

Parent Involvement: Keys to Success

A podcast series from the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center

Parent Involvement: Next Steps

Transcript

Thank you for listening to this podcast series on parent involvement in schools from the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) at Edvantia. These podcasts, developed in partnership with the National Center for Family Literacy, present research, models, resources, and strategies for educators at all levels. All of the information presented in the podcasts is focused on one goal: leveraging parent involvement that results in improved student learning.

The podcast series can help state education agency staff, in particular, in their efforts to relay research and best practices to the districts and schools. The podcasts are designed to provide quick responses to concerns and issues that state-level staff face in relation to parent involvement, and to serve as a source for information and strategies that they can easily point to when working with district and school staff.

The podcasts are based on research indicating that there are six critical areas important to engaging parents in student learning. These six areas are...

1. Setting the climate
2. Communicating with families
3. Developing relationships
4. Providing information and strategies
5. Engaging in learning
6. Developing leaders and mentors

In the parent involvement podcast series, we have included several features to help SEA staff in their work with schools and districts:

- For instance, we present information derived from research and best practice to provide important background information and to summarize what is known about each issue.
- We also use scenarios and examples from real-life situations to help you see how a particular idea or strategy might look in a school or district setting.
- Another feature developed with SEAs in mind is the inclusion of teacher and parent materials that provide practical application in a variety of situations. Downloadable versions of these materials, or links to them, will be found on the podcast's corresponding Web page. They are free for you to use and disseminate.
- You will also learn about supporting resources that you can use to obtain a deeper understanding of specific topics overviewed in the podcasts. This information allows you to spend more time exploring the issues that are most relevant in your state.
- The listener's guides are another useful tool. The guides have synopses of the information presented in each podcast, strategies educators and parents can use, links to other tools and helpful information, a reference list, and room for your own notes. We hope you will take advantage of the listener's guides as you move forward in your parent involvement efforts.

Now that you've listened to the podcasts, you may be thinking about the "next steps" in your state. You may be wondering how your SEA can best support the efforts of districts and schools with regard to parent involvement. Here are just a few ideas of where to begin:

First, you might organize a team of SEA staff members from various departments to analyze current parent involvement efforts and services provided by your SEA, and determine what steps need to be taken to move forward.

Another thing you can do is to conduct needs assessments of key stakeholder groups, including regional staff, district staff, school staff, and parents. These needs assessments can help you determine what schools and districts in your state are currently doing with respect to parent involvement, and what services or resources would be useful to educators and parents.

Of course, you can provide resources on the SEA Web site for educators and parents. Some examples might include links to relevant research, information on NCLB requirements, and sample documents that school and district staff, as well as parent groups, can use as a starting point for their own efforts. The Web site is also a great place to highlight successful parent involvement projects throughout your state. Feel free to link to the parent involvement podcasts from your site.

And remember, you can provide staff development opportunities to all stakeholder groups, including educators in your state as well as parents. Training is an important component of any successful parent involvement program.

To support your professional development efforts on parent involvement, the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center offers many resources, including a facilitator's guide to parent involvement webcasts produced by the ARCC. The guide will help SEA, LEA, and school staff use the webcasts for professional development and facilitate participants through a process for developing a plan for next steps. Both the facilitator's guides and the webcasts are available from the ARCC Web site.

We hope that you have found these podcasts to be helpful in your parent involvement efforts, and that you will share them with others. Remember that the podcast launch page on the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center Web site provides links to a variety of parent involvement resources and tools that states and districts can use as they guide and support school actions for improving parent involvement. The address for the ARCC Web site is www.arcc.edvantia.org.

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This publication was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, its contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.