



We need your WISDOM!

You've heard the adage "it takes a village to raise a child." The team at your child's school values parent input, questions, and collaboration in supporting your child toward having a positive experience at school. Students are always more successful when home and school work together.

Families bring an in-depth understanding of the needs of their children; school teams bring expertise on curriculum, educational programming, and knowledge of the experiences students in the school setting.

There are many benefits to engaging in meaningful consultation. It helps to:

- Build trust between the home and school teams
- Collectively share ideas and solve problems together
- Find successful, supportive opportunities for the student

Attributes of meaningful consultation

- The school and family gather to openly discuss decisions and options available
- All participants share a willingness to listen to each other,
- An atmosphere of mutual respect. Mutual respect is characterized by an understanding that all individuals involved in the consultative process have a contribution to make. Mutual respect is best maintained when everyone is working to achieve decisions that are in the best interests of the child.
- The result is clear communication of the results to all participants, including the decision reached or action taken, with the rationale for the decision.

Principles of meaningful collaboration

- Mutual respect between home and the school team is essential. Mutual respect develops when all participants recognize that everyone is working to achieve balanced decisions and the best outcome for the child
- Meaningful collaboration creates an atmosphere that allows all participants to feel that they have the opportunity to express their point of view and to feel their opinions and input are respected
- The conversation is focused on problem solving about the student and their needs. Conversations will be paused and/or reframed if:
 - * The discussion involves school staffing or personnel matters
 - * The discussion involves other the needs of, or support being provided to, other students
 - * The conversation becomes a direct challenge or is confrontational in nature
 - * One of the participants creates intentional conflict in the relationship or engages in bullying behaviours

References

[Supporting Meaningful Consultation with Parents](#)

[Individualized Education Plans: A Guide for Parents](#)



Support from an advocate

Our goal is for all of our learners to be safe, successful, and thriving in school.

An advocate supports parents in:

- Expressing their views and concerns
- Accessing information and services
- Defending and promoting their rights and responsibilities
- Exploring choices and options

A positive advocate supports and promotes the Principles of Meaningful Collaboration, assisting parents with sharing their perspectives, asking questions, and understanding the processes and structures in place at the school.

To facilitate open communication and a spirit of collaboration, formal advocates are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in a meeting at the school. If you are interested in engaging with an advocate, please ask your school principal for a copy.

What if the team disagrees?

While our goal is always to achieve balanced, collaborative decisions, there may be times that families and school teams disagree.

Your first point of contact is always your child's classroom teacher. If you still have questions after speaking with the teacher, please request an appointment with the school's principal.

On the rare occasion that you are still in disagreement with the school's decision, you may choose to appeal the school's decision. Additional information about this is found on the school district website.



Advocates in our area



Family Resources Navigator Child Development Centre
Kimberlee Howland
250 753-0251 (ext. 259)
kimberlee@NanaimoCDC.com



Parent Support Services Society of BC 250 468-9658



FASD Key Worker (MCFD) 250 741-5734



Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
250 753-6911



Family Support Institute of BC
604 540-8374 (ask to be connected with an advocate in your region)



Inclusion BC <https://inclusionbc.org/>