



Making it Easier to Build Effective Partnerships with Families

LEARNING FORWARD

LEARNING BEYOND THE HORIZON

December 2, 2017 · Orlando, Florida



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MAKING IT EASIER TO BUILD EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

December 2, 2017

AGENDA

About the Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy

Formulating Questions Using the Question Formulation Technique
(QFT)

Three Roles Parents Can Play: Support, Monitor, and Advocate

Unpacking the Strategy & Examples of Use

Practice Teaching

Developing Action Plans

Closing and Evaluation

The Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy

Components of the Strategy

✓ The Question Formulation Technique

A step-by-step process that allows parents to produce their own questions, improve their questions and strategize on how to use their questions.

✓ The Framework for Accountable Decision Making

An analytical structure that allows parents to focus on key decisions, ask their own questions and apply criteria for accountable decision-making – questions about the reasons, the process and their role in the process.

✓ The Support, Monitor, and Advocate Model

The identification of three distinct roles parents should play in their children's education.

Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) to Build Partnerships with Families

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT), a key component of the Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy is a powerful tool educators and early childhood workers can use to engage parents in asking questions about their children's education.

As of 2016, over 200,000 educators around the world have implemented the QFT in their classrooms, and have observed how their students become more curious and engaged, take greater ownership of their learning, and learn more deeply than ever before. Educators, family engagement support staff and early childhood workers can also apply the QFT to develop stronger partnerships with parents. By learning to ask better questions, parents can more effectively support their children's education, monitor their progress, and advocate for them when necessary.

Strengths and Benefits of Using the QFT

- The QFT is a strategy and not a program. It can be integrated into ongoing work and doesn't require additional personnel or resources.
- It is easy to learn and use, and can be put into practice immediately.
- The strategy can be learned individually or in groups.

Facilitating the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) with Parents

Facilitation Timeframes for Individuals and Groups of Parents	
Individuals : 7-15 minutes	Groups : 30-40 minutes

Facilitator's Instructions

1. Develop a Question Focus.

A Question Focus (QFocus) is brief statement, a problem or concern that serves as a "focus" to jumpstart the production of questions. It can be developed out of topics you want to discuss with parents or from concerns parents have.

The QFocus should **NOT** be a question.

Tip: Try your best to develop the QFocus ahead of time.

2. Welcome parents and make them aware you will be working together in a new way for the first few minutes of your meeting.

3. Introduce the rules for producing questions.

1. Ask as many question as you can.

2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss questions.

3. Write down every question exactly as stated.

4. Change any statements into questions.

Tip: For rule #3, when working with individuals, ask parents to write the questions exactly as they come to mind.

Have participants respond to **one** of the following questions:

- What might be difficult about following these rules?
- Which one of these rules might be difficult for you to follow?

4. Producing questions - Instruct parents to ask as many questions as possible about the QFocus, to follow the rules, and number the questions.

Tip: Resist temptation to intervene and give examples of questions during the process.

Tip: Allow time and space for parents to generate as many questions as possible.

5. Improving questions - Facilitate work with closed and open-ended questions.

- Provide definitions for two types of questions closed and open-ended.

Closed-Ended: Answered with “yes,” “no,” or one word

Open-Ended: Require a longer explanation

- Ask parents to categorize the questions as closed or open-ended.
- Ask parents to name advantages and disadvantages for asking closed and open-ended questions.
- Ask parents to practice changing questions from one type to another as follows:
 - ⇒ Change **one** open-ended question into a closed-ended question.
 - ⇒ Change **one** closed-ended question into an open-ended question.

6. Prioritizing questions - Instruct parents to review the list and choose three priority questions while keeping in mind the QFocus.

7. Strategizing on next steps - Discuss with parents next steps with the questions or work with parents developing a plan on what to do with the questions.

8. Reflecting - Ask parents to reflect upon what they learned and how they can use it

- What did you learn?
- How can you use it?

Identifying Questions about Reasons, Process and Role

If you are using the Framework for Accountable Decision Making in combination with the Question Formulation Technique:

- Make sure you provide a working definition of the term “decision.”
- Ask participants to review the list of questions and to try to find one that will help them learn about the reasons, the process and their role.
- They should focus on one category at a time.
- If they don’t have a question, they should quickly produce a new one rather than spend time trying to make questions they have fit.

A Question Focus (QFocus) is the springboard for asking questions. It can be a statement, a picture, a briefly stated problem or situation.

Just one requirement for the QFocus: It should NOT be a question

QUESTION FOCUS EXAMPLES

1. Supporting your child at home
 2. Your child is beginning to struggle in class
 3. Promoting a healthy environment for your child
 4. Speaking up on behalf of your child
-
5. A new way of evaluating student learning will be implemented at your child's school
 6. An evaluation is being recommended for your child
 7. Your child might be held back in the same grade for one more year

My List of Questions to Ask

Topic: _____ Date: _____

1. Ask as many questions as you can about the topic:

- Do not stop to try to answer or judge the questions
- Write each question exactly as it comes to mind
- Change any thoughts or statements into questions

2. Choose the three most important questions for you. Mark them with an X.

3. Find different types of questions:

- *Closed-ended questions* – can be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.
- *Open-ended questions* – require an explanation.

4. Practice changing questions to get different information. Change one of each:



Closed to Open



Open to Closed

5. Reflection

What did you learn?

How can you use it?

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Open to Closed

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What did you learn?

How can you use it?

OBSERVER CHECKLIST

Please check the box when the facilitator completes the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Invited the parent to ask questions	#1	#2	#3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Talked with the parent about the importance of asking questions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Explained the reasons for practicing asking questions and writing down the questions before answering them			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gave instructions on how to produce questions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Paused and gave the parent time to think of questions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wrote down the parent's questions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collected more questions before answering			

SUPPORT, MONITOR AND ADVOCATE

Parents can play these three key roles to participate more effectively in their children's education:

Role 1: **SUPPORT**

Parents:

- help
- encourage
- provide for their children
- support the work of teachers and the school, early childhood workers and others on behalf of their children

To **SUPPORT** my child, I'm currently:

Role 2: **MONITOR**

Parents:

- keep track of their children's progress
- pay attention to their children's needs

They monitor:

- children's entire school experience
- how they are doing academically and socially
- how their child's needs are being met

These are two things I'm currently doing to **MONITOR** my child:

Role 3: **ADVOCATE**

Parents:

- speak up and make specific requests on behalf of their children
- can also be advocates for meeting the needs of all children
- address issues individually or as part of an organized group at the classroom, school and district levels as well as in other settings

This is one example of how I have **ADVOCATED** for my child:



These are other things **I would like to do** to support, monitor, and advocate on behalf of my child:

SUPPORT	MONITOR	ADVOCATE

To help myself I would like to **learn** more about:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Inviting Parents to Learn the Strategy

Briefly describe what the strategy is all about:

Describe your purpose in parents learning the strategy:

Describe how the session will look like (single session, a series, how long...):

Is this a special event you are organizing?

Are you integrating the sharing of the strategy into an existing event?

- USE YOUR NOTES TO DEVELOP A BRIEF INVITATION LETTER OR PUT TOGETHER A FLYER TO INVITE PARENTS. PLEASE BE CREATIVE WHEN DESIGNING YOUR FLYER.