

Handle with Care

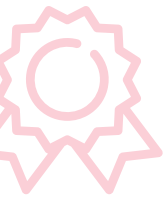
Dealing with Difficult Conversations with Families



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1

ALL Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas



2

EVERY Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career



3

EVERY Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program

EVERY School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders

4



EVERY Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

5



EVERY School and District is Rated "C" or Higher

6



VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens



MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

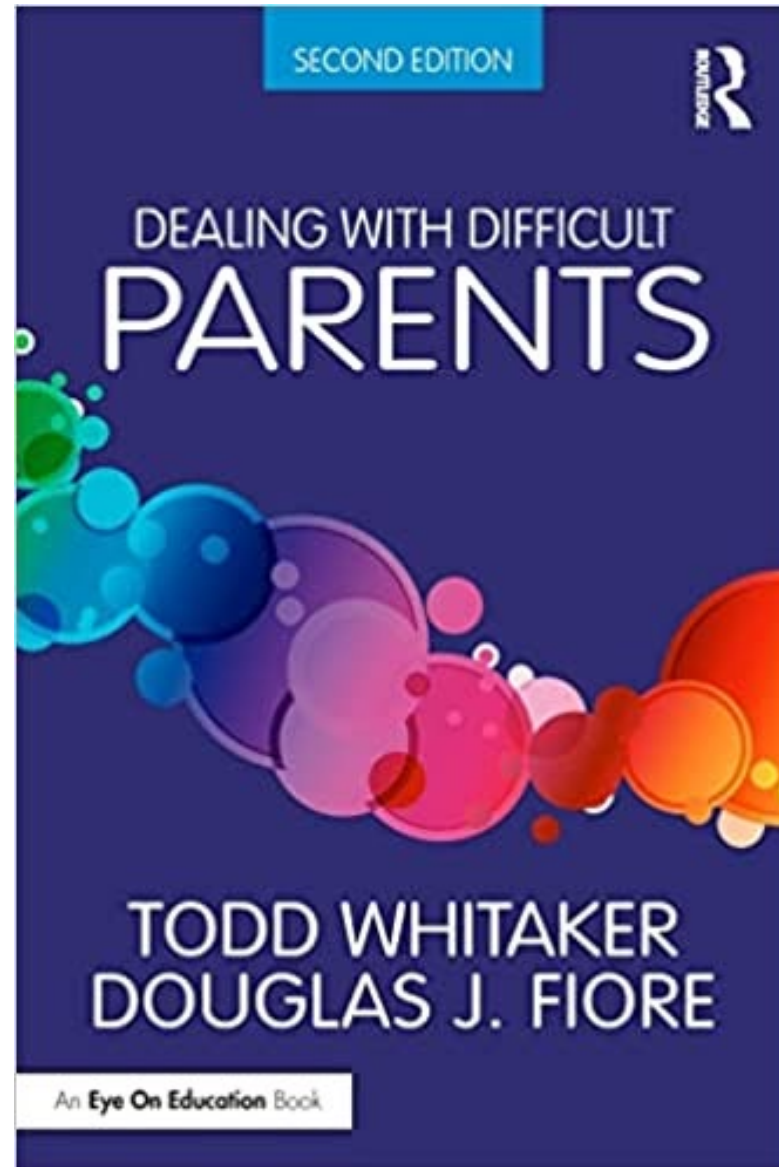
The purpose of this session is to provide the participant actionable/concrete strategies to use to communicate and build trusting relationships with hard-to-reach families.

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Who are Today's Families/Parents?

Describing Today's Families/Parents

“The involvement of parents in the education of their children is of unquestionable significance. Studies consistently indicate that student achievement increases as parents become more involved in their children’s education.”

(Hill & Craft, 2003; Gonzalez-DeHass, Williams, & Hobein, 2005)

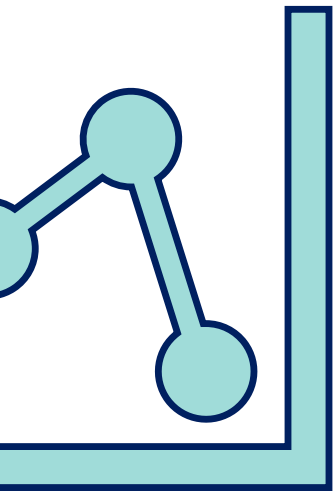


Who

8

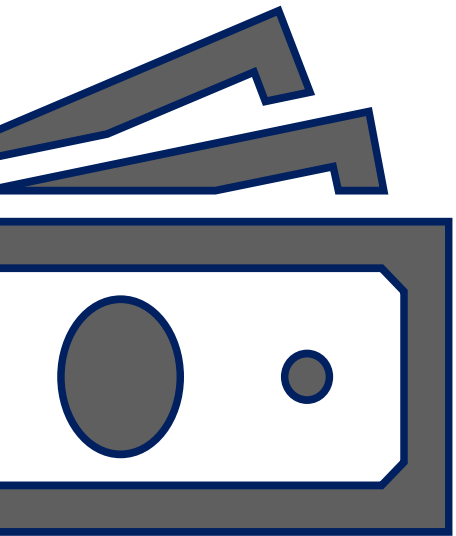
- Varying Family Configurations
- Family Wealth
- Family Stressors
- Varying Family Behaviors
- Personal Biases

Here are just a few recent statistics on the family make-up in the United States in recent years.



- The percentage of working mothers has increased from 9% in 1940 to 78.9% in 2009.
- As evidence in 2014, 41 percent of children born in the United States are born to single mothers.
- Of the 75 millions children living in the U.S. under the age of 18, 24.3 percent (or 18.1 million) live with their mothers only; 54% of those children are under the age of 9.
- In a study examining paternal involvement over the first ten years of a child's life, researchers found the father child contact was associated with better social emotional and academic functioning.
- Across the U.S., 75 million children live in home with their grandparents. 4.9 million live in homes where grandparents are the head of household. 1 million live with grandparents who are their primary caregivers.

The relative wealth of American Households has also experienced negative change recently.



- In 2013, children represented 23.5% of the total population and 32.3% of people in poverty
- Children are by far the fastest growing segments of the total homeless population.
- 45% of homeless children and youth (K-12) were not attending school on a regular basis during their homelessness.
- Throughout the U.S., federal spending on housing assistance programs targeted at low-income populations is less than 50% of 1976 spending levels.

A family's configuration and lack of wealth can cause them a great deal of stress.



- Many parents are working more hours but have less wealth on a relative basis than their parents.
- Many parents feel it is impossible to find 15 minutes of quality time with their children.
- There has been a sharp increase of American adults who are taking prescription drugs to cope with anxiety, depression, and other social issues.



Parent-Centered vs. Child Centered Family Focus





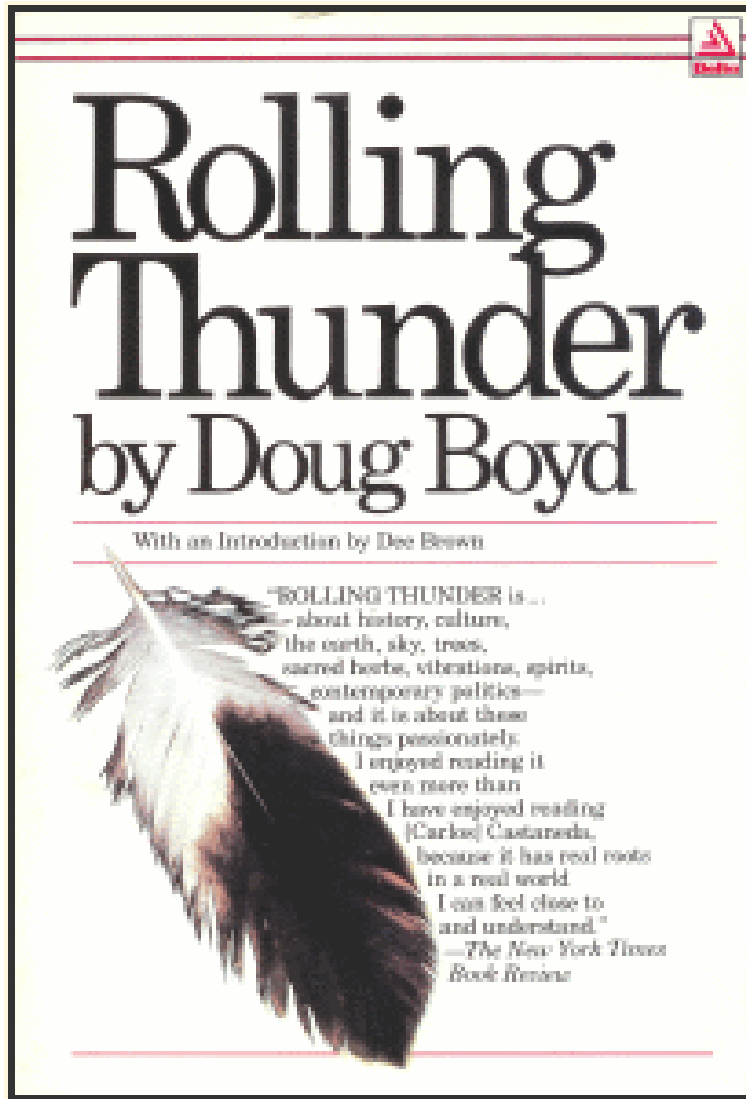
Negative Past School Experiences



Schools organize public, ritualistic occasions that do not allow for real contact negotiation, or criticism between parent and teachers. Rather they are institutionalized ways of establishing boundaries between insiders (teachers) and interlopers (parents) under the guise of polite conversation and mature cooperation. Parent Teacher Association meetings and open house rituals at the beginning of the school year are contrived occasions that symbolically affirm the idealized parent-school relationships but rarely provide the chance for authentic interaction.

-Sara Lawrence Lightfoot





The Snake and the Angry Swami: A Cautionary Tale

The following short story was excerpted from [Rolling Thunder: A Personal Exploration into the Secret Healing Powers of an American Indian Medicine Man](#)


On a path that went by a village in Bengal there lived a cobra who used to bite people on their way to worship at the temple there. As the incidents increased, everyone became fearful, and many refused to go to the temple. The Swami who was the master at the temple was aware of the problem and took it upon himself to put an end to it. Taking himself to where the snake dwelt, he used a mantra to call the snake to him and bring it into submission. The Swami then said to the snake that it was wrong to bite the people who walked along the path to worship and made him promise sincerely that he would never do it again. Soon it happened that the snake was seen by a passer-by upon the path, and it made no move to bite. Then it became known that the snake had somehow been made passive, and people grew unafraid. It was not long before the village boys were dragging the poor snake along behind them as they ran laughing here and there. When the temple Swami passed that way again, he called the snake to see if he had kept his promise. The snake humbly and miserably approached the Swami, who exclaimed, 'You are bleeding! Tell me how this has come to be.' The snake was near tears and blurted out that he had been abused ever since he made his promise to the Swami. 'I told you not to bite,' said the Swami, 'but I did not tell you not to hiss.'



- What was the emotional state of the cobra at the end of the story?
- Considering the Swami's final statement to the cobra, "I told you not to bite, but I did not tell you not to hiss". What did he mean by this statement?

Communicating with Parents



A woman with curly hair, wearing a pinstripe blazer and light-colored pants, stands next to a chalkboard. She is smiling and resting her chin on her hand. A large, empty thought bubble is drawn on the chalkboard behind her. In the bottom left corner, there is a laptop and a cup of pencils.

What's your story?



Who doesn't want
to be associated
with a winner?



Allow me to
introduce
myself!



Touch Base Tuesdays



Reaching Out to the Community 24



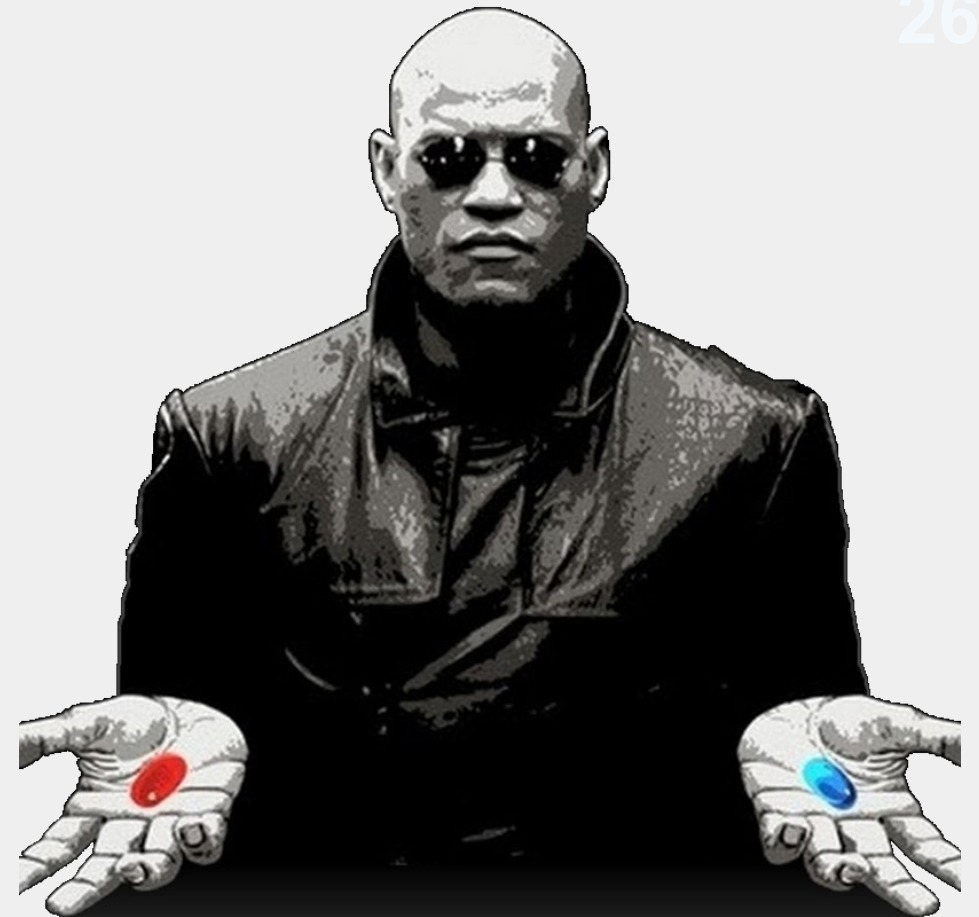
- Local TV and radio stations
- Community Service Projects
- You can also circumvent traditional media outlets by using social media.
- Timing and tone is **EVERYTHING!**

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- Social media can be used as a communication tool.
- Social Media is where “it’s” at!
- Comments and shares make a huge impact.
- Create a social media plan for all large events, fundraisers, academic fairs, etc.
- Building a broad diverse community
- Always monitor posts/comments and use good judgement.

What's the
magic pill?





Positive phone calls



Five Things that Make Praise Work... 28

Authentic.

Specific.

Immediate

CLEAN!

Private

The Fine Art of Deescalating

Email or Call? That is the question!



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Email Bombing

Never let them see you sweat!!!³²



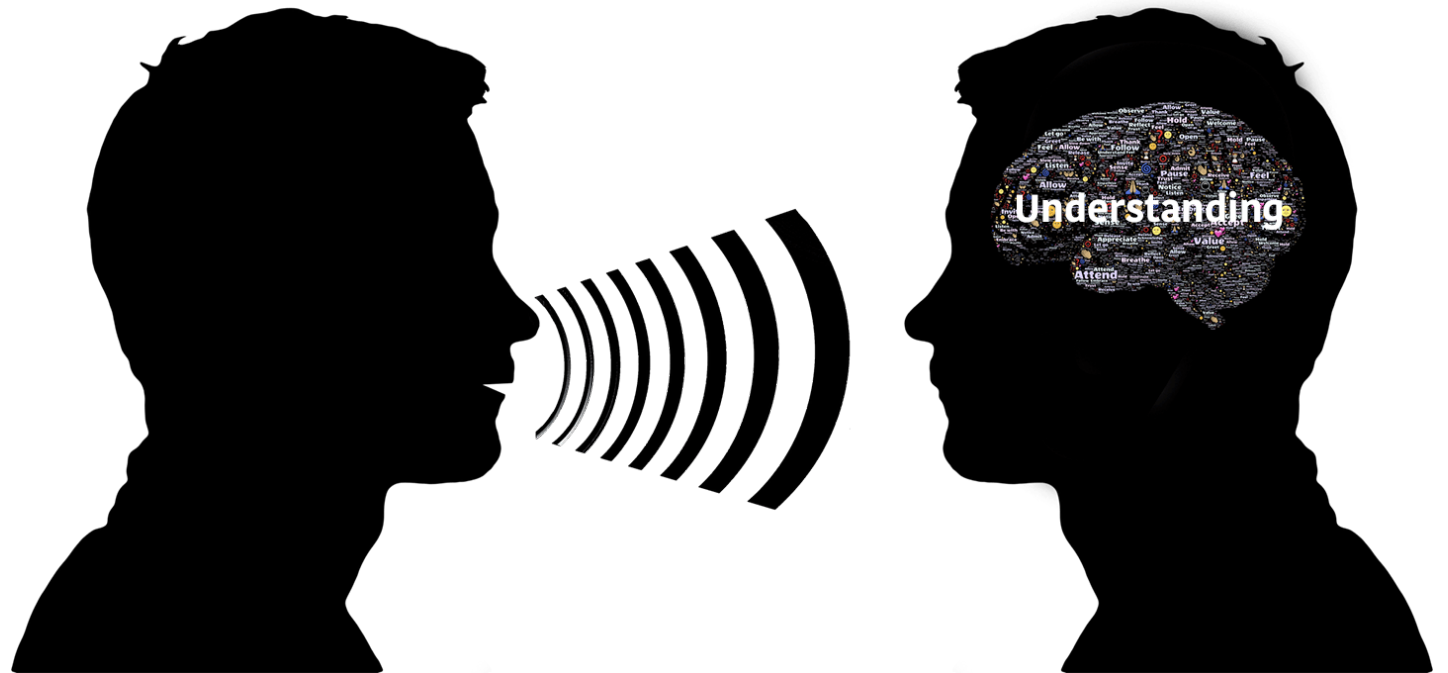
- Lower your voice
- Increase your movement
- Close the gap
- Eye Contact
- Ask a mediator to join.

What if the parents are right?

- Show appreciation
- Correct the wrong as soon as possible
- Apologize
- Never feel the need to always be right.

An Ear NOT an Answer!!!

Active Listening



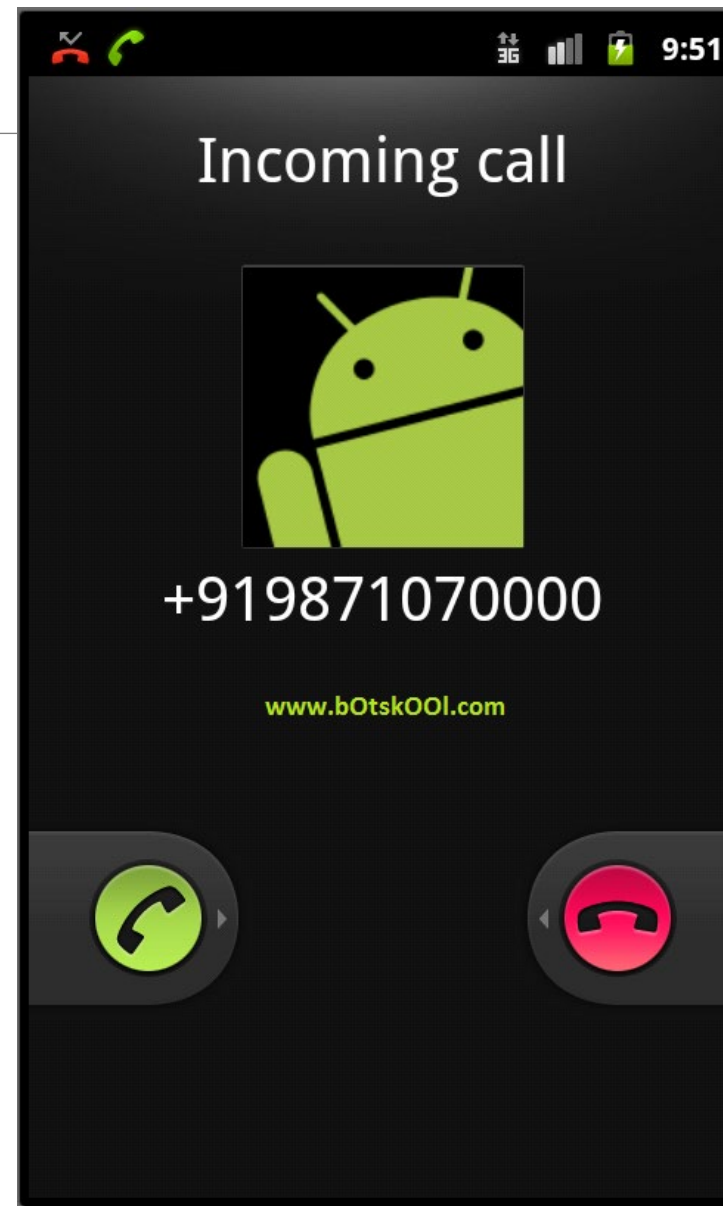


Don't feel Defensive or be Offensive!!



Handling Difficult Situations with the Upmost Care


**The Phone
is our Best
Friend
...unless its
ringing!**





But my child
doesn't lie!





Be aware of
what you
don't know!





Please don't
talk to me like
that!

Little People
have Big Ears!





- Give them an offer they can't refuse.
- What if they use the “F” word...Fair
- Focus on the Future



Thanks for your time and attention



MISSISSIPPI
Family
ENGAGEMENT
GROWING TOGETHER



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION



W.K.
KELLOGG
FOUNDATION™



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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

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