



# A GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

to support the use of  
PARENT TOOL KIT: RELATIONSHIPS

**R**eading

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a**R**ithmetic

**R**ELATIONSHIPS







# MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL OF ONTARIO DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

This *Guidebook for Parents and Schools* is intended to support the use of the *Parent Tool Kit: Relationships — What Parents Can Do To Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships*.

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) recognizes the importance of parent involvement in the development of children's healthy relationships and the building of positive school climates. The members of CODE are pleased to provide this Guidebook to support parent engagement initiatives within schools and school boards and to help in planning parent meetings on these topics.

The Guidebook includes suggestions for activities that may be undertaken to reinforce the ideas in the Tool Kit, especially by School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees as they work together with school and board staff to support meaningful parent engagement in their children's learning.

The enclosed USB Webkey will help you to access the complete kit (the Tool Kit and the Guidebook) at: [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html). You may download all or part of either document. Hard copies of the complete kit have been provided to all public school boards and schools in Ontario. We hope that you will find these documents useful and encourage you to circulate them widely.

These documents are part of a series of Parent Engagement resources. The earlier documents are:

- *Parent Tool Kit: What Parents Can Do To Help Their Child Succeed in School*
- *Teen Edition: What Parents Can Do To Help Their Teens Succeed*
- *Planning Parent Engagement: A Guidebook for Parents and Schools*

All are found at: [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html)



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Throughout this Guidebook, the term *parents* refers to parents, guardians, and caregivers. The term *children* refers to children and youth.

**When parents are engaged and involved everyone benefits, and our schools become increasingly rich and positive places to learn and grow.**



This Guidebook has been developed for parent groups and school staff to use in planning activities to complement and support parents' efforts at home. It accompanies the *Parent Tool Kit: Relationships — What Parents Can Do To Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships*.

The Tool Kit is a booklet that provides information for parents and gives suggestions parents can use to support their children in building healthy relationships.

**“OF ALL THE TYPES OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT...  
LEARNING AT HOME HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.”<sup>1</sup>**

The activities outlined in this Guidebook serve as examples that can be used and adapted to meet the needs of your community. These are only a few of the excellent materials available to foster and promote parent engagement and support the activities suggested in the Tool Kit.

Parent groups and school staff are reminded to confirm with the school principal that activities and resources comply with school and board policy in their implementation.

## **PLANNING PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN YOUR SCHOOL**

*Parent Tool Kit: Relationships — What Parents Can Do To Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships* can be used as a resource for parents at home. School Councils, Parent Involvement Committees, other parent groups, and school staff can also share the Tool Kit with more parents.

This Guidebook suggests ways that parent groups and school staff can reach out to help more parents hone their skills to help their

children build and maintain healthy relationships. It is intended to support the parent engagement initiatives in your school and school board and to help in planning parent events.

The parent voice used throughout the Tool Kit and Guidebook reflects what we heard through consultation with parents throughout Ontario.

1. A. Harris & J. Goodall (2007). *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement, Do Parents Know They Matter?* University of Warwick, UK.

## WAYS TO ENCOURAGE AND ENHANCE PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

School communities are always looking for new ways to encourage and enhance parent-school interaction. New technology expands the possibilities for communication and engagement.

With their busy lives, it may be challenging for parents to be present at meetings held at the school. It is important to provide a variety of opportunities to engage with other

education partners to support their children’s learning and well-being.

Below are suggestions that all Parent Involvement Committees (PICs) and School Councils, in collaboration with their school administrators, could explore. You may already use some of these strategies in your school community. You might find others that you think could work for your school community and that you would like to try.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS	
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Tele-conferences	Schools may have several telephone lines that could be used to bring parents into meetings and could be used for PICs, School Council meetings or parent/educator meetings.
Web Conferences	Some schools may have the capability to have web conferences. This allows both audio and visual participation in real time. This interactive strategy could be used for PIC and School Council meetings, giving all those who choose to participate the opportunity to join.
Webcasts	Webcasts are distributed over the Internet using streaming technology. They can be live or on demand. Webcasts are not interactive, but can be a good vehicle to share information that can be accessed by multiple viewers from wherever they have Internet access.
Podcasts	These are audio or video files posted on the Internet for listening or viewing on demand. For example, if the School Council has a special guest speaker brought in for an event, and provided the guest agrees to be recorded, the presentation could be posted for parents to watch or hear later if they are unable to attend the presentation.
Blogs	These can be used to share information, ideas, and opinions about a particular educational topic. For example, a School Council could ask about ideas for bullying awareness and prevention week. If this is something you would like to start, work with the school administration to establish and create monitoring protocols.



Twitter	Twitter is a good way to get short messages out to the school community. For example, you could send out the scores of school sports games or reminder messages for School Council meetings.
Translation/ Interpretation	Consider translating material into the multiple languages of the school and/or providing interpreters for meetings.
Emails	Gathering parent email contact information is a worthwhile endeavour. Check with your school's administration to see if there is a way for School Councils to ask for that information.
Newsletters	Newsletters can be sent electronically or in hard copy. Leave them posted in places around the entrance of the school where parents may have some time to scan.
Information Packages	Copy a section of the Tool Kit to send home or provide an electronic link. This could be followed by a face-to-face meeting or web conference.
Provide Transportation	Setting up a driving pool for School Council meetings may help attendance at meetings. If feasible, provide a minibus to pick up parents from more isolated areas.
Relocating a Meeting	School Council meetings don't always have to occur in a school. Some housing complexes have meeting rooms that could be used or community centres in neighbourhoods may also be available. If your school draws from several smaller communities, occasionally change the location to community libraries or municipal buildings.
Special Events	When your school is holding special events, have a School Council table set up with copies of meeting agendas, minutes, copies of the Tool Kit, and other materials that you may have developed. Kindergarten orientation times, parent/teacher interviews, concerts, and student performances are all good times to speak to your school community about what is going on in the school.
School Council Partners	With the help of your school administration, you may want to establish a School Welcome Partner Program. When a new family arrives, School Councils could send home a "Welcome Package" and provide the parents with a partner's contact information if they have any questions about their new School Council's work in the community.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES IN THE TOOL KIT?

The Tool Kit's structure and content come from parents' questions and many of the suggestions come from parents' experiences.

Some of the key messages included in the Tool Kit are:

- Healthy relationships are important to the success of our children — they support child development and well-being.
- Parents can help children and youth build and maintain healthy relationships.
- Learning how to deal with conflict in positive ways is an important life skill.
- There are things that get in the way of healthy relationships, such as bullying.
- We all have a role to play in supporting bullying intervention and prevention.
- Parents can help young people build healthy inclusive relationships and maintain good physical and mental health.
- Relationships can be enhanced using social media and communication technologies.
- Parents can help their children learn to deal with setbacks and become more resilient.
- We all have a role to play in creating positive school climates.

## WHAT CAN PARENT GROUPS AND SCHOOL STAFF DO TO HELP PARENTS USE THE TOOL KIT?

Parent groups and school staff can offer opportunities for more parents to become familiar with ideas introduced in the Tool Kit. Some of the suggested activities in this Guidebook provide opportunities for parents to share their own best practices and to enhance skills that support their children as they build relationships. Samples of the kinds of activities that parent groups and school staff might do are included at the back of this Guidebook.

## HOW CAN THE TOOL KIT BE INTRODUCED TO PARENTS?

Parent group members and school staff can review the Tool Kit together to discuss how they would like to use it with parents in their school. The Tool Kit can be introduced through a school newsletter or handed out at a meet and greet event at the beginning of the school year, curriculum night, family BBQ or student performance. There is a sample workshop outline and materials that might be useful in introducing the Tool Kit beginning on page 14.

## HOW CAN THIS GUIDEBOOK BE USED TO SUPPORT PARENTS?

This Guidebook has been developed for parent groups, school staff, and others who want to support the important work parents do at home to encourage the building of healthy relationships among and between children and adolescents.

The Tool Kit focuses on healthy relationships. This Guidebook suggests activities for each of the following:

- How parents can help their children build and maintain healthy relationships

- How parents can learn more about the social media that children are using
- How parents can build their own understanding of mental health and well-being in young people
- How parents can help their children and youth deal with conflict
- How parents can support bullying prevention

The activities are meant to be examples that can be adapted for local use. Parent groups and school staff can use the various activities in ways that best suit the needs of their communities.

## Types of Activity Formats Included

Varying the kinds of opportunities parents have when they come together is key to building and maintaining interest and support. We tire of the same kind of meeting time after time. Involving adults in their own learning or quest for information is key. We learn what we experience. Those responsible for planning parent meetings can give thought to how much variety is offered when parents are asked to come together.

Some activity formats work better than others for different topics. However, several formats can be used for the same topic. Examples are given of the following parent activity formats:

- **Workshops**
- **Case studies**
- **Discussion groups**
- **Role-play**
- **Lecture or presentation**
- **Media resources**
- **Demonstration or exhibits**

Samples of each activity format follow using some of the topics parent groups and school staff may be interested in sharing with more parents.

- A sample **workshop** for introducing the Tool Kit to parents
- A sample use of **case studies** and **discussion groups** for parent groups to use to focus on different aspects of relationships
- A **role-play** activity to develop skills in dealing with conflict
- A sample **lecture/presentation** for parents on mental health and well-being
- An example of how parent groups might use **media resources** to focus on bullying prevention
- A **demonstration/exhibit** opportunity for parents on social media

## PLANNING PARENT ENGAGEMENT: A GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENTS AND SCHOOLS

The above is the title of the first Guidebook sent to schools with the original Tool Kit — *Parent Tool Kit: What Parents Can Do To Help Their Child Succeed in School*. It is intended to be used by parent groups and school staff to plan school-based activities to complement and support parents' efforts at home. Included in the Guidebook are school-based activities, such as:

- Using a workshop: Student-led technology tour
- Using a newsletter: Book reviews and book clubs
- Inviting guest speakers: Student/guest author night
- Featuring student demonstrations: Getting ready for the science fair

- Using online resources: Digital storytelling
- Holding a community event: Food and fitness fair

This Guidebook suggests ways to foster and promote parent engagement to support student learning and well-being and includes:

- Ideas for making an annual plan for parent engagement
- Suggestions for getting families to participate in school-based activities
- Examples of ways to communicate with parents
- How to put parent engagement on the agenda — promoting parent engagement

There is a section of the Guidebook, *Family Opinions Matter: Surveys and Parent Engagement*, that provides ideas for developing school-based surveys to gauge parent satisfaction and to determine community support for initiatives and activities.

## A positive school climate supports student achievement and well-being.

### HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THE BUILDING OF A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Parents can play a key role in supporting the building of positive school climates. In addition to all the guidance that parents provide at home with their children, parents contribute daily to developing healthy relationships throughout the community among children and teens and between youth and

adults. We are all role models and can support a whole school approach by working together on initiatives underway to create safe and accepting schools.

**The Ministry of Education defines school climate as:**

"...[t]he learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community

feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to support a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect. A positive school climate is a crucial component of the prevention of inappropriate behaviour.”

*Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, “Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour” (December 5, 2012)*

**When a positive school climate exists:**

- students, staff and parents feel, and are, safe, included and accepted;
- all members of the school community show respect, fairness, and kindness and build healthy relationships that are free from discrimination and harassment;
- students are encouraged and supported in being positive leaders and role models;
- parents, students, administration, staff, and community members engage in open and ongoing dialogue;
- all partners are actively engaged; and
- every student is inspired and given support to succeed in an environment of high expectations.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS**

In Ontario, **all** schools are required to conduct anonymous school climate surveys of their students, staff, and parents at least once every two years and to share the survey results with their Safe and Accepting Schools Teams. This is a requirement of the *Education*

*Act* and is outlined in *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, “Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour.”*

Sample School Climate Surveys are available in 22 languages at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/climate.html>.

A school climate survey reveals the perceptions of the school’s strengths and needs. It can provide information needed to make informed decisions about school improvement.

The results of the school climate surveys can help to shape the continuing development and improvement of school practices and initiatives, including bullying prevention and intervention plans, with ideas and strategies that teams can adapt as they continue to nurture a learning environment that enables all students to thrive.

School Councils may want to ask the school’s administrators to present an overview of the process for conducting school climate surveys as well as to present any data from a previous year’s survey that has been gathered.

The school administration or parent members of the school’s Safe and Accepting Schools Team might also want to share the role of the Team in creating a positive school culture. Using a whole school approach, these teams bring together the adults in the school, students, parents/guardians, and members of the community to build a positive school climate.

**Of all the things that contribute to the success of our children and youth, few are more basic than healthy relationships.**



# SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS

## HELPING BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

<b>Workshop to Introduce Parents to the <i>Parent Tool Kit: Relationships</i> . . . . .</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Workshop Feedback Form . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Using Case Studies and Discussions: How Parents Can Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships . . . . .</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>How Parents Can Help Their Children Deal with Conflict . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>A Sample Lecture/Presentation Meeting for Parents on Children’s Mental Health and Well-Being . . . . .</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Using Media Resources to Focus on Bullying Prevention . . . . .</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Using Demonstrations and Exhibits to Show How Some Social Media Can Be Used . .</b>	<b>28</b>

# PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

## WORKSHOP TO INTRODUCE PARENTS TO THE *PARENT TOOL KIT: RELATIONSHIPS*

Parents who do not have a copy of the Tool Kit can be advised that it is available at [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html) for downloading or reading and reference.

<b>INTRODUCING THE <i>PARENT TOOL KIT: RELATIONSHIPS</i></b>	
<b>To Do Before Meeting</b>	Have furniture in room arranged so that parents are seated in small groups (groups of six suggested).
<b>Welcome</b>	Welcome parents and introduce parent leaders for workshop. If your group is small, have parent participants introduce themselves.
<b>Overview of the Tool Kit</b>	Introduce parents to the <i>Parent Tool Kit: Relationships</i> by giving a brief background and overview of the kit.  (You might want to show <i>Building Parent Engagement</i> , original Tool Kits and Guidebook, available at <a href="http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html">http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html</a> .)
<b>Helping Parents Navigate the Tool Kit</b>	Participants number themselves 1 through 6.  Each reads a section.  In small groups, each person shares one idea that resonated with them and other parents might want to try.  Each table shares one or two ideas with large group. These can be noted on chart paper and used as part of a newsletter report of the evening.
<b>Thank You</b>	Thank parents for attending.  Make sure parents know that the Tool Kit and Guidebook are available at <a href="http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html">http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html</a> .  Mention any upcoming parent events.

When you are planning your workshop you might want to look at this outline and think about...

- What you'd change
- What you'd add
- What you'd keep
- What you'd need

### WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

You might use a feedback form to plan future meetings. A sample follows.



## WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

The most useful part of this workshop for me was .....

.....  
.....  
.....

I would be interested in focusing on.....

.....  
.....  
.....

I would like information on .....

.....  
.....  
.....

I would like to attend a session with an expert/resource person on .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

### USING CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSIONS: HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN DEVELOP HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

In this activity, a case study is a description of a scenario or event that can be reviewed and discussed.

This type of parent meeting or workshop is suggested as a way for parents to talk about helping their children develop healthy relationships. It could be used prior to introducing parents to the *Parent Tool Kit: Relationships — What Parents Can Do to Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships* or it could be used at any time after.

The length of time you want to spend on this activity will determine the number of case studies you use. There are some sample case studies provided below or when planning this workshop, parents and school staff could come up with some situations of their own that are particularly relevant to your community.

#### **Before the Meeting**

Have furniture arranged so that parents are seated in small groups. Make sure that copies of the case studies are on the tables.

#### **Welcome and Outline of Meeting**

The kind of thing the meeting chairperson might say is:

“We are focusing on how we, as parents, can help our children build and maintain healthy relationships. We know that relationships are crucial to our children’s success in school and in life.

First we are going to review some case studies, then we are going to discuss them as though each of us is the parent in the case study.”

#### **Case Studies**

The chairperson might say...

“On your table you will find some case studies. A parent at each table can pick up one paper and read the case study to the others. Following the reading of the case study, each group is to discuss how the parent in the case study could help the child or young person.”

Questions to stimulate discussion could include:

What is happening in the case study?

What are the issues from the youth’s perspective?

What are the issues from the parent’s perspective?

How can the parent provide guidance in this situation?

### Follow-Up to Case Studies:

A parent from the planning group could give the instructions.

1. Ask groups to share one idea they got from the discussions in their small groups. (Allow time for this sharing.)
2. Ask parents if there are any ideas or suggestions from their group they would like to share with the larger group. Hear from each group who wishes to share something.
3. Show parents a copy of the *Parent Tool Kit: Relationships — What Parents Can Do to Help Their Children Develop Healthy Relationships*.
4. Give a very brief overview of the Tool Kit.

The Tool Kit stresses how important healthy relationships are to the development of children and young people. The Tool Kit is based on concerns parents have raised and is developed into sections around the themes of:

- Building and maintaining healthy relationships

- How parents can learn about and support their children's use of digital media to maintain relationships
- How parents can support their children to thrive in a diverse world
- How parents can better understand issues of children's mental health and well-being
- Understanding the difference between conflict and bullying
- How parents can help children better handle conflict and act appropriately when bullying occurs
- How parents can help their children learn to bounce back when things do not go well — how to help children become more resilient

5. Tell parents the Tool Kit is available at [http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent\\_engagement.html](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html).

### Evaluation for Future Planning

Ask parents to complete the feedback form (sample on page 15) and thank them for feedback that will help you plan future meetings.

**Thank you for your participation.**

## CASE STUDY 1

“Why are you crying?” asked Adi’s mother. Adi didn’t reply for quite a long time, and then he said, “The kids at school are making fun of me. Today, at lunch, someone asked me why I had so many things to eat. Someone else said that that was why I am fat and everyone laughed. I wish I didn’t have to eat in that lunchroom anymore.”

## CASE STUDY 2

“Where are you going, Bala?” her father asked. She hesitated and then said that she was meeting some of her friends. “But will you be home by your nine p.m. curfew?” her father enquired. “Dad, no one but me has to be home by nine. Nothing starts until almost nine and I can’t do anything if I cannot stay later.”

## CASE STUDY 3

Bai came home from school and did not say anything to her parents. She went off by herself and did not do the usual after-school things she liked to do. Her mother went to talk to her but she was very quiet and didn’t talk much. Finally Bai told her that someone in her class was having a birthday party and most of the kids had been invited...but not her.

## CASE STUDY 4

Harper’s father was surprised when he was contacted by the school principal and heard that Harper and some other students had been skipping school. Today they were found in a nearby restaurant. When Harper came in later, his father raised the matter right away. Harper said that all his friends were doing it and if he didn’t do it, he’d lose them as friends.

# PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

## HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN DEAL WITH CONFLICT

One way that parent groups and staff may choose to support parents in building conflict resolution skills is to offer a workshop. A sample workshop follows for you to adapt to better suit your community.

### Dealing with Conflict Workshop

This sample workshop has eight parts:

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Overview**
2. **General Comments about Conflict**
3. **Participant Activity 1**
4. **Information on Dealing with Conflict**
5. **Participant Activity 2**
6. **Group Discussion**
7. **Evaluation and Planning Future Workshops**
8. **Thank You and Wrap Up**

### Welcome, Introductions and Overview

Welcome parents.

Introduce planning/presenting parents and/or staff (and if the group is small enough, ask participants to introduce themselves).

An overview, given by one of the presenters, could include comments such as:

“Tonight we are going to see if we can improve our skills in dealing with conflict so that when it arises at home, we are better prepared. Knowing how to deal with conflict

is an important skill for children, teens and adults.”

### We are going to:

- Role-play some situations that have a conflict;
- Hear a few reminders about conflict;
- Practise our skills, new or old; and
- Hopefully, enjoy ourselves!

### General Comments about Conflict

One of the workshop leaders can make some general comments about conflict. These could include:

- Conflict is a natural part of how we relate to others.
- Wherever there are two or more people, there is potential for conflict.
- Conflict can lead to very positive outcomes, such as:
  - better decisions,
  - more buy-in to the decisions,
  - richer ideas,
  - more creativity (two heads ARE better than one),
  - better understanding of each other, and
  - stronger relationships.
- Knowing how to deal with conflict is the answer.

### Participant Activity 1

We are going to do some role-playing. Role-playing can help us see different perspectives and can allow us to practise our skills.

1. **Divide the parents into four groups.**
2. Within each group, **ask people to partner.**
3. To each group, **distribute written instructions** to pairs:
  - Parent Instruction 1 and Child Instruction 1 (pg. 22)
  - Parent Instruction 2 and Child Instruction 2 (pg. 22)
  - Parent Instruction 3 and Child Instruction 3 (pg. 23)
  - Parent Instruction 4 and Child Instruction 4 (pg. 23)
4. Ask parents to read their instructions and role-play what could happen.
5. Allow sufficient time for role-play to take place.
6. End the role-playing and ask the parents in the four groups to talk about what conflicts they were facing.

### Information on Dealing with Conflict

Suggest to parents that there is some information on dealing with conflict that they may want to keep in mind. Post the points you wish to use so that participants can see them during the next activity.

- While working through conflict, the important focus should be on keeping the relationship healthy.
- The goal is to end with a “win-win”.
- It is important to find solutions that allow both sides to “save face”.
- Negotiated solutions work far better than imposed solutions.
- Choose a good time and place for a talk.
- Stay calm.
- Ignore the behaviour (for now) and deal only with the issue.
- Listen first. Talk second.
- Hear the facts as your child sees them.
- Explore options for solutions.
- Talk about each option. What do I want? What does he/she want? Avoid evaluating your child’s response—see it as information.
- Be prepared to compromise.
- Choose the option together.
- Decide on a plan.
- At some other time, talk about the behaviour and/or the anger. Talk with your child about how a similar situation might be dealt with differently in future.

*Keep your list of ideas where it can be seen by participants.*

### **Participant Activity 2**

Ask parents to change roles with their partner.

Ask them to replay the scene using as many of the conflict resolution ideas on the list as possible.

### **Group Discussion**

Following Participant Activity 2, ask parents to share with their group (or large group, depending on numbers) one thing each learned or was reminded of during the role-play.

Use the activities to reinforce that bullying and conflict are very different. Conflict gets resolved; bullying gets reported!

### **Evaluation and Planning Future Workshops**

Distribute evaluation forms and questionnaires regarding future workshops for parents.

### **Thank You and Wrap Up**

Thank participants for attending.

**PARENT**

**INSTRUCTION 1**

You are role-playing the parent and your partner is role-playing your son.

You are waiting for your son to come home. It is long past the agreed upon time. When he arrives you are really angry and let him know.

**CHILD**

**INSTRUCTION 1**

You are role-playing the son and your partner is role-playing your parent.

You have just arrived home from a great party. You had lots of fun. When your parent starts in on your being late, you get really angry. Why can't my parent understand that I was having a good time?

**PARENT**

**INSTRUCTION 2**

You are role-playing the parent and your partner is role-playing your daughter.

Your daughter has been seeing some young people you don't know very well. You have heard from other parents that these teenagers are into troubling activities. You want your daughter to see much less of them and much more of the friends with whom she used to spend time.

**CHILD**

**INSTRUCTION 2**

You are role-playing the daughter and your partner is role-playing your parent.

One of your new friends drops you off in front of your place just as your parent returns from work. Your parent starts asking who you were with, who the kids in the car are, and a lot of other questions. You are angry and think you are old enough to choose your own friends and let your parent know that is how you feel.



**PARENT****INSTRUCTION 3**

You are role-playing the parent and your partner is role-playing your daughter.

You found your daughter's report card in her room. You didn't know she had it. You look and see that her marks have fallen drastically and the comments refer to poor attendance and poor attitude. You are shocked and angry. Just before you finish reading the report card, your daughter asks what you are doing snooping around her room.

**CHILD****INSTRUCTION 3**

You are role-playing the daughter and your partner is role-playing your parent.

You return home and as you enter your room you notice that your parent is in there looking through your stuff. You are mad that your parent waits until you are out to snoop around. You see that in your parent's hand is the report card you brought home a couple of days ago.

**PARENT****INSTRUCTION 4**

You are role-playing the parent and your partner is role-playing your son.

Your four-year-old son is playing with your nephew, age five. You see your son take the toy your nephew is playing with away from him and your nephew starts to cry. You take the toy from your son and return it to the nephew. Then your son gets very angry and begins to throw things.

**CHILD****INSTRUCTION 4**

You are role-playing the son and your partner is role-playing your parent.

You are playing with your cousin and you notice he has one of your favourite toys. You take it from him—after all, it is yours. He starts to cry, but you ignore him. Then your parent takes the toy from you and gives it back to him. You are really angry both at your parent and your cousin because his crying is what started all this. You show them how upset you are and throw things.

## PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

### A SAMPLE LECTURE/PRESENTATION MEETING FOR PARENTS ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

One activity that parent groups, parents, or staff may want to consider for this topic is the expert presentation.

Young people's mental health issues are often best dealt with by the professionals. Some parent groups have found it helpful to hold a meeting to which an expert has been invited. The expert can review the ways parents can contribute to good mental health and can inform parents of the steps needed in a variety of situations. You may wish to also invite a mental health professional. Your school board's Mental Health Leader will be able to provide advice and assistance regarding experts who could meet with parent and staff groups.

#### Use Parent Questions

Ask parents to bring any questions they have and leave them (anonymously) in a designated place. Ask your expert guest upon arrival to review questions and answer as many as possible during the presentation. Questions can also be submitted earlier if the presenter prefers.

#### Use Local Experts

If it is possible, try to use experts who are local. This may not be possible in all situations, but working through your public health office may help to identify an expert.

This will also allow parents to make a connection with someone who can help them following the meeting. Gather relevant printed materials that parents can take with them. Make sure local resources are included in your collection. Ask your expert guest to suggest resources and perhaps bring something to distribute to parents.

Some of the websites included in the Tool Kit may provide useful support.

#### Timing

Meeting organizers might like to survey parents about when they would prefer the meeting to be held. Some parents find week-day evening meetings difficult to work into their schedule.

Ask the expert guest to speak for a specific length of time in order to allow for parent questions following the presentation.

### **Advertise**

The topic of mental health and well-being may be of interest to parents who may not usually attend parent meetings held at the school. Try to advertise well. Posting notices in places where parents will be does help, such as apartment laundry rooms, local shops, etc. Using a variety of types of communication, such as tweets, blogs, and the school websites is also helpful to get the word out. For more ideas about communication see page 6 of this Guidebook.

### **Resources**

Have resources available for parents to look at and to take away. Ask your expert guest to suggest resources and, perhaps, bring some to distribute to parents. Parents may find it useful to have access to the Internet and a few computers available so that they can explore some of the web-based resources which are available to support mental health and well-being. These resources can also be posted on the school website or included in a newsletter as follow-up to the meeting.

### **Materials**

In addition, it may be helpful to have pens and scratch pads or paper on the seats to allow parents to write questions they want to ask during the upcoming question time.

## PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

### USING MEDIA RESOURCES TO FOCUS ON BULLYING PREVENTION

School Councils, working together with their principals, or PICs working with board staff, may find it helpful to offer an opportunity to watch a film focusing on a topic such as bullying prevention.

#### Things to consider when planning:

1. Have a committee of the School Council view the film ahead of time. Before organizing any public viewing of any film, check to see if there are any requirements for public performance rights.
2. Advertise through the school newsletters, websites, and more widely in the community. For more ideas about communication see page 6 of this Guidebook. Students can help with promoting the event. Hold the event at a time when parents in your community are available.
3. Create a list of relevant questions that parents can discuss following the film. How might your entire school community support bullying prevention as an integral part of a whole school approach?

#### Things to consider during the event:

1. Parents can watch the film seated in small groups to allow them to discuss the film following the viewing.
2. Those leading the meeting could use some of the prepared questions for groups to start discussions. Questions could include:
  - Do you think the responses to bullying were appropriate?
  - What else could have been done?
  - Would you be satisfied if your child were one of those involved? Why/Why not?
3. At the conclusion of the meeting, a reminder of how bullying is to be reported and dealt with in your community can follow. This can be provided by a parent or a staff member familiar with your school's and school board's policies.

### Films You May Wish to Consider

Parent groups or school staff may choose to watch a film. Parents have suggested the following films as possibilities but caution that you will want to preview the films. The films in this list have storylines that touch on bullying, and can provide a starting point for discussions around the differences between conflict and bullying, as well as many other topics around healthy relationship building.

Parent groups or school staff may also choose to view some films and recommend them to parents for viewing at home with their families.

Before deciding on a film to show or to recommend, parent groups or school staff must confirm its usability with the school principal. All activities must comply with school and school board policies in their implementation.

#### ***Bully***

Some communities have used the film *Bully* to provide an opportunity to bring together key partners of their community. *Bully* is a film that documents five kids and their families over the course of a school year. It follows two families who have lost children to suicide and a mother awaiting the fate of her fourteen-year-old daughter who brandished a gun on a school bus. The story goes into homes, classrooms, cafeterias and principals' offices, and offers insights into the world of bullied children. ([www.thebullyproject.com](http://www.thebullyproject.com))

To order *Bully*, you should visit the Bully Project website. Some school boards have purchased public performance rights for this film — do check with your board before ordering.

#### ***Cyberbully***

When a teenage girl is bullied online, she starts to isolate herself from her family and friends. Soon the trauma pushes her toward the edge and her mom takes the troubling issue to the authorities. (*YouTube*)

#### ***To Be Fat Like Me***

A physically fit teenager puts on a fat suit as part of a film project to experience the hardships facing overweight high school students. (*YouTube*)

#### ***Billy Elliot***

Eleven-year-old Billy Elliot learns to be true to himself when he's forced to make a difficult decision he knows will displease his father. Billy's dad wants him to be a tough guy and take boxing lessons. After watching a ballet class taking place at the same time as his boxing lesson, Billy discovers that dance is his true passion. Without the permission of his father, the boy attends ballet classes instead of boxing, and becomes a shining star, attending an audition for the Royal Ballet.

# PARENT GROUP ACTIVITY

## USING DEMONSTRATIONS AND EXHIBITS TO SHOW HOW SOME SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED

Mini workshops can be offered on how to use various social media. Parents who are familiar with different kinds of social media can be invited to show more parents how that site works. Parents have a great deal of expertise to share with one another in many different areas. Technical support should be available so that parents can see and try things out during the demonstration. This is a great opportunity to involve more parents as experts and group leaders.

Some of the most used social media sites you might consider for mini workshops include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Instagram

Advertise in your community for people who are willing to volunteer to help a small group of parents understand how one of the social media sites works.

Explain to volunteers how your evening is going to work.

### **Suggested Format:**

Place each volunteer demonstrator in an area with a set number of chairs.

Ask parents to choose a location to begin.

After your set time, ring a bell or somehow indicate that it is time to move on to another centre.

During the event each parent would have the chance to see two (maybe three) different social media sites being used.

Gather group together at conclusion for a few comments and feedback from participants.



# Parent Engagement Is Important For Student Success.

These materials have been developed by the  
Council of Ontario Directors of Education and  
funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Visit: [www.ontariodirectors.ca](http://www.ontariodirectors.ca)

The design of this Guidebook was created  
by Humber College AdCentre students.

