

Parent Volunteers
Reflect & Apply



Situation

Overview Read this imaginary situation between two teachers discussing the school's endeavors to strengthen family engagement by getting more parent volunteers into the classroom. Think about how you welcome parent volunteers into your classroom. What are some other strategies you might try?

- Teacher A** How have your parent volunteers been going? I haven't seen Karen's mom and Yoonho's mom for a while.
- Teacher B** Yeah, they haven't shown up for a while. They were really good the first few months, but I don't know what happened.
- Teacher A** You had more volunteers than me signed up at the beginning of the year. What happened?
- Teacher B** I'm not sure. How have you been able to keep all yours? You always have Julie's mom come every Monday, and Jack's mom and a few other parents come, it seems like, every week.
- Teacher A** I don't know. I just started off with a sign up calendar and I suggested ways parents could help out...and I also asked for their suggestions of what they would be interested in and comfortable doing.
- Teacher B** I did that too...
- Teacher A** And then I always make sure I have whatever I want them to do that day ready ahead of time...together with any materials I think they might need.
- Teacher B** Yeah...I'm not really good about that.
- Teacher A** I find it makes a big difference. Otherwise, I'm scrambling around trying to figure out what to have them do. I end up wasting some of my time with students and I can't always find something good for the parent to do on the spot. I didn't use to do that but I didn't like it when the parent kept interrupting my teaching to ask me questions. Now, I also jot down a little memo ~ if there's something new for them to do or as a reminder.
- Teacher B** I really need to do a better job of that. It's good advice.
- Teacher A** Also, I learned a good idea from Sallie. She has one spot in her room set aside for parent volunteers. She has a desk set up, it's labeled for parent volunteers, and materials all neatly arranged, things that they usually need. I thought it was a good idea.
- Teacher B** That is a good idea. And it probably makes them feel welcomed.