

School start

Welcome Workshops Parents

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Target group: migrant parents who bring their children to school for the first time

Presentation: expert in intercultural communication, e.g. a highly educated migrant parent.

A. Introduction, welcome and explanation of the goals and aims of this workshops.

Goal: making clear that all this is about improving good intercultural dialog between school and parents, so the child's learning is supported.

B. You, you child, this group of parents and the teacher.

Goal: Getting to know each other.

1. What is your name, what does it mean and how important is it that it is pronounced well?

2. Who is who?

Parents are asked to bring a photo of their child.

Photo's are put on the table in the middle of the group.

Parents try to find out: which child belongs to which parent?

Then each parent introduces the child shortly to the group.

3. Smilies

Parents mark on a paper witch all kinds of smilies which ones represent characteristics of their child and tell each other and the teacher why.

Parents can react and give tips to each other.

4. Photo language

There are a lot of photographs of children in all kinds of situations in the middle on the table. Parents choose one photo and tell each other and the teacher why they like this photo, why it is appealing to them. Is it telling something about their own child? About the future? About expectations for this workshop?

5. Parents teach teachers

Parents tell and explain to each other about education in their home country. What do they think is different? What are they worried about? Parents and teachers can ask each other questions.

6. The important other

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Parents talk about:

- What are my qualities; where am I good at?
- Who taught this to me?
- Who was my most important educator and why?

They present their contribution on this by making a drawing or a symbol on a sheet and show it to each other.

7. Review

Workshop leader makes a recapitulation of the contribution and discussion and writes important issues on a flap-over.

C. Children are different; they are all unique.

Goal: See and accept that children develop in their own tempo and how you can support them as parent.

Parents have already been telling about their child. They have heard how different children can be. The teacher can show with a PowerPoint presentation of photo's made in classroom situation how children react differently on situations and tasks. This will be in fact a short 'lecture' about developmental psychology, wrapped in short stories about individual children.

Subjects: physical differences e.g. in length, motor skills/intellectual/social/emotional learning, fantasy, copying behaviour, obedience, leaders and followers, boys and girls etc.

Parents get an observation list and can mark behaviour of their child.

Then they learn what they can do to help and support their children in their development.

D. Parents are different

Goal: becoming aware of different reacting and coaching styles in raising children.

There are different types of parents: authoritarian, permissive, indifferent, leading, democratic. There is a picture of every type of parents with a short explanation. Then a story is told, e.g. the child has taken something away from a class roommate.

Parents choose: What is my reaction?

Has my reaction to do with my culture, the way I was brought up myself?

Summary: sometimes you have to be strict, sometimes you let things go. It depends on the situation and the child. Parents choose: In general my style of education is..... because.....

Using the six Thinking Hats of Edward deBono parents can learn multiperspective thinking; e.g. in answering the question: Is my style of education community-based? What are the positive aspects, what negative? etc.

To end this session in a creative way sketches can be played about educational situations. Parents act and show how they meet the problems presented.

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E . Expectations

Goal: Parents become aware of their hidden curriculum towards school and the teacher.

1. What does the teacher expect from my child?

Children come to school with different characteristics, personalities, temperament and stages of development. Some experts think you have to test a lot to see the progress the child is making. Others say; leave the child alone, let it get used to school in its own way and tempo. But still, what do you think the teacher should find handy for the child to be able to?

Parents make a list of things like:

- to be able to sit on a chair for 5 minutes
- to listen
- to go to the toilet by itself
- to wait for its turn

2. What do you expect of the teacher?

Parents talk to each other about how they want the teacher to deal with their child:

- I want the teacher to be nice to my child
- I want the teacher to see what my child is capable of
- I want the teacher to help my child when it is shy and insecure

They write their expectations on post-it papers that are posted on the wall.

The workshop leader can discuss these expectations shortly, confirm that they are realistic and also inform that there are sometimes reasons why teachers cannot always live up to all expectations parents have.

3. What does the school expect from me as a parent?

Goal: information about expectations of schools towards parents

a. Vision on the home-school communication.

A short introduction about what school rightfully expects from parents, so teachers are able to do their work.

Also the school's vision of parents being valuable resources for information about their children and for supporting children's learning.

Also that language can be a barrier and that the school is aware of the fact that poor language does not mean poor intelligence.

Also that school wants to investigate intercultural communication.

b. A play of cards with do's and don'ts, like:

- I bring your child to school in time
- I have to go on holiday outside the school holiday periods
- I send my child to school when it is sick

There are various ways to play with these cards.

c. Parents make cards with cultural misunderstandings as they have experienced them, so the school can learn where they are making mistakes, like

- in the way one makes appointments
- in the way to tell bad news

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(See also:

J. What you can learn from intercultural collision

Parents name an example of intercultural collision and discuss, using the six Thinking Hats of Edward deBono for multiperspective thinking again:

- ? what happened exactly; what did we do, what did we say?
- ? what is my side of the story?
- ? what is the other's side of the story?
- ? what were my feelings/ the feelings of the other person(s)?
- ? what is negative about his/her point of view?
- ? what is positive about his/her point of view?
- ? what could have gone better and how?
- ? what did I learn from this?
- ? what did the other person learn?
- ? what shall I do the next time?)

4. What can I as a parent expect from school?

Goal: Parents learn what their rights are about quality information and communication if school does not live up to expectations, where/who they can go to.

On a flap over:

- to get information in time
- to communicate in a nice and polite way
- to have rules that are clear to everyone
- to respect different cultures etc.

F. Parent's statements

Goal: Parents realize: How can I help my child and the teacher to make things easy?

Cards with statements of parents like:

- If my son doesn't listen, just give him a slap
- It is not so much trouble for the teacher to help my child to the toilet?!
- What's the problem when you are a minute late?

There are various ways to play with these cards. Use your creativity!

Summary: How can you help your child and the teacher to make things easy?

G. What can I do to help?

Goal: Parents learn concrete ways to support their children.

What are your future expectations for your child? What and who do you want it to be?

Parents make a beautiful and colourful poster with all the wishes for their children.

What can parents do to make dreams come true?

Let parents say and write on a flap over activities they can do at home to support the child's learning:

- read stories
- store groceries
- name colours
- ask the child's opinion
- confirm qualities
- set boundaries

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- be consequent
- etc.

List of skills children have to perform and the ways parents can support them:

- ? Experiencing the world using all senses: listening, observing, smelling, touching, feeling
- ? Naming objects, events, feelings to remember them well and to reflect on them. Expressing their feelings
- ? Searching for constant characteristics like shape, colour, material
- ? Accuracy: do and say things as precise as possible
- ? Selection: what do I need to solve a problem?
- ? Organizing: putting away everything in the right place
- ? Connecting things: where does that remind me of?...
- ? Imagining: how can I make an image of that in my head?
- ? Distraction: cause and consequence: what...if...
- ? Planning: I have a goal and these are the steps I have to take
- ? Cooperating and sharing; deal with social roles and relations
- ? Learning to live with rules; rules for behaviour, play and work
- ? Searching for meaning of words, situations and events
- ? Feeling of competence: I can do this!
- ? Reflection: what have I done, why, what happened, could I have done it in another way?
- ? Memorising, e.g. by games

Parents can stimulate the development their children's skills at home, e.g. by playing games and let them fulfil little domestic tasks. E.g. putting away the errands: organising and arranging by forms, sizes, purposes and materials. Helping in the kitchen cutting mushrooms: developing fine motor skills etc. And it not a drama when they make a mistake; they can learn from that. When they play e.g. memory, domino or lotto, children learn to observe, set their goal, make a plan or a strategy, concentrate and persevere.

What else do they learn:

- ? There are rules I have to keep; at school and at home there are also rules
- ? I have to wait for my turn and cooperate in order to play the game well
- ? I must make a plan and a strategy to win
- ? I have to be flexible, prepare and adjust to the actions of my playmates
- ? Memorising: what did the other do, where was that card
- ? I have to observe closely what happens
- ? Fair play

Reading loud stories

- ? Learning new words and new meanings
- ? Fantasising and imagining; inner speech, fancy pictures

H. One word, many meanings

Goal: Parents and teachers realize the many meanings of a word (cultural, personal etc.) and that a children, parents and teachers can miscommunicate on this.

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Choose words with many meanings, like e.g. “guide” or “bank” or “stream” or “head”. Let participants come up with other examples.

Ask everyone to write down or draw the first meaning they think of.

Everyone tell his/her meaning.

What does this mean in conversation with children/school/parents?

How can you prevent miscommunication?

I. Game: Winning by cooperation

Goal: cooperation, so you get a win-win situation.

1. A game called in Dutch “Mens erger je niet” (“Don’t get annoyed”). It’s about the experience of playing for yourself and hinder others to win the game.

2. Blow-hockey: This game is about working together by blowing a clot of paper into a basket. (or: in 2 teams keeping a balloon in the air as long as possible) It’s about the experience of working together.

Talk about:

- What is the difference between the games, what is good about trying to win, about cooperation etc.
- How to cope with conflict situation in the family.
- Power: parent wins, child loses
- No rules: it is hard to play the game; the one with the biggest mouth wins.
- Cooperation: win-win situation

Name a conflict situation with your child. How would you solve it now? What is the child to learn from this?

Name a conflict situation with the school. How would you solve it now? What could you have done better?

What could the school have done better to get an win-win situation?

J. What you can learn from intercultural collision

Goal: Learning to see intercultural collision as a challenge to better mutual understanding.

Parents name an example of intercultural collision and discuss, using the six Thinking Hats of Edward deBono for multiperspective thinking again:

- ? what happened exactly; what did we do, what did we say?
- ? what is my side of the story?
- ? what is the other’s side of the story?
- ? what were my feelings/ the feelings of the other person(s)?
- ? what is negative about his/her point of view?
- ? what is positive about his/her point of view?
- ? what could have gone better and how?
- ? what did I learn from this?
- ? what did the other person learn?
- ? what shall I do the next time?