Identifying Families’ Skills and Experience

Purpose

A good way to identify what skills and experiences families can bring to the school environment is to conduct a survey at the beginning of the school year that asks:

1) What skills and experience do families have that they could offer to the school and their children?
2) Do families have any time that they could dedicate to schools and hours? If so, what time best suits them?

A sample family survey is provided. Some specific questions can be added according to your individual school context. The survey can be either distributed to families to be completed at home, or you may wish to interview families and complete the form in this way.

Once the survey has been completed the information can be used to help the school leadership team and the School Council to work out ways to enhance family-school partnerships by asking families to share their skills and experience.

Providing information about times which are convenient for families will help with planning activities, events or meetings.

Source: The following notes have been adapted from the Scottish Executive Education Department, 2006, Parents as Partners in Their Children’s Learning Toolkit, Edinburgh
Sample family survey

Hello
One of the things we do as School Council/the School Leadership Team to support student learning, is to provide opportunities for all families to be involved with the school. We know that everyone is busy but it would really help us if you could answer a few questions about your interests and skills and whether you feel you have time to get involved in some way to support your child and all the children at our school.

By answering this you are not making any commitment to any program. However, it would really help us to plan activities for families and their children in the future.

Could you please complete the form below and return it to school with your child to give to their classroom/home room teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name(s)</th>
<th>Child/children's classes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 1

Do you have any particular interests, experiences or skills that could help the school in any way? Maybe just two or three things? For example:
- There may be things that you already do at home - cooking, Do-It-Yourself renovations, sewing or craft activities, gardening, decorating.
- There may be skills that you use at work - IT skills, typing, web design, catering.
- You may have interests or hobbies, sport activities, or arts and music skills or interests that you could share.
Question 2

We know that all families are busy but we would like to ask if you have any time that you could spare to support the school or support school activities. We are not looking for any major commitment but just to get an idea of what times suit people best.

What time would suit you best?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before school</th>
<th>Immediately after school</th>
<th>During the school day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evenings</td>
<td>[If yes] Start time:</td>
<td>Finish time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekends</td>
<td>[If yes] Start time:</td>
<td>Finish time:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there anything that would help you attend at any time – e.g. transport or childcare?

If you are interested in getting involved would you rather just do something occasionally (say, once a term) or could you make a more regular commitment?

How much time do you feel you would be able to offer? Even 10 minutes can be useful.

Thank you very much. One of the things we would like to do is to share this information with the school to help us to plan future activities. Are you happy for us to do this?

[YES] [NO]

Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make about the school or Parent Council?

Signed …………………………………………………………………………

Thank you.