

Getting Parents Involved in Your School Counseling Program

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Session Overview



Richard Woods,
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
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- Parenting
- Communication
- Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- Decision Making
- Collaborating With the Community

Based on *Epstein's framework of six types of involvement*

Georgia Parent School Climate Survey



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Categories

- Teaching & Learning
- School Safety
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Institutional Environment
- Parent Involvement

<i>Parent Involvement</i>	
21. I am involved in the decision making process at my student's school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Strongly Disagree ! Somewhat Disagree ! Somewhat Agree ! Strongly Agree
22. I am actively involved in activities at my student's school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Strongly Disagree ! Somewhat Disagree ! Somewhat Agree ! Strongly Agree
23. I attend parent/teacher conferences at my student's school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Strongly Disagree ! Somewhat Disagree ! Somewhat Agree ! Strongly Agree
24. I frequently volunteer to help on special projects at my student's school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Strongly Disagree ! Somewhat Disagree ! Somewhat Agree ! Strongly Agree

Parent Involvement: What Works?



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- “The office staff is always friendly and welcoming when I come in.”
- “The teacher calls or sends me a note when my child is doing a good job. Hearing good things about my child first, makes it easier to be objective when I have to hear not so comforting news about my child’s progress.”
- “The staff treats me with respect even though I am not an educator.”
- “I am always given meaningful projects by the staff when I ask for ways that I can help support the school.”
- “I never get the run-around when I have a problem. The staff usually returns my call or makes contact with me in a reasonable amount of time.”



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Additional What Works...

- "The information in the notes, newsletters and messages that I get from the school are helpful and easy to understand."
- "When the staff says they want me to be involved, I can believe them because they make it easy, they don't have rules and policies that discourage my involvement and they don't direct me to a website every time I have a question."
- "My child thinks that the teacher believes in him so that encourages me to be on the teacher's team as an active partner or volunteer."
- "I've noticed that children whose parents are involved get more out of the educational system than children whose parents are less involved."
- "I understand my responsibilities as a parent so when I find out my child is not doing well, it encourages me to get more involved. When I can't be involved at his school, I focus my efforts on helping him at home."

Parenting

Providing information on childhood and adolescent development, parenting skills and tips and information on how parents can support their children's education at home.



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See Handout for Parenting Topics

WHAT TO DO...

- Suggestions for home conditions
- Workshops on parenting
- Parent education courses
- Family support programs

HOW TO DO IT...

- Coffee & Conversation
- Lunch & Learn: Beyond your four walls; Go to parents' workplaces
- Saturday Seminars
- Book Clubs
- Parent Resource Center
- Evening Events
- Webinars/Podcasts/YouTube Videos
- If Title 1 School, coordinate with Parent Instructional Coordinator

Communication

Fostering two-way communication between parents and school using various forms of technology and taking parents' schedules, language barriers and literacy abilities into consideration.

Ways to Communicate



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Technology

- Counseling Website...How often is it updated? Evaluate content?
- Blogs
- Emails or List Serves (Schedule)
- Webinars/Podcasts
- Suggestion Box
- Mass Telephone Messages
- Text Messages
- Videos for missed presentations (YouTube)

Print

- Newsletters
- Student/Parent Handbook
- Friday Folders
- Event Flyers at other school events and to local community organizations
- Students create a handwritten invite to give to their parent
- **TIP:** Avoid too much educational jargon

Proactive vs Reactive Communication

Good News Phone Calls

Volunteering

Recruiting, organizing and training parents and family members to be involved in the school while harnessing their unique skills and backgrounds.

Volunteer Opportunities



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- Career Day/Career Fair
- Parents of College Students
- Postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers
- Mentor to other parents (first generation college bound parents, kindergarten parents, new to area)
- Parents assist in creating counseling related bulletin boards
- Core Curriculum Lessons Guest Speakers (or even participant)
- Chaperone Counseling Related Field Trips

Learning at Home

Providing avenues and resources for parents to enhance their children's learning at home.

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Learning at Home



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- List of Tutors
 - Wyzant.com
 - People from community
- Core Curriculum Websites
- Daily Reading Time
- Core Curriculum Lesson Connection to Home
- Understanding age & developmentally appropriate skills
- Homework policies
- Use of Agendas
- Family math, science, and reading activities

• Counseling Related Summer Packets

- Elementary School:
 - Have students preview career clusters to be covered in the next grade level.
 - Provide preliminary information about career portfolio to 4th graders.
 - Transitioning to MS info for 5th
- Middle School:
 - Transitioning to HS info for 8th
- High School:
 - College/Career Planning activities

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Decision Making

Actively engaging parents in decision making at the school and district level via leadership and advocacy through parent committees.

Guidance Advisory Council

- Create an implementation plan
- Goals & Objectives – What do you want to do with the Council?
- Representation – Who do you want on the Council? (businesses, parents, faculty, students)
- Appropriate candidates – How do you select representatives from certain stakeholder groups?
- Terms of membership – How long should members serve? Should there be set terms?
- Agenda – What do you want to accomplish in the time you have? What can each representative help your department achieve?
- Use of meeting time – How should your meeting time be structured?
- Follow-Up—What would you like the council representatives to do for your department until the next time you all meet?



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Parent Committees

- Academic
 - Special Awards/Awards Ceremony/Academic Incentives
 - Community Tutoring Program
- Career
 - Career Day/Fair/Café Planners
 - Parent College Planning Group
- Social/Emotional
 - Awareness Themed Days/Weeks (photographer, judges, secure door prizes, speaker)

Collaborating with the Community

Organizing and coordinating activities, resources, and services in the community that could benefit children and their families.



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Community Collaboration

- Open House
 - Health Fair
- Holiday Help
- Attend Student Events
- Encourage Community Service
- Cultural Night for Various Ethnic Populations
- Culturally Competent Staff (informed by parents)
- Resource Booth
- Sharing about community forum workshops that may be sponsored by civic and social organizations

Hard to Reach Parents

- **Busy working parents** who cannot attend school during the day and have limited time to support home/school learning
- Parents who had a **negative experience of school** and do not recognize the value of education for their own children
- Parents who speak **English as a second language** and who find contact with school difficult
- **Stressed, troubled or ill parents** who have little spare capacity to support their children's education
- Parents **new to the country** who have little experience of schools or schooling
- Parents with **low self-esteem and self-confidence** who feel they have little to contribute.

Strategies for the Hard to Reach Parent



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- **Provide food and child care for workshops.**
- Address the language barrier – translate report cards, testing information, newsletters, and other communications.
- Make events fun and involve the whole family.
- **Arrange parent-teacher conferences and events after work hours.**
- Include office hours and your contact information in all communications.
- Use strategies that meet parents' basic needs and goals.
- **Mix social and educational events**
- Meetings offsite
- Library open to child and parents in the morning and after school
- Family after-school clubs
- Family sports
- Create venues for parents to submit questions online and in person.
- Differentiate support for parents so that it is appropriate to their individual needs and strengths.
- Use one-to-one personal connections to build trust.
- Keep communication informal at first.
- Use “family” instead of “guardian” or “parent” in communications.
- Use personal invites from school staff and student volunteers.
- **Make events smaller**
- Learn and speak simple phrases in families' native languages.
- Hold dinners for families to target subgroups needing support.

Hard to Reach Parents



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FACTORS

- **Busy working parents** who cannot attend school during the day and have limited time to support home/school learning
- Parents who had a **negative experience of school** and do not recognize the value of education for their own children
- Parents who speak **English as a second language** and who find contact with school difficult
- **Stressed, troubled or ill parents** who have little spare capacity to support their children's education
- Parents **new to the country** who have little experience of schools or schooling
- Parents with **low self-esteem and self-confidence** who feel they have little to contribute.

SOLUTIONS

- Flexible hours for staff; do webinars/podcasts
- Good news phone calls
- On site staff who speaks the language (bilingual secretary)
- Self-care parenting workshop; Adult mentor for the student;
- Newcomer Parent Mentor; Parent Workshop...What to Expect in a School Setting
- Parent Committees; Personal Invite to serve; Good news phone calls

Promoting Parental Involvement



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- Print informational materials in multiple languages.
- Use an automated phone system.
- Utilize district translators.
- Contact parents and students early in the school year
- Make sure every experience is a positive experience.
- Work flexible hours to meet with parents outside of normal school hours.
- Take advantage of new technology but keep equity in mind. Don't exclude parents without technology.
- Think outside the box.
- Utilize as many modes of communication as possible.
- Invite parents onto campus often.
- Inform parents about district and community resources.
- Conduct a survey of parents who do come in to find out what promotes their engagement.
- **Invite parents to new student orientations.**
- Invite parents of struggling students to parent-teacher conferences.
- Convey a sense of urgency and necessity when asking parents to come in.
- Recognize that in some cultures parent presence or involvement in schools is not expected; communicate your expectations to parents of the needed level of involvement.
- **Disseminate information and build trust at parent nights/back-to-school nights.**
- **Conduct some counseling workshops/provide resources when parents are going to already be at the school for the students' school performances.**
- Put announcements on a sign in front of the school
- Create and regularly update a school counseling center Web site
- Use online grade books parents can access
- **Collect parent e-mails**

They're involved. Now what?



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- Display high-quality photographs of parental involvement prominently around the school and on TV screens
- Publish 'thank you' messages to parents for their support on the website, in newsletters, and on display boards
- Hold school awards assemblies and presentations including parent and family awards
- Publish attendance figures for parents' evenings and other events to highlight high levels of participation
- Collect evaluation data, publish outcomes and report how parents' views have influenced change and improvement.

Click on session's topic to register.

All Levels

10

Getting Parents Involved in Your School Counseling Program

This webinar will explore the many different ways you can get parents on board with your school counseling initiatives.

2:00 PM

New Date

Elementary

18

Small Groups for Elementary School

This webinar will present participants with ideas on how to organize small groups from the beginning to the end.

2:00 PM

Middle

12

Career Exploration Activities

This webinar will provide school counselors with information on how to implement career exploration activities into their program.

11:00 AM

17

Small Groups for Middle School

This webinar will present participants with ideas on how to organize small groups from the beginning to the end.

2:00 PM

High

18

Small Groups for High School

This webinar will present participants with ideas on how to organize small groups from the beginning to the end.

11:00 AM

NOVEMBER WEBINARS

REGISTER TODAY!! DON'T DELAY!!
Click on session's topic to register.

THE END

28 Parent Education Topics Presented to Parents on Online Survey

- How to help my child get financial aid information for post-secondary education (a)
- How to help my child cope with family changes (divorce, death, etc.) (ps)
- How to help my child better understand his or her abilities, interests, and aptitudes (ps)
- How to help my child resolve conflict with others (ps)
- How to help my child cope with pressures from school, home, and friends (ps)
- How to help my child become less shy and nervous about others (ps)
- How to help my child improve study skills and test-taking skills (a)
- How to help my child explore future careers (c)
- How to help my child get information about educational options after high school (a)
- How to use logical and natural consequences (ps)
- How to help my child better understand people who are different (ps)
- How to help my child get along better with others (peers, siblings, parents) (ps)
- How to help my child make and keep friends (ps)
- How to help my child focus more on schoolwork (a)
- How to help my child select the most appropriate courses in school (a)
- How to help my child manage time better (a)
- How to encourage my child (ps)
- How to develop responsibility in my child (ps)
- How to help my child solve problems and make good decisions (ps)
- How to help my child get along with teachers (ps)
- How to be an effective single parent (ps)
- How to help my child be more comfortable speaking up in class (learn to self-advocate) (a)
- How to help my child get help when needed (ps)
- How to help my child accept criticism (ps)
- How to help my child gain better self-understanding (ps)
- How to communicate with children/tweens/teens (ps)
- How to respond appropriately to sibling rivalry (ps)
- How to help my child set goals and carry them out (a)

Note. (a): academic topic; (c): career development topic; (ps): personal/social topic

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Parent Education Statements Generated by Parents' Open-Ended Survey Responses

- How to encourage my child to explore new subjects and academic interests (a)
- How to help my child develop test-taking strategies and skills (a)
- How to help my child work beyond his or her academic challenges (a)
- How to appropriately be involved with teachers, staff, and administrators in the school (a)
- How to communicate better with my child's teacher (ps)
- How to cope with my child's learning disability/disabilities (a)
- How to create a home environment conducive to learning (a)
- How to develop a collaborative academic plan with my child (a)
- How to help my child adjust to a new school (ps)
- How to help my child be aware of available school resources (a)
- How to help my child cope with academic stress (a)
- How to help my child develop better executive functioning skills (a)
- How to help my child develop better organizational skills (a)
- How to help my child learn to evaluate his or her own efforts in school (a)
- How to help my child learn to better manage his or her time (a)
- How to help my middle school child prepare for high school (a)
- How to help my child set appropriate goals (a)
- How to talk to my child about his or her career choices and development (c)
- How to understand the academic tools my child uses to study (a)
- How to teach my child to make wise friendship decisions (ps)
- How to understand adolescent behavior and growth in general (ps)
- How to help my child appropriately and effectively communicate with his or her peers (ps)

How to advocate for my child (ps)
How to be aware of and access appropriate community resources (ps)
How to be more aware of the social issues my child is experiencing at school (ps)
How to become informed on current generational trends and issues (ps)
How to more effectively communicate with my child (ps)
How to help my child deal with peer pressure (ps)
How to develop realistic expectations for my child (ps)
How to encourage digital citizenship with my child (ps)
How to encourage my son or daughter to pursue an area or interest historically dominated by the opposite gender (ps)
How to help my child achieve better emotional well-being (ps)
How to help my child cope with emotional challenges (ps)
How to help my child deal with anxiety (ps)
How to help my child deal with gender specific issues (ps)
How to help my child stick with good habits (ps)
How to help my child develop effective social skills (ps)
How to help my child develop strong self-efficacy (ps)
How to help my child feel a sense of belonging (ps)
How to help my child feel comfortable approaching the school counselor, when and if needed (ps)
How to help my child form meaningful friendships (ps)
How to help my child get enough physical activity each day (ps)
How to help my child effectively handle bullying or mean behavior (ps)
How to help my child effectively handle peer pressure (ps)
How to help my child have a good diet (ps)
How to help my child identify his or her own strengths (ps)
How to help my child learn about and deal with eating disorders (ps)
How to help my child navigate puberty (ps)
How to help my child practice good personal hygiene (ps)
How to help my child understand and avoid the negative influence of media (ps)
How to know what are appropriate expectations for my child (ps)
How to promote internet safety in my household (ps)
How to protect my child from cyber bullying (ps)
How to protect my child from online predators (ps)
How to receive referrals for outside ongoing counseling services (ps)
How to reinforce developmental topics discussed at school in our home (ps)
How to talk to my child about sexuality and relationships (ps)
How to teach my child conflict resolution skills (ps)
How to teach my child to appreciate diversity (ps)
How to understand the impact of family dynamics on children (ps)

Original Statements Not Repeated in Open-Ended Responses to Survey

How to help my child be more comfortable speaking up in class (learn to self-advocate) (a)

How to help my child better understand his or her abilities, interests, and aptitudes (ps)
 How to help my child get along with teachers (ps)
 How to help my child get financial aid information for post-secondary education (a)
 How to help my child select the most appropriate courses in school (a)
 How to help my child get information about educational options after high school (a)
 How to develop responsibility in my child (ps)
 How to encourage my child (ps)
 How to help my child accept criticism (ps)
 How to help my child gain better self-understanding (ps)
 How to help my child get along better with others (peers, siblings, parents) (ps)
 How to respond appropriately to sibling rivalry (ps)
 How to use logical and natural consequences (ps)

Note. (a): academic topic; (c): career development topic; (ps): personal/social topic

Group Merges to Create Final Condensed Group List

Merged/Condensed Group Name	Original Group Names Created by Participant(s)
Academic Opportunities and Career Choices	Post high school issues Planning for the future Career/Educational development Academically plan with my child Taking charge of financial aid Upper Learning/College bound College and beyond Beyond high school
Academic Support and Services	School resources and how to best use them Academic resources
Adolescent Development and Issues	Growing a child holistically Duh Mom! It's age appropriate Adolescent behavior Development
Adolescent Self-Management- Study,	Ace every subject every time

Organization, Goal-Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work habits Personal responsibility Teaching goal setting and self evaluation Study skills Organizational skills Self reliance/Executive functioning Goal setting Academic/Organizational habits Academic growth- self directed learning Executive functioning
Coping Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life skills Perfect solutions in a not so perfect world Problem solving and problem avoidance Adapting to change
Creating a Positive Relationship and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong family ties Family issues Home environment Family dynamics
Emotional Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional needs and when more help may be needed Emotional Emotional intelligence Emotional well-being and communication strategies
Learning Skills and Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support group for learning/personality differences Learning differences/Advocating for your child Learning skills
Navigating Academic Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning/Personal development mindset School High school skills Academics Navigating academics
Outside Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External forces Positive outside influences
Outside Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveraging resources Available community resources for families and students External resources and support
Parent Support and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family support Parent advocacy Parent support Parent support skills
Parent-Teacher/Staff Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School/home issues Being a good school partner

Parenting Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridging school to home Parent teacher/staff communication Parent/school relationship Partnering with school Parent/child communication Adolescent parenting Parenting 101 Positive Discipline strategies Parental development/skills Navigating parenting more peacefully Discipline Being a good parent Basic parenting skills Parent development Parenting Parenting practices Parenting tips
Physical Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescent health and wellness Physical health Health and wellness Healthy knowledge promotes healthy body Healthy self-image and concept and physical health and fitness Healthy choices Healthy living Personal hygiene and diet
Puberty, Sex, Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puberty Sex Development
Self Awareness and Esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student strength finder Teaching self-awareness Self-awareness Facilitating a self-aware child Facilitating your child's inner strength Personal development Personal development and awareness Building positive self esteem Helping your child be strong and informed Tenacity/Confidence Yes you can
Sexuality and Gender Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender issues Gender matters Go girls go boys
Social/Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer relationships and skills

Technology Safety and Use

Healthy communication
Interpersonal skills
Relationship building
Negative emotions and self confidence
Meaningful friendships
Socio-educational
Social issues
Coping with my kid's friend issues
Generational trends/issues
Keeping my child secure/safe
Technology/media
Navigating technology
Internet and social media savvy
Technology and your child
Technology/media/generational
Cyber safety
Internet and media
Internet and media safety
