

Announcement of Opportunity for Participation in Parent-Teacher  
Workshop:

# Empowering Parents Through Collaboration

Offered by the  
Arizona Department of Education, Early Childhood Special  
Education Unit, and A.T. Still University doctoral student in  
Occupational Therapy, Lakenzie Crawford

## Workshop Objectives

- Increase parental involvement in early childhood special education
- Increase self-efficacy of both parents and teachers regarding parent-teacher interactions and the special education process
- Decrease preconceived notions of both parents and teachers regarding the other party
- Create an action plan to improve parental involvement created for each school specifically

**Application Deadline: March 1, 2023**

[Return the attached application](#) to Lakenzie Crawford

Parental involvement in special education is a cornerstone of improving special education programs. This project aims to utilize a workshop-style intervention to bring parents and teachers together to create a specialized plan to make improvements in parental involvement in individual school systems through guided application of methods for collaborative problem-solving. This program gives schools/districts the tools to make improvement to parental involvement through strengthening parent-teacher interactions and creating more sustainable/beneficial parent-teacher relationships. Participation in this program is free to all early childhood special education programs that fall under the Arizona Department of Education.

Workshop will include the following:

- One-time, 2-hour workshop provided at participating school
- Development of a specialized action plan to address parental involvement
- Introduction and application of Systems Thinking Model for collaborative problem-solving
- Introduction and application of Transtheoretical Model for effective strategies for change

## **Training to Be Provided by Lakenzie Crawford**

Lakenzie is a doctoral student of Occupational Therapy at A.T. Still University who began studying parental involvement in special education nearly 10 years ago at the University of Tennessee through their College Scholars Program. Through years of academic work in disability advocacy, particularly focusing on early childhood and parental impact, she has developed a passion for improving parent-school relationships for children within special education. This passion led her to Arizona Early Childhood Special Education to conduct her capstone project on parental involvement under the supervision of Suzanne Perry. She hopes to continue this work throughout her career and change the lives of many children, parents, and teachers in the process.

## Research Regarding Parental Involvement

### Parental Involvement Improves:

Child	Parent	Teacher	Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic achievement</li> <li>• Motivation in school</li> <li>• Social, emotional, and cognitive development</li> <li>• Supports positive behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence in knowledge</li> <li>• Lowers stress</li> <li>• Better understand child's condition</li> <li>• Perception of parent-teacher relationship</li> <li>• Self-efficacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of parent-teacher relationship</li> <li>• Teachers' perceptions of job</li> <li>• Ability to manage children's needs</li> <li>• Teacher-student relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces unnecessary referrals for support services</li> <li>• Overall environment of school by improvements to parent, teacher, and child satisfaction</li> <li>• More effective assessments</li> </ul>

References: Al-Dababneh, 2018; Alaçam & Olgan, 2019; Bilton et al., 2018; Bruïne et al., 2018, Zedan, 2021

## Strategies to Improve Parental Involvement

### Categorized into:

1. Teacher-specific strategies: professional development for teachers, establishing teacher-teacher support, and changes to policies, procedures, and practice guidelines
2. Parent-specific strategies: teaching skills and knowledge, establishing parent-parent support, opportunities for parents to volunteer, and information being sent home
3. School-level strategies: changes to policies, procedures, and practice guidelines and professional development for all staff
4. Parent-teacher strategies: trainings, workshops, and seminars, volunteer opportunities, changes to policies, procedures, and practice guidelines, target dynamic of the parent-teacher relationship, improve the logistics of parent-teacher interactions, and improve reciprocal communication

References: Al-Dababneh, 2018; Alaçam & Olgan, 2019; Bilton, Jackson, & Hymer, 2018; Bruïne, et al., 2018; Cheng & Chen, 2018; Goodall, 2018; Hatchett, et al., 2021; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jones, Hampshire, & McDonnell, 2020).

### Most effective approaches:

- Target both parents and teachers
- Involve parent-parent support
- Involve teacher-teacher support
- Involve multi-school interactions
- Address preconceived notions, beliefs, and values
- Improve self-efficacy of parents and teachers
- Support more effective and collaborative problem-solving
- Target administrative change and school-wide action

References: Alaçam & Olgan, 2019; Goodall, 2018; Hatchett, et al., 2021

## Outcomes and findings of effective programs that bring parents and teachers together:

- Parents and teachers have similar goals
- Parents want to be more involved in their child's education in a positive way
- Teachers and parents have a lot to learn from each other
- Parents and teachers develop strong relationships that center around health communication
- Parents are willing to support schools when schools experience staffing shortages
- Parents are eager to help in classrooms and around school
- Schools are better able to mitigate and support community needs
- Parents end up being great supports for teachers
- Parent-parent interactions become more commonplace and allow parents to support each other more effectively

References: Alaçam & Olgan, 2019; Goodall, 2018; Hatchett, et al., 2021

## Schools/districts with high potential to benefit are those that:

- Need more resources
- Experiencing staffing shortages
- Acquiring new classrooms, schools, teachers, administration
- Interested in creating sustainable inclusion practices
- With a high population where one or more parent/close family members is/are home most days
- Wishing to improve child outcomes
- With contentious relationships with families

## Workshop Intervention

This workshop will feature introduction and application of two models used for collaborative problem-solving and change, Systems Thinking Model and Transtheoretical Model. The Systems Thinking Model and Transtheoretical Model were chosen as the basis for the interventions, as they both support a systematic approach to problem-solving that can be applied across a number of problems. Thus, teaching these tools to parents and teachers through application gives them a functional understanding of these models in a way that they can apply them to problem-solving efforts in the future (LaMorte, 2022; University of Phoenix, 2022). The Systems Thinking Model was chosen due to the ability to apply it individually, followed by a group application to incorporate the perspective of all members aiming to solve an issue in a meaningful way. The Transtheoretical Model can be used to improve self-efficacy in problem-solving through creating sustainable change by allowing individuals to see gains from what would otherwise be seen as failure and was chosen to highlight the use of a variety of approaches when solving complex issues (LaMorte, 2022).

This workshop limits presentation time in order to allow for maximum activity and discussion to facilitate active learning. Individual and group activities will be utilized throughout the workshop to ensure that all participants are comfortable contributing to each learning experience. Collaboration will be facilitated throughout each set of activities to indirectly teacher effective communication skills. Finally, participants will work together to create an action plan to improve

parental involvement in the school with guidance on ensuring troubleshooting and future problem-solving solutions are outlined.

### The Local Education Agency's responsibilities include:

- Complete an application to demonstrate a commitment to participate in the entirety of the project
- Schedule dates for workshop session between January 30 and March 31, 2023
- Providing 6–16 parents and teachers of children currently enrolled in early childhood special education per workshop (must include at least one parent and one teacher)
- Provide a room to accommodate workshop at participating school
- Complete a satisfaction survey to summarize the partnership

Applications will be reviewed and selected by committee based on submission date, geographical location, number of students being served, and demonstrated needs.

# Complete the following application and participation agreement:

## APPLICATION

Nominated Site/Classroom: \_\_\_\_\_  
District/ Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator/Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator/Director Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following short answer questions:

1. What is the primary reason you want to participate in this PD opportunity?

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2. Are there any school goals that have to do with parent engagement and participation? If so, state the goals or describe the initiative.

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3. What are the previous experiences of the participating teachers/parents (if any) with activities designed to enhance parent participation and engagement?

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## PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

School Administrator:

_____ Initials	Agrees to ensure full team participation as identified in the application for the entirety of the project.
_____ Initials	Agrees to identify 6–16 parents <b>and</b> teachers for workshop that includes at least one parent and one teacher
_____ Initials	Agrees to provide space at administrator’s chosen school to host workshop
_____ Initials	Agrees to work with Lakenzie Crawford in scheduling time for workshop between the dates of January 30 and March 31, 2023
_____ Initials	Agrees to provide satisfaction feedback at completion of program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## References

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