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## THE WAY THEY LEARN & WHAT'S MY STYLE

### Cottonwood Elementary School

### Cincinnati, Ohio

Cottonwood Elementary School created the Way They Learn and What's My Style?—a two-fold parent/child evening workshop for kindergarten through fifth-grade students and families. The first part, The Way They Learn, focused on parents connecting to their children's learning style. The second part, What's My Style? engaged the students in exploring different learning styles through games and activities. The entire parent/child workshop tapped into multiple intelligences to help students academically, using verbal, logical, visual, kinesthetic, musical, auditory, intrapersonal, and interpersonal learning styles.

The main goal of this workshop was to provide parents with practical information on how to help their students academically. Parents learned about different learning styles, how to determine their child's most effective style, and how to increase learning by tapping into a variety of intelligences. This workshop gave parents a better understanding of why some students may have difficulty learning and how to make homework time a more productive and fun experience for parent and child alike. A second goal of the workshops was to involve students actively in their own education by teaching them about the different approaches to learning and which techniques worked best for them.

The Family Involvement Action

Team planned the workshop and organized the event. School staff obtained a speaker, handled the publicity, and made the necessary facility arrangements for the workshop. The principal promoted the event through his monthly newsletter and announcements. Parents developed the student workshop activities and games, assembled the materials, and recruited volunteers. Fliers were sent home via backpack mail to families at all three elementary schools in the district and were posted in each building. The school message board also announced the event.

A speaker from the Hamilton County Educational Service Center presented the workshop for parents in the Media Center. She used a PowerPoint presentation, related handouts, a variety of books and resources, and an engaging presentation style to inform the audience about different intelligences. Throughout the evening, she addressed parents' questions and concerns. The principal, counselor, school psychologist, and several teachers were on hand to assist and interact with families as well. Parent and staff volunteers greeted participants and worked at the registration table. Another staff member videotaped the presentation so that the video could be available for check out in our videotape library to view at home.

Meanwhile, in the art and music rooms, the students divided into four groups

by age/grade level to rotate through a variety of learning games and activities centered on the different learning styles. Parent volunteers planned and provided childcare for pre-school-age children in the lounge and served refreshments. By offering coordinated student programs and free childcare, attendance has greatly improved at events such as this workshop.

At the end of the evening, participants filled out a program evaluation and added any comments or suggestions. In general, parents thought that the program was great and the speaker was excellent. A student asked, "When are we going to have another program?" That is always a good sign.

The Way They Learn and What's My Style two-fold workshop informed parents about how to support children's education in light of different learning styles. Parents, teachers, and community members had an opportunity to dialogue about homework and learning issues, establish comfortable interactions, and improve home-school communications. Students discovered that there are many ways to learn and that they each have an individual learning style.

This was a fun, engaging, and productive evening for the whole family. The Family Involvement Action Team will definitely continue to offer family-centered workshops with programming aimed at engaging both parents and children.

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