

Leadership opportunities

How parents like you make a difference at schools

19 April 2022



Introductions

What is...? *How does it work? Who decides? What can I do to support / feel connected?*

What could be! *I have a concern – or an idea for making things better! How do I / we effect change?*

Our Goal...

...is for you to come away with a better understanding of how parents like you can make a difference at your school.

We're going to talk about:

1. How our engagement makes a difference: "leadership" in everyday life
2. What the various school-based parent organizations do and how to "plug in"
3. Constructive participation strategies: parent engagement that leads to positive outcomes for the school and all students
4. Resources that train and support parent leadership and parent engagement

Where does parent leadership begin?

Most of us do not think of ourselves as leaders.

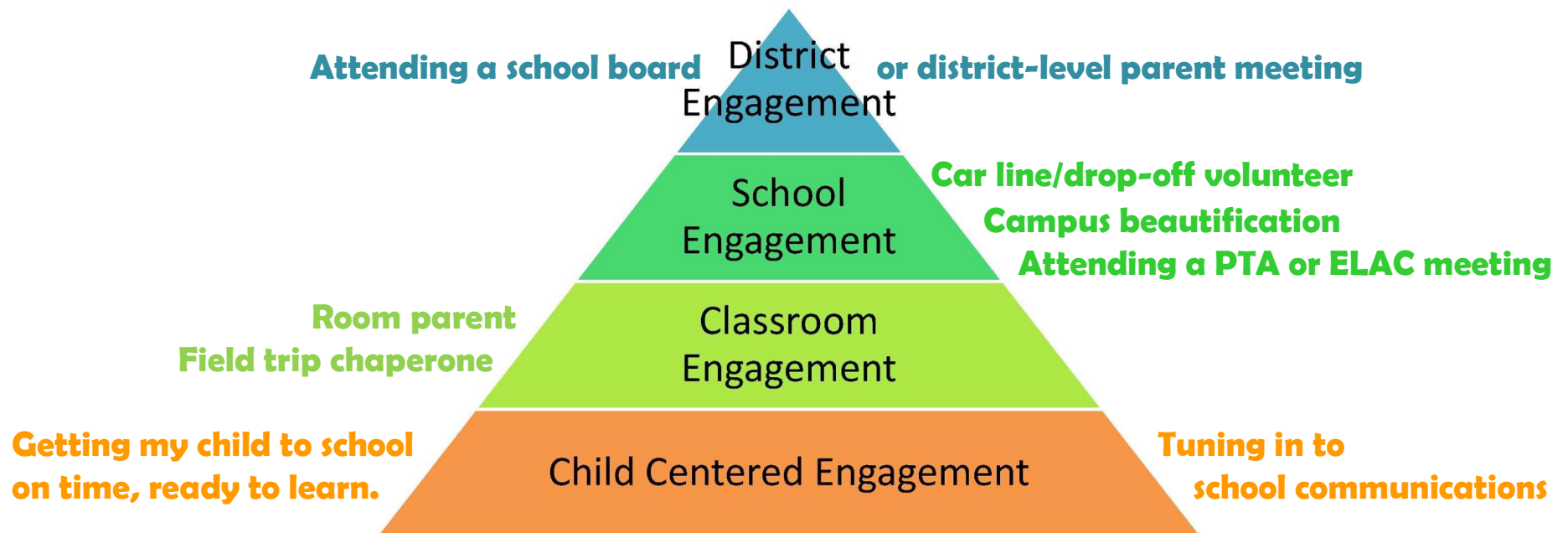
And yet...

Let's look at what it means to be a leader in everyday life



All levels of engagement make a difference

Even at the most basic levels of engagement (supporting our children at home and getting them to school), we have the opportunity to make a difference.



“I see myself as...”

1. ...not (yet) a leader
2. ...a leader in some aspects of my personal (or work) life, but not in the school setting
3. ...not serving in a leadership role at school but I have:
 - a) *Volunteered at/for my school*
 - b) *Attended a meeting or other forum at my school*
 - c) *Attended a district-level meeting*
4. ...serving or having served in an official leadership position

Parent Organizations

School-based Parent Organizations

Parent Teacher (Student) Association – PT(S)A	PTA is a national volunteer-based organization with state, regional, district-level governance as well as units at the school site. Its mission is to <i>make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.</i>
English Learners Advisory Committee – ELAC	Required at schools with 20+ students classified as English Learners (ELs). Parents/guardians of ELs advise the principal and school staff on programs and services supporting ELs.
School Site Council – SSC	Parent, teacher/staff representatives work with principal to develop and monitor comprehensive Single Plan for Student Achievement, including budget decisions, using input from all applicable school advisory committees.
African American Parent Council – AAPC	Parents, teachers, admin, and community members; supports African American students and families in order to close the academic achievement gap.
Other School Committees or Advisory Groups...	Annual Fund, Booster Groups (e.g., sports, performing arts)

District-level Parent Organizations

Parent Teacher (Student) Association – PT(S)A	PTA Council
English Learners Advisory Committee – ELAC	District ELAC
School Site Council – SSC	District Advisory Council
African American Parent Council – AAPC	District AAPC
Other Committees or Advisory Groups...	Community Advisory Council (CAC) Foster Youth Council LCAP PAC

Parent Groups – Quiz!

Match the acronym to the mission!

PTA

Black students are our business!

ELAC

an influential role in decisions that impact **Special Education** students

SSC

engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for **all children**

AAPC

determine the focus of the school's academic instructional program, **budget** and related resources.

CAC

a committee for parents or other community members who want to advocate for **English Learners**



PTA- Parent-Teacher (Student) Association- SCOTT HARDEN

I've been involved with PTA in one way or another since my eldest daughter, Autumn, attended Don Benito starting in the Fall of 2012, as Communications Dir, Treasurer and President) and then, at PTA Council, as Secretary and now President.

There are a lot of common misconceptions about PTA. Many see us as fundraisers for local school sites but in reality **we serve as advocates for great student outcomes at our public schools**, and we give of **our time, our passion and our energy** to provide **programs** and volunteerism which **enriches the lives of the children and their families** we serve.

PTA is about the **spirit of personal investment in our public institutions**, and I've always found warmth in my heart from that place. As a PTA leader, I strive to make that experience more accessible to all.



DELAC- English Learners Advisory Council- BEGONIA RAMIREZ

I first got **involved with my child's education in preschool**, at Families Forward (Mother's Club). Then, at Roosevelt Elementary I joined ELAC and PTA. I've continued to be involved in ELAC and PTA as my children have grown and switched schools.

A few years ago there was an opening for Chair of the district level version of ELAC, DELAC. I had been attending as my school's representative and **people knew me and felt that I could do the job**, so they asked me to step up. I was really busy, but agreed to do it because I really care about making sure that the English Learners in our district are getting the **education they need to reclassify, become proficient in English, and succeed in school and life**. I am passionate about helping other parents become leaders and advocates for their children.



DAC- District Advisory Council-

Jennifer Higginbotham

I was drawn to School Site Council when my eldest daughter started at Hamilton because I like **reviewing data and understanding how the budget is allocated**. Participating in School Site Council gave **me a voice in how my school functioned** and helped me **understand the challenges** facing our entire school community—students, teachers, staff, parents and guardians.

Serving on Hamilton’s School Site Council led to me attending District Advisory Council meetings where I have been able to gain a district-wide perspective and **advocate for what I see as the best use of our resources**. After Hamilton, my kids moved on to Blair where I currently serve as the chair of the Blair SSC. I am also the chair of DAC.

I find DAC to be particularly **interesting** and a wonderful way to be **connected with district leaders, principals, teachers, staff and parents**. I gain satisfaction knowing I’m helping to **bring our district community together to discuss all things related to our school plans and give our DAC participants a forum** for interacting with district staff.



AAPC- African American Parent Council- Nia Nicole Harris

I joined AAPC in search of a community of other parents of black children in PUSD who might share in my experiences. What I found in AAPC was so much more.

Meetings are **affinity spaces**, where we **celebrate, support** each other, share **resources/opportunities**, have **courageous conversations** and **advocate** for what is just. **All voices are welcome.**

AAPC is an engaged member of the PUSD community committed to transformative work that will impact current and future generations of black students. As parents, we recognize our power in unifying around issues that matter. We are **stronger together.**



CAC- Community Advisory Council- Warren Skidmore, PhD

I became involved with the **Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC)** around 11 or 12 years ago when trying to determine how to get support for one of my children. The CAC was a great source of information and support.

The CAC really **helped me to find a path for supporting my child** and I took on an official role in order to help other people that were in my situation.



LCAP PAC- Local Control Accountability Plan- Parent Advisory Council- LORENA YEPEZ HERNANDEZ

I became involved with the LCAP PAC after being involved with ELAC at my children's elementary school. I knew very little about the parent advisory group but saw an opportunity to work with other parents to serve students throughout the district.

I have met some amazing people. **Everyone bringing a different set of skills and expertise, and all with a BIG heart and willingness to serve.** It has now been well over seven years of service, and I feel there has been several small wins that have made a difference in the education of PUSD children, mine included.

The **LCAP PAC has advocated strongly for those students and families in need of additional support.** Some days can be challenging but long term, all the time and hard work has been worth our time. If we can reach that one family, one parent and provide tools to better support their student, than there is no better reward. I am humbled and honored to work alongside such a great group of humans. **We make a difference.**

Homework: when/how do your school's parent groups meet?

How will you find the parent groups at your school?

District-level organization meetings

If you already participate in one parent group, plan to attend the meeting of another group.

Constructive participation strategies

- **What is...?** The Art of Asking Questions
- **What could be!** From REACTION to ACTION

The Art of Asking QUESTIONS...



WHEN to Ask QUESTIONS...

- a. Public Comment (watch the time)
- b. On the agenda item (when specifically allowed)
- c. Parking lot
- d. During an informal meeting, when you're called on (you've raised your hand)
- e. Anytime on CHAT during virtual meetings, but try to keep it to the topic at hand
- f. All the above (*seriously, give someone else a chance!*) :)

WHY to Ask QUESTIONS...

- a. Help the **audience** (*understand the content*)
- b. Help the **speaker** (*maybe they got lost, are not explaining something well, forgot to say something*)
- c. Help the **process/cause** (*define meeting goals, clarify intent of meeting, get needed information, shed light on issue*)
- d. Help **yourself** (*get info you need to do your job, help your child, or maybe just want other people to get to know you better, see you as leader*)
- e. All the above (*for the win!*)

Examples of QUESTIONS...

- a. **Audience:** Could you please define the acronym....?
- b. **Speaker:** Could we pick up where we were before the question? You said you had a slide show? Do you need someone to monitor the chat? I think you mean to say....?
- c. **Process/Cause:** Could we take a step back to remember why we wanted to meet? What do we hope to accomplish in the next hour? Do we have all the information we need? I think I remember that we had spent x, but this slide says y, can someone confirm the number?
- d. **Yourself:** Could we use some extra eyes on those numbers? I am an accountant and am happy to help. How can I/we help?

HOW to Ask QUESTIONS...

HOW-

- Be **prepared**- Take notes on what you want to say
- Know what you hope to **accomplish**
- Watch your **tone**
- Seek to maintain, build, rapport
- Ask in a way that **matches** time available, depth, purpose of meeting.
- Provide BRIEF **context** if necessary
- If the question is very sensitive, requires preparation ahead of time, **send ahead of time**. If not able to do that, acknowledge that you don't expect a full answer NOW, but would like it answered by next meeting

The Art of Asking QUESTIONS...

HOW NOT to-

- *Why didn't you, Why can't you, You never....(confrontational)*
- *I have a question, but first let me tell you in excruciating detail all that has led to me asking this over the last year....(boring, annoying)*
- *I have a question- but it is not a question, it is really me telling you I am very unhappy, confused, frustrated. Or how much better they did this at my old school...(venting, not a question)*
- *I am so sorry to have to bother you with my questions, I am so dumb, I wish I didn't have to ask this annoying thin, I don't know if what I'm about to say makes any sense and I apologize to everyone here for my bad timing, question asking, lack of skill....(not leader-like)*

Asking good questions show leadership and models leadership for others





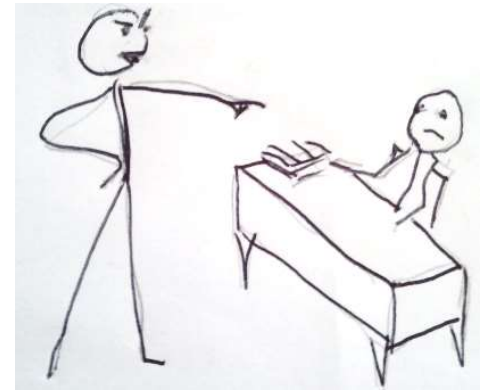
<https://youtu.be/yF6hq3cqxl>

Venting /
Ranting



REACTIONS

Accusing
or
Blaming



Getting
Depressed

REACTION

... is EMOTIONAL

... is based on UNTESTED ASSUMPTIONS

... generates MORE REACTIONS

... is not very productive

(and can sometimes be destructive)

*... often does **NOT** lead to positive solutions*

ACTION

... is THOUGHTFUL

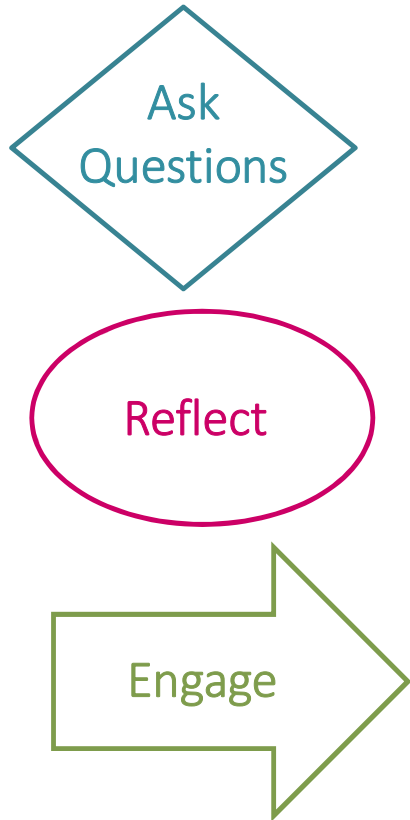
... requires being OPEN-MINDED

... ENGAGES OTHERS

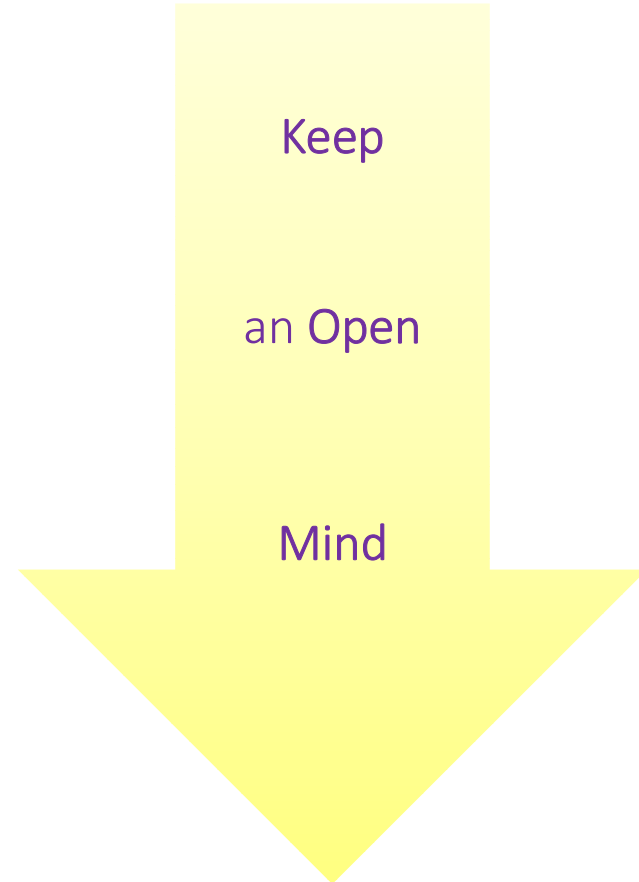
... is CREATIVE

... leads to SOLUTIONS

3 Basic Strategies



1 Guiding Principle:



Question

Reflect

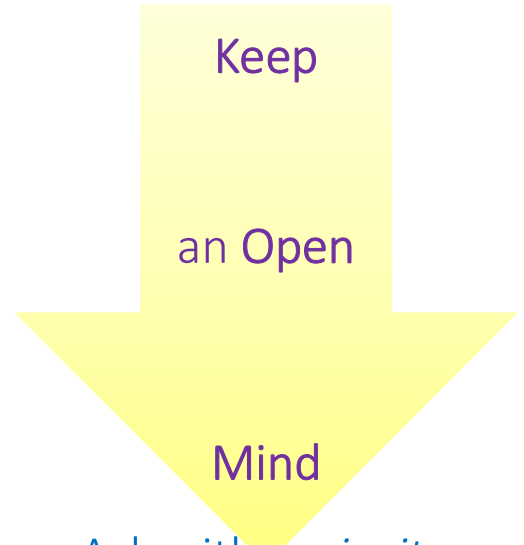
Engage



“A kid pushed me down and took the ball away!”



Question

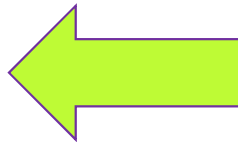


- Ask with *curiosity*

Maybe you and Gus should be more careful...



Cookies & milk and we're done!



“...Gus and I both ran for the ball and he bumped into me and I fell down and he got the ball!”

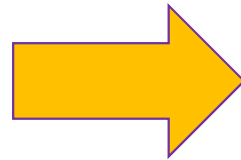


“How did it happen?”

“How did it happen?”



“...This big kid came and pushed me and took the ball for him and his friends to play with.”



- > Do you know this kid?
- > Why do you think he pushed you?
- > What were you (and others) doing before this happened?
- > What happened after you fell down?





- What is important to me – for my child?

I want him to be safe at school.

- Is this part of a larger problem, or just a one-time incident?

Who is this “big kid”?

Is his behavior typical?

How does the school handle this kind of situation?



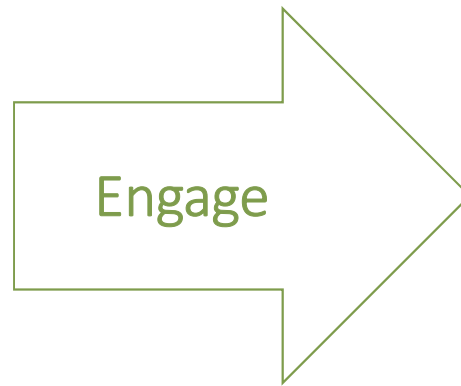
Question



Reflect



Engage



Engage

➤ Who should I talk to first?

Start with someone close to the incident who might know more about what happened.

- *Who supervises during recess? Noon aide? Teacher?*
- *Where can I find this person?*
- *How should I begin the conversation?*

Question

Reflect

Engage

Engage

Question

"My son told me a big kid pushed him down yesterday. Did you see what happened?"

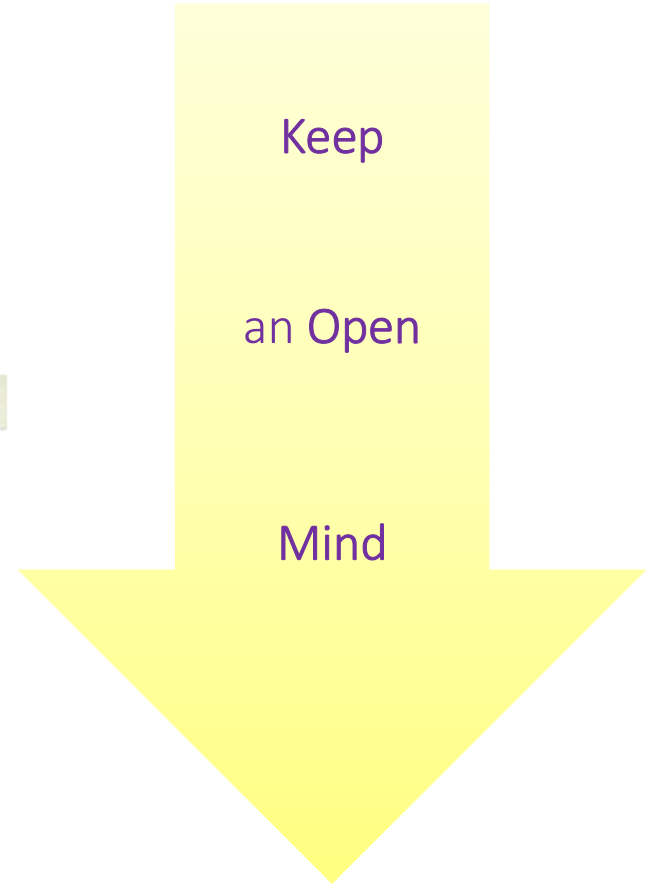


It was the 3rd graders' turn to use the balls. Sometimes the younger kids get out to recess earlier and grab all the equipment, and the big kids get mad.

...So you let a 3rd grader knock my son down just because it wasn't his grade's turn to use the ball?

That's not OK!

I can't believe there aren't enough balls for each grade to have their own.



REACTION



*She thinks it's MY fault!
It was her son's fault! I'm
just one person – how
am I supposed to keep
all these kids under
control? What a
troublemaker...*

*... often does NOT lead to
positive solutions*

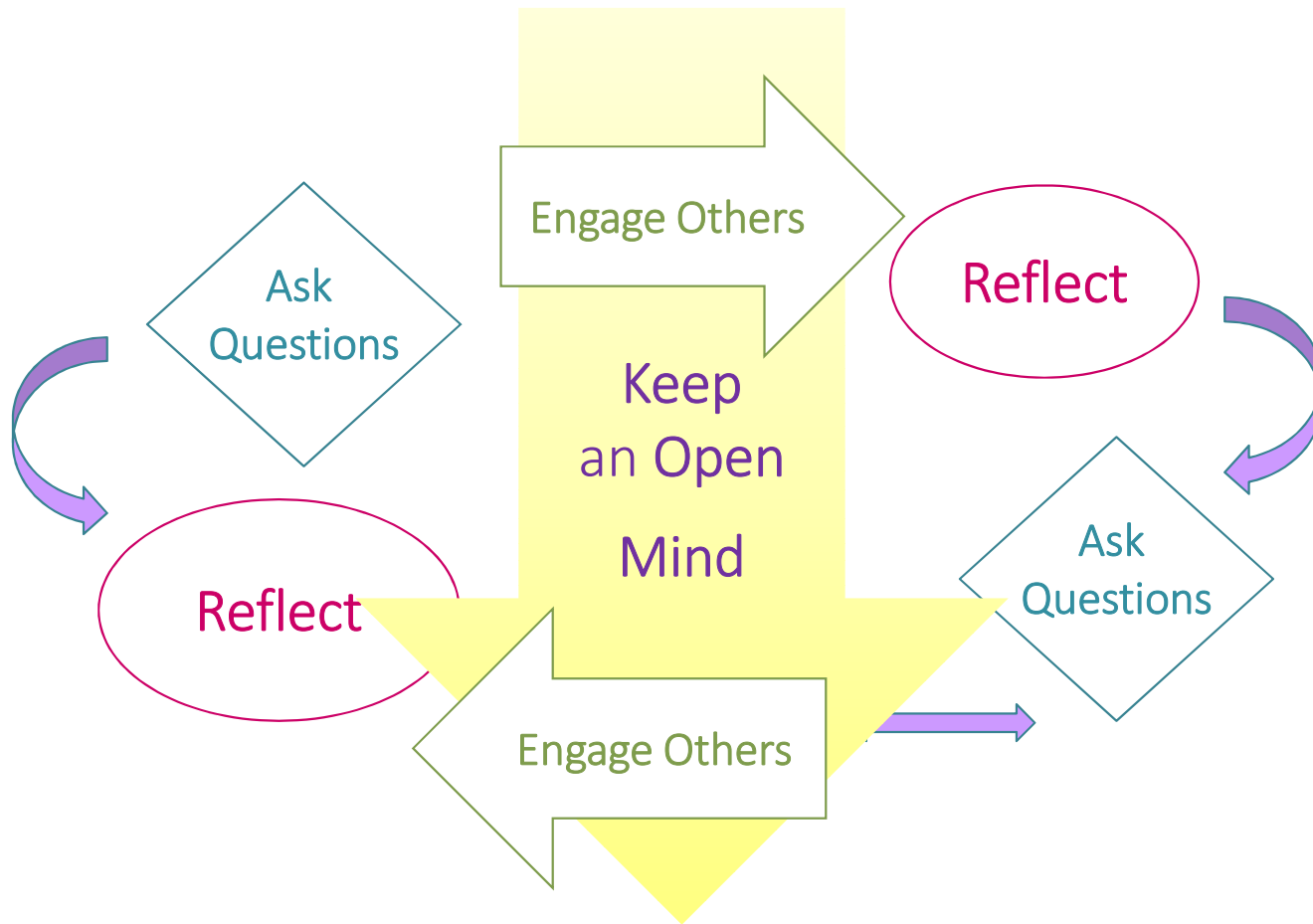
Engage Others

"I know that you want the children to be safe during recess."



What do you think WE could do to try to make sure things like this don't happen?



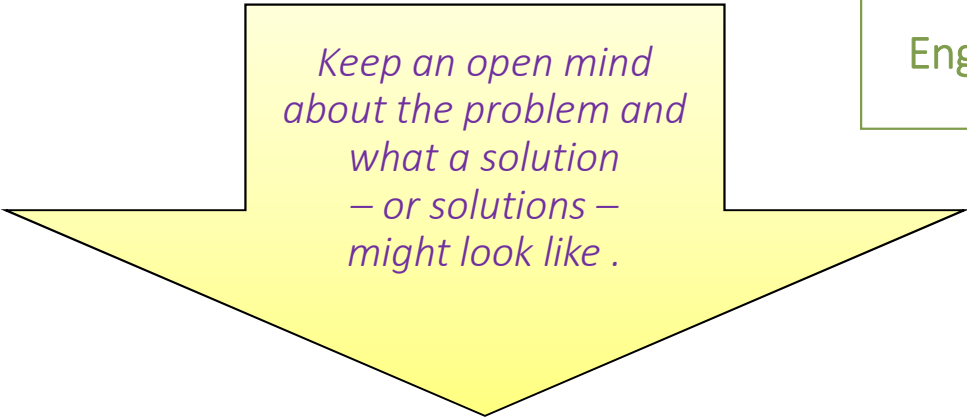




- What do you think would help the children play more safely together?



The noon aide says there aren't enough balls. She also said it's hard for one adult to supervise the entire play area.



- Maybe the PTA could raise some money to buy more balls.
- Could we organize some parent volunteers to help supervise?

Quiz time!

<i>What are the 3 basic strategies?</i>	What do you remember about this strategy?
Ask Questions	Ask with curiosity – don't assume you already know the answer
Reflect	What is important to me? Is this part of a larger problem (pattern, system)? Who should I speak with first?
Engage Others	Start close, work up and outward How should I open the conversation? Assume positive intent Look for common ground Approach people as potential partners
Keep and OPEN MIND	About other people, about what the “problem” is, and about what the solution or solutions might look like

We are leaders when...

We show up and offer to help

... and figure out how to make ourselves useful or invite others to join us

When we ask questions about how things work

... and then others look to us for answers or a better understanding

We see a problem or get an idea

... and connect with others to figure out a solution

We advocate not only for what our own child needs

... but for other children and families with similar needs

We practice empathy and respect for others

... including those with whom we may disagree

Training & Support

Training and support available to parent leaders and leadership groups

PUSD- Family and Community Engagement: <https://www.pusd.us/Domain/2838>

PUSD Parent Leadership Groups: <https://www.pusd.us/Page/3165>

Pasadena PTA: <https://www.ptacouncilpusd.org/>

PEN – Pasadena Education Network: www.penfamilies.org

Ed100: <https://ed100.org/>

First 5 LA: <https://www.first5la.org/parenting/advocating/>

For further reading: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158155.pdf>

Please make sure we have your contact information (Sign-in sheet) so that we can follow up to get you resources and links (including materials in Spanish)

Thank you!

Please complete the short participant evaluation!

Workshop Evaluation Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MSVV6P7>

Evaluación del programa:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MSBZR7P>