



Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)

From parent leaders' experiences: What works in partnerships between parents and professionals?

- Relationship building – building closeness and trust at a human level
- Parents building relationships within the system both from the bottom up (with other parents) and from the top down (with the administration)
- Having a plan that includes parents and community
- Having a structure that includes parents and community
- Decision-making structures that have a parent and community majority on them
- Leadership training for parents that helps parents come together, identify goals and know what they want before and concurrent to participating in the partnership
- Including the teaching of individual self-esteem to parents and team-building for parents in the leadership training process
- Recognizing that it takes time (and some resources) to really be inclusive
- Giving parents that chance to prove they can be constructive contributors and resources to the group
- Parent leader veterans teaching new leaders
- The more parents demand and earn RESPECT, the more it grows
- Practical suggestions:
 - A welcoming atmosphere – friendly greetings
 - Hold meetings at times that are convenient to the most parents
(this varies from community to community)
 - Provide child care
 - Provide food and/or refreshments
 - Provide full translation, when needed
 - Provide clear and understandable written materials and presentations
 - Give enough advance notice for parents to plan around meeting times