More Positive Attitudes and Behavior
 - d) Likely to complete secondary school
- II. Dynamics of Parents
 - a) Hit and Run Parents
 - b) The Inspector
 - c) Go with the Flow Parents
- III. Communication Strategies
 - a) 10 ways to Communicate with Parents in your Center
- IV. Positive Contacts with Parents
- V. Tips for Parents
 - a) Tips for Developing Positive Contact with Parent
- VI. Barriers to Parent Involvement
 - a) Differing Ideas on Parent Involvement
 - b) Insufficient Training for Teachers
 - c) Lack of Parental Education
- VII. Developing a Parent Involvement Plan



RESEARCH

Research shows that parent communication:

- Must be meaningful
- Ongoing
- Two-way
- With mutual respect





RESEARCH

This training outlines the importance of parent involvement, communication with parents, and parent involvement strategies. Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that parent involvement in children's academic success is a positive aspect of achievement. Parent involvement is important at all ages of a student's education and the more actively parents are involved, the more benefits the child receives. As parent involvement programs have evolved and been accepted by school stakeholders, research strongly indicates that one of the most effective forms of parent involvement is when schools engage parents to work directly with children on learning activities. It does not matter whether the parent involvement engages parents actively at the school or home. Communication with parents must be meaningful, on-going, two-way, and filled with mutual respect.





I. BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Importance of Parent Involvement

- Fewer Behavior Problems
- Better Academic Performance
- More Positive Attitudes and Behavior
- Likely to complete secondary school





BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

When schools and families work together, children have a higher chance for success, not just in school, but throughout life (Henderson & Berla, 1996, p. 1). The patterns for success begin in early childhood and include:

- Higher grades and assessment scores
- Better attendance
- Fewer placements in special education
- More positive attitudes and behavior
- Greater enrollment in postsecondary education

These benefits parallel with the kind of results reported for high-quality early childhood programs such as Head Start and the Perry Preschool Project . The development of attitudes, values, and lifelong habits begins with partnership between the early childhood educator and the families of your children.



II. DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

Dynamics of Parents

Hit and Run * The Inspector * Go with the Flow





II. DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

Working in a preschool center you have encountered the many personality types of parents. There are parents who rush in, drop off their child or children and run out the door. Other parents read everything on the bulletin board, may walk in classrooms and observe what teachers do for morning instruction. Yet, other parents, hang out at the school and wait for teachers to provide a task for them.

These parents are known as;

- 1) Hit and run parents**
- 2) The Inspector**
- 3) Go with the flow parents**



DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

Hit and Run Parents





DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

1) *Hit and Run.*

The hit and run parent parks out the front door, runs in and drops off their child to first person they see and often ask to have someone sign their child in. Hit and run parents do not worry about what caretakers are teaching that day, assume all safety measures and teacher ratios are in place, and never ask about teachers' credentials. This usually occurs because parents have had their children in the program for some time and simply trust staff, or they have to get to work in a hurry and trust the teachers will take care of their children and teach them whatever it is they need to know. *After all they are teachers, and they should know everything about what goes on at the school right?* There are also parents who dislike the schools or centers where they take their children, but that is all they can afford. Parents may feel *stuck* at your center.



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DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

The Inspector





DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

2) *The Inspector.*

The inspector parent insists on a walk-through of the entire school while they inspect the school to make sure it is good enough for their child. These parents read lesson plans, ask about safety procedures, and they sometimes want to observe different teachers giving instruction. Inspector parents also want to see teachers' credentials. Parents may call 3 times a day to see what their child is doing and explain to you how to cut the grapes in half so their child does not choke and tells you not to let their child play with *little Johnny* because his clothes does not match (you get the idea).



DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

Go with Flow Parents





DYNAMICS OF PARENTS

3) *Go with the Flow.* Yet, other parents go with the flow and take their children to school everyday, wait for the front door to open so they can sign their child in, then hang out and talk to other parents as they come in to drop off their children. Go with the flow parents usually linger in the class until the teachers asked for them to leave or instruction begins. These parents will read a book to the students and help the teachers with various tasks.

As preschool teachers it is equally important to reach all parents and it is your responsibility to share daily news, upcoming event information, and what you are doing to prepare their children for kindergarten. The goal now is how to communicate with each and every one of these parents.



III. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- Parent Newsletters
- Phone Calls
- School Calendars
- Parent Workshops
- Curriculum Nights





III. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Personal contact, including conferences, home visits, telephone calls, and curriculum nights or open houses, seems to be the most effective form of communication and may be among the most familiar. The great diversity among families means that it is not possible to rely on a single method of communication that will reach all homes, therefore, it is essential that a variety of strategies, adapted to the needs of particular families and their schedules, be incorporated into an overall plan.

- Some strategies to consider include:
- Parent newsletters
- Annual open houses
- Curriculum nights
- Home visits (where applicable)
- Phone calls
- Annual school calendars
- Inserts in local newspapers
- Annual grandparents or "special persons" days
- Board of Education spokesperson
- Website for the school
- Workshops for parents
- Communications that are focused on fathers as well as mothers



COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Communicating with parents can be a challenging task at times. Getting parents to attend open house, school events, or parent conferences may be the only 3 times you see parents in the entire school year. Here are 10 ways to enhance communicate with parents in your center:

1) Parent Bulletin Board

Having a parent bulletin board is a great communication tool if it is maintained well and updated frequently. Useful information to post on your parent bulletin board should include: a calendar of important events along with detailed information about these events, the weekly menu, parent newsletters and information on parent resources. Draw attention to the bulletin board by changing the theme monthly and be sure that your bulletin board is near the entrance of the building.

2) Notes on the Child

Return address labels are a unique way to communicate short messages to parents. For example, if a child needs diapers ASAP simply write: *"I need diapers"* on a return address label and stick it on the child. Labels can also be used as a brief reminder for center events such as picture day, parties and other important days.

3) Posting Signs on the Parent Entrance

When parents enter your building one of the first things that they see is the door. This is a great place to post key information such as: scheduled closings, upcoming events, party information, field trip information, policy reminders and more.



COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

4) Family Mailboxes

Setting up family mailboxes is an organized way of sending notes home to parents. Depending on the size of your center, the mailboxes can be placed in each classroom or in a location near the parent entrance. Label each mailbox with the child's name or the family's last name. Post a sign on the outside of the entrance of your building reminding parents to check mailboxes each day. Also, encourage teachers and children to remind parents to check mailboxes.

5) Verbal Reminders

Pick-up time or morning arrival is a perfect time to remind parents of classroom events, center events or supplies needed. Parents usually will appreciate the reminder, because they may not have time to read the notes that were sent home until days later. Verbal reminders send the message to parents that you are comfortable talking with them -- a keyway to open up the lines of communication.

6) Use the Child as a Communication Tool

Children are known for having a good memory! Have you ever made a promise to a child? If so, chances are they frequently reminded you of the promise you made. When there is an important event in your center or if the children need to return something to school, simply ask the teacher to discuss it with the children at group time. The children will be sure to remind their parents over and over again!



COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

7) Telephone Calls

If you need to get a message to a parent and find that sending a note does not work, give the parent a call. Be sure to keep the phone call brief (3-5minutes). Keeping the phone conversation short sends the message that you respect the parents' time. There are many different ways of contacting parents: home phone, cell phone or at work. Be sure to ask the parent what time of day is a good time to call them and which number is the best number to reach them.

8) Easels on the Outside of the Classrooms

Placing an easel on the outside of the classrooms provides another way of communicating with parents for the teachers. The parents will read the note before entering the classroom, and it may even create some discussion between the teacher and the parent about the note. Writing or typing notes takes time. If teachers do not have time to write notes, he or she can simply write messages on the easel outside of their classroom. The easel can either be in the form of a dry erase board or a chalkboard.

9) Mail Flyers or Postcards to Their Home

What is the first thing that you do when you get home? For many, this is the time they read the mail. Sending a post card to a parent's home sends the message that your center event and their participation are important. In most homes, the refrigerator is full of important notes, and your postcard or flyer just may go on the refrigerator as one of these reminders.

10) Email

In this electronic age, sending an email is another effective way of communicating with parents. Some parents have their emails sent to their cell phones, or they may even check their email at work. This is also a great way to save paper! Information that can be sent by email includes: newsletters, my day reports, reminders or even tuition reminders. During the enrollment process, ask each family for their email address so that you have another way of communicating with them.



IV. POSITIVE CONTACT WITH PARENTS

- Smile when you see parents
- Learn parents' names
- Let parents know you need their support
- Communicate often
- Make positive phone calls
- Lead with positive news





IV. POSITIVE CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Tips for Developing Positive Contact with Parents

1. **Smile When You See Parents**
2. **Greet them.** Most parents only occasionally interact with teachers so make sure that at least 90 percent of your encounters with them are positive, warm, and friendly.
2. **Learn Their Names**
Always address parents by their preferred name.
3. **Declare Your Intention**
Tell them that you want to partner with them, that you appreciate their support, and look forward to working together.
4. **Communicate Often and in Various Forms**
Provide information about what's going on in your class, what students are learning, what they've accomplished, what you're excited about, what they're excited about, and the learning and growth you're seeing.
5. **Make a Positive Phone Call Home**
Call all homes within the first couple of weeks and then at regular intervals throughout the year. Identify those students who perhaps need a positive call home.
6. **Lead with Positive News**
Give positive praise first when calling parents or meeting with them to discuss a concern. Every child has something good about him/her. Then share your concern. End with a positive note



POSITIVE CONTACT WITH PARENTS

7. Find a Translator

If you can't speak parents' language, seek a translator for at least one parent conference and/or phone call. Parents are encouraged to bring in a family member to assist in translating for conferences.

8. Ask Questions about the Child

"What kinds of things does he enjoy doing outside of school? Who are the special people in her life -- family or family friends? What do you think are her best characteristics? What was he like as a little boy?" Demonstrate an interest in knowing your student. Take time to listen to your parents.

9. Invite Parents to Share

Distribute a survey at the beginning of the year (if parents don't read/write in English, students can interview them and relay their answers). Find out what parents know about and what skills they have. Let parents share with you their cultural traditions, interests, passions, skills, knowledge.

10. Let Parents Know How They Can Help

Many want to help but especially as kids get older, parents aren't asked for help as often and don't know what to do. There's always some way they can help in the classroom.



POSITIVE CONTACT WITH PARENTS

12. Explain Your Instructional Decisions

Plan ongoing parent workshops to notify parents about curriculum or curriculum changes. Keep parents informed about any major changes or additions within the educational system.

13. Develop a Learning Community

Invite parents to give their input, give them information that will help them form an opinion, and listen to their conclusions.

14. Thank Parents

Both individually and publicly for their support, perhaps in your weekly newsletter. Recognize what they do to help your class and how it's impacting students.

15. Share Every Success

Let parents know what their child is doing well, what academic skills, social skills or knowledge he's mastered.





WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Parents are their children's best advocates. Parents' willingness to contact teachers on a regular basis about their children's progress is the first step to becoming involved in their children's education. Armed with good information about a child's performance, parents can proceed in both direct and indirect ways to influence the child's progress. Parents can become directly involved in children's education by:

- Limiting time spent with friends and watching television
- Providing support to educators,
- Providing ideas for improvements in the education system
- Taking advantage of opportunities to become involved with school administration and policy development
- It is important to keep parents informed about their child's progress during the entire school year.



V. TIPS FOR PARENTS



Keeping Parents interested and Involved

- Here are some ideas for supporting ongoing parental interest and involvement that many early childhood educators have found to be successful:
- Make the most of drop-off and pick-up activities. Greet with enthusiasm and when possible, acknowledge their arrival in some special way.
- Share a detail or two. When speaking with parents, be sure to add some specific information about their child's progress. "She's doing fine" is not nearly as satisfying to a parent as "You wouldn't believe how much fun she had creating shapes out of clay the other day!"
- Host a variety of special events. Try to plan activities such as informal breakfasts, picnics, class trips and fairs featuring educational books and toys throughout the school year. Events from parents may encourage them to be more involved in developing and planning. Be sure to consider whether parents have preferences about when during the day or evening these activities should take place.
- Communicate frequently. Whether in person (parent-teacher conferences,), through printed materials (flyers, newsletters, school bulletin boards) or online (school Web sites, group or individual e-mails) , try to make frequent contact with parents.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

- High Expectations Count
- Celebrate Achievements through work sampling
- Encourage Parent Networking
- Have Resources Readily Available
- Invite Parents into Classroom





TIPS FOR PARENTS

- High expectations count. Help make parents aware of the school's high standards for achievement, learning goals, curriculum and strategies for helping every child succeed. Invite parents to become involved in decision-making and planning ways to help the school community meet these goals.
- Celebrate achievements through work sampling. Create portfolios, scrap books, and/or other collections of children's experiences in the classroom for parents to look at whenever they visit the classroom.
- Encourage parent networking. A good way to start building parent networks is by creating a parent contact list. Be sure to include teachers, aides and other relevant school personnel.
- Identify and make useful resources available to parents. Be prepared to lead parents to readily available resources, or through a lending library in the school, through local agencies or via helpful resources on the Web.
- Invite parents into the classroom. Extend frequent invitations for parents to visit their child's school and spend time in the classroom. Whether parents are invited to be silent observers or to help with activities, these visits can be most helpful and enjoyable. Always thank parents for their visit.



PHONE GUIDELINES

- Introduce yourself
- Tell the parents what their child is studying
- Invite the parents to an open house and/or other school functions
- Comment on their child's progress
- Inform them of their child's achievements (e.g., "Student of the W")
- Inform them of their child's strengths or share an anecdote





PHONE GUIDELINES

For new teachers it can be difficult to make the first call to a parent or guardian. Preparing for the call will make it easier.

Before making a call, write down the reasons for the call. One reason can be simply to introduce yourself to the parent or guardian. Here are several guidelines you can use as you prepare:

- Introduce yourself
- Tell the parents what their child is learning about
- Invite the parents to an open house and/or other school functions
- Comment on their child's progress
- Inform parents of their child's achievements
- Inform parents of their child's strengths

Reference

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BUILD TRUST WITH PARENTS

- Ensure parents their child's best interest is at heart
- Talk causally with parents
- Keep communication lines open
- Establish an open-door policy





BUILD TRUST WITH PARENTS

Building a parent's trust is often a gradual process. First of all parents need to ensure that you have their child's best interest at heart. Proving this to some parents can be challenging, but it isn't impossible. Talk with parents casually and keep ongoing communication lines open.

- Use registration time to build a foundation with parents.
- Create detailed student information sheets to share during conferences.
- Send out parent surveys to gather parent interests.
- Make open house a special event and present a simple Power Point to share student expectations, rules and regulations.
- Communicate good news regularly
- Establish an Open Door Policy

Once trust is built with parents, parents are more likely to return to your center and enroll younger siblings.



LISTEN TO PARENTS

There may be times that a parent has a question or concern about something. Refrain from being defensive. Being defensive makes it seem as though you have something to hide. Instead of being defensive listen to everything parents have to say before you react. Most of the time a parent's questions or concerns come down to miscommunication or misconceptions. Assure parents you will clear up any issues, remain calm and in a professional manner. Listening to parents provides parents the opportunity to vent about an issue that may be easily resolved.





DOCUMENT EVERY COMMUNICATION

The importance of documenting parent communication can ease any future concerns regarding specific issues. It doesn't have to be anything in depth. Documentation needs to include the date, parent/student name, and a brief summary. Although you may never need it, it will be well worth the time if you ever need it. Documenting is so valuable. For example, a parent may not be happy about your perception on a child's progress through the course of the year. A parent could claim that you never talked to them about it, but if you have it documented that you did communicate several times throughout the year, the parent has no basis for their claim. It is important to document every parents concerns, whether you know them well or not.



DOCUMENT EVERY COMMUNICATION

- Include the Date
- Parent/Student Name
- Brief Summary of Communication
- Place in Child's File





VI. BARRIERS TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Many parents encounter obstacles to participating in their children's education. These barriers are brought into your center every day. Barriers to parent involvement include:

- Differing ideas among parents and teachers on what constitutes involvement,
- Insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to both mothers and fathers,
- Lack of parental education and parenting skills,
- Time pressures,
- Job pressures
- Language barriers

Studies show that parents tend to be less involved in the educational process as their children get older. A study of the U.S. Department of Education found that nationwide, as children grow older, contacts between families and schools decline in number and in the positive nature of such contacts. This decline in involvement is the result, in part, of a variety of challenges that families face that make their participation difficult.

Although these barriers make it difficult for parent to get involved with their child's education, the tips and strategies previously provided will help you to reach parents



VI. BARRIERS TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Differing Ideas on Parent Involvement
- Insufficient Training for Teachers
- Lack of Parental Education
- Time Pressures
- Job Pressures
- Language Barriers





OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Ensure that the service is friendly, warm & welcoming to all parents.

- Communicate with parents in ways that promote their confidence
- Ask parents how the service can make itself more friendly and appealing
- Enable parents to talk about their needs
- Help parents prioritize issues overcome barriers
- Allow parents opportunities to express their feelings
- Help them to acknowledge and understand difficult feelings
- Recognize when particular or specialist help is needed
- Ensure staff know how to refer parents to appropriate services



VII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Goal: The Parent Involvement Plan will address:

1. Document the desired results between leaders, teachers, and parents.
2. Documentation of agenda and attendance of stakeholders.
3. Activities proposed to address.
4. Resources used or needed for future meetings.
5. Timeline: A calendar of events for the year.

Desired Results	Evidence of Involvement	Activities	Resources	Timeline



VII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Develop a parent committee in the beginning of the school year. Keep record of agenda and attendees.

Encourage parents to attend the parent committee meeting. Be sure to invite all parents to take part of this process to alleviate any misunderstandings. When developing a parent involvement plan be sure meet with each parent at some point during the beginning of the year. Having a parent meeting at the beginning of the school year will provide the opportunity discuss the parent involvement plan.

Parents may then return the plan at their earliest convenience. The Parent Involvement Plan should include desired results between leaders, teachers, and parents. Be sure to save any documentation such as meeting agendas and attendance. List any activities parents may be interested in assisting with throughout the year. Identify any resources that may be needed for further meetings. Always set a timeline for completion of any project parents are working on. Review the parent involvement plan periodically or as needed.

REVIEW

By the end of this training participants will be able to:

- 1) Recognize the benefits of parents given research on benefits to parent involvement to review.
- 2) Identify the 3 dynamics of parents and decide how to support every parent.
- 3) Implement communicate skills with every parent given 10 strategies on how to communicate with parents.
- 4) Describe tips for parents by developing positive contact with parents.
- 5) Develop a parent involvement plan by establishing a plan that includes desired results, evidence of involvement, activities, resources, and a timeline.



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