



# Collaborating with All Parents and Guardians of Children with Disabilities

Category: Special Education

## Workshop Overview

Following is a general overview of this workshop, including desired participant outcomes, an explanation of the workshop's alignment with Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, and resources that are included in print and electronic form.

**Category:** Special Education

**Duration:** Full workshop – 3 hours

### Desired Outcomes:

Participants will...

- Understand the importance of parental involvement in special education.
- Know what they should be aware of when collaborating with parents whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds are different from theirs.

### Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

- **Learning Communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
- **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

### Resources in This Binder:

- Handouts:
  - Workshop Agenda
  - Attendee Notes
  - 3-2-1 Evaluation Form
  - Certificate of Completion
- “Think About It” Exercise
- Ready, Set, Go Planning Activity





## Topic Outline

Understanding the general flow of topics to be covered is an important part of giving a strong presentation. This allows the presenter(s) to lead effective group discussions and speak extemporaneously. Following are the main topics covered in this PowerPoint presentation. As you prepare to give the workshop, you may want to refer to this page often.



### Main Topics:

1. Home-School Partnerships in Special Education
2. Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement – 1
3. Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement – 2

### Subtopics:

#### 1. Home-School Partnerships in Special Education

- a. Benefits of Parent Engagement
- b. Definitions of Parent Engagement
- c. Parent Engagement in Special Education

#### 2. Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement – 1

- a. Barriers to Parent Engagement
- b. Understanding Families of Children with Disabilities in Grief Cycle

#### 3. Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement – 2

- a. Barriers to Parent Engagement (continued)
- b. Understanding Your Student's Family

## Presentation Outline



This outline is designed for you to see the PowerPoint presentation at a glance. Note that slide numbers and the approximate amount of time needed per slide are shown in the right two columns. **The times in bold print show the approximate total time needed for that topic, which includes the approximate times for the activities, shown in parentheses.** You might consider keeping this page within reach during the presentation.

Section of Presentation	Slide #	Timing (mins)
<b>Getting Started</b>		
Introduce self, co-teacher, participants	1	
Explain materials issued to participants		
Cover objectives (from Workshop Overview)	2-3	<b>10</b>
<b>Topic 1—Home-School Partnerships in Special Education</b>	<b>4-9</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Activity</b> —Parents vs. Parents of Children with Disabilities	6	(30)
Break		
<b>Topic 2—Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement - 1</b>	<b>10-19</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Activity</b> —How Can You Support Grieving Parents of Children with Disabilities?	19	(20)
Break		
<b>Topic 3—Challenges Affecting Parent Engagement - 2</b>	<b>20-37</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Activity</b> —What Do These Words Mean to You?	21	(15)
<b>Activity</b> —How Can You Support the Parents of Your Students with Disabilities?	37	(30)
<b>Closing Thoughts</b>	38-40	<b>10</b>
Total of 3 hours (not including break)		

### Helpful tip!

**This workshop can be broken up into shorter sessions so that you can adapt the presentation according to your time constraints.**

## Slide 9

**PDXPERT** HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

### Parent Engagement in Special Education

- Special education federal regulations: IDEA, IDEA '97, and IDEA 2004.
- How schools are expected to involve parents:
  1. Individualized Education Program (IEP) team
  2. Formal evaluation process
  3. Specific timeline
  4. Meeting time
  5. Language support
  6. Due process hearings

THE MASTER TEACHER

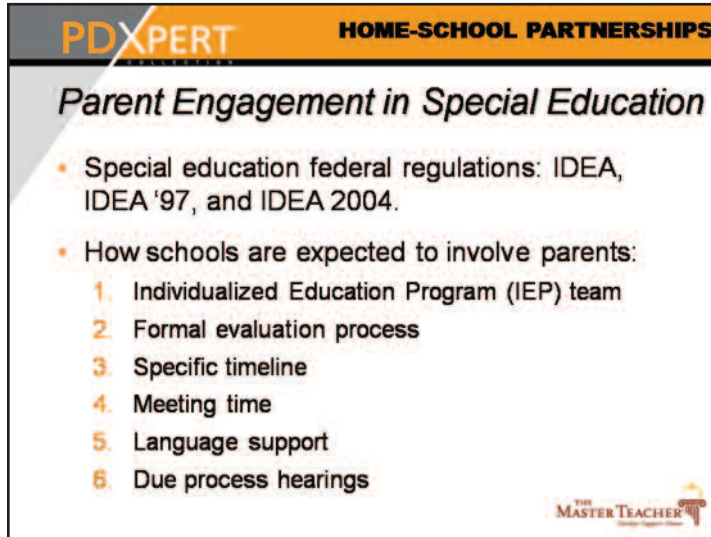
*Parent engagement is especially important in special education. The need to have parents involved is strongly emphasized in special education regulation. In order to ensure that parents are involved in the development process of their child's individualized education program (IEP), schools expect parents to participate in many activities. Have participants share what IDEA 2004 requires parents to be involved in.*

Display the rest of the slide after they have shared. The following are some examples of how parents are expected to be involved in the special education process.

1. Parents are key members of the IEP team who help make decisions regarding their child's special education services and placement. They take several roles in the team: parents, decision makers, and advocates of their children.
2. Before any formal evaluation is conducted, schools must first obtain parental consent.
3. A specific timeline is given to allow parents to guide the special education process. For example:
  - The IEP team must meet at least once a year to determine the child's appropriate special education services and program.
  - The school must complete evaluation and schedule an IEP meeting within a specific time frame. (Check the state regulation for the specific timeline.)
4. IEP meetings should be scheduled at a time and location that is mutually agreed upon by the entire IEP team, which includes the parents.
5. Interpretation services must be available so that parents who don't speak English can understand the information. Written documents must be available in parents' native language.
6. Parents have the right to request a hearing when they disagree with the proposed services and/or placement.

*As you can see, parents of children with disabilities are no longer the ones who are expected to simply drop off and pick up their children from school or just make sure that students are doing their homework. They are expected to be involved in many activities. They are expected to be schools' equal partners and decision makers. However, not **ALL** parents can take these roles.*


## Slide 9 (continued)



**PDXPERT**      **HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

### *Parent Engagement in Special Education*

- Special education federal regulations: IDEA, IDEA '97, and IDEA 2004.
- How schools are expected to involve parents:
  1. Individualized Education Program (IEP) team
  2. Formal evaluation process
  3. Specific timeline
  4. Meeting time
  5. Language support
  6. Due process hearings



If this workshop is given over three days, stop on this slide for Part 1 and debrief what has been discussed. Inform the participants that Part 2 of the workshop will focus on why some parents of children with disabilities do not collaborate with schools. From now until the new workshop, ask participants to think about the students with disabilities they serve and what challenges may prevent their families from being involved in IEP meetings, school events, and their child's education. Remind the group to read the following article prior to the next session: National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (2003). *News digest: Parenting a child with special needs.*

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Slide 19

**PDXPERT** CHALLENGES AFFECTING PARENT ENGAGEMENT - 1

**Activity: How Can You Support Grieving Parents of Children with Disabilities?**

With the members of your group, brainstorm what school professionals can do to help a parent of a child with a disability in each phase of the grief cycle.

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**Activity: How Can You Support Grieving Parents of Children with Disabilities?**

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

Materials for presenter: Slide with the grief cycle (Slide 18). Markers and chart paper.

Materials for participants: Papers and writing utensils.

After displaying the activity slide, display the grief cycle slide again. Have participants work in groups of 3 or 4 and brainstorm what they can do to support a parent of a child with a disability in each of these phases. For example, when parents are in the isolation phase, introducing them to other parents who have children with similar disabilities would be helpful. They can receive emotional support from these families.

(If this workshop is given on three days, stop on this slide for Part 2 and debrief what has been discussed. Inform the participants that they will continue exploring additional challenges that may prevent some parents of children with disabilities from involving in schools and their child’s education.)

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## “Think About It” Exercise



Have staff complete this exercise to begin implementing what they learned during the workshop. Distribute this document to staff by attaching the file to the Next Day Follow-Up Email, or make copies for the staff.

1. List two parent engagement strategies that you frequently use in your classroom. Have you had success with these strategies? Why or why not?

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2. What are the long-term effects on students when their parents are engaged? What is the impact on you when your students’ parents are engaged?

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3. What challenges do you experience when engaging parents? What can your school principal or colleagues do to assist you in this area?

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