

Tips for Engaging Families in the Behavior Planning Process

1. Family members can become most effectively involved when they function as partners in the education process. When families consider themselves partners they will contribute more significantly to the behavior planning process.
2. Make sure all members feel and are treated as equals. If some people come to the team not feeling valued, they won't be open to sharing solutions and ideas.
3. Share information reciprocally as opposed to giving information to the parents. A two-way communication where parents contribute their ideas, concerns and possible solutions increases the effectiveness of the behavior planning process.
4. Approach behavioral planning from a "needs based" model. Focus on the skills the student needs in order to successfully participate in school. Avoid describing behavior in a negative or judgmental manner.
5. Respect cultural differences. Simplistic over generalities can offend and increase the divide between family and school.
6. Encourage risk taking and creativity. When mistakes are made, treat them as a source of learning.
7. Provide parent education programs to support positive behavior that are designed to increase parents' understanding and influence on their children's education.
8. Help parents understand that behavior is a function of need.
9. Help parents understand that the goal is not eliminating a behavior but to develop new strategies for coping thus developing a new replacement behavior.
10. Support parents to help children meet their needs in a positive way.
11. Provide parents with support to implement behavior change at home. Draw up student-parent-teacher contracts and support parents with tools and skills to monitor behavior progress.