

5. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Sameena Eidoo: Building a strong relationship requires families and schools to actively communicate with one another. Schools vary in how they develop a relationship with their students' families and how they welcome the families. Some parents may be unsure as to how they can create and develop a relationship with their child's teacher and need guidance as to how they should communicate and what the school's expectations are for parent involvement. The connection between a child's home life and school life is important and in order to sustain a connection between both spheres. Both schools and families need to work towards making a concerted effort that builds a relationship.

Arabic Speaking Parent: Much of the relationship between the parent and the teacher happens through the child. The child talks to the teacher and then comes to talk to you. This makes communication far more complicated than if you were physically there.

Caribbean Community Parent: Sometimes the child probably do something at school, like the principal or teacher tried to discipline the child. Some parents, the child will come home and give their version of the story, the parent will just take whatever the child says, they go to the school and get upset with either the principal or the teacher, that's not good. You have to go sit the principal, your child and listen because once the child is in front of the principal or the teacher I don't think the child will be that brave to be lying, and if it's your child you know the child is going to lie.

Somali Speaking Parent: When we first came to Canada, we stayed home not realizing the importance of developing a relationship with the teacher. Our relationship with the teacher here is different than the one in Somalia because we can't get from the teachers here what we used to get from the ones in Somalia.

Sameena Eidoo: Before any meaningful or productive relationship is formed, contact must be made. Overwhelmingly this responsibility to establish contact is perceived to be that of the school or teachers.

Educator: If I have a good student, my son is a good student, I don't know the way to the school and parents talk about this proudly, "I didn't know where my son's school were, he was a good student." It was only school role to communicate, start to initiate communicate with parents, and it's all this, you know, bad news when a school, teacher call. It always bad news, it's about discipline, about bad marks etc.

Sameena Eidoo: Is this in Russia?

Educator: Yeah, this is the stigma they came with, and this is how important to explain that even if your student get marks like 90 or something, it's better for his success if you will keep very, you know, very close relationship with school, if you will go to any meetings or parent-teacher interview, etc.

Caribbean Community Parent: First, I think they should have, like, probably getting to know parent, just have meeting, or a little maybe fundraising event or some social. Getting to know probably newcomer or some welcoming newcomers and getting to know parent and probably they'll have a better relationship in the future to come.

Caribbean Community Parent: But first of all, they have to just accept you for who you are, that's where they have to start and then build from there.

Sameena Eido: The school environment is of incredible importance to the development of the parent-school relationship. An environment where parents are invited and encouraged to visit and be an active participant in the education of their children is essential.

Somali Speaking Parent: In Somalia I did not have any problems. I have graduated from university and people I used to live with in Somalia reached success that way. When I came here I was still expecting to become successful because I went to school and gained an education. But the immigration has impacted my children because we don't have enough income I will move to a low income neighbourhood that negatively impacts my kids education, success and knowledge. I realized that I am always in a struggle, you have to fight for your rights and the system struggle for your survival, advocate for your children. Because if you do not advocate for your children, involve yourself with the school, learn the rules and regulations the problems will impact your children. In this country you have to advocate more for your children in order for them to succeed.