

10 IDEAS *for Promoting Parent Involvement* THIS OCTOBER *and Throughout the Year*

Parent involvement is first and foremost about building relationships. Consider these ideas for creating a warm, inviting, and fun atmosphere in your school so that parents look forward to coming and see themselves as partners with the school.

1. Principal's Coffee Hours. Host a "Principal's Coffee Hours" in the morning right after students go to their classes. Great for parents who find it difficult to attend evening meetings. There is no fixed agenda, which allows for a more open and free-flowing discussion. To make it happen, PTA helps get the word out and provides donuts and coffee. *Submitted by McDonough School, Manchester, NH.*

2. Face to Face Meeting. If a parent has something to celebrate or has a concern about his/her child, or with the new teacher, set up a "face to face" meeting with the parent, child and teacher prior to the beginning of school or early in the fall. This meeting will really help the teacher to remember any special events or circumstances. *Submitted by Henry Wilson Memorial School (4-6), Farmington, NH*

3. Monday Morning Coffee Drive-Thru. Give parents and guardians a warm greeting along with a donut, coffee, and information on the week's activities as they drop their children off for school.

4. Special Parent Recognition Event or Banquet. Suggested ideas include free catered meal, door prizes, DJ, and lots of Fun! Parents complete 10 of 25 school activities to receive a certificate at the end of school. Activities may be: conferences, open houses, Visit American Education Week, family nights, book fairs, use of parent resource library, classroom or library volunteering, attending PTA/PTO event, attend/help at family fun night, attend math/science night, assist with classroom project, go on field trip, attend star student breakfast, work on school partnership team, etc.

5. International Food Night. Introduce families to foods from around the world with a buffet dinner. Label each dish, including the country of origin. Also provide educational information on the countries represented. Celebrate!

6. Game Night. Provide board games for families to play in teams or as individuals. Organize tournaments to help families get to know new people.

7. Valentine's Day Parent-Child Lunch. Invite families to join their special valentines — their children — for a school lunch. Decorate the cafeteria for the event.

8. Student Art Exhibition. Display students' photographs, paintings, drawings, collages, sculptures, and other artwork in the school library and hallways. Invite families to a VIP opening, complete with appetizers and refreshments, to admire the art and meet the artists.

9. Family-Student-Faculty Sports Event. Organize games of softball, kickball, volleyball, or basketball. Have parents, students, and teachers compete against each other, or mix up the teams.

10. Family Fun Festival. Set up booths with food, face painting, and arm wrestling—as well as information about school programs, community resources, and PTA/PTO membership. Organize carnival games, skits, and indoor relay races. And don't forget to offer door prizes!



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