

## **THE PARENT INTERVIEW**

### **Considerations**

#### The Purpose

- Determine the parent's perceptions of the student's
  - Strengths
  - Needs
  - Concerns
- Determine the parent's concerns
- Identify significant adults and youth in the student's life
- Screen for and identify problems

#### The Interviewer

- Good relationship with the parent or able to establish a positive connection
- Comfortable with discomfort
- Strong listening and observation skills
- Able to recognize and follow-up on "red flags"
- Able to elicit feelings and coping methods (not just facts)
- Doesn't assume that the identified problem is THE problem

### **The Interview**

Can be oral or written, structured or unstructured

#### Stages

- 1) Social
  - Connect
  - Define your role and purpose
- 2) Exploring
  - Identify strengths and needs
  - Gather information
- 3) Next Steps
  - Explain the action planning process and how the team will use the information
  - Explore the parent's next steps

**DETERMINING STRENGTHS AND NEEDS: The Parent Interview**

**Assessment of Internal and External Strengths**

The parent's perceptions regarding her/his child's behavior, strengths, concerns, supports, and needs are critical to effective action planning. The parent may save the SAT time by suggesting supportive activities, strategies and resources. Also, the parent may offer information that only s/he has – information key to an action plan that meets the student's needs. In addition, by involving the parent in the process, s/he is more likely to agree to participate in the strategies developed by the SATeam.

The questions listed below are strength-based, general in nature, and invite more than a "yes" or "no" answer. The interviewer does not need to ask them all. Depending upon the response, each question should be pursued and clarified so that accurate information can be gathered and presented to the SATeam. The interviewer should personalize the questions below, asking them and recording the responses per the interviewer's day-to-day style of interacting with people. For each question, ask regarding family, school, community and peer settings and interactions.

**PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Support

- *Who are the adults who mean the most to your child?*
- *Who does your child think really cares about her/him?*
- *Who are other students who mean the most to your child?*

Empowerment

- *What do important people in your child's life do that show your child that s/he is appreciated, that your child really counts?*
- *Where does your child feel most safe? Most unsafe?*
- *In what ways does your child help others?*
- *In what ways does your child have control over her/his life?*

Boundaries and Expectations

- *Which rules/boundaries in your child's life are most helpful to her/him?*
- *Which rules/boundaries would your child like to change?*
- *How can your child help change rules that don't work well?*
- *What do important people in your child's life expect from her/him?*

Constructive Time Use

- *Which activities give your child the most satisfaction?*
- *What makes your child laugh?*
- *How does your child plan and organize her/his time?*
- *How does your child spend her/his time outside of school?*
- *What talents, skills, accomplishments is your child most proud of?*

Commitment to Learning

- *How does your child feel about school?*
- *Is your child motivated to achieve academically?*

Positive Values

- *Which values are most important to your child?*

## Student Assistance Program

### Social Competencies

- *With whom does your child interact easily, communicate consistently?*
- *When confronted with a problem that your child can't resolve right away, what does s/he do?*
- *When your child finds herself/himself in a situation that makes her/him uncomfortable and s/he can't change that situation, what does your child do?*
- *How does your child feel trying new skills in front of people? What would help your child take these kinds of positive risks?*

### Positive Identity

- *What accomplishments is your child most proud of?*
- *What does your child think her/his life will be like in three years? Five? Ten? Later?*
- *What does your child expect of herself/himself?*
- *Describe your child's most recent success.*
- *Describe your child's most recent failure. How does your child feel about it? Has your child learned anything from not having it go the way s/he would have liked? What would you like her/him to do differently next time?*

### Behaviors of Concern

- *Are you concerned about any of your child's behaviors?*

### Needs

- *What do you think your child needs?*

### Strategies

- *What strategies have you tried?*
- *What has been successful? Why do you think it was successful?*
- *What has not worked well? Why do you think it wasn't successful?*
- *What else do you think might work?*