
PLANS RESPONSIVE TO PARENTS' NEEDS

Cottonwood Elementary School

Cincinnati, Ohio

Like many schools, Cottonwood Elementary School has a group of hard working parent volunteers that always supports school programs. This same group of parents typically participates in PTA, attends school functions, helps their children with homework and school projects, and attends parent-teacher conferences. The challenge is to reach the greater population of families who are not typically involved at the school.

To meet this challenge, the Cottonwood Family Involvement Team has taken a two-fold approach when planning partnership activities. First, the program provides opportunities for parents to become involved at school through informal, interactive social activities such as our Back-to-School Picnic, Welcome Coffees, Family Dance Night, and Family Fun Night. In these casual settings, parents have the opportunity to connect with other parents as well as school staff and administrators. By establishing a welcoming environment for parents at the school, the parents are more likely to participate in formal school situations such as parent meetings and conferences.

Secondly, the program enables parents to participate more easily in important school meetings by offering childcare. Offering childcare during parent-teacher conferences, Parent Information Nights, and other school meetings makes it easier for many single parents to participate. It also allows two-parent families to attend meetings together so both parents can be fully involved.

While these initiatives have not fully solved the challenge of involving all parents in the school, they help move the school, family, and community partnership program in the right direction.

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