

Strengthening the Relationship Between Families and Schools: The Parents in Partnership with Educators Program (PIPE)

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*Start a
conversation*

M.I.
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M.I. Understanding

1. Videos

2. Exhibits


3. PIPE Program




Gender Identity

- Being straight, gay, bisexual or transgender is not something a person can choose.
- Kids usually start to figure out who they are attracted to between 9 and 12.
- Families need support navigating criticism from their community.
- Being gay is NOT caused by early childhood experiences, parenting or the way someone was raised.
- Gay youth try and take their lives four times as often as their straight peers.
- All children need to know that they are loved and accepted by their parents.


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How to manage worries (anxiety)

- Everybody experiences anxiety- it is part of our ability to survive danger.
- Up to 10% of the population is overly sensitive to signs of danger or anxious. Only 2-3% of these people end up developing anxiety disorders.
- Anxiety becomes a problem when it starts to affect a child's ability to cope and quality of life.
- To a child dealing with anxiety, although it might not make sense to us, the situation causing the fear is very real.
- The best thing you can do is teach your child to cope. The earlier you can teach them to cope, the better.

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Separation Anxiety & Change

- Understanding the reasons behind what is causing your child to be anxious and establishing coping techniques is important.
- When separation anxiety appears out of the blue, it might be the indication of another problem.
- Children pick up on their parent's anxieties – if you are anxious about a situation you children might feel they need to be anxious too!
- Children struggling with separation anxiety often complain of headaches and stomachaches.
- Many children feel anxious about school but cannot necessarily express what is upsetting them.

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The PIPE Program

The PIPE Program

Four steps over a short period of time:

1. Information gathering session
2. Skills-based session
 - Binder
 - Communication skills
3. School meeting
4. Follow-up session to discuss next steps

Program Objectives

1. Family / School history
2. Relationship building
3. Conflict analysis
4. Coaching
5. Mediation & Negotiation

Case Study

Robert complained to anyone who would listen about the problem with his son's school. Charlie had been bullied since grade one, and although attempts had been made to separate Charlie from the bully, Robert felt the school had not done enough to protect him. Now in grade 5, he was so anxious it was a daily struggle to get him to school. After another incident, Robert and his wife Michele confronted the school's principal, demanding that the bully be suspended and transferred to a different school to get him away from Charlie. When the principal insisted that was not possible, Robert accused her of favouring the bully and the couple requested that Charlie be transferred to a different school district. After this request was denied, Michele took to social media to criticize the principal and attack the bully's family.

At this point, a friend of Robert's suggested that the PIPE program might be able to help them. After an initial phone interview, during which Michele indicated her desire to withdraw Charlie from school and take their case to the local media, the PIPE representative arranged a face-to-face meeting with Robert and Michele.

Program Objectives

1. Family / School history ←

2. Relationship building ←

3. Conflict analysis ←

4. Coaching ←

5. Mediation & Negotiation ←

Preliminary Research

Research Objectives:

1. Explore why parents enroll in the program and what they gain from their involvement.
2. Gain a deeper understanding of the factors that help parents improve their communications with their child's school.

Methodology

Measures:

- De-identified parent files ($n = 10$)
- Semi-structured Interviews ($n = 8$)

Interview Participants:

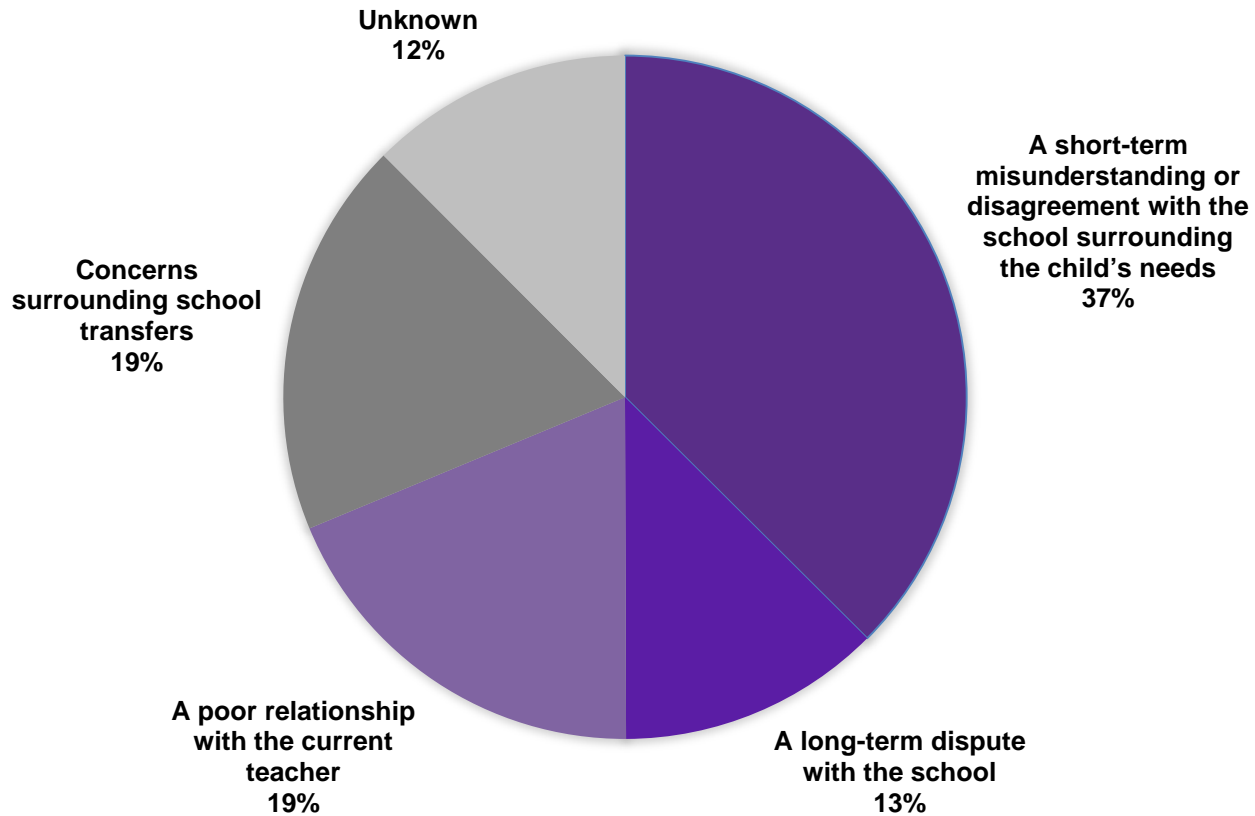
- Eight parents (100% female)
- Children on IEPs ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.09$)
- Children aged 4-13 years old (64.3% male, 35.7% female; $M = 8.91$, $SD = 3.26$)

Data Analysis:

- Descriptives
- Content Analysis

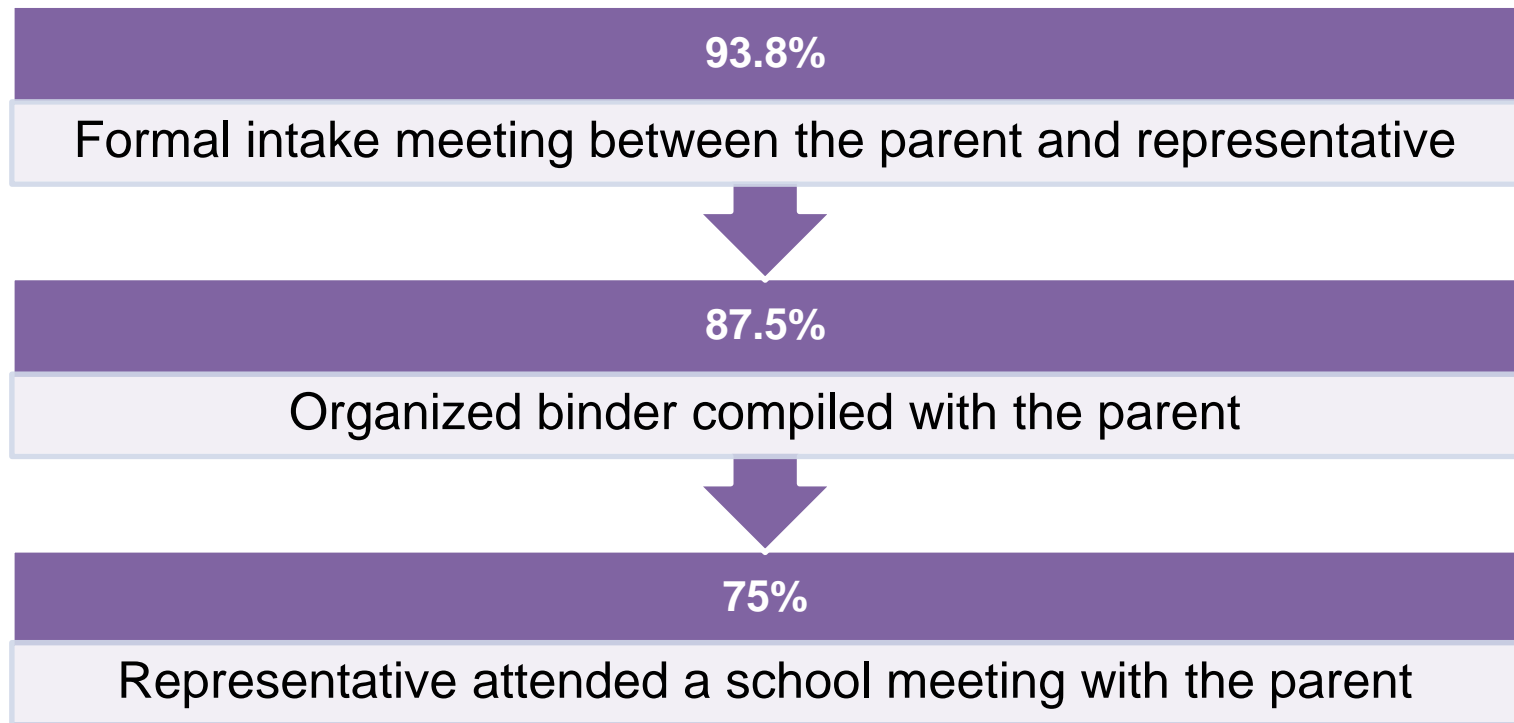
File Review

Main conflicts with the school:



File Review

Program components:



*Follow-up meetings were not recorded in the files

File Review

Table 1		
<i>Frequencies of Health, School, and Family Related Concerns</i>		
Type of Concern		Percent (%)
Health concern		
	Speech and language delay diagnosis	18.75
	Possible speech and language delay*	6.25
	Anxiety diagnosis	31.25
	Possible anxiety*	6.25
	Oppositional defiant disorder diagnosis	12.50
	Attention-deficit/-hyperactivity disorder diagnosis	18.75
	Possible sensory issues*	18.75
	Possible fine motor skill issues*	6.25
	Sleep disorder diagnosis	6.25
	Possible sleep disorder*	12.50
	Learning disability diagnosis	6.25
Behavioural concern		
	Self-regulation (incl. aggression)	18.75
	Attention	12.50
School concern		
	School refusal	12.50
	Peer victimization	25.00
Family concern		
	Experienced domestic violence	6.25

Note: $N = 16$. Most children presented with multiple concerns ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.30$)
 *Details of an official diagnosis were not provided.

Parent Interviews

1. HAVING SOMEONE ON YOUR TEAM

Personalized
support

Willingness and
openness to attend
school meetings

Guidance in the
form of resources

It was just a huge relief to find somebody who was willing to actually just sit and listen and genuinely help me with the process. (ID 100)



Parent Interviews

2. LEARNING AND HONING NEW SKILLS

Organization skills

Communication skills

On specific strategies learned:

Being organized and being well prepared before going to meetings at my son's school. Very well prepared. (ID 101)

Parent Interviews

3. PARENTS' ROLE AS ADVOCATES

Self-confidence

Personal
responsibility

Stigma reduction
and openness with
others

Everyone's always talking about what's not working... well, what is working? What was the good quality? What are the things that are good about my son, not just what are his problems. (ID 100)



Conclusions

- Parents gained a “second wind” and a renewed sense of confidence and hope through the program
- The program illustrated the importance of encouraging self-efficacy and confidence in parents
- The program is relatively new and is currently being piloted with only one facilitator. It is will be important to continue to evaluate as it grows



QUESTIONS / COMMENTS?

