



Powerful Partnerships: Strategies for Navigating the Family-School Relationship

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Webinar



History of OEO

Tackling the Opportunity Gap in K-12 Schools in Washington

Founded by Legislature in 2006

Our mission: We work with families, communities, and schools to navigate educational challenges and increase collaborative problem-solving so that every student can fully participate in and benefit from public K-12 education in Washington



What OEO Does

We listen. We inform. We help solve problems.



CASEWORK



TRAININGS AND
OUTREACH



POLICY

Check out our Family and Community Engagement Resources (including our report):

<http://oeo.wa.gov/education-issues-topics/family-involvement/>

Family Panel: From where you stand, what does effective engagement look like?



What does it mean for that relationship to be responsive to your family and your child's needs?



First Steps for Families: Communication is a process

Preparation: School Meetings Like a Pro



The friendlier, the more business-like the better

- Organize your info
- Consider role of private providers in meetings and reports
- Give and request documentation
- Document discussions and questions in writing
- Ask for a summary/meeting minutes
- Discuss action steps and timelines— what's next?

What tips would you add to that list when it comes to communication?



Special Considerations When Your Child Has a Disability

Your perspective is invaluable and unique

Three Tips

- Request to see the same documents as other members of your team (IEP or 504)
- Share your concerns, observations, and hopes for your child: what you see, hear, hope
- Ask questions



Goal: What Special Education Should Look Like

Individualized

Specially Designed Instruction

Team Approach

Least Restrictive Environment

Parent and Student
Participation

Free Appropriate Public Education



How have you dealt with conflict at school? What would you suggest to other parents, as well as educators?



Conflict Happens

Are there ways to avoid it or navigate it? Conflict=human

We all want a positive meeting:

- Listen & share in equal parts (facilitation when that is not happening)
- Acknowledge concerns (including pausing)
- Keep the discussion on track and explore options
- Look for opportunities to learn more/fill gaps and provide that help to others
- Try to identify the WHY
- Consider how to share outside medical and specialist perspectives, if applicable

How have you navigated the emotions embedded in conflict?

Feelings that arise when:

- You think a student you care about is not doing well?
- You aren't sure what is happening at school? You aren't sure why things aren't going well?
- You haven't had great experiences communicating with school staff?
- You are concerned that stigma about your child's disability, race, ethnicity, language, gender identity, or other experience is shaping how adults respond?



Communicating in Difficult Situations

Moving toward Understanding & Agreement

Self-Awareness

What am I feeling? What am I expecting from this meeting?

Listening to Understand

Maybe I still won't agree, but I can try to understand.



Interests over Positions

Ultimately I want _____. I think the right way to get there is _____. but I'm open to other options.

Special Considerations SWDs: What if Focusing on the Lowest Level of Repairing Relationship Hasn't Helped?

Next Steps

- Get the decision (or document the disagreement) in writing: use of PWN
- If it's an IEP: ask the team to reconsider or postpone a change until there is more info/discussion
- Work out a plan to take more data; review reasonable time period
- Seek help; seek an outside perspective



Which community supports or resources have been helpful to you?





Questions for Us?

Panelists:

- Parting Ideas
- The Change You'd Like
to See

Contact OEO

Give us Feedback on Today's Webinar: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Powerful_Partnerships

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