

*The Right Question Strategy for Building Partnerships with Parents*

**Strengthening Parents’ Skills to Ask Better Questions Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)**

*Acknowledgements:*

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**The Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy**

**Components of the Strategy**

***The Support, Monitor, and Advocate Model***

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

* **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.*

**This Resource Includes:**

* facilitation tips and you can use to help parents produce their own questions, improve their questions, and strategize on how to use them.
* a template, *My List of Questions to Ask*, you can use to guide parents through the process and parents can also use on their own afterwards.

**How Can Parents Ask Better Questions Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT)**

The Question Formulation Technique (QFT), a key component of the Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy educators can use to engage parents in asking questions about their children’s education. This technique provides a step by step process for producing questions, prioritizing, and planning on how to use them.

As of 2016, over 300,000 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 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

Use the template **My List of Questions to Ask.**

* Groups: 30-40 minutes

Use chart paper so participants can follow the work being done with the questions.

(For example: Discussing the rules, 2 minutes; producing questions, 4-5 minutes; working with closed and open-ended questions, 5 minutes; prioritizing questions, 4 minutes; creating an action plan, 4 minutes, sharing the work, 5 minutes; reflection, 5 minutes.)

**Facilitator’s Instructions**

Please follow the steps below to integrate the Question Formulation Technique into your practice to build and strengthen partnerships with parents.

**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 educators 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.**

*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:* Do not explain the QFocus when introducing it.

*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:**
  + What information they would like to get?
  + How will they go about getting it?

**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?

**My List of Questions to Ask**

**Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

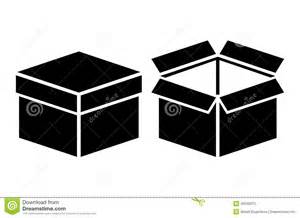
* Do not stop to try to answer or judge the questions
* Write each question exactly as it comes to mind
* Change any thoughts or statements into questions

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

**3. Find different types of questions:**

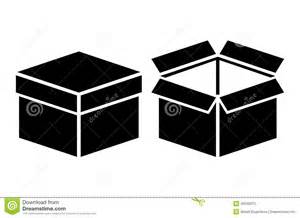
* *Closed-ended questions –* can be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.
* *Open-ended questions –* require an explanation.

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



Open to Closed

Closed to Open



**5. Reflection**

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