



## Collaborating with Families

### Challenge

- Video: Claire Morgan is beginning her second year as the principal of M. T. Watkins Middle School. She spent her first year as a new principal learning the ropes and getting to know the teachers and students. Now she wants to focus on developing more meaningful ways to connect with families and fostering active parental involvement.

### Initial Thoughts

- What do teachers need to understand about working with families who have children with disabilities?
- What are some ways to go about building positive relationships with families?

### Perspectives & Resources

#### Module Objectives

- After completing the entire Perspectives & Resources section and reviewing the accompanying activities, the learner should:
  - Recognize the diversity of families and the importance of involving families in students' education
  - Understand the issues that most affect families who have children with disabilities
  - Be familiar with a number of practical ideas for creating a positive partnership with parents of children with disabilities

#### Page 1: Family Composition

- Video: At the school's weekly staff meeting, Principal Morgan uses a slide show to illustrate the diversity of the families at M. T. Watkins Middle School
- Key points about families [bullet points]
- Audio: Listen to Anne Henderson talk about the various definitions of families

#### Page 2: Emotional Reactions to Disability

- Grief [bullet points]
  - Link: Ways the stages of grief affect families
  - Audio: Luz Hernandez describe the emotions she has felt over the years as the parent of a child with a disability
- Joy [bullet points]
  - Audio: Shane Nurnberg talks about how parenting a young child with disabilities has had a positive effect on his life



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- The Teacher's Role [bullet points]
  - Audio: Shane Nurnberg shares his thoughts about the importance of teachers' understanding families' emotions
- Activity: Imagine yourself as the parent in one of the three scenarios below

### ❖ Page 3: Additional Roles of Families

- Type of Role/Example of Parent's Involvement
- Audio: Anne Henderson talks about the roles families who have children with disabilities play in their child's education
- FYI
- Audio: Shane Nurnberg talks about the additional roles involved in raising a child with a disability
- Audio: Luz A. Hernandez talks about the additional roles involved in raising a child with a disability

### ❖ Page 4: Stressors of Daily Living

- High Divorce Rate
  - Audio: Luz Hernandez talk about divorce among some of the parents she is involved with in her professional role
- Lack of Help
  - Audio: Luz Hernandez talk about the people whom she considers her support system
- Financial Struggles
- Healthcare Costs
- Accessibility Issues
- Activity: After reading the linked essay identify at least three issues that affect families of children with disabilities or their siblings
  - Link: "Where Are the Parents?"

### ❖ Page 5: Building Positive Relationships

- The staff members at M. T. Watkins plan to build positive relationships by... [bullet points]
- FYI
  - Link: The South Carolina Red Carpet Initiative

### ❖ Page 6: Encouraging Involvement

- Keep in Mind [bullet points]
- Six types of parental involvement [bullet points]
  - Link: Examples of parental involvement [pdf]
- Audio: Anne Henderson discusses the importance of welcoming families
- Keep in Mind



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- Audio: Shane Nurnberg talk about some of the ways his son's school involves families

### ❖ Page 7: Respecting Families

- Recognize Parents as Ultimate Decision-Makers
  - Link: Parental Experiences/Behaviors Exhibited
  - Audio: Anne Henderson talk about the roles parents play as decision makers
- Respect Differing Cultural View Points [bullet points]
  - Link: Respecting Families From Differing Cultures
- Keep in Mind
- Audio: Anne Henderson talk about how respect builds trust and fosters improved relationships between schools and families

### ❖ Page 8: Acknowledging the Strengths

- Audio: Luz Hernandez talk about some of the ways that her son's school has acknowledged her family's strengths
- More information
  - Link: Council for Exceptional Children Code of Ethics
  - National Education Association Preamble
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA '04)
- Keep in Mind
- Audio: Anne Henderson discusses how education is changing and how educators must place high expectations on students and their families

### ❖ Page 9: References & Additional Resources

- References
- Additional Resources

### ❖ Page 10: Credits

- Content Experts
- Module Developers
- Module Production Team
- Media Production Team
- Media
- Expert Interviews



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### Wrap Up

- Principal Morgan and her staff have learned that to help ensure the success of partnerships between schools and parents, teachers and other school personnel should... [bullet points]
- Audio: Anne Henderson emphasizes the importance of welcoming and involving families in an effort to help all children to learn and succeed
- Audio: Luz Hernandez shares some words of wisdom for professionals who work with families who have a child with a disability
- Reflection on Initial Thoughts

### Assessment

- Complete the numbered questions