

OAFCCD Parents as Partners Tip Sheet Strategies for Effective Partnerships

1. Know your child:

- Be informed about your child's strengths and needs
- Understand your child's diagnosis and how it may impact learning
- Collect articles and information that may be helpful to school staff

2. Find out about the school system:

- Learn about special education services and programs
- Find out about your role in special education

3. Prepare for case conferences and meetings:

- Make sure you understand the purpose of the meeting
- Find out who will be attending the meeting and why they will be there
- Take someone with you to help you by taking notes or speaking on your behalf
- Be prepared to share information about your child

4. Communicate effectively:

- Pay attention and listen to the speaker
- Ask questions about words and procedures you don't understand
- Repeat information to make sure you understood what was said
- Speak clearly and present facts in a logical order
- If you become emotional, ask for a break or to re-schedule the meeting

5. Learn to negotiate and problem solve:

- Brainstorm ideas without judgement and consider new ideas
- Evaluate each idea and identify consequences
- Select best solutions and plan details for implementation
- Evaluate results and decide whether to continue or to try another option
- Recognize the resource limitations faced by school staff
- Look for areas of agreement and compromise

6. Maintain records and keep notes:

- Make notes of key discussion from phone calls and meetings
- Record the names and positions of people involved
- Ask for copies of meeting minutes and other documents
- Keep your notes and records organized in a binder or filing system

7. Follow-up on phone calls and meetings:

- Before the end of the call or meeting reconfirm the next steps, actions and future meetings
- Send a thank you note with a summary of your expectations from the meeting or call
- Complete all the tasks that were identified for your action (make appointments, provide information, etc.)
- Monitor changes and track progress for future meetings

8. Develop relationships:

- Share good news about your child with school staff
- Thank the teacher for their efforts and be specific in your comments
- Attend school social events and volunteer to help in the classroom or on trips
- Let the Principal and others know when things are going well

9. Find help in the community:

- Seek out information about your child's needs and strategies that may help
- Attend workshops or meetings that will provide information or support
- Contact community agencies that provide support to families
- Connect with other families of a child with similar issues

More Resources:

These strategies are from the OAFCCD Parents as Partners Program. For more tips and links to the Ministry of Education check the Parents-as-Partners website at:

www.parents-as-partners.ca

