

Champions Together



My Child at Home

Parent Mentor Training



My Child at School

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Part 1: Role of the Parent Mentor

Introduction

A child receiving special education services has many needs. The parent of a child receiving special education services also has many needs. These parents may be overwhelmed by the additional responsibility of raising a child with a disability. They may be confused by the numerous rules and regulations that must be followed in order to provide for their child's education. They may be frustrated, fearful and in need of guidance and support.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that schools and parents work together to plan and make decisions for the education of a child who needs special education. There is an emphasis on parent participation and documentation of coordination with parents. A strong relationship between the school and family is an integral component in this process and results in the best possible outcome for the children.

The complexities of raising a child with special education needs magnifies, multiplies and intensifies the need for coordinated services. School districts are looking for ways to encourage better working relationships and help reduce or avoid potential confrontational interactions down the road.

A Parent Mentor for parents of children in special education is one way to increase the comfort level of parents and establish positive, productive relationships between parents and schools.

Responsibilities

The Parent Mentor serves as a bridge between school services and parents. The responsibilities of the Parent Mentor are determined by each individual school district. A school district may choose a different title, such as Parent Facilitator, Family Liaison, or Parent Resource Coordinator.

Some functions of the Parent Mentor may include:

- ✧ Serving as the school district's point of contact for parents of children with disabilities
- ✧ Serving as a liaison between the school district and the parents
- ✧ Meeting with parents who are new to the special education system
- ✧ Explaining district policies and procedures
- ✧ Facilitating parent training groups
- ✧ Providing support and assistance to families
- ✧ Monitoring or assisting students and their parents as the students make transitions between schools
- ✧ Providing information that explains linkage to community based services
- ✧ Assisting families with access to wraparound services
- ✧ Providing follow-up on school-parent agreements (including student IEP issues)
- ✧ Providing information and support to parents when their children are ready to make the transition to adult services
- ✧ Performing other responsibilities deemed appropriate by the school district

Personal Qualifications

The individual chosen as the Parent Mentor will need many skills and possess many different characteristics. Some of these will include:

- × Preferably, being the parent or relative of a child with a disability
- × Strength in communication skills, both verbal and written
- × Having good listening skills
- × Mediation skills
- × Experience with team building
- × Sensitivity to diversity
- × Ability to develop a supportive relationship with the school district and special education system
- × The ability to work with both parents and education professionals
- × Strong organizational skills
- × Public speaking and/or training ability

Point Of Entry

Children enter the special education system at various points in their educational journey. Depending on the age of the child at the point of entry, parents will be concerned about the many different needs of their child. As their children transition into a special education system, parents have varied knowledge regarding the types and levels of service that are available to them.

A school district may choose to have the Parent Mentor give presentations to groups of parents with children currently receiving early intervention services. This would provide an opportunity to introduce a link to the parents before they enter the special education system.

Early Intervention (0-3)

Parents whose children have participated in an early intervention program may be accustomed to the highest level of service, with their choice of private providers. Children in early intervention are entitled to all services deemed appropriate by the early intervention team. In special education, the child is only entitled to services that support the child's ability to benefit from education. Parents accustomed to developing (and receiving) a wish list of services in early intervention programs may find their children are eligible for fewer services as they enter early childhood programs. These parents may be facing the challenge of coping with disappointment and discontent. The Parent Mentor can provide information about the differences between early intervention and early childhood program service delivery and entitlements under IDEA.

Early Childhood (3-5)

Parents of children who are first entering the realm of special education during these years have children with a recent diagnosis or who have failed screenings. These parents may be more emotional, as they are first confronting the idea of the presence of a disability. They have not had as much opportunity to reach the stage of acceptance. The Parent Mentor can provide support to these parents as they work toward reaching acceptance of the initial diagnosis.

Older Children

If a child enters special education from general education, the parents may have already formed a negative perception of special education. The Parent Mentor can provide information about the special education program and focus on the benefits for the child, as opposed to the negatives. These parents may be interested in having a picture of what their child's day will be like. They may be more concerned about the physical space in the classroom and the location of the classroom. They will need reassurance about the social and academic impact on their child. They will want to know which mainstream classes their child will continue to be in, such as gym, art, music, lunch and recess. They will want to know what opportunities their child will have to spend time with friends and to participate in extracurricular activities. The Parent Mentor can dispel inaccurate perceptions.

Establishing A Positive Relationship

Establishing a positive relationship between the school district and the parent of a child receiving special education services is an important aspect of the Parent Mentor's job. It makes all the difference in the working relationship for the rest of the child's educational career.

Following initial identification of a child in need of an eligibility review, the Parent Mentor should contact and visit with the parents. It would be most beneficial to the parents if the visit could occur prior to the formal meeting. This initial visit would be modeled on the "Welcome Wagon" concept. In addition to providing the family with a name and a face to contact at the school, the Parent Mentor could bring:

- × Promotional literature about the school district's special education program (fact sheet, press release, newsletters)
- × A list of important school phone numbers (superintendent, special education director, principal, school secretary)
- × Promotional items from the school district (magnets, key chains, calendars)
- × Information on parent groups or organizations specific to the child's disability

The Parent Mentor could also bring a school district's statement regarding the district's willingness to work with the parents of children in special education.

Sample Statement:

School District 123 is dedicated to working closely with the parents of all students who attend the district's schools. Educational team members are readily available to discuss issues and concerns related to meeting the needs of all children. Parents are viewed as integral members of the educational team.

The Parent Mentor should gather information that will help the parents feel they are understood by the school district and that their needs will be met.

Sample Questions for the Parent Mentor to Ask:

What do you hope your child will gain or learn from his/her education program?

What are your concerns regarding your child's program?

How do you envision your child spending his/her day?

What are your child's strengths? (In what does your child excel?)

What are you most proud of about your child?

What type of additional support will you need from the community?

The Parent Mentor should have a thorough understanding of the special education program, including district procedures and interpretations. This is essential in order for the Parent Mentor to answer questions from parents. The parents may want to know about the buildings or the teachers. The parents may feel more comfortable having these questions answered by a parent with experience than by other school district personnel. The Parent Mentor should work toward building confidence in appropriate school staff.

Although asking questions and providing information are the first steps in helping the parents feel understood, effective communication skills on the part of the Parent Mentor will enhance this process.

There are several communication techniques that should be in the Parent Mentor's repertoire of skills.

First Impressions – Be the first to say hello and extend your hand, maintain eye contact, smile immediately and often, address parents by name, dress professionally, remember your best manners, listen 80% talk 20%.

Reflective Listening – The listener repeats back to the speaker the listener's understanding of what the speaker has said. This is not a word for word repetition, but rather, a rewording that indicates understanding of the content.

Nonverbal Communication – Your body language can inadvertently give the impression that you are not listening. This happens when the listener looks away or looks down, does not lean forward, makes impatient gestures such as finger tapping, frowns or glances at the clock or a watch.

Open-Ended Questions – Encourage parents to share more of their thoughts and feelings by asking open-ended questions. These often start with “how” or “why,” instead of “did you” or “do you want to.”

Communication Styles – Be aware that individuals have varying communication styles. There are many books and websites that provide additional information on this topic.

Additional information on communication can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.hodu.com/>

A mine of practical information and insights on communication skills and human relationships

<http://www.coopcomm.org/index.htm>

The Cooperative Communication Skills Internet Resource Center

Special Education Processes

The Parent Mentor needs to be familiar with the various processes and jargon used by the special education system. The ISBE Parents' Guide: The Educational Rights Of Students With Disabilities has a wealth of information and should be required reading for the Parent Mentor. The director of special education should meet with the Parent Mentor on a regular basis to clarify procedures and interpretations of the law.

A minimum level of competence would include familiarity with: Individualized Education Program (IEP), Eligibility Review (ER), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Extended School Year (ESY), familiarity with various disabilities and professionals who work with these children, and anything unique to the district.

The Parent Mentor should have a thorough understanding of the IEP process and the general practices of the school district. The Parent Mentor needs to understand what happens at the IEP conference well enough to describe it to other parents. This would include the length of the conference, who attends, what occurs, where it is held and any other information a parent may need. The parents should know the IEP team will discuss their child's current level of performance, areas in which their child is behind and how the school will meet those needs.

The IEP team is responsible for focusing on both the strengths and the needs of the child. Sometimes parents don't hear the information about their child's strengths, because they are so overwhelmed by negative information about their child. Many parents find it difficult to listen to people talking about what their child "can't do." The Parent Mentor can help prepare parents.

The Parent Mentor needs to understand the various activities that can take place at an IEP conference well enough to explain them to parents. Sometimes (usually every three years) an IEP conference will include an eligibility review. This meeting will have more people, reports on evaluations and will determine a child's continued eligibility for services.

When interacting with parents of children ages 14 and older, the Parent Mentor will need to be aware of the school district's requirement to develop transition goals, and ability to provide transition assistance. Some districts have a transition coordinator or facilitator, vocational instructor, special evaluations or other programs unique to the district.

District Procedure

The Parent Mentor should be informed regarding district procedures and receive clarification from district special education administrators as needed. These areas commonly include:

- × Grades
- × Evaluations
- × Records
- × Diplomas
- × Transfer Requests
- × Extra-curricular Access
- × Fees
- × Enrollment
- × Registration
- × Discipline
- × Statewide Testing

Training

The procedures for training are at the discretion of the individual school district. The director of special education should provide information about facility usage policies and administrative contacts. Training should integrate district resources and personnel as appropriate, to build the team concept and enhance the transfer of service.

Feedback

Following contact with parents, the Parent Mentor should have an opportunity to share information gathered in the field. Ongoing communication is essential and there are several options for providing feedback to the school district from the Parent Mentor. The director of special education or an individual supervising the Parent Mentor should set up a schedule of opportunities for feedback. This could occur via face-to-face meetings or written reports. The Parent Mentor should share information on trends, concerns, unresolved conflicts and both positive and troubling information. The director of special education could share information on positive case resolution and methods for resolving issues.

The school district will consider this information to improve services to children and parents, strengthen relationships with families and the community and create overlapping spheres of influence to help children in special education attain their highest level of potential.

Parent Education

The Parent Mentor can help parents acquire a better understanding of their child, their child's disability, available services, and the special education system by offering workshops, courses, and small-group meetings. ADI provides curriculum and masters of the *Champions Together* material for two small-group courses. The courses are *My Child at Home* and *My Child at School*. In each course, a small group of parents (not more than 10 per group) meets once a week for three weeks in 90-minute sessions. The next section in this Handbook is a guide for the Parent Mentor to implement the parent courses.

Part 2: Parent Mentor as Group Leader

The Parent Mentor serves as the group leader for a *Champions Together* course.

The Parent Mentor will:

- Review this Handbook and course materials.
- Copy materials and manuals for each parent who participates in the course.
- Prepare a schedule for a course Round (see Master Form in Part 3).
- Prepare a Contact List (see Master Form in Part 3) of parents to be contacted for participation in the course.
- Recruit parents to participate in the course.
- Lead the three sessions of the course.
- Lead the graduation ceremony at the end of the third session.
- Evaluate the program (see Master Form in Part 4) based on course evaluations submitted by participants.

Please see a more detailed list of tasks for the Parent Mentor in the checklist section of this *Handbook*.

Materials

Masters of all necessary materials are included on the *Champions Together* CD. The Parent Mentor is responsible for photocopying and assembling the materials.

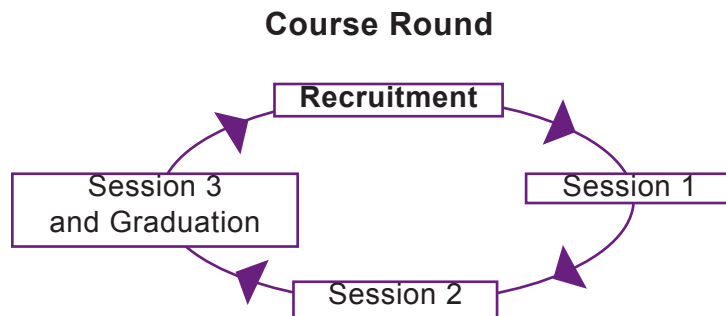
Materials Needed for the Course Sessions (for each group of 10)

These materials should be packed in a Session Kit (plastic container or box) for each group.

- 10 postcards
- 10 postcard stamps
- 3 sign-in forms
- 33 name tags
- 10 of each of the three session manuals
- 11 certificates
- 12 pencils
- 1 pen

A Round of a *Champions Together* Course

A round of a *Champions Together* course for parents begins with recruitment of participants and ends with a graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the third session of the course.



Let's review a few important terms.

Term	Meaning
<i>Course</i>	<i>Champions Together</i> offers two courses for parents: Your Child at Home and Your Child at School.
<i>Round</i>	Each time a course is offered, it is called a round. A round begins with recruitment and ends with a graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the third session.
<i>Session</i>	Parents meet for three weekly sessions in each course. Each session lasts about 90 minutes.
<i>Group</i>	Parents meet as a group of up to 10 parents. A round may include one or more groups.
<i>Group Leader</i>	The Parent Mentor serves as group leader for the parent courses.

Let's look at an example of how a *Champions Together* course is scheduled:

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A COURSE ROUND (EXAMPLE)

	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thr.	Fri.	Sat.
Week 1							
Week 2			Session 1				
Week 3			Session 2				
Week 4			Session 3 and Graduation				

NOTE: Recruiting participants is an ongoing process. Teachers should be informed about the courses so they can talk with parents about them. The Parent Mentor will talk with parents about the courses. The recruitment period specified here is the time when parents are contacted to make a final commitment to attending the course. The Parent Mentor may keep a Contact List of potential participants to confirm at this time.

Check List for Parent Mentor

Please check the box when the task has been completed.

Getting Started

- 1. Review materials
- 2. Prepare list of parents to contact for participation in course
- 3. Reserve rooms for three parent sessions

Recruiting Participants

- 1. Contact parents to recruit
- 2. Send postcard to parents
- 3. Call to welcome and remind parents

Preparation for Sessions

- 1. Review manual for the session
- 2. Arrange for baby-sitting
- 3. Arrange for refreshments
- 4. Arrive 30 minutes before session begins
- 5. Arrange room and furniture for circle of 11 people (10 parents plus Parent Mentor)
- 6. Give baby-sitting materials to baby sitter
- 7. Set out parent materials

Session 1 of a Parent Course

- 1. Check that materials are ready and doors are open
- 2. Greet parents at reception table
- 3. Ask parents to write names on name tags and sign in form
- 4. Direct children to baby sitters
- 5. Lead the parent group

After Session 1

- 1. Restore room to original condition
- 2. See that the materials are safely stored
- 3. Take sign-in form home to make calls
- 4. Send postcard to parents
- 5. Call to encourage and remind parents

Session 2 of Parent Course

- 1. Greet parents
- 2. Ask parents to write names on name tags and sign in form
- 3. Lead the parent group

After Session 2

- 1. Restore room to original condition
- 2. See that the materials are safely stored
- 3. Take sign-in form home to make calls
- 4. Call to encourage and remind parents

- 5. Prepare parent certificates for graduation
- 6. Sign certificates for parents that have attended both sessions

Session 3

- 1. Greet parents
- 2. Ask parents to write names on name tags and sign in form
- 3. Lead the parent group
- 4. Administer course evaluation form
- 5. Arrange furniture for graduation ceremony
- 6. Lead the graduation ceremony
- 7. Keep copy of sign-in form and copy of the graduation list for permanent file
- 8. Plan next round and Parent Reunion
- 9. Collect and store left over material. Materials should not be distributed to parents who do not participate in the parent sessions. Also, materials should not be used to increase the size of a group beyond 10 members.
- 10. Evaluate program

Organizational Details

Now that we better understand the *Champions Together* courses, let's look at a few organizational matters.

Recruiting Participants

Parents are personally invited to participate in a *Champions Together* course. This recruitment is the job of the Parent Mentor. The Parent Mentor calls parents from the Contact List prepared with the assistance of the special education director, teachers, or other staff.

Copies

Photocopies of course manuals and materials such as postcards, sign-in forms, contact lists, parent interest flyers, and certificates are made for each participant prior to each session. Masters are included in this Handbook and/or on the *Champions Together* CD.

Refreshments

Refreshments such as coffee, cold drinks, and cookies should be ready before parents arrive at each session.

Suggestions:

- ✧ Ask the school (or the sponsoring organization) to provide refreshments for the first session.
- ✧ After the first session, encourage participants to bring refreshments. This helps form a bond of contribution among the group.
- ✧ Refreshments for graduation should be special. Share graduation planning with the parent participants. Some schools bring a special cake for graduation.

Babysitting

Make attendance easy for parents with young children by providing babysitting. Gather crayons, coloring books, and paper for the children. These materials will help entertain children for a few minutes, but will not keep them occupied for the entire session.

Suggestions:

- ✧ Encourage parents only to bring preschoolers or young children.

- × Have the children in a room separate from their parents.
- × Ask responsible older students to help with babysitting.
- × Ask grandparents or other senior citizens to serve as baby sitters.
- × Ask parents who have completed the course previously to serve as baby sitters.
- × Consider showing children's movies on videotape for entertainment.
- × Provide healthful snacks for the children.

Graduation

A graduation ceremony is held at the conclusion of session 3. A parent receives a certificate at the graduation ceremony if that parent has attended all three sessions of the course.

The parent certificates are found in the back of this guide. After session 2 and prior to session 3, the certificates must be:

- × signed by the principal, director, or other administrator if appropriate,
- × signed by the Parent Mentor,
- × lettered with the parent's name, school's (or district's) name, and date.

Use the sign-in forms from sessions 1 and 2 to make a list of parents who have attended both sessions. A master form of the graduation list is included in this handbook. The certificates are prepared from this list.

Suggestions:

- × Copy certificates on a heavy paper stock, possibly light-colored paper.
- × Arrange for children of graduating parents to attend the ceremony. Do not bring the children to the third session, but arrange for them to arrive at the end of the third session so that they can attend graduation.

- ※ Arrange for media coverage of the graduation if you think that is appropriate.
- ※ Bring a camera to take pictures for a scrapbook or special display.
- ※ Prepare or purchase a special graduation cake to serve after the ceremony.

Reunions

Parents enjoy their sessions and the support they get from each other. They want to reunite occasionally to discuss their progress. Suggestions for a reunion are found in this handbook.

Conducting a Parent Session

Understanding Parent Group Techniques

Champions Together uses two techniques that are very effective and are used by many training programs. The techniques are: (1) reading a script, and (2) group applause. Parent Mentors are sometimes uncertain about these techniques, but they soon discover that the techniques are important to the group process. By reading the script, the Parent Mentor insures that all of the information is presented to all of the group members in proper sequence. Reading the script makes the job easier for the group leader and enables all parents, even those who may not read well themselves, to receive the information. Group applause adds to the positive atmosphere of the sessions.

Communication Skills

The following communication skills will help you conduct a successful parent group.

- ※ ***Be sensitive to your group members' initial feelings.***

You may have felt a bit nervous when you agreed to become a Parent Mentor. You wondered what a *Champions Together* course was all about. You had many questions and some apprehensions. The parents in your group will arrive with the same nervousness. Ease the parents' nervousness by being warm, supportive, and above all, genuine.

- ※ ***Set a tone of confidence in the parent course.***

Parents will look to you for reassurance that the *Champions Together* experience is worthwhile. Show your confidence in the program. Treat it seriously and your group members will do the same. You will have a powerful and positive impact on your group members and their families. Through your efforts, many children will benefit.

- ※ ***Remember that adult learners are fragile.***

Adult learners require special handling. Many of them have not been in a "school" setting for a while. Treat them with the respect they deserve. Be careful not to "talk down" to them. Encourage them and show your interest in them.

※ ***Encourage everyone to participate.***

Draw reluctant parents into the discussion. Thank participants for their comments. Nod, smile, say, "Interesting point." Group leaders should always begin the exercises listed. **Don't** ask for volunteers. Ask parents to contribute in turn so that everyone participates.

※ ***Use a strong voice when reading.***

Remember that the parent manuals provide your script. Just read. And read with a strong voice. Because you are often looking down at your manual when you read, you will need to increase volume so that everyone is able to hear you.

※ ***Pause and look.***

Good eye contact helps people feel comfortable in a new setting. Take an occasional pause from reading to look at the participants. Then return to the reading. A short pause also helps emphasize a point; it allows the thought to sink in. Don't be afraid of brief silence.

※ ***Keep the group on track.***

Don't let conversations stray into complaints or topics unrelated to the course. If a parent begins complaining about a teacher, for example, suggest that the parent talk with the teacher. Then move ahead with the session. If a parent is talking too much or is way off the subject, remind the group that material remains to be covered. Then move ahead with the session.

※ ***Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."***

You are a group leader. You are not expected to be an expert child psychologist or educator. If a parent asks a question you can't answer, just say you don't know. Ask the group for suggestions.

※ ***Don't ask participants to read.***

It is the group leader's job to read the scripted material in each session. Don't embarrass participants by asking them to read.

Keys to a Successful Course

The following keys to a successful *Champions Together* course will help you provide the high-quality experience that families deserve.

Use this Handbook!

- ✓ Use the checklists; take advantage of the experience of others who have conducted courses.

Keep spirits high!

- ✓ Focus positive energy on the parents who participate.
- ✓ Don't be discouraged by those who choose not to participate.
- ✓ Take charge and make the program work for your organization.

Look ahead!

- ✓ Don't let the past hold you back.
- ✓ Never say, "We tried something like this once, and it didn't work."
- ✓ A *Champions Together* course works for any organization that is willing to make it work.

Remember that parents really care!

- ✓ All parents want their children to do well.
- ✓ *Champions Together* courses help parents help their children succeed.

Use time constructively!

- ✓ Stay on track with the program.
- ✓ Stick to the curriculum.
- ✓ Keep discussions focused.
- ✓ If parents have concerns about teachers, staff, or problems unrelated to the course, kindly suggest that such matters be taken to the appropriate person.

Make parents feel welcome!

- ✓ Watch for parents as they arrive for their sessions.
- ✓ Greet parents warmly.
- ✓ Set an example of hospitality.

Start sessions on time!

- ✓ Take the initiative to get the session started! Gather the parents.

Be prepared!

- ✓ Have all the materials and supplies ready to go. Organization counts. Be ready before the parents arrive.

Apply the personal touch

- ✓ Everyone enjoys a personal invitation to a special event. That is why parents are recruited by personal invitation.
- ✓ Parents will want to come back if they are made to feel they are an important part of the group. Get to know them.

Recruiting Participants

Contact List

The Contact List includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents you will contact to recruit for the course.

Telephone script for recruitment calls

On the next page is a sample telephone script to use as a model when making calls.

Practice Telephone Script

Parent Mentor: Hello, Mrs. Smith, my name is Mrs. Hanson. I'm calling to invite you to a parent education course sponsored by [NAME OF SCHOOL].

Parent: Could you tell me more about the course?

Parent Mentor: The course is called *YOUR CHILD AT HOME* or *YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL*. It is for parents of children receiving special education services.

Parents meet once a week for three weeks in the course. We have scheduled the first three Tuesday nights in November at 7:00 p.m. The sessions last about an hour and a half each.

Parent: It sounds great; I'll attend.

Parent Mentor: Wonderful! It would be nice if your husband would also attend the sessions. Do you think he'll be able to make it?

Parent: Yes, we will both be attending.

Parent Mentor: Great, I will reserve two slots for you. Babysitting will be provided for preschool children. Do you have small children who will be coming to the sessions?

Parent: Yes, we have a three-year-old, and she will join us.

Parent Mentor: We will reserve materials for you and your husband at the session. Since the session size is limited, will you call me if you can't make it?

My number is: _____ .

Parent: Yes, of course.

Parent Mentor: Let me confirm your address so we can send you a postcard.

Parent: We live at 123 Central Avenue, in Oak Grove, 60378.

Parent Mentor: Thanks! I look forward to seeing you at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1. We will meet in the library at the school.

Parent: Thanks for calling. Good-bye.

Parent Mentor: Good-bye.

Outline for Calling

The following outline will help us when we make our recruitment calls. Let's read through the outline now and fill in needed information.

WHAT?

- × Parent education program for parents of children receiving special education services

- × Name of course: YOUR CHILD AT HOME or YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

WHERE?

- × School or sponsoring organization:

- × Location of session:

WHEN?

- × Time: _____

- × Day of Week: _____

- × Dates: _____ , _____ ,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- × Taught in small groups

- × Babysitting available for preschool children

IMPORTANT POINT

- × Will spouse attend?

PARENT'S RESPONSE

- × Yes, will attend

- Confirm address

- ※ Call if you can't make it.
- ※ Interested in future course. Can't attend this time; call me for next round
- ※ No. Not interested

CLOSING

- ※ Thanks and good-bye

Tips for completing the Contact List

- ※ If the parent does not wish to attend, thank the parent for listening and say good-bye. Check "No" on Contact List.
- ※ If the parent seems interested but has a schedule conflict, ask if the parent would like to participate in a later round of the course. If yes, check "Interested in Future Course" on the Contact List. These parents can be contacted for the next round of the course.
- ※ If the parent plans to attend, check "Yes" on the Contact List. (If both parents are attending, check "Yes" by "Spouse Will Attend.")

Completing Welcome Postcards

To welcome the parents who have agreed to attend, and to remind them of times and dates, send a welcome postcard to each parent.

- ✓ Postcards remind the parents of the date and location of the session.
- ✓ Postcards make the parents feel welcome.

Send welcome postcards to the parents no later than three mailing days prior to session 1. Be sure to address one side of the card, and write the first name of the parent on the other side of the card. Sign your name at the end of the card.

Welcome Postcard

Dear _____ ,

We are very excited to be hosting the _____ course for parents. We
[Name of Course]

think it's great that you have chosen to participate in the program, and we look forward to meeting with you for the three sessions.

Time: _____ Day of week: _____

Dates of 3 sessions _____ , _____ , _____

Location: _____

Room: _____

See you then!

[Parent Mentor's Signature]

Telephone calls to participants before first session

Within the two-day period before the first session, call each parent you have recruited. Offer a personal welcome and confirm the time and date. If the parent has decided not to attend, recruit another parent to take his or her place.

These calls are a crucial part of recruitment! Keep trying until you reach the parent.

Reunions

The reunion was added to the *Champions Together* parent program at the request of participating parents. Parents typically enjoy their sessions and the support they get from other parents. They want to reunite occasionally to discuss their progress.

The reunion is attended by all parents who have completed a *Champions Together* parent course. This includes parents from all previous rounds.

To plan an reunion, follow the steps below:

Step 1: Schedule the Reunion

About a month after the completion of a round is a good time for a reunion, but each organization must plan the reunion based on its schedule and the schedule of subsequent rounds of the course.

If you know the date of the reunion before session three of the course, you can announce the time and date during graduation.

Step 2: Reserve Room and Arrange for Refreshments and Babysitting

Prior to the session, the Parent Mentor reserves the room, arranges for refreshments and organizes babysitting.

Step 3: Notify All Champions Together Parent Education Course Graduates of the Reunion

At least one week before the reunion, send postcards to all *Champions Together* graduates. Use the file copies of the graduation lists from previous rounds to obtain names and addresses of graduates. See suggested postcard below:

Dear _____ ,

You are cordially invited to a reunion of parents who have graduated from *Champions Together* courses offered by our school. The reunion will be held from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16. The reunion will be held in the school library. We hope to see you there. Best Wishes.

Step 4: Follow the Reunion Agenda

The Parent Mentor conducts the reunion by following the Reunion agenda. (See agenda below.)

Reunion Agenda

- **Greeting by Parent Mentor**

Thank the participants for coming.

- **Purpose of session**

We have decided to meet again to discuss progress with our children since we completed the parent course.

- **Review of the Activities for the Week from the course manuals.**

- **Group discussion**

- With which activities has your family had the greatest success? Tell about it.

- With which activities has your family had the greatest difficulty? Who can offer suggestions?

- Would parents like to meet again? Another reunion? When?

Part 3: Forms

Schedule for a Course Round

RECRUITMENT PERIOD

Starting Date	Ending Date

PARENT SESSIONS

90 minutes each.

(But reserve room for 30 minutes in advance of starting time to allow for set-up.)

Same day and time each week.

	Location	Date	Day of Week	Begin Time	End Time
Session 1					
Session 2					
Session 3					

Contact List

Child's last name: _____ Child's first name: _____

Parent's last name: _____ Parent's first name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Home telephone: (____) _____ School: _____

Will attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

Will spouse attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

If yes, spouse's name: _____

Person making call: _____

Child's last name: _____ Child's first name: _____

Parent's last name: _____ Parent's first name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Home telephone: (____) _____ School: _____

Will attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

Will spouse attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

If yes, spouse's name: _____

Person making call: _____

Child's last name: _____ Child's first name: _____

Parent's last name: _____ Parent's first name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Home telephone: (____) _____ School: _____

Will attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

Will spouse attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

If yes, spouse's name: _____

Person making call: _____

Child's last name: _____ Child's first name: _____

Parent's last name: _____ Parent's first name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Home telephone: (____) _____ School: _____

Will attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

Will spouse attend? (circle) YES NO INTERESTED IN FUTURE COURSE

If yes, spouse's name: _____

Person making call: _____

Graduation List

Location: _____ Date of Graduation: _____

Course (check one): Your Child at Home Your Child at School

Parent's Last Name	Parent's First Name	Address	City/State/Zip
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Champions Together Sign-In Form

School, District, or Sponsoring Organization: _____

Directions: Please complete sign-in form at each session. Use a pen and print neatly. Thank you.

Session (circle): 1 2 3 Date: _____ Location: _____

Course (circle): Your Child at Home Your Child at School

Group Leader

Name	Address	City	Zip	Telephone
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____

Group Members

Name	Address	City	Zip	Telephone
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____
_____	_____	_____	_____	(____) _____

Sample Text for Postcards

Welcome Postcard

Dear _____ ,

We are very excited to be hosting the _____ course for parents. We think it's great that you have chosen to participate in the program, and we look forward to meeting with you for the three sessions.

Time: _____ Day of week: _____

Dates of 3 sessions: _____ , _____ , _____

Location: _____

Room: _____

See you then!

[Parent Mentor's Signature]

After-Session-1 Postcard

Dear _____ ,

It was a pleasure to share the first session of our parent course with you. Good luck with your Activities for the Week. We are eager to meet with you again for the two remaining sessions.

Time: _____ Day of week: _____

Dates of sessions: _____ , _____ , _____

Location: _____

Room: _____

See you then!

[Parent Mentor's Signature]

Your Child at Home

This is to certify that

_____ has successfully completed the Your Child at Home course for parents.

at

on the _____ day of _____,

Your Child at School

This is to certify that

_____ has successfully completed the Your Child at School course for parents.

at

_____ on the _____ day of _____, _____

Part 4: Course and Program Evaluation

Champions Together Course Evaluation

Today's Date: _____

What school or organization is hosting this parent course? _____

Which course did you complete?

Your Child at Home

Your Child at School

Which sessions did you attend?

Session 1

Session 2

Session 3

This course was:

Very helpful to my family

Helpful to my family

Not very helpful to my family

Not at all helpful to my family

The organization of this course was:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

The materials used in this course were:

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

What did you like best about this course? _____

What part of the course has been the greatest benefit to your family? _____

What did you like least about this course? _____

A suggestion to improve this course is: _____

Other comments: _____

Champions Together Course for Parents Parent Mentor’s Evaluation of Program

This evaluation has three sections. “Procedures” helps you assess strengths and weaknesses in the way your *Champions Together* program was conducted so that you can make improvements. “Results” helps you judge the effectiveness of the program. “Next Steps” helps you make decisions about the future of the program.

Procedures

(Please Circle)

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | 1. Coffee, beverages, and snacks were provided for parents attending sessions. |
| Yes | No | 2. The room accommodations were comfortable, pleasant, and free from distraction. |
| Yes | No | 3. The Parent Mentor directed the recruitment efforts. |
| Yes | No | 4. The Parent Mentor attended the graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the course. |
| Yes | No | 5. The Parent Mentor called the parents on the Contact List to confirm their participation. |
| Yes | No | 6. The Parent Mentor was enthusiastic about the program. |
| Yes | No | 7. The Parent Mentor read well aloud to the group. |
| Yes | No | 8. The Parent Mentor called their group members before each session. |
| Yes | No | 9. The Parent Mentor sent postcards to group members before the first two sessions. |
| Yes | No | 10. Babysitting was provided at the sessions. |
| Yes | No | 11. The parents who attended all three sessions received certificates. |

Results

Based on the Course Evaluation Forms completed by parents at the end of the course:

- What percent of respondents chose "Excellent" or "Good" to the following areas?
Organization of Course _____ %
Materials _____ %
- What percent of respondents chose "Very helpful to my family" or "Helpful to my family?"
_____ %
- What did the parents like best about the course?

- What part of the course did parents think benefited their families the most?

- What did parents like least about the course?

- What suggestions did the parents offer?

Based on the Sign-In Forms you collected from parents during the course session:

- A. How many parents were you prepared to accommodate in this round? _____
- B. How many parents attended session #1? _____
- C. The number in "B" is what percent of "A"? _____ %
 - 80% or better – Bravo
 - 70% to 80% – Solid performance
 - 50% to 70% – Maybe your expectations were too high; or recruitment practices should be re-examined.
 - 0 to 50% – Needs an explanation. Probe deeper. Call parents who did not attend and find out why.
- D. How many parents attended session #3? _____
- E. The number in "D" above is what percent of "B"? _____ %
 - 80% or better – It doesn't get much better
 - 70% to 80% – Still pretty darned good
 - 50% to 70% – Better learn what happened. Maybe a conflict with another event; perhaps a wave of illness.
 - 0 to 50% – Needs an explanation. Probe deeper.

Next Steps

- Reviewing the summary above, what changes might be useful in the next round?
- Were you able to accommodate the number of parents who were interested in the course?
- Was the number of parent participants less than expected?
Should you change your recruitment practices?
- Were parents who completed the course satisfied with the experience?
 Yes No

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The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



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