



*E-book*

# Parent Involvement 3.0<sup>®</sup>

From informing to collaboration

Peter de Vries





# Parent involvement 3.0<sup>®</sup>

## From informing to collaboration

This book is designed to help parents and teachers engage in intelligent and powerful collaboration. The preface is written by Otha E. Thornton Jr., president of National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the United States.

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## Preface

When I was asked to write the foreword for Parent Involvement 3.0, I started to think about the strategies that I used as a father to become - and stay - involved in my children's schooling. What I did with my kids wasn't anything groundbreaking. I didn't rewrite the rules of parent involvement. But I was a constant, passionate, and curious parent, always wanting to know more about what my children were learning in school, how I could help them learn more, and how I could make their all-around education process better.



Here are nine things I did:

- Contacted the teacher early in the year and then kept the communication channels open
- Attended parent-teacher conferences and asked what I could do to support what the children were learning in school
- Talked with my children every day about homework, classwork, and what they were learning
- Made sure my kids were well rested and had the proper school supplies
- Helped my kids create and maintain good homework and study habits by setting consistent routines
- Provided a variety of reading materials for my kids, and made sure they saw me reading
- Engaged with teachers and administrators about education decisions that were being made at school
- Asked questions if I didn't understand school issues or practices, and let school officials know as soon as possible if I had any concerns
- Attended PTA meetings to network with other families, discuss concerns, and celebrate successes at school

Ultimately, I became so involved with PTA that I am now the national president of the association! As president, I stress to our more-than-four-million members that the key to effective family engagement lies in the types of engagement that families carry out. Studies have shown that the more families engage with students about the curriculum being taught in their schools, the greater the positive impact on student academic achievement. In fact, research shows that schools would need to spend more than \$1,000 per pupil to gain the academic achievement results that one engaged family member provides.



National PTA defines family engagement as a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies are committed to engaging families in meaningful and culturally respectful ways, and families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development. This engagement is continuous across a child's life, spanning from birth to career. It also carries across different contexts, making an impact everywhere a child learns: at home, at school, and in the community. According to the latest research, students are four times more likely to improve in reading and ten times more likely to improve in math when their families are engaged in the learning process.

All families can have a positive effect on their children's learning, regardless of their cultural background, education, or income level. When families are engaged, students:

- Have higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in more-challenging academic programs
- Pass classes and earn credits on time
- Improve attendance
- Improve behavior, both at home and at school
- Have better social skills

Research shows that the earlier families become engaged, the longer-lasting and the greater the impact of their engagement. At its core, parent engagement means being at the table and using your voice when decisions are being made that impact your child - whether you are speaking with your child's teachers, your school board, or your elected state and federal officials. Decision-makers exist at every level of the education system, and all must hear from our families if we believe in sharing the power of shaping our children's learning.





## Parent Involvement 3.0<sup>®</sup>

Resources like Parent Involvement 3.0 and National PTA's Standards for Family-School Partnerships can help guide both families and educators. Many times, these groups work solo instead of engaging with one another. To get the most out of their education, our children need teamwork from involved adults and families as well as their teachers. Once that engagement occurs, education success almost always follows.

Otha E. Thornton Jr.

President, National PTA





# Introduction

## *Parent Involvement 3.0,* a mega-reform in education!

In November 2012 I was working with several schools on the island of Curaçao to help them work more effectively with parents. During that trip, I was interviewed by Mariano Luis Heyden of Radio Curom. After I talked about parent involvement for a while, he said: “So what you call Parent Involvement 3.0 is a mega-reform in education that isn’t based on throwing a lot of money or time at the problem, but rather on seeing the cooperation between school and parents in a different light. That’s pretty out of the box.”

That quote kept coming back to me. Is it really that simple?

It led me to expand on the idea of *Parent Involvement 3.0* to create a concept that would allow teachers and parents to look at their cooperation differently and thereby allow it to be more effective.





# Parent Involvement 3.0

*Parent Involvement 3.0* is about the collaboration between parents and schools in the education of today's children.

To achieve this, both parties cooperate in looking for new insights to support the development of children.

*Parent Involvement 3.0* is a logical evolution from *Parent Involvement 1.0* and *Parent Involvement 2.0*.



Parent Involvement 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 in summation:

## Parent Involvement 1.0

The school sends information to the parents. This is one-sided communication where the school decides the time, the format, and the content of the information.

## Parent Involvement 2.0

The school sends information to the parents and allows parents the opportunity to send information back. In this case, there does not need any direct communication; the information is just a collection of one-way messages that does not necessarily create collaboration.

## Parent Involvement 3.0

School and parents share and search for new information with a common goal in mind for both parties - the development of the child, that is the student.





### Current situation

One-sided information that flows from the school rarely leads to an increase in parent involvement. Especially not in modern society, where every day we are forced to choose what information reaches us.

Additionally, because of the increased use of social media, we get more and more used to interactivity, speed and efficiency in communication.

Despite this, many schools continue to send information in the traditional manner, using newsletters and e-mail. A lot of information reaches the parents in a quick way, but doesn't allow for interaction (*Parent Involvement 1.0*). Simply using the 'reply button' in the communication process is not enough either (*Parent Involvement 2.0*). There is still no meeting, no real contact. Consequently, parents can sometimes react strongly and send emotionally charged responses. *Parent Involvement 3.0* is the version of communication necessary to take interaction between schools and parents to a better level.





### Parent Involvement 3.0; a step beyond

But why should you, as a school (or parents) make the switch to *Parent Involvement 3.0*? Because it improves student outcomes! Research studies clearly show children deliver better results when their parents and teachers work together in finding what's best for them. The students feel better. Additionally, it has a positive effect in preventing absenteeism, bullying and possibly even suicide among students.

*Parent Involvement 3.0* also helps in doing good things more efficiently. That doesn't just save time but also energy, for both teachers and parents. Time and energy that can be invested in a good education for children! *Parent Involvement 3.0* is a way of thinking. When every teacher and parent consistently acts according to this way of thinking, then teachers and parents will understand each other, help each other, supplement each other, motivate each other and inspire each other. Always in the student's best interests!

### Difficult parents do not exist

Difficult parents don't exist even though teachers don't always feel that way. Some parents may be overly assertive, even aggressive, while some may be incredibly passive. This is because at school things are about their child. Notable behavior in parents is usually due to concern or uncertainty about *how* they can best involve themselves. The cause of this apparently 'difficult behavior' is in many cases a lack of '3.0 communication'.

The foundation of *Parent Involvement 3.0* is the idea that all parents are involved in the well-being of their child. Many parents just don't know how best to support their child's learning.

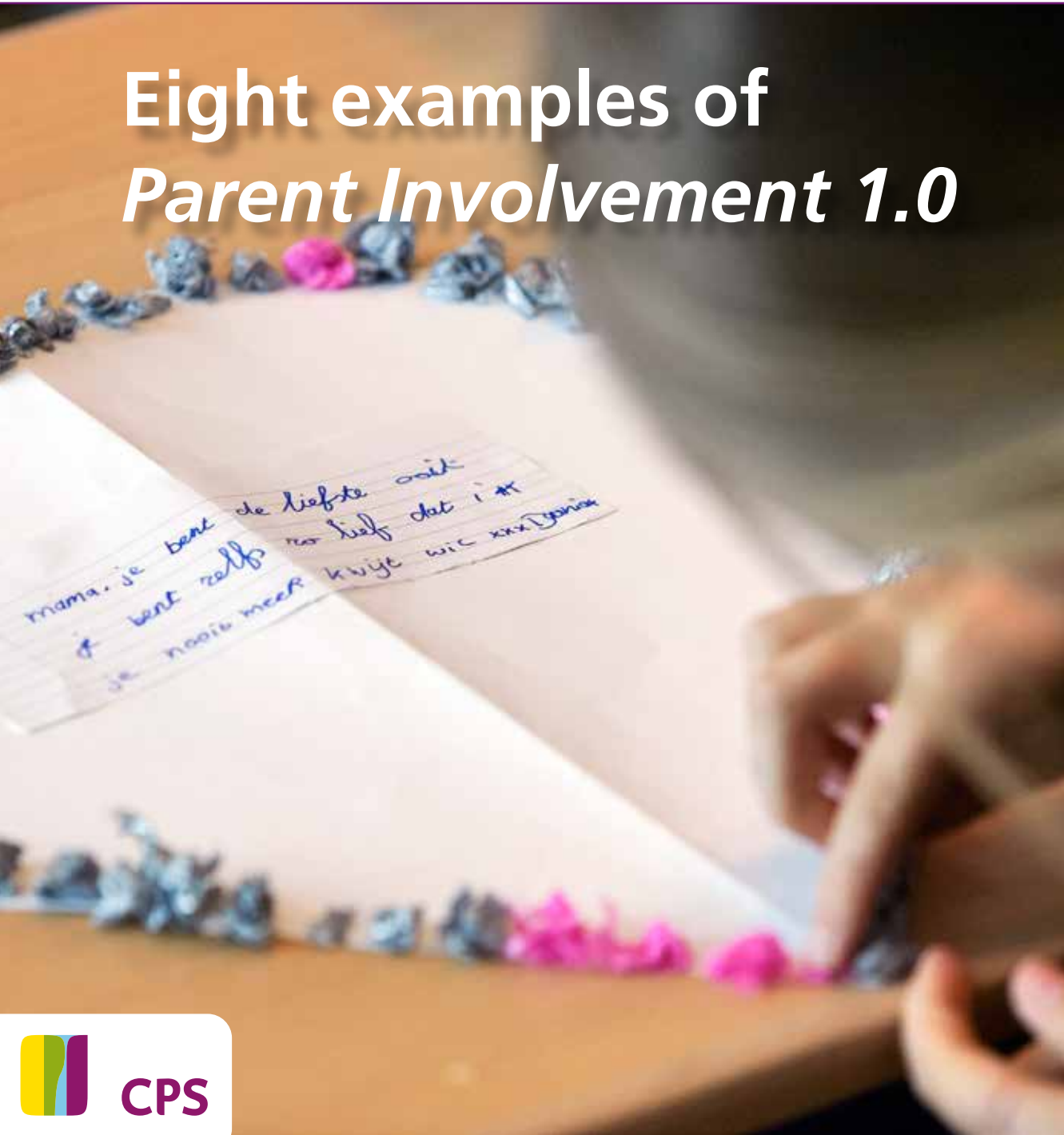


### Crucial for Parent Involvement 3.0

Insight is crucial for making the switch to *Parent Involvement 3.0*. Insight in what education is about, insight into how you can allow students to develop optimally and insight into what is needed to achieve this. Which responsibilities belong to the school, the parents and the student? Where do they overlap? In what possible way can a school realize a shared responsibility with parents? How do parents and school support each other in finding the best ways for children to learn? By cross-referencing this information, we can reach a common ground and attain valuable new insight that provides students the opportunity to be even more successful at school.



# Eight examples of *Parent Involvement 1.0*



*Parent Involvement 1.0* means that the school sends information to the parents. The school determines the time, the format and the content of this one-sided information.





### Recent research

When schools want to better collaborate with parents , they often mean communicate more with parents. But sending more information to parents does not mean that there is any real connection with parents. In autumn 2012, Dutch research organisations Ecorys and Oberon conducted an assessment of parent involvement assigned to them by the Ministry of Education. The study measured to what extent parent involvement in the Netherlands has improved since a first measurement in 2009.

In an interview with the secondary education magazine 'Van 12 tot 18', researchers Van der Aa and Van Der Vegt concluded that collaboration between school and parents is improving: *"The realization that collaboration is important has spread throughout education over the last few years". But: "If we measure progress by the standards of Parent Involvement 3.0, we must conclude that progress has mostly been made on Parent Involvement 1.0."*

School leaders are increasingly aware of the important role parents can play, but so far this appears to lead only to an increase in the one-sided information sent to parents.

<sup>1</sup> Vries, P. de (March 2013) Van 12 tot 18, page 22-24



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 1.0 and its effects*

#### Example 1 **Nothing to say during a parent-teacher conference**

Some teachers in secondary education feel it isn't necessary to hold parent-teacher conferences if there is no information to share. At the same time, teachers feel that parents in secondary education are less involved as the children get older.

#### Example 2 **Parent Portals for Monitoring Student Progress**

Many schools have online access to student performance information that can keep parents up to date with their children's grades and attendance. Some teachers feel that parents can learn all they need to know about what's going on regarding their child by simply using the parent portal regularly. However, if the digital aid is used only in this manner, help is often offered too late. Besides, it is not possible for a worried parent to communicate his or her concern through the system.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 1.0 and its effects*

#### **Example 3 Open House/Curriculum Night**

Most schools organize a curriculum night for the parents at the start of the school year. The class teacher or mentor shares what the students will be learning over the coming year and which rules will apply to them. Attendance varies by year. Most parents show up during the first and last years of elementary school as well as the first and last years of high school. Parents of an oldest child also often show more interest than parents of a second or third child, as they may have heard the story before. These evenings provide a lot of information, but very little contact with the parents. Parents do not feel as if they are part of the process at these evenings because the evening is focused on what students will do and what teachers will do. Nobody is asking parents for their views on learning or their responsibilities regarding the development of their child. Nobody is helping parents know how to help their child learn in that class.





### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 1.0 and its effects*

#### Example 4 **Learning continues at home**

The parent involvement at home is more likely to help a child learn than parent involvement at school. Most students are assigned regular homework, but rarely are parents told how they can best support their child's completion of the homework. As children get older both the school and the student provide parents with fewer and fewer ideas on how to help their child.

#### Example 5 **Report Cards**

A school report card is a judgment of the child by the school. Report cards are often written in such a way that many parents will be unable to understand if their child has a problem and what the story behind the problem is. This can happen because of the use of abbreviations or by using professional terminology. Because of this, report cards rarely encourage parents to discuss things regarding the student.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 1.0 and its effects*

#### Example 6 **Parents are parents**

Schools often tell parents “You are our partners in education”. Unfortunately, what it means to be an effective partner is not defined and has virtually no meaning. Without specific information on how to support their child, parents aren’t motivated to put anything into practice.

#### Example 7 **Dependent on help**

Many activities are impossible for schools without the help of parents. That dependency is sometimes used by schools to pressure parents. In other words, without parent help it won’t happen.

With this message, the school is unilaterally pointing out what it feels is the parents’ responsibility without actually allowing parents to participate in the decision making process to determine what is actually needed from them or how they can support the school.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 1.0 and its effects*

#### Example 8 **The newsletter**

Through commercials, television, brochures, e-mail, social media and other means, we and parents alike have to process so much information on a daily basis that we tend to sort things by relevancy. This also applies to how we read newsletters. School newsletters often don't reach parents. After all, news from school is not the only important information we receive in one day.

Schools that send too much information often think and act mostly out of their own interest and fail to share the most important information in a way that cause parents to read the information and act on it.

#### **Conclusion**

In *Parent Involvement 1.0* the school mainly communicates about what it thinks is important or about the way it sees the solution to problems for the student or the school. Parents are expected to conform to the school's way of doing things, and this often leads to frustrations for parents and teachers alike.





# Eight examples of *Parent Involvement 2.0*

In *Parent Involvement 2.0* the school sends information to the parents and allows parents an opportunity to send information back. However, there is still no actual contact, only the two-way exchange of information. The content of the information isn't a result of parent teacher interactions, but is a collection of 'sent' information. Parents and teachers operate in separate worlds. Common responsibility and distributing tasks according to each other's roles is difficult in this situation.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 2.0 and its effects*

#### **Example 1 The reverse parent-teacher conference**

To take a step beyond sending information and to show an honest interest in the parents' view of their child, schools sometimes have 'reverse parent-teacher conferences'. These are mainly a chance for the parent to talk, disregarding the fact that many parents feel uncomfortable in such a situation. There is no room for dialog where both parties search for new information about the child to help its development.

#### **Example 2 Emotional reactions**

As schools are sending more e-mails, parents are also making use of this medium to send information back. Because parents are emotionally involved with their child, it's not uncommon for parents to send emotionally charged e-mails. Schools tend to see these emotional e-mails as unpleasant.

When there is no regular dialogue between parents and the school, parents tend to hold on to their concerns for a long time and after that let them out all at once. The reachability of schools and teachers also plays a major role in this. Is the school truly open to parents or are there still barriers in place? Except from parents that send emotional e-mails, there are some other dads or mums that may visit the school in a huff after frustrations build, which can be very intimidating to teachers.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 2.0 and its effects*

#### Example 3 **Parental satisfaction research**

Parents are not the school's partners in education (*Parent Involvement 1.0*), but neither are they the school's customers (*Parent Involvement 2.0*).

Nonetheless, many principals stress that parents are the school's customers and should be treated as such by teachers. Usually this is then followed by sentences like "The customer is always right." Parental satisfaction research is seen as an important means of improvement, but satisfaction does not guarantee a parent knows how to partner with the school to improve student learning. It might even encourage parents to act out their role as consumer critics.

#### Example 4 **The lawyer will be there too**

A lot of arbitration exists in the world of education. While teachers have unions and professional organizations, parents sometimes have groups that help support them. Arbitration carries its dangers, however. This sort of 'us versus them' thinking can easily end in conflict.

Parent Involvement 3.0 is an appeal for less arbitration and more shared responsibility and equality. (Leraar Leerling Ouders, [www.stichtingllo.nl](http://www.stichtingllo.nl))





### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 2.0 and its effects*

#### Example 5 **Anti-bullying policies**

Many schools and states have an anti-bullying policy. Often these policies describe how parents will be informed or can be involved. A good anti-bullying policy describes the parent's role in preventing and stopping bullying. This goes beyond informing parents at some stage (*Parent Involvement 1.0*) or calling on parents when their children cross the line (*Parent Involvement 2.0*). If a school wants students and teachers to feel responsible for preventing bullying, parents and students must have their input on an effective anti-bullying policy (*Parent Involvement 3.0*).

#### Example 6 **Over-involved parents**

Some teachers think parents are “over-involved” and feel it’s important to limit their influence. Of course it’s easy to understand why a school needs to set boundaries. At the same time, however, we must realize that parents who are already worried are only going to get more worried if contact with a teacher is difficult. If, at the start of the school year, parents and teachers make an agreement about how and when contact occurs (*Parent Involvement 3.0*), this allows a teacher the freedom to indicate that too much attention for a parent may have adverse effects on the other students. Teachers can then search for the optimal solution along with the parents.



### *Eight examples of Parent Involvement 2.0 and its effects*

#### Example 7 **Extra holidays**

One of the great annoyances for schools is children not attending the day before a vacation because the parents want to have a longer holiday. Many parents find the penalties acceptable or simply call the child in sick. With *Parent Involvement 3.0* the principal can invite the parents to discuss the consequences this decision has for their child. This would be a discussion about the how and why of rules and what the child can learn from them, or about needlessly calling children in sick and the effects it has on the child.

#### Example 8 **Panel discussions**

In panel discussions or brainstorming groups, parents are invited to share their observations with the school, brainstorm about improvements and more. Some schools use a set group of parents, while others choose to ask different groups every time to get more feedback. For some schools, these meetings can be a disappointment. "Most parents do nothing but complain, and they don't look beyond the interests of their (own) children." Usually this is a sign that those panel meetings are not balanced rightly. Often parents are allowed to tell about what they or their children have experienced but they're not asked to think about solutions and common responsibility. It's rare for parents to see or hear of any results from their input and suggestions. As a consequence, parents often stop cooperating and stop attending.



### Conclusion

In *Parent Involvement 2.0*, communication is mutual but parents and teachers are still working in separate worlds. The gap between these worlds can sometimes be difficult to bridge. Schools are all too quick to see parents as a nuisance. Parents often experience teachers as dismissive and feel uninvolved with the school because they are not partners in the process of supporting their child's learning.





# Four essential ingredients for *Parent Involvement 3.0*

In *Parent Involvement 3.0* the school and parents cooperate with a clear goal in mind for both parties - information about the child's behavior and how it can be used to help the student learn.



*Parent Involvement 3.0* assumes that the cooperation between school and parents is organized in such a way to make school and parents equal partners. School and parents have a mutual responsibility for the education of the child, and recognize each other's professional and emotional expertise in these matters.

*Parent Involvement 3.0* is the ideal cooperation between school and parents.

Of course this raises the question, "How can you put *Parent Involvement 3.0* into practice? The recipe for implementation has four essential ingredients:

- 1. A startup meeting at the beginning of every school year with parents, student and teacher.**
- 2. Individual arrangement of meetings: school, parents and students agree on the type and frequency of communication, based on the developmental needs of the student.**
- 3. A beginning of the school year reception for parents and children, so they will get to know each other (again), allowing people to get involved with one another at the start of the new school year.**
- 4. Buddy/mentor parents**

With consistent use of the above four ingredients, *Parent Involvement 3.0* can become a reality. This is not just a matter of approach but more a revolution in thinking about the quality of cooperation between school and parents. All those involved will ultimately see how they need each other and how they reinforce each other in helping children learn. The valuable new ideas that spring up become a motivator for continued involvement.





### *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

#### **1. A startup meeting every year**

The goal: to create contact, trust and bonds between school and parents from the very start.

Parents must entrust their children to a teacher who they often barely know. A good startup meeting and an introduction to the teacher(s) at the start of the year should be considered routine. Typically that first meeting has been a one-sided '1.0' information evening or doesn't happen until the first 15-minute conference in November.

An individual startup meeting with parents, student and teacher(s) or mentor(s) instead of an information evening for a whole class ensures a better start to the school year which, in turn, lets the student see that their parents and teachers can cooperate. If other people (such as a relative or family friend) play an important role in the student's life, they can also be present at the initial meeting. The conversation should be about what the student wants to learn during the coming year, the challenges and opportunities parents anticipate for their child, along with what the teacher expects from the student during the year. Such an interactive meeting at the start of the school year will yield results all year long. This first contact allows parents to more easily connect with their child's teacher by establishing a personal relationship right from the start.





### *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

## **2. Individual arrangement of meetings**

The goal: to individualize contact with families based on the needs of the child.

This second ingredient requires us to let go of the more traditional ways of engaging families. It means letting the parents have a say in how and when there is contact between school and parents.

In the startup meeting, the discussion between school, student and parents should be based on the needs of the child. Currently how and when schools meet with parents is usually determined by the school calendar (in the case of parent-teacher conferences), report cards or progress reports, the findings of the school (in the case of a home visit) or by a small group of parents (with parent councils). Individual meetings with parents based on the needs of the individual student mean in practice that the frequency and duration of these meetings will be different for each student. In some cases, parents and the school meet twice per year for half an hour to share information on the child's progress. In other situations, a home visit is scheduled with the family to give the teacher an opportunity to share data on the child's progress outside of the school environment. In other cases more immediate contact with the family is necessary, for example, by phone. Of course this leaves school and parents the option to arrange a parent-teacher conference to follow-up on strategies and progress discussed during the phone conference.



## *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

### **2. Individual arrangement of meetings (continued)**

The individual meeting is scheduled, based on the needs of the student, rather than for the school's benefit. It may also be important for parents to schedule meetings with specific subject area teachers over the course of the year. With *Parent Involvement 3.0* the student, his or her parents and teacher(s) all know how to schedule a meeting on short notice to support the student's learning.

Every conversation about the student will be a '3.0' conference to discuss the child's progress areas of concern and barriers to achievement. The success of the child depends on the successful collaboration between the teacher and the parent. During these conferences, parents and teachers will review data together, brainstorm solutions and come to an agreement about what to do next. When possible and appropriate the student should be present at these conferences. One possibility is for the student with the teacher's assistance to prepare a portfolio with current work samples to share progress with his or her parents during the conference.



## *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

### **2. Individual arrangement of meetings (continued)**

The yearly startup meeting is also a time to survey parent's wishes about the frequency of information meetings in the interest of their child. It may well be that parents of 4th-grade or 7th-grade children have virtually no interest in attending a Back to School Night/Curriculum Night at the start of the year while parents of 5th-grade and 8th-grade children do. Or the school could strongly recommend that it is in the children's best interests for all parents to attend at least one of the planned meetings at the start of the school year so that parents know what is happening at school and how they can best support their child's learning and development.. It may also be helpful to arrange an evening for parents to meet all of their child's teachers.

Experience shows that parents who commit to a cycle of meetings arranged by the school and themselves in this manner almost always show up. Additionally, these meetings make it much easier for the school to start conversation with the parents when needed.





### *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

#### **3. A beginning of the school year reception**

The goal: create opportunities for parents to get to know each other and each other's children to support all students.

It's important to build social connections and contact between families. For the students it's not only important to have contact between their parents and the teacher or mentor, but also to have contact among parents and other children.

For this reason, it's a good idea to start every school year with a voluntary 'Family Meet-Up' for parents and students in a grade level or class to get to know one another. If parents get to know each other, they often develop a greater understanding of each other's children. Parents then feel more responsible for the well-being of the entire class. In this case, parents may be able to intervene much earlier in situations if they feel like to have developed an existing relationship with another parent. Finally, it's important for parents to get to know each other so that they know the families of their child's friends who their own children are playing with on a regular basis.



## *Four essential ingredients of parent involvement*

### **4. Buddy/mentor Parents**

The goal: to enable all parents to engage as partners in supporting student learning

Some parents have a more difficult time engaging with the school than others. This may be caused by past experiences, language/cultural barriers, challenging work schedules that offer virtually no free time and childcare issues. Some parents who resist outreach by the school can be engaged by other parents. In order to involve all parents it is therefore necessary to create an environment where parents feel connected to one another. A 'buddy system' is a great solution for doing so. Parents that need that extra little push are linked to another parent. The need for a buddy can be determined at the yearly startup meeting, for example. It's also a good opportunity to recruit new buddies. Doing so isn't really a lot of work for the school, but the effects are enormous. One principal told us that, in order to improve buddy relationships, he hired a bus to send forty parents on a 'school trip'. It was a massive success.

To give another example: some schools can be rather frenetic about dealing with parents that don't speak English very well or at all. Imagine, though, having to go to a hospital in Italy with your child where none of the doctors can speak a word of English. You'd be miserable.

One good solution would be to have an English-speaking buddy who can show you around in the hospital and translate where necessary.





# Effects of *Parent Involvement 3.0*





Applying these four basic ingredients has the following effects:

1. **Commitment from all parents and therefore optimal involvement in the school development of their child.**
2. **A time investment at the start of the year ensures a good assessment of the needs of the student, which frees up time and energy for the rest of the year. This greatly improves the efficiency of cooperation.**
3. **A new way of thinking about the cooperation between school and parents in the student's best interests.**
4. **A lot of creativity, variation and personal expression in the cooperation between school and parents. This creates all sorts of new, efficient and time-saving forms of cooperation and new ideas about how children can learn.**
5. **The forming of a school community wherein *all* parents feel involved and know how to deal with that involvement.**
6. **While there seems to be a greater initial investment of time, you eventually save time because 'repair meetings' are needed much less.**

The ultimate result: teachers will have more breathing room, parents feel involved and students develop better.



### Very important...

Is *Parent Involvement 1.0* or *2.0*, the sending of information, always wrong? Of course not. In *Parent Involvement 3.0* there is the same back-and-forth sending of information, but always with the goal of improving cooperation in the student's best interests. If communication stops at *Parent Involvement 1.0* or *2.0* however, that means real cooperation between school and parents is incomplete or missing altogether.

Parent Involvement 3.0 is reached by letting go of all existing styles of Parent involvement. Together with the individual parent the moments of cooperation, based on the needs of the individual student, are rearranged.

The four basic ingredients must be applied consistently to reach these effects. Just having the yearly startup meeting and then maintaining the usual parent-teacher conferences, or maybe changing them around a bit, will not get beyond *Parent Involvement 1.0* or *2.0*.

Arranging this cycle of meetings will mostly happen according to the planning needs of the school instead of the developmental needs of the student. The goal can only be reached if the school is willing and able to let go of all existing forms of parental cooperation (such as information evenings, parent-teacher conferences, house calls) and rearrange everything in search of the best methods for each individual student. That demands a lot of guts and ambition!



### More than the recipe

The above recipe will get you to *Parent Involvement 3.0*, but *Parent Involvement 3.0* is much more than just those four methods. Theme evenings with parents can be organized in a very 3.0 way for example, by arranging workshops for and by teachers *and* parents.

A parent can show teachers how to work with presentation tool Prezi while another parent tells about his culture and the education habits that go with it. Or a workshop about signs of bullying can be prepared by parent and teacher together. Not only does this make good use of the parents' expertise, but it also creates an environment where both sides can learn from each other equally.

### In closing...

*Parent Involvement 3.0* is not about parents; it's about students. Children have the right to a cooperation between teachers and parents. Teachers and parents share a common responsibility for the development of the next generation, after all. Shared responsibility is bigger than just keeping each other well-informed. Working together is a requirement for both teachers and parents. This means that you can't 'pull rank' as a teacher, and that parents must also sometimes get over themselves in the interests of their child and its classmates, even if something feels unsatisfactory.





## Criticisms about *Parent Involvement 3.0*



### Critical feedback regarding *Parent Involvement 3.0*.

1. Whether *Parent Involvement 3.0* damages the profession of teaching is a serious question. Don't parents assume a teacher-like or principal-like role in *Parent Involvement 3.0*? The school doesn't make certain decisions for the sake of the students without a good reason. Parents should trust in that, shouldn't they? And if they don't, then maybe it's time to look for another school? The important underlying question here is "Who owns the school?" Does it belong to the teachers, the students, the principal, the government, the parents...? It's an impossible question that leads to exhausting discussion:  
"We will decide what happens here at school..."  
"Yes, but it's our child. And if we don't want..."  
The most important question then is not who *owns* the school, but rather who the school is *for*: the students. That question will relax those involved and open up the possibilities for cooperation as well as for sharing responsibilities.
2. "Let teachers do their job" is a common reaction heard to underscore the fact that teachers are often busy enough, without having to engage with parents who are often seen as trying to meddle in their profession. The only reason to work in a close collaboration with the parents is the positive effect it has on the educational outcome of the student.'
3. Who decides? Does *Parent Involvement 3.0* mean that parents have a voice in all of the school decisions regarding the student? Who has decision rights, the school or the parent? Parent Involvement 3.0 is not a form of democracy. *Parent Involvement 3.0* is sharing responsibility and working together on behalf of the student. If a teacher and parents have a difference of opinion, the final responsibility should always lay with the school.



# *Parent Involvement 3.0:* theoretical underpinnings

How *Parent Involvement 3.0* works. *Parent Involvement 3.0* is based on the National Standards for Family School Partnerships from the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the years of practical experience of CPS Onderwijsontwikkeling en advies (a Dutch advisory organization for education) in Dutch schools.





### Parent Involvement 3.0 and the six PTA standards

The National PTA evolved from the National Congress of Mothers, founded in 1897 by three women driven by their wish to create a better future for their children. The National PTA has over a century of knowledge and experience engaging families meaningfully in school partnerships. CPS Onderwijsontwikkeling en advies has translated those PTA standards to the Dutch education system in close cooperation with the PTA.

#### Standard 1 **Welcome All Families**

Families and parents are active participants in the school. They feel welcome, valued and connected to each other, the school community and student learning.

#### Standard 2 **Communicating Effectively**

Parents and the school engage in regular two-way conversation about student learning.

#### Standard 3 **Supporting Student Success**

Parents and the school work together to support student learning and healthy development both at home and school. Parents and school are provided multiple opportunities to gain knowledge and skills to do this effectively.



## Standard 4 **Speaking Up for Every Child**

Parents advocate for their own children and other children so that all students are treated fairly and have access to quality learning opportunities that support student success.

## Standard 5 **Sharing Power**

Parents and school are equal partners in decisions that affect children. Together, they inform, influence and develop policies, practices and programs in the best interest of students.

## Standard 6 **Collaboration with the community**

Parents and school work together with the community to connect students, families and staff to additional learning opportunities and a chance for civic participation through volunteer and service opportunities.

These National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, developed by the National PTA, are the prerequisites for a school to implement *Parent involvement 3.0* successfully.



In short:  
***Parent Involvement 3.0***

*Parent Involvement 3.0* is a revolution in education which isn't based on throwing a lot of money or time at the problem but rather on simply looking at the cooperation between school and parents in a new light. There is only one goal: the best possible cooperation between school and parents for the student's development.





Parents and teachers are both responsible in all things related to school. They should cooperate instead of merely informing each other. Teachers and parents are equals and fully respect each other's roles, tasks and responsibilities. Parents and teachers feel responsible for the children. Parents know how they can be involved in the education of their child. To reach these goals, it is necessary to apply *Parent Involvement 3.0* consistently in language, in thought and in action. It means distancing ourselves from our prejudices such as 'difficult parents', 'passive parents' or 'know-it-all teachers' and instead support each other in looking for the best for our children, our students.

### The views of CPS

The views of CPS regarding parent involvement clearly state the responsibilities of school and parents.

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Every child, every student has a right to a good cooperation between school and parents! According to CPS Onderwijsontwikkeling en advies, parental responsibility is therefore a mandatory and equal cooperation between parents and school wherein parents and school work proceeding from a common responsibility to reach a better education for the child (the student). Parent involvement has only one goal in mind: a better world for the child/the student, the parents and the school.



Thinking in terms of *Parent Involvement 1.0*, *2.0* and *3.0* offers a clear analysis if there is a breakdown in the cooperation with parents or if parents are not fully involved. Is there trouble? Perhaps the school was acting too '1.0' and parents were therefore responding in a '2.0' manner.

*Parent Involvement 3.0* demands a school leader that naturally and completely facilitates the cooperation of his or her colleagues and the parents in the best interests of the students. Principals that constantly want to please the parents, or take the passive attitude of some parents for granted or who mainly let themselves be led by the teachers' resistance to change, are selling their students short.

If school and parents apply *Parent Involvement 3.0* consistently they'll see all parents becoming effectively involved. As a result of this, time and energy are saved. Most importantly: students will be happier at school and will achieve better results!







# Appendix: *Parent Involvement 3.0* at your school?

The plan on the following page will help you chart existing forms of *Parent Involvement 1.0* and *Parent Involvement 2.0* at your school and translate them to *Parent Involvement 3.0*. This plan can be completed by school and parents working together.





Current Parent Involvement 1.0 - forms at school	Current Parent Involvement 2.0 - forms at school	Desired Parent Involvement 3.0 - forms at school
<i>Example of 1.0 → 3.0</i>		
Theme evenings with one-sided sending of information...	become... 	...meetings where teachers and parents are workshopping together. Parents could for example give workshops on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from Powerpoint to Prezi;</li> <li>• helping your child with homework;</li> <li>• the effects on a family if a child is suffering from ADHD;</li> <li>• their own cultural background, norms and values;</li> <li>• puberty (for example if a parent is a psychologist).</li> </ul>
<i>Example of 2.0 → 3.0</i>		
	Reverse parent teacher conferences that only let the parents speak... become... 	...discussions with enough time to exchange information in order to reach new insights together.
<i>Think about what is happening in a 1.0 or 2.0 manner at your school, and think about how this could be translated into a 3.0 form...</i>		



# About the author

“So what you call Parent Involvement 3.0 is a mega-reform in education that isn’t based on throwing a lot of money or time at the problem, but rather on seeing the cooperation between school and parents in a different light. That’s pretty out of the box.” That quote kept niggling at me. Is it really that simple?

Peter de Vries (1965) worked as a teacher in basic and special basic education for almost ten years. After that, he has worked as a location manager for an orthopedagogic daycare center for children with mental and physical handicaps. At the same time, he had his own practice as a mediator between parents and schools in both primary and secondary education. Since 2003 he is working as principal-advisor and trainer at CPS Onderwijsontwikkeling en advies. Besides this, he also visits school as a parent. Based on his experiences, De Vries has written, among other things [\*Handboek ouders in de school\*](#), [\*Mijn kind op school\*](#) and [\*Ouderbetrokkenheid voor elkaar\*](#).

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*Parent Involvement 3.0* is a way of thinking. If all teachers and parents consistently put this way of thinking into action, teachers and parents will understand each other. They will start to recognize where their interests meet and where they can reinforce each other in developing an appropriate education for every child. That in turn will provide new insights and opportunities for involvement with each other and with the school, creating an inspiring school environment for all children.