Sharing Effective Strategies Between Home and School

Dorothy Parks and Bambi Polotzola
October 11, 2012
Participants will...

- Review the research and benefits of family and school collaboration
- Discuss barriers and strategies to effective collaboration
- Consider strategies in building, sustaining, and concluding partnerships
• What are your first thoughts when you hear the words “family-school partnerships,” or “collaboration?”

• What are some ways you foster positive communication between home and school?
Inclusive Practices
Curriculum & Instruction
Environment
Communication
Behavior
Social Interaction
Transition
Collaboration
Collaboration is a “style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work together toward a common goal” (Friend & Cook, 1992).

Collaboration occurs when professionals with different expertise voluntarily work together to address the needs of all students in an inclusive environment and their families (West & Idol, 1990).
Parents are the first and foremost influence on their child’s development and school success. When parents are involved in helping their children learn at home, students have…

- Better grades
- Higher scores on standardized tests
- Better attendance records
- Higher aspirations
- More positive attitudes towards school and homework

Bogenschneider & Johnson (2012)
Collaboration between family and educators facilitate students’ cognitive, social, and emotional functioning by extending opportunity for learning across home and school settings through mutual reinforcement and support.

Home and school partnerships have been linked to academic success, as well as:

- Increased self-esteem
- Improved behavior
- More positive attitudes toward school

Effective Home and School Collaboration

Increased Family Involvement

Students

More positive attitudes about school
Improved behavior
Increased “on task” time
Enhanced sense of responsibility for learning

Parents

Improved ability to support student learning
Increased satisfaction with educational services
Higher regard for teacher effectiveness

Educators

Improved parent-teacher relationships
Stronger support from parents
Better understanding of students’ needs
Increased ability to support student learning

IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
What does the research say in relation to students with ASD and related disabilities?

- An interdisciplinary collaborative team has a shared responsibility for the student’s educational plan (IDEA, 2004).

- All team members, including families, should have an understanding of strategies and supports utilized in the student’s educational programming (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huger, & Kincaid, 2003).

- Instructional teams (including families) should collaborate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming for students with autism and related disabilities (Friend & Cook, 1995; Jorgensen, Schuh, and Nisbet, 2006; Yell, Katsiyannis, Drasgow, & Herbst, 2003).

- This collaboration should be evidenced in documentation such as lesson plans and IEPs, as well as through manifestation in daily student programming (Wilson, 2006).
Can you think of any other reasons why collaboration between home and school are so important?
Barriers to Effective Collaboration

- **Conceptual**
  - perceived roles and responsibilities

- **Pragmatic**
  - logistical factors

- **Attitudinal**
  - beliefs and expectations

- **Professional**
  - personal philosophy
  - communication, problem-solving, and conflict management skills

Welch (1998)
Use C.O.R.E. to eliminate barriers!

- **CONNECT**
  Develop trusting relationships

- **OPTIMISM**
  Embrace the possibilities of change and assume that each person has the ability to learn and to change

- **RESPECT**
  Acknowledge that each person is trustworthy, concerned & caring with the right to differing values

- **EMPOWER**
  Facilitate feelings of competence by identifying each person’s particular skills and strengths

Minke (2000)
Building family-school partnerships

Ensure that parents have needed information to support children’s educational progress.

- **Orientation night with follow-up contact for non-attendees.**
- **Parent support groups to disseminate information.**
- **Monthly meetings on topics of interests.**
- **Share resources, tools, strategies that match student’s learning style and skill through technology (email, virtual newsletter, website)**
- **Community workshops where parents and educators learn together, such as the LASARD Winter Institute and Family Helping Families classes.**

LAQI5. School teams (including families) attend trainings provided by outside agencies or local districts regarding students with autism and related disabilities

LAQI6. Ongoing training for school staff and families is offered by the school and/or district related to students with autism and related disabilities.
Collaboration in the Assessment Process

Involving families in the assessment process

• Empowers families to communicate information they most want schools to know

• Familiarizes educators with students’ likes, dislikes, strengths, behavioral and social skills

• Increases the likelihood that special education services will address a student’s most important needs

Thompson, Meadan, Fansler, Alber, & Balogh (2007)
Family Assessment Portfolios

- Informational materials created by student/family through the use of “All About Me” booklets, scrapbooks, movies, or web-based profiles

Thompson, Meadan, Fansler, Alber, & Balogh (2007)
Components of FAPs

Components may include:

- All About Me-introduction of student with personal info
- Meet My Family/Friends-introduction of important people in student’s life
- Learn about disability/medical conditions-straightforward, practical info about what disabilities affect student
- Look what I can do!-overview of current level of performance in academics, life skills, key areas based on LAQI
- Things to remember-summary of most important info for school personnel to remember (safety, vulnerability, diet)
- Words from people who know me-presentation of student through the eyes of someone who loves him/her

Thompson, Meadan, Fansler, Alber, & Balogh (2007)
**Introductions Please!**

Hello! My name is Charles James Taylor, III but people call me Chas. I am pleased to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am excited about starting a new school year at a new school. I will turn 11 years old this summer. I have attended Port Barre Elementary for 8 years. I will be in the 5th grade and know I am going to have a successful year.

My newsletter will help us become better acquainted before the new school year starts. I hope you like my newsletter and you find it helpful in getting to know me better. I know once you get to know me, you’re gonna love me!

**It’s Momma Time**

I really look forward to the new year at Port Barre Middle School and I am excited about working together with you and all of Chas’ new teachers as part of his educational team. Chas’ father and I are very involved in our children’s education! We want you to know that you have our support as parents.

Chas was diagnosed in 2001 when he was 2 years old with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). We had no idea what that meant at the time or what a wonderful transformation this would be for us and to so many others.

Our goal for Chas is that he becomes an independent young man who finds joy in his relationships with others and they find joy with him. It is our hope that Chas will gain knowledge, skills, and social connections that will allow for him to be a fulfilled and productive member of society.

On page four and five of this issue of “All About Chas” I have included an article called “Ten Things Every Student With Autism Wishes You Knew.” I found it very helpful for me as a parent of a child with autism and as a teacher of students with autism.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter to get to know Chas a little better before the new year starts.

Sincerely,

Bambi Polotzola
Questionnaires, Surveys, Interviews

- Social skill assessments
  - Social Skill Assessment by Scott Bellini
  - TRIAD Social Skill Development

- Development of IEP (Individualized Education Program)
  - Preconference meetings, phone calls
  - Meeting summaries, communication logs

LAQI7. Evidence of a history of communication between family and school staff over time is present.
SOCIAL SKILLS SURVEY - Parent

Child’s Name: ___________________ Age: _____ Birth Date: ____________
Person completing form: ___________________ Date: ____________

1) How many close friends does your child have? ______
   For each friend, please complete the following:
   **First Name** | **Age** | **Gender (M/F)**
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

2) How many times per week does your child invite friends to play? ______
3) How many times per week do friends invite your child to play? ______
4) Please list all organized peer group activities that your child is involved in:
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

5) Please list your child’s special interests or talents:
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

6) How interested is your child in spending time with peers?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not very interested  Extremely interested

7) How interested is your child in making new friends?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not very interested  Extremely interested

8) Please complete the table below to indicate your child’s favorite activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Home - Inside</th>
<th>At Home - Outside</th>
<th>In the Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When alone</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With parent(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Develop and publicize regular, reliable, varied two-way communication systems.

- **System-wide family-school communication/ assignment notebooks**
  - School to Home Notebook
  - Agendas
- **Signed student progress notes with available parent comments section**
- **Electronic communication technology/social media**

Tools like Google SMS-Translate will help you reach out to non-English-speaking families who use mobile devices. Here’s how it works: Text 466453 with “translate” plus the word or phrase you want to translate plus “to” plus the destination language. (For example, you could text, “Translate upcoming parent meeting to Spanish.”) You’ll receive an automated reply, which you can then text to recipients. To see a simple demonstration, visit the Google Mobile help page: google.com/mobile/products/sms.html.

Tweetdeck (tweetdeck.com) offers a similar tool for translating Twitter posts, which you can automatically post on your website or Facebook page to provide regular updates from the classroom. (Download free widgets for setting up Twitter feeds at twitter.com/goodies/widgets.) ImTranslator (imtranslator.com/) provides real-time translation for a wide range of languages and enables you to email translated text.

To encourage family literacy activities, share resources like Los Bloguitos (losbloguitos.com), a Spanish-language blog by children’s authors and illustrators. Families can explore the site from home computers or at local libraries.

A family technology night offers the perfect opportunity to introduce these new-media resources to your parent community. Encourage adults to bring mobile devices if they have them. Have school computers available for parents to use too. Give adults time to test-drive tools while you’re together. Be sure to invite someone who can translate, and have your tech-savvy students standing by to help.

Related Resources:


→ Watch an Edutopia interview with a determined student from YES Prep in Houston, a school that encourages every student to attend college with a “whatever it takes” philosophy: edutopia.org/yes-prep-students-parents-slide-show
School to Home Notebooks

A communication journal that goes beyond, “Had a great day!”

✓ Facilitates collaborative problem-solving
✓ Functions as analysis of information
✓ Provides ongoing documentation of program implementation and student progress

Involve families in determining:

- How frequently to write
- What kinds of info will be exchanged
- Whether journal will be open to multiple stakeholders
- What medium for exchange will people use (email, notebook, agenda)
Tyler’s Mood today was best described as:

__________________________________________

Tyler ate breakfast/lunch/snack: YES ___ No ___

Anything he did eat or refused provided by school?

__________________________________________

Tyler took a nap: YES ______ No ______

Comments: ________________________________________________________________

Need diapers _______ Milk _______

Work Habits:
(1=Independent, 2=Needed Some Assistance, 3=Needed Constant Assistance)

____ Following the teacher’s directions
____ Paying attention/following along
____ Working independently
____ Working cooperatively with others

Was Tyler seen by Speech Therapist or Occupational Therapist? If so, please have therapist comment on the attached page for the overall mood and participation by Tyler.

YES: __________________ NO: __________________

Initials of person completing form: __________________

Therapist/Parent Communication Log:

Therapist/Date/Comments:
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Parent/Date/Comments:
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did we do?</th>
<th>Homework</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6 Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American History</td>
<td>He completed (2) worksheets (1) labeling/recongizing the state of L.A. map; (2) completing the L.A. map with the state flower, bird, nickname, etc. His copy is enclosed in this binder left in pocket.</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>He review with the class listening to the answers to the &quot;Highway Man.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>He completed his Spelling Test. Wrote his new spelling words in his binder.</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review/write new spelling words. Spell Test on Oct. 12 (Fri.) or Oct. 14 (Mon.) Practice on the I-pad helps a lot, he made a 100 on test</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ILES: (1) Stay in my desk. (2) Raise my hand to speak. (3) Don't yell or repeat. (4) Finish all my classwork. (5) Keep my hands myself. Don't hit. (6) Be quiet in class. GOAL: At least 7 smiles, at the end of each class period.

**Other Services**

The Halloween Dance has been change to Oct. 30 (Sat.) Some time, you may chose to let him come alone or you can attend or whomever, but there will be staff members as well as chaperones to this dance. He is beginning to settle down, so he doesn't have as many outbursts.

Speech: He did word problems on computer. He made 96%. Baseline from last year was 75.

QPE: Kicking and throwing football with his classmates.

Notes from Chas and his family

Chas went to the camp with his dad, brother, and then went to his memee's.

Thanks for the books. They are so thorough.
Strategies in concluding collaboration partnerships

Create an end of year collaborative newsletter, scrapbook, or movie highlighting school year, achievements

Host Student Achievement Day

Hold IEP conference to

- Discuss progress of student achievement and develop new goals
- Prepare student for annual transition
When students take part in parent-teacher meetings, they share in the responsibility of their education. How can students with ASD collaborate with family and educators?

Through person-centered planning

- emphasizes identifying the dreams and visions of the student and his or her family (posters, essays, collages)
- generates educational plans that emphasize the student's abilities and preferences and identifying supports in the community to achieve goals related to these plans (student preference assessments, Individual Transition Plans)
Strong, positive family and school collaboration or partnerships enables all parties—parents, teachers, and students—to gain a shared understanding and responsibility of school goals, the student’s learning strengths and needs, and effective strategies to support student achievement.
How can we relate what we learned about C.O.R.E. to the strategies we talked about today?

<table>
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<th>Connect</th>
<th>Community workshops</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Family Assessment Portfolios</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>IEPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>Social Skill Assessments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School to Home Notebooks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology/social media</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What strategies are you willing to incorporate in your practice/home life?
• More information on parent involvement - http://ddc.ohio.gov/pub/ESCParent.PDF


National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) in collaboration with the Future of School Psychology Task Force on FamilySchool Partnerships www.accountabilitydata.org-