Strategies for Enhancing Family-Professional Partnership within Schoolwide Models of Behavior Support

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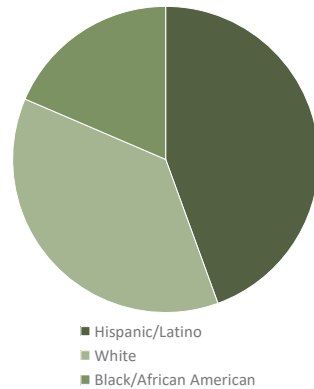Honors Committee Chair: Kathleen Strickland-Cohen, Ph.D.

PBIS at a Glance

- **Positive Behavior Intervention** and **Supports (PBIS)** is an approach to behavior support focused on preventing the occurrence of problem behaviors in schools (Kincaid et al., 2016)
- **Critical Features Include:**
  - Schoolwide prevention efforts
  - Ongoing evidence-based assessment & Intervention
  - Team-based data for decision making
- Another critical feature of **PBIS** is the inclusion of family member perspective when establishing school wide expectations and goals.

Partnerships

- Partnerships are relationships in which families and professionals work together to make and implement decisions that will benefit children
- A parent from a partnership study done by Strickland stated **"partnership happens when teachers and family members come to some type of resolution, some type of agreement for something we can both try."**
- Effective communication with roots in honesty and trust is the foundation of partnerships (Haines et al., 2015)
- Evidence shows that when families are satisfied with partnerships, they are more likely to have positive perceptions of their child's learning
- Partnerships are unique and complex; different strategies can be implemented to meet the different needs of families
- Factors that impact partnerships:
  - Culture
  - Personal values
  - Working status of parents

Demographics

- ■ Hispanic/Latino
- ■ White
- ■ Black/African American

Strategies for Teamwork

- Use a planned approach
  - Decide how and when communication will occur
  - Eliminate confusion later on and ensure child's progress is being adequately discussed
- Create **consistent** environments for children
  - Have shared expectations and values at home and school
  - Children have more opportunities to master a skill or practice a procedure
- Provide parent resources to build skills
  - Parents become an added resource for students' learning at home
  - Strengthen the connection between home and school
  - Ex. Parent Activity Day

Strategies for Trust

"I think trust is the most important thing. I am trusting my child with this teacher."
– family member from study

- Partake in culturally responsive practices
  - Learn about a family's culture and the implications it may have in educational settings
    - Ex. Providing a translator or language options
- Follow through and provide updates
  - Build trust that work is being done
- Understand that parents and teachers are experts
  - Teachers are educated on proper practices and parents know their child. Both parties add value to the partnership

Strategies for Communication

- Consistent two-way conversation
  - Providing a way for families and teachers to exchange information frequently is vital
    - Multiple modes: email, phone call, letters home
      - Each partnership is different and can benefit from different modes of communication
- Utilize a Parent Involvement Coordinator
  - Keep parents informed about events in the classroom or in the school
  - Provide a leadership role to a family member and promote partnership in an organized manner
- Have clear expectations and wishes early on
  - Ensure goals are aligned and eliminate the possibility of large misunderstandings

Procedure of Study
(Strickland-Cohen & Kyzar, 2018)

- Qualitative data was collected from **28** family members from **3** schools in a local school district through interviews
  - Each school had PBIS methods in place at the time the interviews were conducted
- The two main research questions of the study were the following:
- **Research Question 1:** What experiences and events do family members perceive as having **helped** and **hindered** communication with teachers related to their child's behavior?
- **Research Question 2:** What ideas do family members **wish** they could express to teachers about addressing their child's challenging behavior and supporting their child's appropriate behavior?
- Data provided meaningful instances to families that either **helped** or **hurt** communication with teachers
  - 15 unique categories were found when the family response data was analyzed (Ex. Trust is critical, positive feedback, and lack of guidance)
- These categories were sorted into three main components that families desired in partnerships—**trust, teamwork,** and **communication**

References

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