Tellin’ Stories Project
Teaching for Change

Using the power of story to connect parents and schools for quality education for all students
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Teaching for Change provides teachers and parents with the tools to create schools where students learn to read, write, and change the world.
Session Objectives
Participants will learn approaches from Teaching for Change to:

• Help teachers and administrators rethink their assumptions about parent involvement and why traditional approaches are often unsuccessful

• Adopt new approaches to parent-school relations so that there is a level playing field
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Agenda

• Welcome and Introduction
• Ice Breaker
• Turning the Tables on Prof. Devel.
• Top Family Engagement Strategies
• How We Do It – Principles for PD
• Closing and Evaluation
Where and with Whom We Work

“They've really helped us learn how to help our kids. We [Spanish-speaking parents] were closed to those activities and opportunities before, but now they are open to us.”

-- Imelda Marroquín, parent

“Tellin’ Stories did not just increase the numbers of parents involved – it literally changed the face of who we saw coming in the door and advocating for their children.”

-- Michelle Molitor, principal
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School-based approach

- Build relationships between families and schools
- Address the cultural differences, understand diversity, and develop multicultural relationships
- Help parents to develop skills needed to advocate and assist their children in getting a quality education
- Prioritize parents’ concerns and develop action plans to enhance their school community
- Professional development, coaching, and support for principals, teachers, and parent coordinators
Assumptions

TRADITIONAL

• Parents **roles are limited**: fundraising, chaperoning, attending PTA meetings.

• Parents need to have **specific skills** to be involved. Many lack the capacity or willingness to be involved. (deficit-model)

• Starting point: Hold a PTA **meeting** and have parents sign up for committees.

• Diversity is a challenge. School culture needs to be imposed on the school community.

TELLIN’ STORIES

• Parents play **multiple roles**: teachers, supporters, monitors, advocates, decision makers and more.

• **All parents** are resources to their children’s schools. Schools must recognize and cultivate the knowledge and strength of each family.

• Starting point: **building trust** through sharing our stories.

• **Diversity is a strength**. School culture and leadership must reflect the diversity of the school community.
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Signature Activities

• Story Quilting Series
• Community Walk
• Welcoming Climate Walkthrough
• Roving Readers
• Grade Level Dialogues
• Cross-City Parent Coordinator Training
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Ice Breaker!
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• Schools become more aware of the language, culture, and experiences of their families
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• Teachers, staff, and administrators approach parents as partners
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• School meetings include and engage families in meaningful ways
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• Schools appreciate parents and see them as resources
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• Parents emerge as leaders and advocates for their children
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

• Teachers welcome – and request! – parent involvement
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What can happen as a result of effective PD with teachers and family engagement practitioners?

- Build relationships that break down barriers and create direct links in the home-school partnership
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Parent Panel Debrief

- What themes or trends did you notice?
- How did parents feel about their experiences with the school?
- How would you describe the parents’ experiences and their relationships with the teachers?
- What do you think teachers might take away from this conversation?
- What insight/knowledge/skills do you think teachers need to engage with parents based on what you’ve heard?
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Family Engagement Strategies
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Family Engagement Strategies

- Positive phone calls home
- Home visits
- Including families in the curriculum
- Parent-teacher academic meetings (Grade Level Dialogues)
- Parent Centers/
  Parent Coordinators
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How We Do It: Principles for PD

- Encourage community/relationship building
- Acknowledge power dynamics when parents engage with schools
- Lead teachers to question and confront their assumptions about families
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How We Do It: Principles for PD

- Promote shared learning: between teachers, between parents and teachers
- Tap into what families/teachers already know and are doing
- Include family voices in PD
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How We Do It: Principles for PD

- Encourage respectful and responsive family engagement
- Find ways to be interactive, welcoming, accessible
- Develop strategies specific to their families
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