I. Addressing Barriers to Parent Involvement Resource

II. References
## Addressing Barriers to Parent Involvement

**Resource**  
*Back to Table of Contents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Example/Explanation</th>
<th>Ways to Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of outreach from the school</td>
<td>Research has found that some teachers are hesitant to reach out to parents of color and/or working class parents because of an assumption that they don’t have the time, energy, or interest to be involved. (Kim, 2009).</td>
<td>Learn parents’ communication preferences and the ways in which they would like to be informed of their children’s progress. Reach out in a variety of ways - phone calls, email, mailings, in-person meetings, or social media (Epstein, 1995; Kim, 2009).</td>
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<td>Unfriendliness or hostility from teachers and school staff</td>
<td>Some parents are put off by a businesslike approach from school staff and want teachers who will listen to them and make time to hear and understand their concerns. (Smrekar &amp; Cohen-Vogel, 2001).</td>
<td>Treat parents as co-educators who are experts on their children and have valuable input to share. Make time to hear and respond to their needs and concerns (Lasky, 2000).</td>
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<td>Lack of access to resources needed for certain forms of involvement</td>
<td>Examples might include transportation to attend parent-teacher conferences, internet access to check a child’s grades, or translation services for parents with limited English proficiency (Jefferson, 2015).</td>
<td>Provide translation services for parents who do not speak English. Provide accommodations for parents with limited access to technology (Jefferson, 2015).</td>
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<td>Limited opportunities to participate</td>
<td>Schools sometimes claim to prioritize family involvement but never ask parents for input, respond to their feedback, or involve them in decision-making. (Wolff, 2002).</td>
<td>Inform parents about ways to be involved, but also ask how they want to be involved. Ask for and act upon parent feedback on your school and classroom (Wolff, 2002).</td>
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<td>Deficit-based conceptions of parents</td>
<td>Teachers and schools operate with unspoken norms for what they believe to be appropriate forms of parental involvement. When a parent’s behaviors fall outside of these norms, teachers may assume that he or she is disinterested in the child’s education or unable to support it. (Smrekar &amp; Cohen-Vogel, 2001).</td>
<td>Understand that parents may have different norms and beliefs about involvement than you. They also may be engaged in their children’s education in ways you do not recognize (Smrekar &amp; Cohen-Vogel, 2001).</td>
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<td>Belief that a “good” parent is a compliant parent</td>
<td>When parents express disagreement with a teacher or question the policies or practices of a school, they may find themselves ignored, marginalized, or treated as a problem by the staff. (Jefferson, 2015; Lasky, 2000).</td>
<td>Suspend judgment and seek to understand the parent’s perspective. Ask yourself how you would feel if you were in his or her position. Acknowledge and validate the parent’s feelings.</td>
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1. In this study, the teachers’ hesitance was couched in a fear of bothering or burdening parents who were already overwhelmed by other responsibilities. Researchers found, however, that this fear was based on assumptions and many of the parents were willing and able to get involved.

2. These norms tend to be based on those held by (and for) middle-class, European-American, two-parent families (Kim, 2009; Lasky, 2000).

3. Furthermore, understand that parents may understandably have strong feelings or emotions about issues concerning their children (Conderman et al., 2010).
References


