



Missouri PIRC

Missouri Parent Information Resource Center– Southwest

Engaging Hard-to-Reach Families

What are ideas to build **trust with “hard-to-reach”** families?

Welcome families into schools. Create a monthly school-based parent council to involve parents.

Encourage the school staff to go into the community. Encourage **teachers to “get out of the classroom” to interact with** the families and community members. This interaction helps teachers know about the resources available to families.

Tap into other people **who are already “cultural brokers.”** Seek out community agencies that serve families and hold joint events with them. Capitalize



on families’ existing familiarity with community agencies to help parents to feel more comfortable with the school.

Provide resources and **services to meet families’** needs. Partner with a local health clinic to hold a health fair for immunizations and screenings, or provide ESL, literacy classes. Help parents

build a foundation to allow them to feel more at ease about connecting with your school.

Foster community-building among parents. Use parents as ambassadors to bring in other parents. Schools may train these parent volunteers to be leaders to help school **effort’s spread.**

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More about our services:

- MO PIRC is available to provide workshops and presentations on topics such as NCLB and Title I issues, Appropriate Behavior, Expectations, Family Involvement, Building Family Relationships, Social Emotional Development, and Early Literacy.
- Planning parental involvement activities.
- Offering Title 1 Schools Grants for parent involvement activities

Websites on involving Families:

www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/

www.bccpac.bc.ca

www.cisnet.org

www.ecs.org

www.middleweb.com

www.nces.ed.gov/

www.ncpie.org

www.teachers.net

www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter

Making progress in building trusting relationships:

- Increased number of positive communication and phone calls between teachers and parents.
- Increase in the number of opportunities for parents to become involved in school activities.
- Increase volunteers / helpers

- Nonthreatening and supportive environment creates a sense of collaborative community
- Increase in family interest, commitment, attendance and involvement in school activities.

- Increased awareness of **families’ needs and increased** efforts to reach out to families and make them feel welcome.
- Improved perceptions of school climate among students, families, and teachers (through a welcoming climate survey tool).

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PIRC

Parent Information
and Resource Center

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Missouri PIRC is a federally funded grant program that is available to serve Missouri educators and parents. Some of our services include workshops and presentations topics such as NCLB and Title 1 issues, Early Literacy, Family Involvement, Social / Emotional Development, Building Family Relationships and Appropriate Behavior Expectations. We also offer resources **such as children's books to give away to families and children, as well as brochures, and parent resources on such topics as math and reading.**

Our purpose is to give parents, schools, and community organizations working with families the training, information, and technical assistance they need to understand how to help children succeed in school. We help parents understand school report cards, school choice, and supplemental educational services. We work with Title 1 schools and educators in planning parent involvement activities.

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More Parent Involvement Ideas...



1. Advertise year round for parent volunteers. Be sure to mention specific activities and events along with a time frame.
2. Replace the **visitors' badges with "VIP" buttons.** The Very Important Person message will certainly convey that volunteers and families are important and welcome.
3. Feature parent volunteers and their contributions, as well as volunteer programs, on the school and district Web sites.
4. Do an informal audit. Ask a business person from the community: *What was your initial impression of the school? Did you feel comfortable coming to the school? Were there friendly faces, helpful staff, and polite students? How do the facilities and grounds rate in terms of cleanliness, signage, and availability of parking?*
5. Welcome mid-year transfers. Try to **give a courtesy call to a new arrival's** home or develop a material that can be sent through the mail or online.
6. Foster discussion about education with parents. Some questions to ask: *What concerns do you have about your child's education? What is your role in your child's schooling? How does your child learn best?*
7. Contact all parents at the beginning of the school year to establish three positive communications and ask what method parents prefer to use for future communication.
8. Create a resource directory.
9. Promote family literacy through book fairs and family nights.
10. Make sure nothing is secret. The technology is available to allow families to access online report cards, homework, announcements, teacher comments, and even the cafeteria menu.

Based on *176 Ways to Involve Parents: Practical Strategies for partnering with Families* by Betty Boulton, Corwin Press (2006).

