

IDRA Parent Leadership Model

“Valuing” and “Deficit” Assumptions

IDRA's parent involvement model has four major areas of focus: Parents as (1) first and continuing teachers of their children; (2) resources to the school; (3) decision-makers in education; and (4) leaders and trainers of other leaders. Within these four areas we illustrate below the contrast between the valuing and deficit models of thinking and acting. For each area below, we've listed sample “valuing” and “deficit” assumptions.

Parents as Teachers

Valuing Assumptions

- ❖ Parents have already taught their children many things.
- ❖ Parents continue to transmit values, beliefs and traditions to their children.
- ❖ Parents demonstrate their love for their children in a variety of ways.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Parents share successes in rearing children.
- ❖ Families share with each other how they observe important events.
- ❖ Parents compare and contrast how they show love, and also how they teach responsibility, honesty and other values.

Deficit Assumptions

- ❖ Parents do not know how to rear children properly.
- ❖ Parents have limited knowledge because of limited formal education.
- ❖ These parents are poor because they do not have initiative and do not want to work.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ These parents need a class on “How to Raise My Child for Success.”
- ❖ Simple, practical, hands-on activities are the best you can do for these parents.
- ❖ Provide lectures on responsibility; the importance of education; and appropriate child rearing practices.
- ❖ Explain how to get and keep a job.

Parents as Resources

Valuing Assumptions

- ❖ Parents can assist in a variety of ways, including tutoring and instruction.
- ❖ All parents are experts in their families' histories and traditions.
- ❖ All parents have unique skills.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Parents staff reading centers.
- ❖ Parents give oral histories of their neighborhood. They share cuentos, adivinanzas, and trabalenguas (stories, riddles and tongue-twisters).
- ❖ Parents show and tell a specific skill they are proficient in, e.g., making tortillas, tossing a ball, etc.

Deficit Assumptions

- ❖ Parents are unskilled, but they can provide free assistance for low-skill tasks.
- ❖ Parents cannot assist with instructional tasks.
- ❖ Parents can get in the way, so you must be careful and control their activities.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Use parents to make photocopies, watch the kids and run errands.
- ❖ Parents can help supervise the cafeteria and run cake sales.
- ❖ Rules for parents must be clearly posted. Limit time, space and label sections “for teachers only.”

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Parents as Decision Makers

Valuing Assumptions

- ❖ Parents make decisions all the time.
- ❖ Parents do not need extensive formal instruction on decision-making.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Parents are given support to participate successfully in decision-making groups.
- ❖ Parents are given great leeway in what they want to accomplish and how they are going to get there.

Deficit Assumptions

- ❖ Parents cannot make good decisions by themselves.
- ❖ School personnel know better than parents what is good for their children.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ A few parents whose opinions you know and can trust are allowed to be on committees.
- ❖ Carefully guide parents to make decisions that you determined beforehand.

Parents as Leaders and Trainers

Valuing Assumptions

- ❖ Parents are powerful advocates of excellent schools.
- ❖ Parents can teach other parents.
- ❖ Parents can be spokespersons, catalysts, problem solvers, and resource linkers.

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Parents conduct workshops on parent leadership.
- ❖ Parents give public testimony in support of excellent education for all children.
- ❖ Parents participate in public dialogues on schools that work for all children.

Deficit Assumptions

- ❖ Parents cannot make good leaders in education
- ❖ Parents should not criticize schools
- ❖ Parents always lack the information to be advocates for good education

Related Types of Activities

- ❖ Parents are trained to be effective fund raisers for their child's school.
- ❖ Parents are coached to say only nice things about school.
- ❖ Parents are counseled to defer to the professionals and experts on all educational issues.

