

# Parent Support Workshops

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*Palmetto Elementary/Middle School  
Mullins, South Carolina*

Palmetto Elementary/Middle School invited parents of students who were having behavior problems to a series of Parent Support Workshops. During these meetings, which were held twice per quarter, parents learned strategies for helping their children become better students. They also gave parents an opportunity to share their stories with other parents facing similar challenges. Palmetto specifically targeted students who were receiving the most disciplinary citations and were at risk for referral to an alternative school.

Many of the students at Palmetto come from impoverished families, and some have incarcerated relatives. Knowing that students who attend alternative schools may have trouble with law enforcement, the teachers at Palmetto wanted to do whatever they could to help the students improve their behavior and stay in their home school.

The assistant principal worked with the district parent liaison to develop topics for each Parent Support Workshop. The liaison researched those topics and created a presentation, giving parents strategies for helping their children stay in school, including establishing reward systems at home. The parents also saw a video about the importance of children having boundaries, rules, and chores.

Getting parents to attend the workshops proved to be the biggest challenge. The parent liaison solved this by driving some participants to the events. The school also offered lunch or breakfast at the support sessions, making it easier for more parents to participate.

Because of the positive impact of the workshops, 13 of the 15 students whose parents participated improved their behavior and were able to stay at Palmetto. Next year, the school hopes to expand the program by including more workshop activities, establishing a parent resource center open in the evening, and featuring guest speakers in addition to the district parent liaison.

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