Parent Meetings in an Early Childhood Setting

Purpose:
To inform or educate parents regarding such matters as:
Child development
Developmentally appropriate practice (play)
Topics of relevance (math, reading, etc…)
Relevant legislation (new child-safety seat law)
Parenting strategies

To increase school to home communication and get feedback from parents.

Educating parents is just as important as educating their children because they often have unrealistic expectations regarding their child's development and progress in school. Parents often don't understand how young children learn.

What to include in a parent meeting:
An agenda
A newsletter or informational packet about the topic
Specific at-home activities they can do with their child
Additional resources that parents can look into
Good books that cover this topic or another that they are interested in. A parent library in your classroom is helpful.
Community resources that will assist them.
An evaluation form

Giving parents specific at-home activities they can do with their child is a great tool. Often parents want what's best for their child, but don't know how to go about it and need to be pointed in the right direction.

What to think about prior to having a parent meeting:
Target audience
Education level
Subject matter that will be useful. Questions that they have come to you with are helpful.
Time and length of meetings
Food or door prizes

How to decide on a topic that your parents will be interested in:
Research the topic in professional literature
Choose articles or resources that you want to share
Look to see what your community has to offer

Why should YOU have meetings?

NAEYC guidelines for four-and five-year institutions (Initial Certification) states:
Programs prepare early childhood professionals who:
3.1 Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with families by the following means: support parents in making decisions related to their child's development and their parenting.
3.4 Link families with a range of family-oriented services based on identified resources, priorities, and concerns.

Parent meetings are a practical way to accomplish these guidelines.

The parent meeting can be an effective teaching tool that compliments classroom interactions with children. When parents know you care enough to help provide resources to help them, it opens doors and reinforces positive school-family relationships.

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