Collaborating with Families

Use this outline to follow along with the module’s main features. The blank “Notes” panels below each section are interactive and can be filled in using Adobe Acrobat. Otherwise, print this document and record your notes by hand.

Module Home

- Module Description: Designed to help teachers build positive relationships with families, this module highlights the diversity of families as well as the factors that school personnel should understand about working with the families of children with disabilities (est. completion time: 1 hour).
- STAR Legacy Cycle
- Related to This Module
  - Link: Module Outline
  - Video: Navigating an IRIS STAR Legacy Module
  - Link: IRIS and Adult Learning Theory
  - Wrap-Around Content Map

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?
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Perspectives & Resources

❖ Module Objectives

• After completing the entire Perspectives & Resources section and reviewing the accompanying activities, you 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
• This IRIS Module aligns with the following licensure and program standards and topic areas...

❖ 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: Anne Henderson talks 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 describes 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
• The Teacher’s Role [bullet points]
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- 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 talks about divorce among some of the parents she is involved with in her professional role
- Lack of Help
  - Audio: Luz Hernandez talks 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?”
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Page 5: Building Positive Relationships
- The staff members at M. T. Watkins plan to build positive relationships by...
- FYI
  - Link: The South Carolina Red Carpet Initiative

Page 6: Encouraging Involvement
- Keep in Mind
- Six types of parental involvement
  - Link: Examples of parental involvement [pdf]
- Audio: Anne Henderson discusses the importance of welcoming families
- Keep in Mind
- Audio: Shane Nurnberg talks 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
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• 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 talks 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

• Suggested module citation
• References
• Additional Resources

❖ Page 10: Credits

• Suggested module citation
• Content Experts
• Module Developers
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Outline

• Module Production Team
• Media Production Team
• Media
• Expert Interviews

Wrap Up

• Summary of the module
• 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
• Revisit your Initial Thoughts responses

Assessment

• Complete the numbered questions. Please note that the IRIS Center does not collect your Assessment responses. If this is a course assignment, you should turn them in to your professor using whatever method he or she requires.
You Have Completed This Module

- Give Us Your Feedback
  - Link: Module feedback survey form
- Professional Development Hours
  - Link: IRIS PD Options
- Related Resources [links]