



How to Plan and Conduct a ParentCamp

About ParentCamps

- ✓ Think about why you want to meet with other parents and caregivers in an informal setting. Do you want to get to know your child's schoolmates' parents in an informal setting? Or do you have a specific issue you'd like others to hear about and address possible solutions.
- ✓ Decide whether your meeting will be an introductory session or will address specific concerns. An introductory session will be more of a meet-and-greet and open forum, and may be one general session, while a meeting addressing specific issues could consist of multiple sessions.
- ✓ These kinds of meetings may be executed well as ParentCamps. What is a ParentCamp? It is a gathering of parents, guardians, grandparents, and other caregivers to discuss issues or ideas that will lead to a better education experience for children. Intended primarily to benefit elementary school-age children, parents of children in middle school and high school also may find a ParentCamp forum of value for discussing issues of common concern.

Gather Support

- ✓ Reach out to school and district leadership, parent groups, community & educational organizations to form a committee and gather support.
- ✓ If you're not sure where to start, try starting with your child's teacher. Or see if you can talk to teachers at events, such as back to school night, parent-teacher meetings, or on the playground at dismissal time.
- ✓ Try to talk to parents as they drop off kids in the morning.
- ✓ Then make an appointment to speak with the principal.
- ✓ If you belong to any community organizations, connect with individuals at a meeting or event. Explain to them what a ParentCamp is, and your interest in having a local ParentCamp. Express what your interest is in forming a ParentCamp, creating a more solid network of student support by discussing a topic of concern and identifying ways to address issues raised.

Start With the Basics

- ✓ Choose a date, time, and location. The typical ParentCamp takes place in a school and lasts 4 hours with 3 breakout sessions.
- ✓ Create a registration (ParentCamps are always FREE) and session suggestion sign-up form.
- ✓ Spread the word via social media, traditional media (e.g., fliers, ads in neighborhood, city, or county newspapers or other periodicals), word of mouth by community & faith organizations (translate into various languages as necessary). A flier can include language, such as: "What is a ParentCamp? (See about ParentCamps above).
- ✓ See if your child's teacher will distribute your flier to the class at the end of the day for kids to take home.
- ✓ Recruit facilitators, those who will moderate the breakout sessions, and language interpreters, as needed. Facilitators' main job is to keep discussion on topic, to end on time, and to ensure that all comments/suggestions are heard and written down.
- ✓ Create attendee packets consisting of an agenda and other materials. An agenda should include topics for discussion, times, and locations, if there are to be breakout groups.



Check the Details

Remember to plan for refreshments, whether bottled water, for example, or snacks too. See if the school or an organization can sponsor the refreshments. If not, ask for volunteers to make or bring snacks, and for all to bring their own drinks.

- ✓ Recruit volunteers to be greeters, assist with food, and be room monitors. Explain their roles. Greeters will direct those arriving to the room, and answer any basic questions, such as where the restrooms are located. Room monitors help the facilitators. The room monitors will get people to sign the sign in sheet, take notes during the session, keep track of time and signal to close out session as time nears 40-minute limit.
- ✓ Create directional and sponsorship signage. Plan ahead of time to have the supplies you'll need—primarily markers and easel paper.
- ✓ Work with building contact person:
Verify the rooms will meet technology needs, if any. If you do a Twitter feed, for example, you'll need a laptop and projector.
- ✓ Verify Wi-Fi capacity in building; request guest login if necessary. If there is no Wi-Fi, find a volunteer willing to use their Internet capability for the meeting OR have someone gather notes on flip charts.
- ✓ Consult the ParentCamp Checklist [\[hyerlink\]](#) to make sure all details are covered.

The Big Day Is Here!

Before the Meeting

- ✓ Arrive at least an hour before the event to help with anything still needing attention: room set up, refreshment arrangement, signage set up, equipment set up, and attendee packet assembly.
- ✓ Have greeters at their appointed locations a few minutes before the posted start time.
- ✓ Have name tags and markers on registration table, which can be close to the meeting room entry, either in the room or just outside. Indicate that first name only is needed.

Opening Session and Breakout Sessions

- ✓ Open the meeting with statements about the purpose of ParentCamp.
- ✓ Briefly list attendee guidelines, Guidance may include simple rules of order, such as raising hand to speak. Remind attendees to give sufficient time for speakers, responses, and facilitator note-taking, and be mindful of session time remaining.
- ✓ Display a Twitter feed wall & encourage attendees to post and tweet using the #ParentCamp hashtag
- ✓ Write topics for discussion on butcher paper. Attendees may choose any topic. In choosing a topic organizers of the ParentCamp may have a feeder shown on the screen where only tweets are seen or topics are suggested at the opening and written down on a chart which indicates the presenter and the room in which the topic will be discussed.
- ✓ Have volunteers show attendees where breakout rooms are located.
- ✓ Network and have fun!



Closing Session

- ✓ Share individual and share-out session notes with attendees. Decide which issues will be addressed after the meeting, and what strategies should be undertaken.
- ✓ Survey attendees afterward for feedback and suggested improvements.
- ✓ Read evaluations afterwards for additional suggestions and comments for improvement.
- ✓ Get a plan in place before the meeting ends as to what action will be taken to address issues and concerns raised during sessions. Ask for volunteers to help with what is needed to complete the action items.

How to Follow-up After the Meeting

- ✓ Continue the conversation online with ParentCamp participants.
 - ✓ Connect with anyone who volunteered during the meeting to assist afterwards and review the action item(s) and suggestions made during the meeting for addressing the action items.
 - ✓ Determine how long you think it will take to complete an action item, and have regularly scheduled check-ins along the way. Record progress made.
- ✓ Update all on the status of action item(s). Ask for additional assistance for completion of action items, if needed. Completion could be a definitive end of an activity (e.g., a safety issue at the school is addressed), or setting up an activity to run thereafter (e.g., afterschool reading club).
 - ✓ Start planning the next event! This will be an opportunity to report out on progress made on action item(s) from the previous meeting and can act as an indicator of progress and reinforce the positive outcome of ParentCamps.

ParentCamp = Parents CAN!

www.parentcamp.org @ParentCamp #ParentCamp

For support and guidance, contact ParentCamp Inc. (julie@parentcamp.org)