

5. Family Involvement Coordinator Sample Job Description

This description lists seven major tasks that family involvement coordinators are expected to accomplish, along with some ideas for activities and programs to carry them out. The coordinator will need to enlist volunteers—it will take more than one person to do all these tasks well.

1. Help the school to develop a family-friendly school climate. This should be done in cooperation with the principal, teachers, parent organization, and other staff. For example:

- Conduct an annual “Welcoming School Walk-Through” with parents and teachers to make sure the school welcomes families and treats them with respect. (For more information about the walk-through, see Chapter 10.)
- Work with school staff to use the walk-through results to make improvements (e.g., signs, directions, greeting at front office, displays of student work, regular visiting hours).
- Create a comfortable family resource room where families can meet, get to know each other, and discuss their interests and concerns. Stock the family room with books, games, and learning materials that families can borrow.
- Develop a school family involvement policy with input and approval from parents and teachers. (To satisfy the requirements for a school parent involvement policy under Title I of No Child Left Behind, go to www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.doc. For ideas on developing a policy, see tool 12.)

2. Develop programs and activities designed to engage families in improving student achievement. Plan these in collaboration with an action team of families, teachers, parent organizations, business-community partners, and the principal. For example:

- Design two family involvement programs/activities each quarter to help families participate more effectively in improving their

children's learning. For example, family reading activities, math and science trainings, and career and college planning events. Use student achievement data to target skills that need to be strengthened.

- Help families understand standards and assessments, students test scores, rubrics, and the school report card.
- Facilitate and organize other parent meetings and workshops, as parents request.
- Collaborate with school staff, community members, partners and families to develop programs and activities geared to reach families who are underrepresented because of social, economic, racial, and/or language barriers.

3. Help teachers/staff and families develop strong partnerships and enhance communication between parents/families and school staff. For example:

- Encourage and support school staff to reach out to families. Create ways for families and teachers to meet face-to-face and to know each other, such as class meetings, breakfasts with the principal, and getting-to-know-you activities at PTA meetings.
- Develop monthly family contact logs for teachers with families' telephone numbers, so that teachers can be in touch with families at least once a month.
- Work with teachers and other staff to develop learning kits that families can take home to use with their children.
- Provide administrators, teachers, and support staff with research articles and handouts for parents. Staff can develop their own resource kits and notebooks with this material.
- Be a liaison between families and teachers when problems arise, more information needs to be shared, or cultural differences are a barrier.
- Develop a "room parent" or "department parent" (in middle and high schools) system to help teachers communicate important information and deadlines to parents.
- Arrange for translation and interpretation services for meetings, parent-teacher conferences, telephone calls, and notes home.
- Organize tours of the community for school staff to get know

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families and neighborhoods better and to identify families' concerns and ideas for improvement. (You might partner with parents and community organizations to help organize this event.)

- Communicate regularly with principal about parents' and families' ideas and concerns.

4. Develop and implement effective family involvement strategies and activities to empower students and their families. For example:

- ◆ Invite parents to participate in school committees and in the school's parent organization. Work with those groups to help them be welcoming and supportive of new members.
- ◆ Recruit parents to be a part of school/district decision-making committees and meetings. Be sure they have information and background materials to be informed members.
- ◆ Document parent/community activities through visual portfolios that include sign-in sheets, flyers, and pictures.
- ◆ Invite families to participate in professional development training along with staff.
- ◆ Ask parents to evaluate parent meetings and parent/family workshops.
- ◆ Survey families/school community and school personnel to assess the effectiveness of your school's partnership program.

5. Take part in opportunities for professional development. For example:

- ◆ Attend all meetings and training activities for family involvement coordinators and share ideas and experiences.
- ◆ Keep school staff updated about family involvement activities in your school. For example, create a bulletin board about the activities, with pictures.
- ◆ Maintain a portfolio of all major activities, with sign-in sheets and photographs.
- ◆ Take advantage of professional development to learn new knowledge and skills.

- ◆ Identify and take part in learning opportunities, such as conferences and meetings.
- 6. Participate in and support district activities and programs for families. For example:**
- ◆ Work closely with district family involvement and community resources coordinator.
 - ◆ Help organize and recruit for district events and activities.
 - ◆ Publicize and promote district programs for families, such as advocacy workshops and literacy activities (as it applies to your school).
 - ◆ File quarterly reports on the family involvement activities at your school.
- 7. Help to recruit partners to become part of the district’s family involvement program. For example:**
- ◆ Reach out to local community groups and businesses to find out how they would like promote family involvement in your school.
 - ◆ Work with community partners and families to identify resources for families in the community. Make sure that teachers and counselors have up-to-date referral information on community services to give families.
 - ◆ Attend community meetings that will help you connect to community resources for families in your school.

Qualifications and skills:

- ◆ Understands class and cultural backgrounds of families and how to interpret culture of school to them
- ◆ Thinks and acts in ways that respect ethnic, cultural and language diversity
- ◆ Communicates successfully with teachers, families, administrators, and students (including being bilingual, if needed)
- ◆ Is computer-literate
- ◆ Has experience in collaborative leadership
- ◆ Displays interpersonal skills

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- ◆ Advocates for children and parents
- ◆ Shows organizational skills
- ◆ Writes and speaks clearly and well

This job description was developed by Anne Henderson and Karen Parker Thompson, coordinator of family involvement and community resources for the Alexandria City Public Schools in Virginia, with advice from Jeana Preston of the Parent Center in San Diego.

6. Family Welcome Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help school staff learn more about their students' families. We recommend that the questions below be asked face-to-face, rather than in a written survey. This can be done in several steps and places, such as when students enroll in the school, at the school open house, at parent-teacher conferences, and at parent activities. The family-school coordinator or parent liaison can do this, and community groups can help. **(It is important to emphasize that this information will be kept strictly confidential.)**

Dear Families:

Our school wants to know more about its families and their rich and interesting cultural heritage. With this information, the Family and Community Involvement Action Team can plan better programs to build on our students' home cultures. We also want to learn more about how families would like to help.

First, tell us about your cultural background:

- What languages are spoken in your home?
- In what country (or state) were you born?
- Tell us about your family's beliefs about the importance of education.
- What does your family do to help your children learn?
- What are your family's traditions? What activities do you do as a family? How do you celebrate birthdays and other important family events?