

Parent Involvement Strategies

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**Summary of Preferred Classroom Setting**

I would love to teach in a public elementary school setting. I would like to teach in a larger district, such as Fargo Public Schools. My dream would be to teach preschool, but I will likely teach early elementary first, so that is the setting that I will be completing this assignment for. I would love to be in a K-2 classroom, so will be completing these artifacts for first grade.

### Parenting

Parenting is a very important aspect of a child's life. Parents are a child's number one teacher. Often, out of anyone, children have the strongest bond with a parent or a family member. They have a great amount of influence on the formation and development of the child. It is so important that teachers and schools work to support parents in endeavors to raise their child. It is so important to provide resources and learning opportunities for parents to learn about what is best for their child at this particular developmental stage. Children are growing physically, socially, academically, and cognitively. They need a great amount of support in this, and parents are usually a major provider of this support. This will help students so much in their growth, as they will be more likely to be getting the support they need at home, as this is being promoted at school. This makes such a big difference for students as they are much more able to focus on the task at hand during the school day when their needs are being met at home.

There are many ways that schools can provide support for parents and families. This is important as every family is different and has different needs. A good example of a support that could be provided is a support group or initiative for fathers to develop their parenting skills. The Turtle Mountain Miikanaake Program is one that provides classes for fathers who belong to that Tribe (Bold, n.d.). This is a resource that is promoting responsible fatherhood, healthy family relationships, and economic stability. It is so important to let families know about resources like this or to provide them opportunities to get this information at school. In the *Home and School Relations* text they discuss how, "standards for fatherhood must be revised to reflect a higher common ground" (Olsen & Fuller, 2012, p. 288). This is true of fatherhood and parenthood in general. As a school and community, we need to help promote education and therefore a higher common ground for parenting.

The artifact that I will provide to my parents will be the start of a discussion and mission to get parents the support and information that they need. I will provide a letter that will be sent home telling parents that there will be a series of Parent Parties throughout the year. These hour long events will be an opportunity to get together with other parents in a social way and learn about parenting topics that they are interested in. The letters that are sent home will be filled out and sent back to school. Through this, parents will have the opportunity to communicate what they would like to learn more about. All of this information will be taken into consideration when planning these Parent Parties. If there is a topic that is not covered at the Parent Parties, but there is another organization that offers information on that topic, parents will be directed towards that organization or resource. The letters will also give parents an opportunity to express when could work best for them to have this event. This way, we will hopefully get maximum interest and availability for the Parent Parties. This will be a fun way to get parents a little more involved and informed about parenting.

Dear 1<sup>st</sup> grade parents/guardians,

20 August, 2018

I am so excited to get to know each of you and your students who will be in my class this coming academic year. This year we are starting a new event called Parent Party. This event will happen on four evenings throughout the year. It is not mandatory, but will be a fun way to get to know other parents and have a fun night out. There will be child care provided at the school.

There will be a speaker about a parenting topic that is of interest to you, followed by a half hour social. At the bottom of this sheet, there will be a form to fill out where you can express what topic(s) you are interesting in learning more about and what dates/times will be likely to work best for you this year. We would love your feedback so we can make these nights the best that we can for you!

These forms can be brought back during Back to School Night or can be dropped of at school by September 1<sup>st</sup>. I am so excited to get to meet you and get to have your child in my class this year!

Sincerely,

Claire Wurzer



Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

What parenting topic would you be interested in learning about this year? : \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What days of the week would work best for you?: \_\_\_\_\_

What time would work best for you? (4-8 PM): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Communicating**

Communication between school and home is very important. It is important for parents to feel like they can openly communicate with their child's teacher. It is also important that they teacher frequently communicates with parents and lets them know what is going on in the classroom and how their student is doing. This open communication is very helpful to create a partnership between parents and teachers. This way the student will be more likely to get the best experience they can out of their year. It is proven that an increase in communication helps to promote student success. In a study done by Kraft and Rogers, research was done to see if there was a correlation between parent teacher communication and student success. They discovered that, "Messages decreased the percentage of students who failed to earn course credit from 15.8% to 9.3%—a 41% reduction. The intervention shaped the content of parent-child conversations with messages emphasizing what students could improve, versus what students were doing well, producing the largest effects" (Kraft & Rogers, 2014). This shows why it is so important to promote communication with parents.

In my classroom, I am going to have a private Facebook page that parents of students in my class can be a part of. On this Facebook page, I will post about what we are doing in the classroom and reminders about what is going on or what is being sent home. This will help to increase communication. Parents will be able to message me privately through this page as well. Parents can choose to not have them or their child involved in the page if they are not interested. These updates can also be sent by email or paper copy if preferred. This information will be sent home at the beginning of the year in a letter home.

Dear 1<sup>st</sup> grade parents/guardians,

1 September, 2018

I am so excited to have your student in my class this year. The year has been off to a great start! I am so excited for all of the learning that we are going to get to do together. I would love to get to share what is going on in the classroom with you throughout the year. The main way that I do this is through my classrooms private Facebook page. This is a group that just parents in Miss Wurzer’s class are a part of. I share what we are up to, reminders, and links to letters being sent home on this page. I would love for you to be a part of it.

I would love if you could indicate if you would like to be a part of this page or not below and return the bottom half to me by September 14<sup>th</sup>. If you are not interested in being a part of the page, I would love to be able to send you the same information that is on the page through email or on a paper copy. I am so excited for the rest of the year and to keep getting to know you and your student better!

Sincerely,

Miss Wurzer

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Would you like to be a part of Miss Wurzer’s First Grade Facebook page? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If no, what is the best way to communicate with you? Email \_\_\_\_\_ Letters \_\_\_\_\_

Are you ok with your child being pictured on the Facebook page? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Miss Wurzer by September 14<sup>th</sup>. Thank you so much! ☺

### **Volunteering**

It is so important to promote volunteering for parents and students through school events and opportunities. It is important for students to have opportunities in and outside of the school to help others and do good. This will help them to have great learning experiences and gain many life skills. It is also so important that parents have opportunities to volunteer within the school and in their child's classroom. This will help parents to get involved in the education of their child. It is so important to help parents be an active part in their child's development, as they are usually the most influential person in their child's life in this regard. This is why it is so needed to give parents opportunities to get more involved and feeling included in this educational process. "When parents see that that classroom/program is a place for them as well as the children they will feel freer to become involved, to ask questions, and to offer help" ("Involving Parents in the Program," n.d.). Providing volunteer opportunities for parents is a wonderful way to get them involved and familiar with the classroom and their child's education.

To promote this in my classroom I am going send a letter home with a couple different opportunities for parents to help out in the classroom throughout the year. This will be an encouraging letter that can give parents an opportunity to be involved, but it is not mandatory. This letter will go out about a month into school, so parents are not bombarded with too much information right at the start of the year, but still have a lot of the year left to help out if they want to. Attached to this letter will be a link to a spreadsheet where parents can sign up for different opportunities. If families do not have access to a computer, a paper sign up can be provided for them. This is how I will introduce parent involvement and volunteering to families.



Dear 1<sup>st</sup> grade parents/guardians,

28 September, 2018

I hope this letter finds you well! As fall is upon us, I wanted to take the opportunity to let you all know how much I have enjoyed having your children in my class this first month of school. We have many fun activities coming throughout the rest of the year that I would love some help with. These include:

- Guided Reading- coming in for a half hour during a school day to listen to students read books and guide them towards a higher reading level, there will be more information sent to you if you are interested in this opportunity
- Holiday Parties- plates, napkins, snacks, in class helpers with games
- Chicka Chicka Boom Boom Program helpers- handing out programs, watching students before program (you will still get to be an audience member the whole time)

These are all areas that I would love to have some help if you are interested! Attached is a link to a google sheets page with a sign up document where you can indicate your interest! Put your initials in the orange boxes where you would like to volunteer. Please take a look! Thank you so much!

Best Regards,

Miss Wurzer ☺

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1X34tmP5fyPwXUPqzKQffGWSTUcX2i3odX9bfPlt0-Fo/edit?usp=sharing>

### **Learning at Home**

Learning at home is very important so learning does not just end in the classroom. It is so important for students to take ownership of their learning on their own time. It is also important for them to be able to apply their learning in environments other than school. It is important at a young age like first grade to give students opportunities to learn at home that parents can assist with and are not extremely time consuming, but helps to get the practice down. This will help parents to also be aware of where their student is at and will help them to get involved in their child's education. There needs to be a balance of support from home and school. The article "Involving Parents in the Program" discusses this saying, "Remind parents that quality education can result only from a partnership between parents and caregivers" (n.d.). This is why sending work home is of utmost importance.

For my artifact, I made a cover to the take home book packs that will be sent home with students over the weekend. Students will get to choose up to three books to take home from the classroom library. The students will check these books out by writing the name of them on their packet. They will then take these books home in the pack along with the sheet that they will need to fill out for homework. On the sheet will be a place to write what books they read, for how long (goal 15-20+ minutes), and a parent signature. This will promote reading at home and will help parents to get involved as well.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Reading Pack Log

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Book(s) Checked Out: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time Read (Goal 15-20+ minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature:

X \_\_\_\_\_

### **Decision Making**

Parent input is very important for schools and decisions about student education. Parents should have a say in what happens in their child's education. It is important that they are involved in decisions that the school makes as it will likely affect their child. It is very important to involve parents in these decisions so they feel involved and appreciated, which they should be. It is very important to make sure that parents know about opportunities where they can voice their opinion and be aware of what is going on in the school. It is also very important to make sure that once parents get involved their ideas are appreciated and taken into consideration. Active listening is key in these types of situations.

The purpose of active listening is to help you clearly understand exactly what the speaker is trying to communicate, and to let the speaker know that you have understood. In active listening, we listen for both the content and the feeling conveyed in the message ("Active Listening", n.d.).

Using these skills is very important to help everybody's ideas be taken into consideration when making decisions that affect students.

One great way for parents to get involved in this way is through PTA. PTA stands for Parent Teacher Organization and works to bring parents and teachers together to make decisions and work to give students the best educational experience they can get. This is done through raising money, discussing issues, and planning events. My artifact for this section is a PTA poster to let parents know about this organization and how they can get involved. This would be sent out to parents two weeks before the first PTA meeting of the year.

# Hey Super Parents! We need your help!

**What? Parent Teacher Association**

**When? September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7-8 PM**

**Where? Lincoln Elementary Gym**



(“Pta Flyers Best 25 Pto Flyers Ideas On Pinterest Pta Parent Teacher”, n.d.).

### **Collaborating with Community**

It is very important to provide students and families information and ways that they can utilize resources available to them in the community. This will help families to get the resources that they need to be a more successful family unit. There are organizations that out there to help families that want to be utilized to be able to be of assistance. It is important to let families know that these resources are out there and are often free. This way they can get the assistance they need. This is important, so students needs are being met and they can learn and develop in a the most successful way that they can. An example of this could be the nurturing parenting program. “These programs provide information and assistance to parents to help them provide a healthy way of life for their families and to help create stronger family relationships” (Bavolek, n.d.). There are many programs offered by the government and other nonprofit organizations that want exactly that for families and have many resources to help families be successful.

For my artifact I am making a poster to send home with families whose students have free and reduced lunch. This poster will be giving information that their student is eligible for the Backpack Program, where a backpack of food will be sent home with them on the weekend (“Backpack Program”, n.d.). This will provide information about what the program is and when their child will be getting food sent home. This poster will inform parents about this organization and resource that is available for their child. It will be sent home before the start of the school year, so parents are aware of the assistance that their child will be getting starting on the first weekend of the school year.



# Backpack Program



**What?** A program that provides food for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch on the weekends and holidays.

**When?** Food will be sent home for the weekend on Fridays and on the day before school breaks. Students need to bring back the backpacks on the first day back at school after a weekend or break.

**How much?** There will be enough food for three meals a day. All of the food sent will be nonperishable.

**For more information:** Contact Lincoln Elementary at (701) 466-4900  
2120 9th St S, Fargo, ND 58103

Or

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/hunger-relief-programs/backpack-program/>

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