

Educational Philosophy Statement re: Family Engagement

In the educational field, a teacher is required to focus on their students in order to educate and enhance their development throughout the school year. When focusing on students, it is important to remember that families have a key role in each student's life and significant influence on the progress a student is capable of achieving. It is crucial for a teacher to recognize that "the primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies with the family, and it is within the family that children have their first educational experiences. These experiences in the home influence children's later abilities in school" (Grant & Ray, 2019, p. 61). The home is the first location that students begin to learn, and the family is the main influence on what content is shared, taught, or avoided for the children to experience. Thus, as a teacher, I plan to focus on the strengths and opportunities families have offered and can provide to each student's developmental and educational progress. Additionally, understanding the role of the home on a child's development also highlights the importance of connecting school and home experiences. By communicating with families and providing frequent updates, information in the classroom can be spread and reinforced in the home.

Communication with families is imperative for reinforcing school-related content in the home. By informing families on what is occurring in the classroom, the students will benefit from more conversations and ideas to be spread from within the classroom and into the home environment. As learning is integrated and interconnecting, especially in the early childhood years, it is beneficial and important that families integrate home and school learning. Furthermore, the transfer of information from the classroom to the home can provide opportunities for important information and events occurring in the home to be shared and understood in the classroom. Joint goals and expectations for students could improve developments for students as the beliefs and ideas of home could be appropriately enforced in the classroom as well. Additionally, learning about events, ideas, and beliefs in the home can also provide valuable learning opportunities in the classroom to enhance diversity, acceptance and tolerance. To achieve these benefits and enhance learning for the student, "a key factor in building such relationships is strong communication with families that is "frequent, personal, and consistent" (Powell, 1998, p. 65)" (Grant & Ray, 2019, p. 309). Thus, to accomplish these goals and adapt my classroom to provide opportunities for extended learning and cooperation with

families, it is crucial I have appropriate and open communication with families regularly. Such communication would then transition to possibilities of developing relationships with the students and their families.

As a teacher, developing a relationship with each student's family has numerous benefits for all involved. Connecting home and school learning can empower families, enhance student learning and development, and provide teachers information to support classroom learning. Thus, by opening communication methods and engaging families in classroom events, relationship building opens new possibilities for learning, support, and growth. It is imperative to develop such relationships that include values such as trust, respect, and acceptance to allow communication to flow both ways. "To be more effective, your family engagement practices must be based on principles of empowering families; always respectful of cultural differences; and, when possible, building on strengths already possessed by the family" (Grant & Ray, 2019, p. 260). Through these values and actions, the teacher then has increased ability to develop relationships with families that lead to support and learning from home and school. By doing this, the child can also improve in the classroom due to the relationship-built trust modeled in the classroom and at home. Further, relationships are a major influence on student progress as teacher-student relationships are also a major influence. Learning about the family and the student in a more wholistic view provides the teacher new insight on how to educate and support each learner more proficiently.

In summation, I hope to achieve these roles as a teacher in order to have a positive and significant impact on each of my students. I recognize the important role families have on each child and how they influence the learning, development, and lifestyle of each unique individual. A family can be seen as a unit in a system, not just specific and unconnected members. Thus, I plan to develop strong communication tools to connect with the families in my classroom, including print and electronic forms. I also aspire to continue to strengthen the relationships with each family throughout the school year as different issues and achievements arise. As it is crucial for families to be involved in their student's learning, I hope to integrate learning from school into the home and provide options for families to expand their child's learning. Further, I expect to develop communication skills that provide for open communication between families and myself. Skills that demonstrate acceptance and tolerance, with respect and understanding, have

the potential to focus on the well-being of each child and developing goals that further enhance development and learning.

References

Grant, K. B., & Ray, J. A. (2019). *Home, School, and Community Collaboration: Culturally Responsive Family Engagement* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.