Effective Parent & Family Communication and Training

August 3rd, 2017 National Autism Conference State College, PA Kerri Collins, M. Ed.



Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

PaTTAN's Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania
Training and Technical Assistance
Network (PaTTAN) is to support the
efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of
Special Education, and to build the
capacity of local educational agencies
to serve students who receive special
education services.

PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

Today's Focus:

- Parent & Family Involvement
- Parent & Family Collaboration
- Parent & Family Training
- National Standards
- PaTTAN Autism Initiative Site Review
- Before the School Year Starts
- IEP Meetings
- Communication Beyond the Classroom Teacher

Here is My Heart

- "Here is my heart. Please, take care of it. It's so precious, so special to me. I don't know what I'd do without it. Please don't let it get hurt."
- "What can we do to make sure every school, every classroom, every student, every child, will thrive?"
- Parents & families are the best advocates for their children!

What is Parent & Family Involvement?

 "Parent Involvement generally refers to the participation of significant caregivers (including parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents, etc.) in the educational process of their children in order to promote their academic and social well-being." (Wolfendale, 1983)

Always Evolving

- The true definition of parent & family involvement is constantly evolving.
- Research is quite extensive in the area of the importance of the role of parents/families in children's academic achievement, yet still has limits and areas for advancement.
- The actual effect of the relationships between families/teachers/schools on children's actual outcomes is still developing as an area of study.

What is Parent & Family Collaboration?

- "Home-school collaboration refers to the relationship between families and schools where parents and educators work together to promote the academic and social development of children." (Christensen, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992).
- Shepard and Carlson (2003) acknowledged the positive impact of improved communication between home and school

Parent & Family Collaboration

- One Way
 - Teacher Parent
 - Parent Teacher
- Two Way
 - Teacher Parent
 - − Parent ← Teacher

Parent & Family Collaboration- Additional Things to Consider

- Families may find it difficult to be involved in activities that require participation at the school
- Barriers to family engagement

What is Parent & Family Communication?

- May involve impressions created or words expressed
- Loosely put, families and teachers (including other school personnel), collaborating to address academic, social, and behavioral needs of a child.
- Within school psychology, parent communication is sometimes referred to as "parent consultation"
- Aim for the interactive dialogue between teachers and families!

Expressed Parent & Family Communication

- One Way
 - Teacher Parent
 - ParentTeacher
- Two Way
 - − Teacher ← Parent
 - − Parent ← Teacher

What is Parent & Family Training?

- Working with parents & families to increase a desired behavior in their child
- Improving parent-child interactions
- Educating parents & families

Parent & Family Training

- Parents and families must have opportunities to support the educational process at school and in the home **in ways that work** (Eccles & Harold, 1993).
- Explicit parent and family training yields more success for students!

Parent & Family Involvement

- Meaningful family engagement is associated with:
 - Better school attendance
 - Higher test scores
 - Higher grades
 - Better social skills
 - Better adaptation to school
 - Post secondary education more likely

(Top Five Reasons Schools Need to Engage Parents, PaTTAN publication & Henderson & Berla, 1994)

Parent & Family Involvement

- "Evidence suggests that active parental involvement in the schools is a critical factor in a child's educational success at all grade levels." (Eccles & Harold, 1993)
- Schools that have parental involvement benefit from:
 - Improved teacher morale
 - Increased support from families; and
 - Improved collaboration across the schools' communities

And Most Importantly...

- Parental & family involvement leads to positive student outcomes.
- "When we know that meaningful family engagement has a direct positive impact on student achievement, it leaves us with the responsibility to make engagement meaningful."

Parent & Family Involvement

- Parent & family goals, perspectives, and concerns should be considered in educational planning
- Parent & family training and communication will assist parents in becoming an active participant in their child's education
- Should be consistent with evidence-base & what is best for student

Important to Note:

- It's not always easy!
- Establish a partnership!
- Parent & family involvement makes a bigger difference when it is collaborative and with all those involved (school staff, community members, etc.)
- You are working toward a common goal!
- More progress will be made and will be easier to achieve when everyone is on the same page

Barriers to Engagement

- Some but not all barriers:
 - Schools have been the target of negative reports
 - Cultural differences
 - Parents' own negative school experiences
 - Economic and time constraints
 - Lack of technology
 - Use of "jargon"
 - Lack of knowledge/feelings of incompetence
 - Failure to understand the role parents can play
 - School and teacher practices/characteristics themselves!

It's Essential!

- "Effective communication is essential to create strong school-home partnerships to increase parental involvement." (Graham-Clay).
- Every positive interchange will help increase trust and build stronger relationships!

Questions for Parents & Families to Ask

- Encourage parents & families to ask these questions (or address for them!)
 - Quality- Is my child getting a great education?
 - Ready for success- Will my child be prepared to succeed in whatever comes next?
 - Safe and healthy- Is my child safe and cared for at school?
 - Great teachers- Is my child engaged and learning every day?
 - Equity and fairness- Does my child have the opportunity to succeed and be treated fairly?

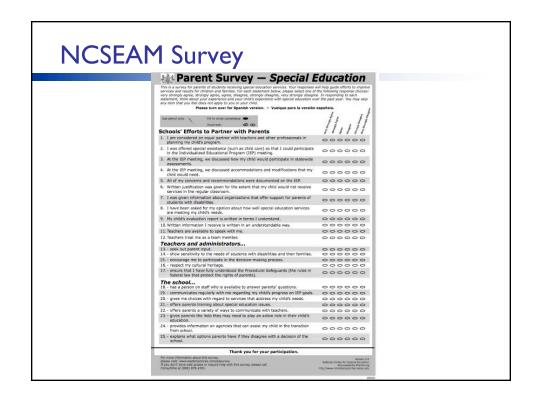
Enhancing Parent & Family Engagement

- IDEA
- State Performance Plan Indicator 8:

Using the NCSEAM Survey, the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities

Enhancing Parent & Family Engagement

- IDEA
- State Performance Plan Indicator 8:
 - How the data is collected:
 - Each year, parents of school-aged students
 with disabilities in approximately one-fifth of
 the state's LEAs receive the NCSEAM survey
 by mail and are asked to complete it. The
 survey consists of 25 questions designed to
 measure schools' efforts to partner with
 parents.





National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- Building family-school partnerships for student success
- "When families are involved in their children's learning both at home and at school, their children do better in school."
 - Finding I: Involvement programs that link to learning improve student achievement
 - Finding 2: Speaking up for children protects and promotes their success

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships (continued...)

- Finding 3: All families can contribute to their children's success
- Finding 4: Community organizing gets results

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- PTA's National standards for Family-School Partnerships
 - Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community
 - Standard 2: Communicating Effectively
 - Standard 3: Supporting student success
 - Standard 4: Speaking up for every child
 - Standard 5: Sharing power
 - Standard 6: Collaborating with community

Work Together

 "In this complex world, it takes more than a good school to educate children. And it takes more than a good home. It takes these two major educational institutions working together." – Dorothy Rich

Are Teachers Prepared?

 Many teachers are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents (Hradecky, 1994; Lawrence,-Lightfoot, 2004)

Site Review

 Parent & family communication and training section of site review

Yes No

Parent/Family Engagement

25. Is there a system of training for parents, caregivers, and other community members that regularly interact with the students? Evidence of this item needs to be documented. Trainings must focus on content that is relevant to students' instruction and that allows an increased collaboration and involvement as well as enhance parents' ability to make informed decisions.

26. Is there a system of communication with parents/caregivers? 2/2 of the following criteria must be met to receive credit for this item.

- a. Communication is designed to keep parents informed about their child's specific program and progress.
- a. Communication allows parents to provide feedback and information to teacher.

Where to Begin?

- Prior to school starting:
 - Send home to families:
 - Preference assessments & caveats!
 - Parent Handbook
 - Information about the teacher
 - Meet with families & students:
 - Invite them to come in to classroom/school, begin initial pairing!
 - Obtain information on family priorities
 - Communicate...communicate... communicate with families all year!!

Communication

- "Written communication is probably the most efficient and effective way we can provide valuable ongoing correspondence between school and home." (Williams & Cartledge, 1997).
- Consider the format and content
- The goal is to organize concise, accurate information for parents & families to read and understand

Communication

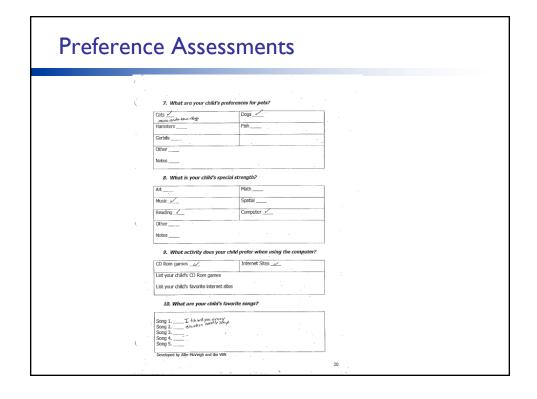
- Initial positive, collaborative interactions set the stage for more continued collaborative interactions as the school year progresses.
- Parents & families want to be treated with respect and as equals
- Develop a "personal touch" in your communication style
- Parents & families have an authority and wisdom of their child that is EXTREMELY valuable to you as the teacher!
- The parents & family are an ally!

Put Your Heart Into It!

- Truly committing to parent & family communication, collaboration, and training requires your heart!
- When you do this, it's so much easier to keep parents & families in the loop, support what you do, and trained (if needed!)
- Without parent & family support and involvement, the job is much more difficult!

	Name of parent/guardian:
ANAMAAA	Name of student:
Dear Families. August, 2015	Dear Families,
Welcome back! I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer! My name is Mrs. Collins	We're off to a great year! One of the activities in our classroom at the beginning of the
and I will be your Autistic Support teacher at Roundtown Elementary this year. For some of you, I am a familiar face, and for others, I am brand new \otimes .	year is to develop hopes and dreams for the school year. I would like for you to begin to think
Also returning this year are our wonderful classroom aides, Mrs. Zellers and Mrs. Kibler. We are also very excited	about your most important hopes and dreams for your child. I invite you to join this activity by sharing those hopes and dreams. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions:
to welcome a new personal care assistant to our room as well! This summer was quite busy for me! In June, I worked	TOWARD BUT AND COMMON THE TOWARD WAS TOO
at a summer camp for children with special needs, called Aaron's Acres. Each year, it is one of the highlights of my	 What do you feel is most important for your child in school?
summer. Also in June, my husband and I went on our annual family vacation. This year, we went to Lake	
Harmony. It is always a great time with family! I am fortunate to have the time to spend with my four nephews, Evan, Tyson, Quinn, and Ben.	
They keep us on our toes! Then, in July, my husband and I celebrated our anniversary with a trip to St. Lucia. We have been looking forward	
to visiting this island for quite some time now and are glad we can finally	 In what ways would you like to see your child grow socially?
check it off our travel bucket list! We had a wonderful time, but were eager to return to our favorite felines, Sophie, Basil, and Millis (see picture below).	WASASASASASASASASASASASASASASASASAS
In August, the three other Autistic Support	WASASASASASASASASASASASASASASAS
teachers and I met to plan and really advance our various programs. We are looking forward	In what ways would you like to see your child grow academically?
to implementing our ideas in our classrooms! Additionally this month. I had the honor of speaking at the National Autism	
Conference in State College, PA. Without a doubt, the experience was a highlight of my teaching career thus far?	
Roundtown Autistic Support is deligited to continue our participation in the PaTTAN Autism Initiative! Enclosed with	
this letter, you will find additional paperwork such as a Reinforcement Survey to complete, and the Parent Handbook. Please complete these as soon as	
possible and return to school the first week. Additionally, various consent forms will be sent home the first week of school.	As the year progresses, I look forward to talking with you about your goals for your chil
Here are a few reminders to help get the school year off to a smooth start.	and your child's progress/plan towards meeting them! Please send this letter back with your child by September 4 th . Thank you!
Please try to label everything with your child's name to	ricase send ans retter oats, wan your child by September + . I nank you:
keep our Lost and Found items at a minimum: lunches, backpacks, jackets, sweatshirts, etc.	Truly,
outpacks, jackes, sweatsmis, ex.	Kerri Collins, M. Ed.

						1
		PENDIX 3.		3. What are your child's favo	orite video preferences?	
		ent Assessment Form	. 1		d movies Cartoons	. (
	Reinforceme		127/14	Real-life animal		
Child's Name Completed by:				List some of your child's favorite vid	eos	-
Prior to beginning intens	sive teaching it i	s important to identify ALL of you	ar child's	WINXOUD, Hollokilly Bery Ecop St.	with the first	
		n have very specific reinforcers a se provide as much detail as pos		4. What are your child's favo	orite snacks?	
child's reinforcers. This teaching.	information will	help expedite the transition to in	ittilisive	Candy	Fruit _ 4′_	
Using a scale of 1-5 (1 b	peing the most t	favorable) please indicate your ch	alid's preferences	Cookies 2-	Crackers 3	
balows		e indoor activities?	**	Chips BBQ	Pretzels	1
Puzzles		Games 4		Ice cream/_		
Books 3		Sensory toys 2		. · Other;		
Musical Instruments		Computer games		List your child's favorite brand name	5;	
Action Figures		Painting				٠ - (٠
Bowling		Play dough 5		5. What are your child's favo		
Other:				Soda _/_ Juice _4	Z. Water R	
Notes:				Milk # Look chor		1
2. What are your	child's outdo	or playtime activities?		List your child's favorite flavors and	brand names:	
Bicycle 5	Swing set					
Theme Parks 4	Swimming			6. What are your child's favo	orite books?	
	Swiiiining			Pop-up books 4	Picture books 3	
Roller-skating				Books with sound cards 3	Sensory books _/	
				Puzzle book _5_	Coloring books	
				Sticker books		1
				Notes		
			18			
			18			19



When Communicating

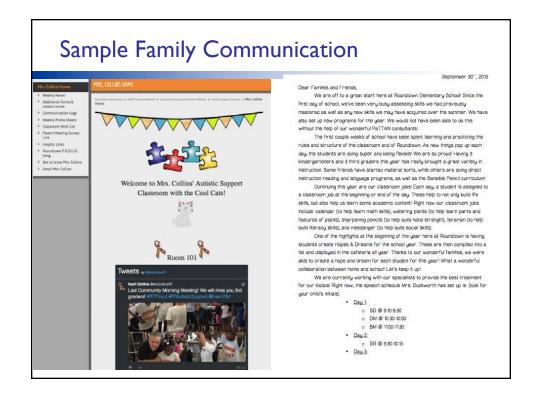
- Establish what information will be communicated via each source by whom, and how often
- Honesty
- "Good news" and "bad news".
 - It might just be challenging news!
- Avoid "jargon"
- Use titles (Mr. Mrs. Ms., etc.)
- Consider when a face-to-face meeting is more appropriate!

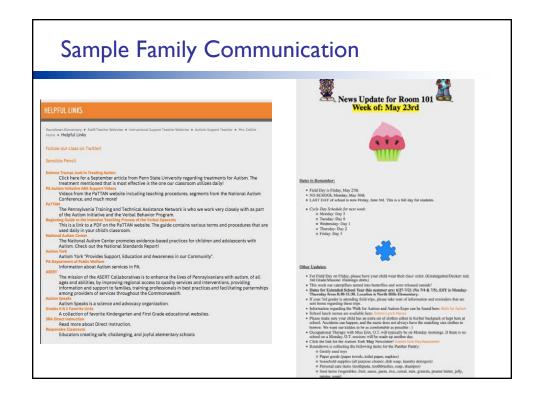
Home and School Communication

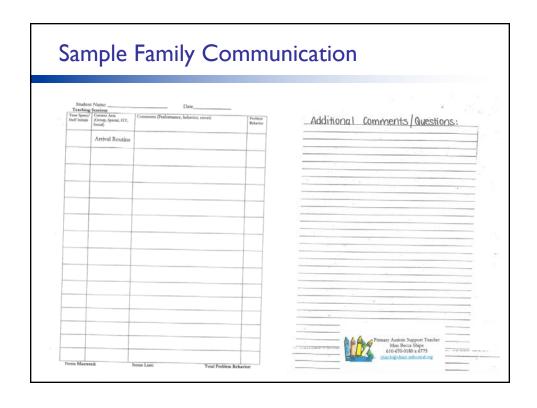
- Letters/Newsletters
- Communication log
- Monthly letter
- Weekly probe sheets
- IEP documents
- Report cards/Progress Reports
- Conferences/IEP Meetings (more to come!)
- "Summer" bags
- Use available technology!!!

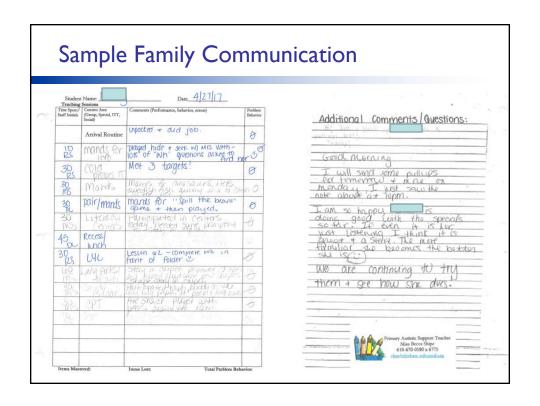
Home and School Communication- "Real Time"

- Website
- Twitter
- Blogs
- Phone calls
- Text
- Email
- Go To Meetings
- Video Conference
- FaceTime/Skype
- "Good News Calls!"









Skills Addressed Today Makened **Progress** **Practice these skills at home: **Practice fleese skills at home: **Pra	8	school to Ho	ome Commu	nication Log	Home/School Communication Log
Skills Addressed Today Material (Requesting): Prescribe these skills at home: Prescribe (Requesting): Prescribe (Requ	itudent:		_	Date:	Date: Completed by:
things at home. Wheat Perception/Maction to Sample: Masteriod 8 of Diock designs: This Morning: Did your child have difficulty sleeping or waking?yesno Comment: Did your child have difficulty sleeping or waking?yesno Comment: Did your child eat this morning?yesno Comment: Dees your child have any medicallyhysical concerns you'd like to share?yesno Comment: Dees your child have any medicallyhysical concerns you'd like to share?yesno Comment: Usere there any changes in your child's daily routine (eg, change in child care)?Yes No If so, please describe: Other (OT/PT, SLP, etc.)	Skills Addressed Today	Mastered	In Progress	Practice these skills at home:	
This Morning: Did your child have difficulty sleeping or waking?yesno Comment:	Handing (Requesting):				Did you child participate in any activities you'd like to share (eg. community, church, family, sports)?
Imitation Imitation targets: Comment: Did your child set this morning?	Visual Perceptual/Match to Sample:	_	_	Mastered # of block designs:	This Morning:
Did your child eat his morning?					Did your child have difficulty sleeping or waking?no
Tacting (Labeling): Tacting targets: Comment: Dees your child have any medicallyhysical concerns you'd like to share?	Imitation:			Imitation targets:	Comment:
Does your child have any medicallyhysical concerns you'd like to share?vesno Comment:					Did your child eat this morning?
Comment: Were there any changes in your child's daily routine (eg, change in child care)?Yes No Listener Respondings Listener Responding targets: Are there any uponing changes in your child's routine (eg, change in child care)?Yes No Other (OT/FFT, SLP, etc.) Other (OT/FFT, SLP, etc.) If so, please describe: If so, please describe:	facting (Labeling):			Tacting targets:	
Were there any changes in your child's daily routine (eg. change in child care)?YesNo Listener Responding targets: Are there any upcoming changes in your child's routine (eg. doctor appointment, family visit, change in pare work schedule): If so, please describe:					
Lastere responsing targets. Are there any upcoming changes in your child's routine (eg, doctor appointment, family visit, change in pare work schedule): If so, please describe:	Peer to Peer Manding:				
Other (OT/PT, SLP, etc.) work schedule): If so, please describe:	Listener Responding:			Listener Responding targets:	If so, please describe:
If so, please describe:					Are there any upcoming changes in your child's routine (eg. doctor appointment, family visit, change in pare
N/A	other (OTPT, SLP, etc.)				
				N/A	
	NESCRIBE				

Communication Take Away

- Strive to use a variety of effective communication strategies
- Make communication with families as informative and interactive as possible
- Incorporate new communication methods
- Maintain the "human touch"!
- Daily and honest communication is key!
- Communication should be thoughtful, planned, and promote the home-school partnership to better student learning!

Yes No

Site Review

decisions.

 Parent & family communication and training section of site review

Parent/Family Engagement

25. Is there a system of training for parents, caregivers, and other community members that regularly interact with the students? Evidence of this item needs to be documented. Trainings must focus on content that is relevant to students' instruction and that allows an increased collaboration and involvement as well as enhance parents' ability to make informed

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Parent & Family Training... But When?!

- In person opportunities:
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Older learners- job trainings
 - Meetings
 - Back-to-School Night
 - Parent-Teacher Conferences
 - Parent Visitation Day
 - Boot Camps
 - Reach out to your PaTTAN consultants
 - National Autism Conference

IEP Meetings

- Parents & families are a CRITICAL member of the IEP team!
- According to federal law, the IEP meeting
 "serves as a communication vehicle between parents and
 school personnel, and enables them as equal
 participants to jointly decide
 - What the child's needs are,
 - What services will be provided to meet those needs, and
 - What the anticipated outcomes will be
- Remember- it's a draft!

IEP Meetings

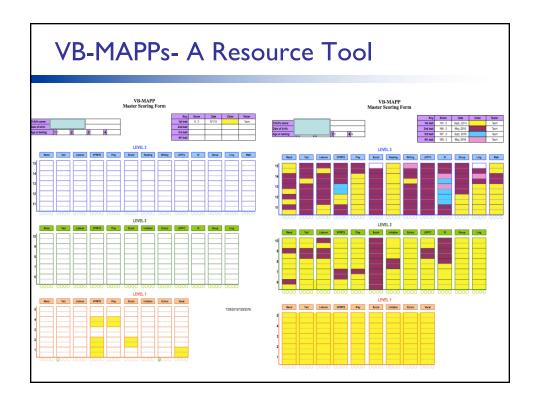
- Again- It's a DRAFT!
- Send the draft home ahead of time for parents and families to review
 - Allows parents and families to provide adequate input
 - Allows parents and families to prepare for the meeting
 - Avoids surprises at the meeting!

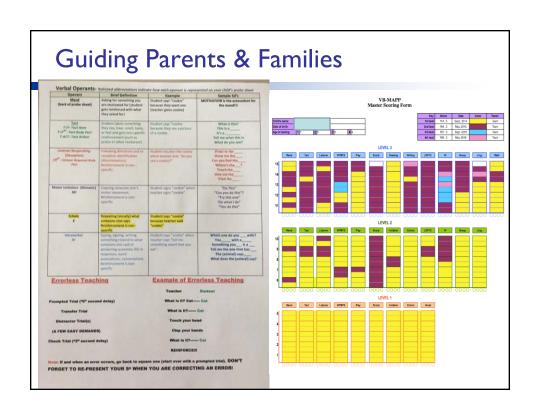
Heward's Metaphor for the IEP

• "The IEP is a system for spelling out...where the child [is]with current skills, where she should be going, how she will get there, how long it will take, and how to tell if and when she has arrived. Thus, a good IEP serves as both a road map and a guidebook for meeting the challenges posed by a student's disability. The annual goals and benchmarks developed by the team identify the destinations for the journey and provide signposts along the way." (Heward, 2006)

IEP Meetings

- Benefits of the IEP meeting
 - Meet as a team
 - Review progress and services
 - Share what you are doing all day!
 - Make changes
 - Review goals and obtain parent input
 - Discuss transitions (schools/work place/etc.)
 - Resources/Tools
 - Training





Parent & Family Desires

- Parent & family desires and input should always be heard! Remember, they are part of the team as well!
- As stated earlier, parent & family preference is not always consistent with evidence base.

What if you disagree?

- Formally, if parents disagree:
 - Team meeting
 - Mediation
 - State complaint
 - Due process hearing
- Informally, if parents disagree:
 - Try the LAFF, don't CRY strategy!

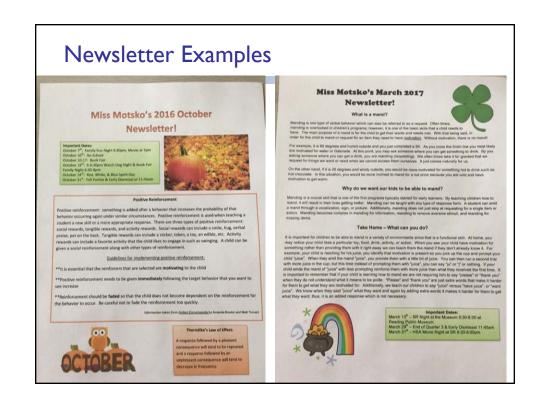
LAFF L Listen, empathize, and communicate respect A Ask questions (and ask permission to take notes) F Focus on issues F Find a "first step"

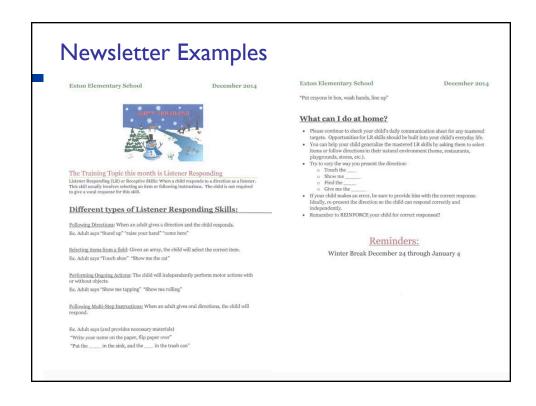
CRY C Criticize others R React hastily and promise something you cannot deliver Y Yakkity-yack-yack

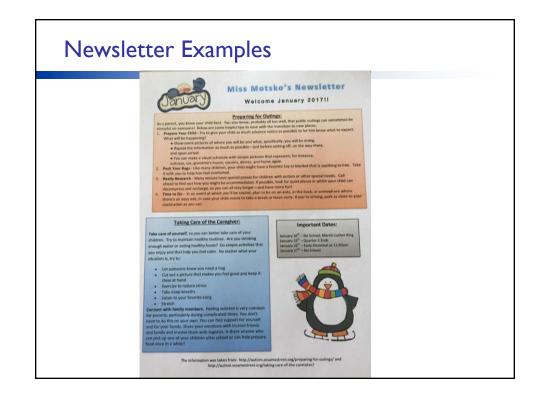
Parent & Family Training Continued...

- The VB-MAPP
- What if you can't always do trainings in person?
 - Videos
 - Newsletters
- Teach the parents & families too!









Site Review

 Parent & family communication and training section of site review

Yes No

Parent/Family Engagement

- 25. Is there a system of training for parents, caregivers, and other community members that regularly interact with the students? Evidence of this item needs to be documented. Trainings must focus on content that is relevant to students' instruction and that allows an increased collaboration and involvement as well as enhance parents' ability to make informed decisions.
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Parent & Family Communication Beyond the Classroom Teacher

- Support Staff:
 - Prior to school starting:
 - Meet with your classroom staff:
 - Review expectations for classroom and parent communication; establish yourself as the leader
 - Give clear directions on what you want them to do

Parent & Family Communication Beyond the Classroom Teacher

- General Education Teachers:
- Prior to school starting:
 - Meet with general education teachers:
 - Review expectations for shared students and parent communication; establish yourself as a team member!
 - Advocate for your students
 - Continue to discuss how parent communication between you is going

Parent & Family Communication Beyond the Classroom Teacher

- Administration:
- Prior to school starting:
 - Meet with administration:
 - Review expectations for parent involvement with your students
 - Ask for help!
 - Set up routine meetings
 - Reinforce them!

Here is My Heart

 "We expect an awful lot of teachers and schools. I want us to remember that we are all here for the same purpose. It's about creating an environment where every child can thrive."

In Summary...

- Continued collaboration is essential for the success of each and every student!
- We are a team!

Resource File

• https://webapps.pattan.net/files/PaTTANAutis
mResources.zip



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