CAEP'S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MINI COURSE & RESOURCES

Jennifer Carinci, Accreditation Director, Director of Research and Engagement, CAEP
“Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

CAEP Family Engagement Course
CAEPFamilyEngagement.org

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
Watch a brief video explaining the CAEP Family Engagement Course
What do new teachers say is their biggest challenge?

Of all their responsibilities, it’s the area in which new teachers say they feel the least prepared.

Family Engagement

Ranked even higher than maintaining order and discipline?

In schools with a majority of low-income students this statistic jumps from 31% to 40%.
Family engagement matters to both teachers and students

98% of teachers said they believed that teachers need to be able to work well with parents

76% of students who said a K-5 teacher made a difference in their life said this teacher knew about their life outside of school
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

CAEP PARTICIPANTS

• 74% responded that they had 0 courses primarily dedicated to family engagement

• 63% responded that their professors incorporated strategies for communicating with families into their courses either never or only once a quarter/semester
Pilot Project 2015 - 2016

1. Parent teacher phone calls
   - Live practice making good & bad news call

2. Parent teacher conferences
   - Video modules comparing two sets of PTC

✓ Emphasized proactive positive communication to build strong relationships with families
✓ Taught candidates to view families as assets
Participant overview

Fall 2015
- 6 EPPs
- 3 states
- 112 candidates
  - 30% graduate students
  - 48% seniors

Spring 2016
- 7 EPPs
- 3 states
- 113 candidates
  - 51% graduate students
  - 34% senior
  - 13% juniors
Data collection

- Surveys
- Students’ work
- Feedback from professors & EPPs
- Focus groups
Family Engagement

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—Theodore Roosevelt

What's Next?

Family Engagement
Proactive positive communication with students' families builds strong relationships that encourage family engagement and benefits students' success.

Parent Phone Calls
Regular communication with parents forges strong relationships by sending the message to students that teachers and parents are a team.

Parent-Teacher Conferences
Parent-teacher conferences are an opportunity to spend in-person time with parents to cultivate your relationship and foster a strategy for student success.

www.CAEPFamilyEngagement.org
CAEP family engagement course

• Free, web-based mini course with 3 modules
  ▪ Importance of family engagement
  ▪ Making an initial phone call home
  ▪ Parent-teacher conferences

• Faculty guide
  ▪ Resources for locating & working with practice parents
  ▪ Training materials
  ▪ Phone call scenarios

• Practice parent training PowerPoint and practice calls
Family engagement philosophy

Based on a directive communication method to:
1) emphasize relationship building & proactive, positive engagement
2) teach candidates to view families as assets and partners
“Pedagogies of enactment”

- Beyond academic knowledge
- Craft and skill
- Or “pedagogies of enactment” (Grossman & McDonald, 2008)

- Most of development of interactive skills left to field experiences: aspect over which teacher educators have least control
- Candidates need more opportunities to practice & receive immediate feedback
- “explore conditions of uncertainty”
7 Elements of highly effective communication

• Adapted from Walker & Dotger (2011) 7 elements of highly effective parent teacher conferences
  • Warm welcome
  • Sharing information
  • Gathering information
  • Establishing an action plan
  • Maintaining a positive relationship
  • Accepting emotions
  • Managing flow
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Family Engagement Module Overview
WHY ENGAGE WITH FAMILIES?

Discover why partnering with families matters.

EXPAND

BENEFITS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

PARENTS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
Learn about how parents reap the benefits of family engagement.

EXPAND

TEACHERS AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
Learn how family engagement helps you become an effective teacher.

EXPAND
What does a family that cares about education look like?

Pause for a moment and jot down a few phrases. When you're finished, click NEXT.
Parents and Family Engagement

In this video, a D.C. Public School parent discusses how open communication changed her perspective on her role in her child's education.
7 Elements of Effective Parent Teacher Communication

Learn to successfully communicate with parents by following the 7 Elements. Then listen to Joan Walker, Ph.D., who developed these steps, share tips for engaging parents.

Warm Welcome

Share Information ➔
Gather Information ➔
Create an Action Plan ➔
Be Empathetic ➔
Maintain Positive Expectations/Tone ➔
Manage Flow ➔

Warm Welcome

- Introduce yourself. The parent may have more than one child, and the child may have more than one teacher.
- Parents may be concerned when they receive calls from the school. When you call, reassure parents that their child is all right.
- Confirm that the parent has time to talk.
- In person, thank the parent for coming in and take a minute to break the ice with non-school related talk. Remember that parents are often nervous or stressed when coming into school to speak to a teacher.
- Establish a friendly, conversational rapport (e.g., ask about their day and how they are doing; don't just dive right into sharing information).
Practice Parent Phone Call Module
Practice parent phone calls

- Online modules most effective when coupled with live practice
- Other forms of practice not as effective
- Faculty Handbook guides you through implementing practice phone calls
Results from Pilot

• Making the phone calls before the training forced them to pay attention to the training & reflect on their own performance
• Doing something “blind” forced them to focus & reflect on their performance; it was a “jolt” to pay attention
• They liked having to “figure it out on their own” & “The anxiety was a charge”
DELIBERATING GOOD AND BAD NEWS

Learn to share both good and bad news with parents.

BREAKING DOWN THE SEVEN ELEMENTS

In each of the following scenarios, a teacher and a mother have a conversation about Michael. Listen to each of their phone calls, then review a breakdown of the phone calls according to the Seven Elements.

EVALUATING PARENT PHONE CALLS

WRITE A SAMPLE SCRIPT  EVALUATE A PARENT PHONE CALL
Delivering Good and Bad News

Bad news is hard to deliver.

In fact, people dislike delivering bad news so much that social scientists even have a term for avoiding delivery bad news. It's called the “MUM effect” or “Mum about Undesirable Messages.”

While you may not be familiar with the term MUM effect you may have heard of the “good news sandwich,” where you deliver bad news “sandwiched” between good news (or good news, bad news, good news). But research has shown that while this method makes delivering bad news easier on the news-giver, it makes it harder on the news-recipient. Those learning bad news prefer to hear the information in a direct manner.
LEARNING GOOD AND BAD NEWS

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EVALUATING PARENT PHONE CALLS

Write a sample script for Michael’s parent phone call.

Evaluate the parent phone call with the Seven Elements.

Ms. Johnson

Ms. James

Ms. Bradley
7 Elements

Listen to Ms. Johnson's conversation with Michael's mother, and analyze their phone call according to the Seven Elements.

- Introduction
- Warm Welcome
- Share Information
- Gather Information
- Create an Action Plan
- Be Empathetic
- Maintain Positive Expectations/Tone
- Manage Flow

Warm Welcome

Establish the context for the conversation in the first few seconds.

The warm welcome is missing from this conversation. Ms. Johnson forgets to introduce herself, confirm whether this is a good time to talk, or reassure the mother that everything is all right with Michael; rather, she dives right into sharing information. Remember to take a few minutes to lay the groundwork for your conversation and establish a rapport.
Parent-Teacher Conferences Module
PREPARING FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

TEACHER: KIM WALKER

STUDENT: MARIO CHAVEZ

CREATING A PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE PLAN

KNOWLEDGE AT WORK
Apply what you know about the Seven Elements of Effective Parent-Teacher Communication.

EXPAND

Kim's First Attempt: Mario Chavez

Kim's First Meeting
Watch Kim's first meeting with Leticia Chavez.

Compare Perspectives
Compare Kim's and Ms. Chavez's perspectives.

EXPAND

EXPAND
Kim Walker

Kim Walker is nervous about her ability to communicate with her students' parents at parent-teacher conferences. Click on each arrow to learn more about Ms. Walker's situation.

- Meet the Teacher
- Kim's Challenges
- Kim's Classroom
7 Elements

Watch Kim Walker interact with her student Mario’s mother, Letitia Chavez.

You’ll see several short videos depicting different phases of their parent-teacher conference and be asked Yes/No questions about how well Kim communicated with the parent.

1. Did Kim get the meeting off to a positive start?

- Yes
- No
Parent-Teacher Conference modules

• Watch pair of parent-teacher conference videos:
  ▪ 1st meeting goes poorly,
  ▪ 2nd meeting is more successful (same parent and teacher)
• Two conferences (4 videos)

• Fully online
• Before module write plan for parent-teacher conference based on scenario & revise after watching videos
Assessments
DELIVERING GOOD AND BAD NEWS

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MS. JOHNSON

MS. JAMES

MS. BRADLEY

EVALUATING PARENT PHONE CALLS

WRITE A SAMPLE SCRIPT

EVALUATE A PARENT PHONE CALL
Assessments

- Written phone call script
- Phone call evaluation
- Write/revise parent-teacher conference plan

- Can be modified to meet individual professor's needs
- Cannot be submitted through family engagement site
Questions on CAEP’s Family Engagement Modules
Additional Materials

Faculty Handbook & Tips
Practice Parent Training PowerPoint
Faculty Handbook

• comprehensive manual that walks you through implementing the course
• includes classroom activities and
• resources to supplement the modules
Tips for Faculty

7 Elements of Effective Parent-Teacher Communication: Candidates’ Strengths & Weaknesses | Tips for Faculty

• **1. Warm Welcome:** Many candidates forget to introduce themselves and skip the Warm Welcome altogether, especially during their first call. This tends to improve for subsequent calls.

• **2. Share Information:** Almost all candidates incorporate the Share Information step. But many talk at the parent, rather than with them.

• **3. Gather Information:** This is an area in which most candidates require improvement. Many candidates do not Gather Information—or do not do so in a meaningful way. They may ask a few perfunctory questions at the end of the conversation, but gathering information should create an open dialogue between parent and teacher.
7 Elements of Effective Parent-Teacher Communication:
Candidates’ Strengths & Weaknesses | Tips for Faculty

• 4. Establish an Action Plan: Along with Share Information, this is the step most candidates incorporate and with which they seem the most at ease; however, many candidates do not incorporate the parent’s ideas into their plan.

• 5. Maintain Positive Expectations: Most candidates need to work on this step, especially when it comes to delivering bad news.

• 6. Be Empathetic: Candidates demonstrate difficulty differentiating between validating a parent’s emotions and agreeing with the content of what parents are saying.

• 7. Manage Flow: Candidates vary considerably on how well they stay on track.
Take Aways

• Candidates need practice
  • Navigating unfamiliar situations
  • Asking open-ended questions that seek the family’s perspective
  • Distinguishing empathy from agreement

• Candidates want to focus on delivering news, rather than on gathering information by asking questions and establishing a dialogue.

• Candidates will default to giving “good” news—even when the situation requires delivering bad news.

• Practice and skills in delivering bad news can help candidates have effective conversations.
Practice Parent Training: Excerpts
Ms. Bradley (bad news example)

PLAY CONVERSATION:

Opening:
The teacher sets up what the call is about, so the parent opens up to her.

Sharing Information:
The teacher directly and objectively outlines the situation and immediately includes the parent, so the parent wants to engage.

Asking Questions:
This teacher does a good job, handling bad news but she does not ask questions about the family. But the parent prompts her at the end by saying, “Is there anything you want to know from me?”

Because the parent feels the teacher is a partner she shares personal information (from the bio) and they are able to have a deeper conversation about Michael.
If/then prompts
Response Cues
Opening

START:

Be on guard and don’t let it down until the teacher has won you over.

Tell the teacher right away that she caught you on a break and you only have 10 minutes to talk.

IF the teacher:

- Quickly & clearly introduces herself and states her purpose for calling
- Confirms you have time to talk
- Reassures you everything is OK with your child

THEN YOU: Can relax, let your guard down, let your tone of voice & choice of words be more friendly and inviting.
Opening continued

IF INSTEAD the teacher:

• Forgets to introduce herself
• Explain clearly why she is calling
• Takes too long to state purpose of the call
• Takes an approach that feels too aggressive
• Generally lacks confidence

THEN YOU: Interrupt with, "What did you want to talk about today?"

NOTE: You are a little edgy but not unfriendly; you are concerned. The school is calling & you do not know why. Is everything OK with your child?

This is the first time that a teacher has called you from the school. Let the teacher hear the surprise in your voice.
Phone call scenarios
Round one (pre-modules)
Bad news scenario #1: Marta Perez

• You are the mother of 5\textsuperscript{th} grader Pamela Perez.

• Pam excels academically but you know she sometimes gets bored and can then become a bit disruptive.

• You have tried repeatedly to try to talk to the school about this situation, but you always end up frustrated: They just want to focus on her “behavior problems” while you want to focus on finding a better academic fit for your child.

• You won’t give up though. You know Pam needs a more challenging environment.
More information about Ms. Perez

• You are a divorced from Pam’s father. You and your husband are both remarried. Everyone gets along.
• You love animals and you and your second husband run a local animal grooming business.
• You had hoped to be a veterinarian. But you went to a “lousy” high school that didn’t have the challenging academics you needed.
• You won’t let the same thing happen to Pam. You are determine she have the challenging environment she needs to succeed.

NOTE: If the teacher asks you open-ended questions and builds a relationship, you should reveal why you are wary of the school and your reasons for your frustration. But if the teacher only focuses on delivering information (the current detention), than you becomes increasingly resistant—you are not going along with the teacher’s plan!
Thank you!

This project was piloted in 2015-2016 with 7 educator preparation providers.
• Albany State University
• Columbus State University
• Georgia State University
• Howard University
• National Louis University
• Trinity Christian College
• Trinity Washington University

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