

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strategies for Adapted Physical Education Teachers in Connecting BRIDGES with Parents of Children with Disabilities

Adam S. Forbes and Martin E. Block

Abstract

Families are an important part of the educational success of children. They can provide children with the opportunities to participate in lifetime physical activities outside of the school setting. When families feel valued and welcomed, their engagement and satisfaction with teachers can become enhanced thereby developing positive outcomes for children. However, specific to adapted physical education, not all families perceive positive experiences with their involvement in APE such as difficulties in understanding APE services, approaching APE teachers, and how to support their children's physical activity needs. It is important for APE teachers to communicate with families and develop a collaborative relationship to demonstrate the benefits of physical activity and support families' efforts in recreational opportunities outside of school. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide

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APE teachers with strategies they can use to develop a partnership with families of children whom they support through the BRIDGES model. Explanations of each step within the framework are provided as well as examples APE teachers can use to start developing the home-school connection.

Introduction

Schools are comprised of numerous social exchanges among students, teachers, service providers, and administrators. In particular, interactions among school professionals and families can influence the development of collaborative relationships, which in turn can improve opportunities for children to have success in school. When families feel welcomed, respected, and trusted, their engagement and satisfaction within the school environment and with school professionals can become enhanced (Dinnebeil et al., 1996; Spann et al., 2003; Stoner et al., 2005; Stoner & Angell, 2006). As a result, their children can attain positive, educational outcomes (Boonk et al., 2018; Jeynes, 2003; Watson, 2012) such as improvements in self-concepts, attendance, effort, achievement, and motivation (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Santiago et al., 2016). Therefore, families are an important part of the success of children in school and as such, school professionals should make efforts in collaborating with families for the education of their children.

Over the decades, educational policies have recognized the importance of families in the education of their children with a focus on developing and increasing parental engagement within schools. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) states that parental engagement involves collaboration in school programming and student academic achievement as well as participation in school events. In addition, school professionals should develop the means for families to be involved (ESSA, 2015). Another policy specific to children receiving special education services is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). IDEA emphasizes and mandates that parents of children with disabilities be a part of a collaborative team whose purpose is to provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE) for their children, which includes an Individual Education Program (IEP). Additionally, parents have the right to receive prior written notices of evaluations, meetings, placement decisions, or FAPE to

understand the education of their children. Teachers working with children who receive special education services under IDEA are mandated to collaborate with parents in creating IEP goals, communicating progress, and building a trusting relationship to derive commonality in the success of their children. Parents provide a unique perspective that should be acknowledged and valued by schools and school professionals.

Within IDEA, some children may receive adapted physical education (APE) services, which provide specially designed instruction by adapting and modifying PE instruction based on the individual needs of children with disabilities (NCPEID, 2022b). As part of the collaborative team, APE teachers support children in their physical activity (PA) needs. They achieve this task by developing knowledge surrounding motor development, disability characteristics, assessment, instruction and planning, and communication (NCPEID, 2022a). Since families have the right to be informed about the special education of their children under IDEA, APE teachers should develop a connection with parents by building a trusting and collaborative relationship. In building a relationship with families, APE teachers will have the opportunity to enhance parental involvement within and outside of school, facilitate parental efficacy in supporting their children at home, and develop a continuation of lifetime PA for their students with disabilities.

Although parental involvement produces positive outcomes for children, some barriers may impede involvement in APE and deter collaborative relationships with families. When asked about PA for their children with disabilities, some parents shared positive experiences regarding the value of APE in supporting their children (Chaapel et al., 2012; Columna et al., 2008) and how it created success for them compared to other educational settings (Kwon et al., 2021). However, other parents reported barriers to understanding what APE is and how it can assist their children's PA needs (Columna et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2019, 2020). Parents wanted to know more about APE services but did not know how to start the conversation, approach APE teachers (Lee et al., 2019), or ask appropriate questions regarding their children's PA opportunities (Chaapel et al., 2012). Additionally, there were instances of parents sharing the non-attendance of APE teachers in IEP meetings (Chaapel et al., 2012;

Lee et al., 2019) or APE services were not present within IEP documents (Lee et al., 2020).

Communication was integral to parents understanding what APE is, what their children were doing in APE, and how parents could help their children at home with PA (Chaapel et al., 2012; Columna et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020). They wanted to develop collaborative relationships with APE teachers but did not know how to approach them or ask the appropriate questions related to community/recreational programs or skills to practice at home (Chaapel et al., 2012; Columna et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2019). Additionally, parents expected teachers to build relationships with them through effective and ongoing communication (Chaapel et al., 2012; Columna et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2021), embracing and valuing their support (Columna et al., 2008), and to display respectful, open-minded, and personable qualities (Chaapel et al., 2012). However, with a lack of expectations perceived by parents of APE teachers, parental involvement was often absent in APE. With limited involvement in APE, parents may not know how to support their child's PA at home. As a result, children may not have the opportunity to engage in community/recreational activities outside of school to reinforce skills learned in school and develop lifetime PA.

APE teachers should facilitate the development of relationships and plan to work with families in becoming involved within APE. This will not only fulfill the legal requirements for parental involvement but also demonstrate the importance of PA outside of school and within their children's future. APE teachers are in a position to bridge the gap in communication to enhance parental involvement in APE, help parents have a clearer understanding of how APE services supports their children in school, and help parents learn how to assist their child's PA at home. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide strategies for APE teachers to develop relationships and connect with families of children with disabilities through a model called BRIDGES (Sawyer, 2015). The BRIDGES model will be explained in addition to how it can be applied in APE. Other models will be presented that supplement the BRIDGES framework and further foster collaboration between APE and families. For the purposes of definition, families and parents will be used interchangeably when mentioned, which include guardians, caretakers, etc.

BRIDGES Framework

The BRIDGES framework is a model that can guide teachers in developing and implementing strategies to support various types and levels of parent involvement (Sawyer, 2015). BRIDGES stands for Build, Recruit, Individualize, Dialogue, Generate, Empower, and Strengthen. These steps are intended to be flexible for teachers to use continuously throughout the school year and can be adapted to different school settings such as APE. This model will be explained in detail with practical strategies that APE teachers can use as they are developing collaborative relationships with families. However, the BRIDGES framework does not address time to reflect on the relationship with parents towards the end of the school year. This is a crucial additional step that will be added to the BRIDGES framework and discussed further in the following section. It is important to mention that APE teachers do not need to entirely change their responsibilities when it comes to supporting their students in using these strategies to build relationships with parents. Rather, the intention is to provide these models as a way to support and enhance the strategies APE teachers may already be using and to encourage the use of additional ones when needed.

Connecting BRIDGES With Families

Step 1: Build

To start connecting with parents, APE teachers should plan to make the first contact with the focus on building the foundations of the relationship. Although it may seem uncomfortable to approach parents, parents need to feel that they can rely on and trust APE teachers to support their children. The initial contact with parents can occur before the start of the school year or during the pre-planning weeks (Matuszny et al., 2007), as it may be difficult to reach out during the school year. Additionally, this is a time for APE teachers to create specific plans and strategies for developing relationships with parents throughout the school year (Sawyer, 2015). For example, an APE teacher might have a plan for ongoing communication through the creation of a Twitter account to share the progress of every unit or skill theme included in the school year.

APE teachers must make sure parents feel welcomed and comfortable during the initial contact. There are many ways to start these

initial contacts, including a phone call, email, Zoom meeting, or in-person meeting via school events or home visits (Columna et al., 2009). A welcome email is one way to start the initial contact with families, which can be sent at the beginning of the school year (see Figure 1) by providing a short introduction about the APE teacher and the definition of APE. This is an opportunity to discuss a teacher's background and role at the school (Matuszny et al., 2007), define what APE is in general and specifically for their child, how teaching sessions will be organized, and what specific teaching strategies will be used to support their child (Columna et al., 2009). It may be a chance to provide laymen's terms for APE in general and how it supports their child at school. An example definition might be:

All children receiving special education under IDEA must receive physical education (PE) regardless of disability. However, some children may not be able to successfully participate and learn in a general PE setting due to difficulties in focusing, physical limitations, understanding directions, or a combination of different challenges. This is where adapted physical education comes in. Adapted physical education (or adapted PE or APE) is specially designed physical education that supports children's physical activity needs in school through individualized and appropriate instruction. In general PE settings, APE includes modifying rules to an activity, adapting equipment, breaking down of skills into smaller and simpler components, or utilizing various supports such as visuals. APE also can be working with children with disabilities in a separate, small group setting or even one-on-one if that is what is best for a particular child.

Due to the nature of some itinerant APE programs with larger caseloads, making individual phone calls or emails to each family may be improbable. One solution is to collect parent emails within each school and create a group list on an email platform such as Outlook. When sending an email, teachers can select the recipients as the given group and create a blind carbon copy (BCC) email to families either attaching a general newsletter or written communication. A BCC email maintains privacy, confidentiality, and preference by sending individual emails to each recipient instead of a large group.

Figure 1

Introduction Email

August 23rd, 2017

Dear Parents of INSERT NAME

Hello!

I am Adam Forbes the adapted physical education (APE) teacher working with your child this year. I look forward to getting to know your child and working with you in supporting your child. Please take a moment to read over the following information:

Days and Times Your Child Has PE

Monday, Thursday, Friday
2:30-3:00PM

Supplies Needed for PE



It is important to ensure your student's safety and success in PE that proper footwear is worn for class. Proper footwear for PE are sneakers, running shoes, and tennis shoes. In addition to proper footwear, your child should be dressed in comfortable clothing that is easy to move in different types of physical activity that they will be performing in PE.

Parent Contact Information (attached)



I am a firm believer that communication between a child's PE teacher and parent is vital in ensuring their safe and successful participation in the PE setting. Please use the sheet attached to let me know the best way to contact you.

Parent Interest Form (attached)



In order to get an idea of what interests your child in terms of physical activity, please fill out the attached parent interest form. This is a way for me to understand your child's needs and what types of recreation/activities you do as a family and what things I can focus on during PE. This also helps me plan ahead for your child's future in creating goals for physical activity!

Please return the attached two sheets (contact info and interest form) and put into your child's school folder! And you may keep this top sheet for your records!

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring that your child has a safe and successful experience in the PE setting. I look forward to a great school year! Please feel free to contact me any time if you have any questions or you have information to share about your child.



Adam Forbes
Adapted Physical Education Teacher
[teacher email](#)



In this way, APE teachers and families will have a direct communication channel to respond and discuss without other families being a part of the conversation. Additionally, APE teachers can add their number so parents can easily reach them with questions or concerns. Regarding in-person initial contact, APE teachers can also attend back-to-school nights and meet families in person to build the initial relationship. Meeting in person may provide a better avenue to make introductions and to discuss APE, which may provide parents with a clear overview of how it supports their children at school. Whatever approach is taken for the initial contact, APE teachers should make it positive, friendly, and open when communicating with parents (Keller-Kyriakides, 2016).

Step 2: Recruit

After making the initial contact and introductions, the next step is to encourage and receive parental input and feedback to develop their buy-in toward APE (Sawyer, 2015). Once parents understand the benefits of APE, their involvement can increase in school and at home specifically to support their children's PA needs. Parents become involved when they feel their input is valued and welcomed. If possible, reaching out to parents to understand their beliefs about APE should occur during the first weeks of school (Matuszny et al., 2007). APE teachers can create surveys or questionnaires that can be included in a newsletter, webpage, or email (Sawyer, 2015). This is a good way to gauge family experiences, interests, strengths, children's interests, goals and values for their children, and expectations from APE services (Knopf & Swick, 2008). For example, Figure 2 provides a short survey designed to learn what families do for recreation and PA. Additionally, teachers can ask about family preference for communication, e.g., email, phone, text, and the best times to contact (Keller-Kyriakides, 2016) (see Figure 3). To develop ease, APE teachers can combine an initial email with the survey attached as well as an introductory beginning-of-the-year email and a contact information sheet. By providing the opportunity for parents to share their input and knowledge about their children, APE teachers can help parents feel they have a voice and an understanding of what occurs in school for their children.

Figure 2

Parent Interest Survey



Parent Interest Form

Please return this page in your child's school folder



1. What do you do as a family for recreation (e.g., play tennis, go for walks, go swimming)?

2. What activities do you see other children doing in your neighborhood that you think your child might enjoy (e.g., bike riding, soccer, t-ball, rollerblading)?

3. What community-based sport programs does your child participate in or that you would like to see your child participate in (e.g., t-ball, soccer, Special Olympics)?

4. Do you have any fitness concerns for your child that you would like addressed in physical education (e.g., endurance, upper body strength, flexibility, body weight)?

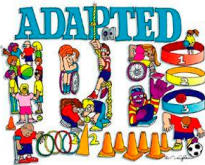
5. What other things would you like your child to work on during physical education (i.e., what would your dream physical education program look like for your child)?

From A Teacher's Guide to Including Students With Disabilities in General Physical Education (3rd ed.), by Martin Block, copyright © 2007 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., All right reserved.

Figure 3
Parent Contact Information

Parent Contact Information

Please return this page in your child’s school folder.



Name of Student: _____

Name of Parent(s): _____

Please fill out the following and check mark your preferred method of communication:

- Email
- Telephone
- Letter home with student

Do you give consent for pictures and videos to be taken of your child during PE?

- Yes
- No

If yes, do you give consent for them to be sent home to you via email?

- Yes
- No

Please return by 09/15/17

Thank You,

Adam Forbes

Adapted Physical Education Teacher
[teacher email](#)

Step 3: Individualize

Once parent preferences and buy-in have occurred, APE teachers can start to individualize how they involve and engage parents. It is important to embrace a wide range of differences among parents (Sawyer, 2015) as they come from various backgrounds and cultures. The BRIDGES framework is not a one-size-fits-all model but should be adapted and modified for each family with a focus of building trust within the relationships. One way to develop trust is to recognize and incorporate families' identities, knowledge, and perspectives within their children's APE (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2015). As families are the experts on their children's strengths and needs (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2015), they should be involved in the education process. APE teachers can make parents feel welcome by addressing cultural differences in their classrooms and in the community (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2015). They should consider cultural customs, values, language, and leisure preferences (Columna et al., 2009).

Another factor APE teachers should consider is the potential barriers to involvement and communication in schools. Specifically, immigrant families reported difficulties in understanding what APE is and how it can assist their children's PA needs. Additionally, they did not know how to start conversations or approach APE teachers (Columna et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2019, 2020). Although cultural mismatches among families and schools may be present, an additional aspect that APE teachers should consider is the structure of schools, potential stereotypes and biases toward immigrant and minority families, and discrimination that parents may face. These are important factors for APE teachers to consider. By individualizing parental involvement, APE teachers provide the means for meaningful, and ongoing communication that serves to support their children's growth in PA (Sawyer, 2015).

Step 4: Dialogue

Throughout the school year, ongoing communication can help strengthen parent-teacher relationships (Keller-Kyriakides, 2016; Matuszny et al., 2007) and welcome opportunities for parents to be a part of their children's progress in APE (Sawyer, 2015). Although there are many responsibilities an APE teacher has during the school year, it is important to identify the easiest and most appropriate method for families to develop ongoing dialogue. Consistently

sharing children's progress in school outside of the IEP can facilitate meaningful conversations to enhance collaboration (Knopf & Swick, 2008). This gives parents a way to understand what occurs in school and have a voice to ask questions and concerns they may have. In addition, families can share information happening at home which may assist APE teachers when working with their children (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2015).

The most intensive form of communication is verbal. This involves making regular phone calls, parent-teacher conferences/check-ins, video call meetings, or home visits (Columna et al., 2009; Knopf & Swick, 2008), although it is understood that this may not be feasible for all APE teachers who have large caseloads. Another form of ongoing communication is written, which can include notes, checklists, newsletters, or communication journals (Columna et al., 2009; Knopf & Swick, 2008). Monthly newsletters are a good way for APE teachers with large caseloads to regularly communicate with parents. Furthermore, a unique way to create consistent communication is through technology. This could be sending emails, creating a webpage (Columna et al., 2009), or creating summary videos of each unit, skill theme, or individual child. A Google Site webpage can be created by the APE teacher to organize their responsibilities to support students and share information with families (see Figure 4). The Google Site can be saved onto a teacher's Google Drive to use at a later time. APE teachers can also create a social media account to document general overviews of children's progress in school relating to specific units, skills, or activities.

Figure 4
Google Site



Families want open communication with APE teachers and want them to value and respect their involvement (Columna et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2019, 2020). When APE teachers establish open channels of communication, parents feel valued and welcome to become involved in APE. Both teachers and parents can provide supportive information for the success of their children in school and at home. APE teachers should be open-minded, demonstrate respect, and listen to parents with the intent of understanding their perspectives (Sawyer, 2015).

Step 5: Generate

This section focuses on APE teachers developing ideas and resources for parents to identify and implement practices at home and in the community (Sawyer, 2015). APE teachers can develop strategies to address concerns and issues that may arise when parents support their children at home. It may include implementing home activities; creating materials for the home, such as a task analysis of gross motor skills; or sending useful information that occurs at school, such as skill components, goal checklist, or activities. Also, APE teachers can develop recommendations to share with families on how they can support their children at home. For example, a “tip sheet” of the overhand throw can be generated to share for the home environment (see Figure 5). Skill components can be broken down into simple cues used in school in addition to a visual representation of each component. As part of the tip sheet, at-home activities can be offered as well as community recreational opportunities. This can be shared via email, text, or social media. APE teachers can further enhance the parent-teacher relationship by providing the resources for families to engage in PA at home and in the community.

Step 6: Empower

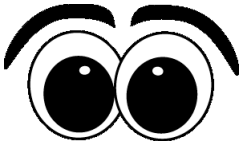
Empowering involves equipping parents with the knowledge and skills to develop confidence in their ability to support their children in PA (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2015; Sawyer, 2015). APE teachers have the opportunity to foster parental advocates for APE. There are many ways to empower parents, which can involve information sessions (Columna et al., 2009), training workshops (Kluegel, 2000), webinars, webpages, training videos, or video libraries (Sawyer, 2015).

Figure 5
Overhand Throw Tip Sheet

OVERHAND THROW TIP SHEET

Overhand Throw Skill Components

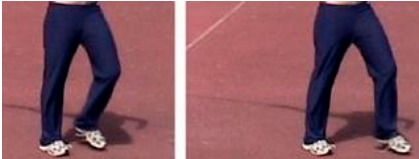
Use the following visuals and cues to practice the overhand throw at home.



Eyes on Target



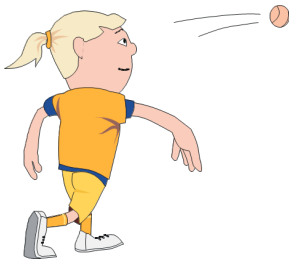
Make an "L"



Step



Point



Throw

Figure 5 (cont.)

OVERHAND THROW TIP SHEET

At-Home Activity



HOME CHALLENGE: BUILD AND DESTROY

PRACTICE YOUR THROWING WITH A GAME OF BUILD AND DESTROY

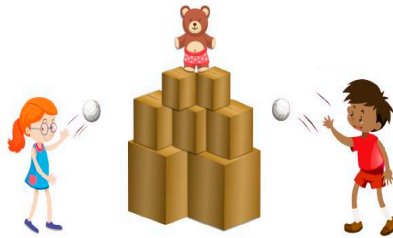
HOW TO PLAY

Build a tower in your house or backyard in a place that is safe to throw.

You can use things like boxes, toys, pillows, and cushions.

Stand a few metres back and throw balls at the tower, trying to knock it down.

Count the number of throws it takes to knock it down!



HOW MANY THROWS DID IT TAKE
TO KNOCK DOWN YOUR TOWER?

Equipment:

Balled up (clean) socks



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Figure 5 (cont.)

OVERHAND THROW TIP SHEET

Recreational Opportunity



The Little League Challenger Division provides athletes with disabilities the opportunity to play in an adaptive baseball program.

<https://www.littleleague.org/play-little-league/challenger/>

APE teachers can reach out to families about starting an after-school sports club with their children or work together in bringing adapted sports programs to the school area, such as iCan Shine bike riding. Another example is creating a webpage of resources developed to support families at home, which can include videos, teacher-created supports, and recreational activities. As part of the webpage, teachers can create videos of how they support children at school and how parents can do the same. Regarding training, APE teachers can schedule an after-school event for families to engage with each other in support of their children at home in PA. Topics can include prompting, visual supports, skill components, and home activities. Additionally, this can be an opportunity for parents to share their knowledge, hear each other's concerns and questions, and build a supportive community (Sawyer, 2015). Table 1 demonstrates some themes that can be planned during a training session on at-home activities for families.

Table 1
Parent Planning Session

Theme – At Home PA	Topics to Discuss
Ways to Engage/Prompt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving Choices • Timer/Countdown • Levels of Prompting (Independent to Physical Assistance) • Understanding skill components/cues
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying home items as PE equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Socks = Ball ○ Plastic Bags = scarfs ○ Empty Plastic Bottles = pins • Low-budget items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Balloons ○ Beach Ball
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Stations for families to participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Angry Birds (Overhand Throw) ○ Juggling Challenge (Scarfs) ○ Bowling (Underhand Roll)

Step 7: Strengthen

One of the most important aspects of the BRIDGES framework is maintaining and strengthening partnerships with parents. At the end of the school year, APE teachers can celebrate the accomplishments of individuals or groups of children to share with families. Additionally, acknowledging and thanking parents for their involvement in the school year can help motivate them to continue being responsive and supportive of APE. Throughout the school year, APE teachers can contact families to share their gratitude and appreciation for being involved and supporting their children in APE. An example can be hosting family events throughout the year, which could occur in person or online. This can be a chance to celebrate the efforts of families to engage within APE. Due to time constraints, scheduling events may not be feasible. APE teachers can send a thank-you email, letter, text, or phone call to families, sending thanks and appreciation. This can also occur during routine forms of contact, e.g., newsletters or social media posts. When families enroll their children in recreational activities outside of school, APE teachers can further strengthen the relationship by attending these events. When teachers extend their support outside of the school setting,

parents can gain a sense of the compassion and care an APE teacher may have toward their children, further enhancing the relationship. By going above the main responsibilities in supporting students in school, APE teachers can strengthen the partnership with families showing genuine care for their children and their efforts.

Additional Step: Reflect

Although not a part of the BRIDGES framework, APE teachers should take the opportunity to reflect on their relationships with parents at the end of each school year (Matuszny et al., 2007). Questions that teachers can ask are what worked, what didn't, and what must be added to further strengthen and improve the relationship for next year. APE teachers should also recognize their efforts to strengthen the relationship and celebrate themselves (Sawyer, 2015). A reflection sheet can be created for teachers to complete at the end of each school year. APE teachers can also create a reflection and feedback form for families to complete to further gain information on the relationship throughout the school year and as a basis for adjustments the following year (see Figure 6). Parents can either fill out the form or the APE teacher can speak with families via phone call to reflect on the school year and the relationship.

Reflections on Families and Itinerant APE Positions

When initially developing a partnership with families, some may be reluctant to become involved or welcoming to an APE teacher's efforts. This should not discourage APE teachers from developing a relationship with families or reaching out with information about APE. Additionally, this should not be recognized as a teacher's failure to communicate with families or a reflection of how families may feel toward them. Persistence may be required to engage with families as well as be accessible and flexible to families' needs. APE teachers should continue to provide information to families about what occurs in school and leave the channel of communication open whenever families are ready.

Due to the nature of itinerant APE positions, some of the suggestions provided may not be possible. APE teachers should reflect on their current caseloads, school responsibilities, and personal qualities when developing collaborative relationships with parents. Additionally, APE teachers should remember the uncertainty of

Figure 6

Reflection Form

Parent-Teacher Collaboration Review and Reflection Form

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

1. What helped you feel more comfortable working with your child's APE teacher? (Check all that apply)

- The frequency of information received (How often? _____)
- The way information was provided. (How was it provided? _____)
- Training sessions or school events
- Being asked about what I needed and how I wanted to receive information
- Additional ways: _____

2. What was not helpful in making you feel more comfortable working with your child's APE teacher? (Check all that apply)

- The frequency of information received (How often? _____)
- The way information was provided. (How was it provided? _____)
- Training sessions or school events
- Being asked about what I needed and how I wanted to receive information
- Additional ways: _____

3. Are there any additional ideas or feedback you have for how the APE teacher can help maintain your involvement and comfort in working collaboratively with them in the upcoming year? (You may use the back of this sheet to provide your thoughts and ideas)

Adapted from the Sample Review and Reflection Worksheet in Matuszky, R. M., Banda, D. R., & Coleman, T. J. (2007). A progressive plan for building collaborative relationships with parents from diverse backgrounds. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 39(4), p. 30.

maintaining caseloads every school year which may be subject to change. Efforts to develop relationships with families at a school that may not be under an APE teacher's caseload the following year can be detrimental to motivation. If APE teachers have a base school within their caseload, it is suggested that they focus their attention on developing partnerships with those families first. Additionally, teachers should not attempt to build relationships with all families during one school year. This can be a gradual process, with family-teacher partnerships created every year. For example, an APE teacher can have a goal of developing a relationship with five families throughout a given school year following or adapting the BRIDGES framework. Thereafter, an additional five families can be engaged to develop a partnership the next year. It is important to remember that APE teachers should maintain their workload balance in a way that does not overload their physical and mental capabilities.

Conclusion

The BRIDGES framework is one way that APE teachers can plan to develop a collaborative and trusting relationship with the families of children whom they support. They can adapt the framework to complement the ways they may already be communicating with families or follow the steps to begin developing collaborative relationships. By involving families in APE, teachers can have the opportunity to not only support their students' PA needs in school but also recruit families to provide recreational activities outside of school. Families can provide an avenue to support lifetime PA opportunities for children with disabilities. By using the BRIDGES framework, APE teachers can encourage families to become more involved in APE, develop an understanding of how it supports their children at school, and empower families to advocate for their children's PA needs.

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