TRI-STATE WEBINAR SERIES

Working with Students and Parents From Poverty

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Tri-State Autism Spectrum Disorder Webinar Series

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Learner Objectives

• Be more inviting and less intimidating.
• Communicating with Families.
• Be Involved in the Community.
• Be a PART.
Outcomes

The purpose of this webinar is to expand our thinking and introduce proactive approaches to serving children and families from poverty in a way that builds connections in and out of school.

#1 Be More Inviting and Less Intimidating

- Take a moment to reflect on your school experience growing up.
  - How did you get to school?
  - Who met with your teachers for parent/teacher conferences?
  - How often did you get a phone call home from the teacher?
  - How often did your parents come into school?
• Home-school connection for our students from poverty…

• Describe parental involvement or lack thereof?

• What could be the reasoning behind this?
  • How many of these parents may have had a negative school experience?
  • In what ways would that create a present-day disconnect for their own children?

• What are some other potential factors that could impact the home-school relationship?
  • Work schedule
  • Multiple children
  • Lacking support systems for childcare
  • Language Barriers
  • Unfamiliarity of the school building and/or how to gain access and navigate through the building
  • Unspoken cues or norms of the school building that may cause parents to feel as though they don’t belong
Possible Solutions

• Welcome package with a DVD
  • Brief tour of the school
  • Protocol for entering/navigating the building.
  • Feature key staff members

• Host family events

• Create opportunities for families to interact with teachers and staff for nonacademic reasons.

Polling Question

• According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, what income amount is considered the current Federal Poverty Threshold for a family of four?
  A. $23,550
  B. $28,000
  C. $32,775
  D. $35,000
#2 Communicating with Families

• Parent contacts you made in terms of percentages:
  • Disciplinary reasons?
  • Negative academic reasons?
  • Positive reasons?
  • Other reasons?
Find Positive Reasons to Communicate!

- Earned a good grade
- Showed positive leadership,
- Worked well in their small group
- Shared ideas during a discussion
- Helped another student
- Volunteered to share in front of the class.

Modes of Communication

- Which method of communication works best for your parents?
- Start ongoing communication as soon as possible
Special Education Teacher Dilemma

- Students were telling parents that they had no homework
- As a result students would fail
- Middle class parents would contact me
- Parents from poverty usually would not
- Something had to be done!

Weekly sent snapshots through text message to parents
- Rubrics
- Assignments
- Grades
- Calendars
- Test scores
- Projects

Parents felt ‘in the loop’
• Established borders and expectations for communication

• Parents were more receptive and proactive

Polling Question

• Teachers who contact home *only* for disciplinary reasons are able to build strong relationships with families.

  • True
  • False
#3 Be Involved

- Reflect on the following questions:
  - In what ways are you involved in your own community?
  - How has this involvement impacted the relationships you have?

- We benefit from taking intentional steps towards being present, active, and involved in our student’s communities

What is the goal of being involved in your students’ community?

The goal is to be seen, build relationships, and bridge the gap between home and school
Results of Being Involved

- The world of school and home begin to merge.
- You will meet and have ‘everyday’ conversations with parents and families,
- Strengths their trust towards you and their willingness to join the TEAM.
- More likely to cross paths with harder-to-reach parents.

Polling Question

Which of the following are not ways to get involved in the community surrounding your school?

A. Parent/Teacher Conferences
B. Attending sporting events or performances
C. Driving through the community
D. Supporting local businesses and keeping them informed about upcoming school events
#4 Be a PART

- Tap into student's unique qualities and talents as a means of being a part of your classroom and school.

- School should be the most stable, structured, predictable, safe part of their day.

We want every student to know they are valued and they are needed.
Jobs/Roles

Team Building Activities

• Solidify learning environment conducive to difference, learning, and working together.
Curricular opportunities

• Students can relate and share their personal experience

Non-academic opportunities

Lunch Bunch  STEM Club
The Results of Student Belonging

• Students gain:
  • Initiative
  • Motivation
  • Drive
  • Intrinsically striving to succeed

• The feeling of belonging in your classroom may be the biggest factor in helping students to finish school and break the poverty cycle.

Polling Question

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, approximately 1 out of every ____ children in the United States is growing up in poverty.