

Table 6.1 Family–school partnership working problems and solutions

Common problems in working with families	Solution to the problem
1. Assuming that families will be like your own family and will be willing to engage in a school’s family activities and events.	Ensuring that the benefits of engaging with and participating in family activities at the school are made clear, i.e. ‘What’s in it for families?’ Publicising past achievements in family partnership working.
2. Placing too much emphasis on fundraising.	Always beginning the school year with a family social or welcome event, and one that is free. Saving fundraising events until later in the year.
3. Doing the same family activities every year, because that is the way that they have always been done.	Looking back at the evaluations on family activities at school. Stopping doing those that received satisfactory or poor evaluations. Introducing new and more innovative activities that have been suggested by families, which will have a wider appeal.
4. Trying to cram too many family activities into the school year, resulting in staff and family volunteer burn-out.	Removing those activities that take up far too much family volunteer and staff time. Focusing on fewer more successful activities.
5. Failing to keep track of all the family activities and events held at the school, year on year.	Documenting everything – how many events, what type of activities, how many families attended, which families attended, impact and outcomes of each activity.
6. No long-term family partnership working strategy, plan or budget in place.	Greater involvement and consultation with family representatives to gain their views and vision for current and future family partnership working developments. Apportioning a core amount of funding from the school budget to pump prime family activities. Offering a planned programme of training for family volunteers and family workers to support succession planning.
7. Taking family volunteers for granted, by using the same core group of loyal parents and other family supporters.	Continually acknowledging family volunteers’ contributions, and supporting them in recruiting new family volunteers to share existing and new roles and responsibilities.



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