



PARENTS AND TEACHERS AS COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

15 Questions to Help Teachers Help Parents Meet Their Child's Needs



As special educators, we know that children and youth with special needs learn by doing. In order to support families in completing extension activities at home with their child who may have a significant disability, it is important for us to listen to families and find out more about the challenges they face. *This document is **not** designed to contribute to IEP development or implementation.* These 15 questions are designed to help you, as a special educator, learn more about the challenges families face at home when they attempt to meet their child with a significant disability's needs. Once you know the answers to these questions, you can help families develop strategies and techniques to address challenges while building new skills at home. You can use the BUILDING LEARNING INTO NATURAL HOME ROUTINES AND ACTIVITIES PLAN to assist you in this task. In ongoing conversations with families, make sure to address the following topics: **general well-being of the student and family (food, physical and emotional health), updates on information from the school district, intended outcomes of any virtual learning or collaborative session(s), barriers to virtual learning or collaborative session(s).** Finally, let your knowledge of the family guide your conversation. If you know the family will be offended by some of the questions, leave them out. You can also rearrange the order of the questions if you feel it will help you with the conversation with the family

Sample Script

As your child's special educator, I would like to get to know you and the challenges you face supporting your child at home. In order to do this well, I would like to gather more information about you and your child at home. If any of these questions are surprising or uncomfortable for you and you don't want to answer them, please just tell me to skip that question.

5 Organizational Questions

1. What is the best way for me to communicate with you? Do you prefer email, phone calls, video conference, mail from the post office, or some other way of communicating regularly?
2. I would like to meet with you weekly. What is the best day and time for us to meet?
3. Who is in your home? Who else do you think will be engaged in supporting your child's learning?
4. What other issues are you facing right now that will impact your ability to support your child's learning?
5. Do you have other family members who need your time or support (age, illness, disability, etc.)?



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10 Questions to Help Me Understand You and Your Child at Home

1. Please describe a typical day at home with your child?
2. Please describe any changes you would like to make in your daily routine?
3. Please describe any challenges you face in implementing your daily routine? What are some parts of the routine that are going really well?
4. Please describe the activities you do with your child where you feel especially successful?
5. Please describe the activities you do with your child where you are especially challenged or struggling?
6. What activities would you like to teach your child that you believe will improve your life at home?
7. Please describe how you would go about teaching your child a new skill or routine?
8. Please describe your long term goals for your child?
9. What do you think is most important for me to know about you as it relates to helping you meet your child's learning needs at home?
10. Is there anything else you would like me to know about you and your child at home?

Sample Closing Script

Thank you for your time today, I appreciate you sharing your thoughts about your day with your child at home. We will stay in touch on a regular basis and I am here to support you. (Ensure that the parent has your contact information and set some parameters regarding availability, including office hours.)