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# **Contents**

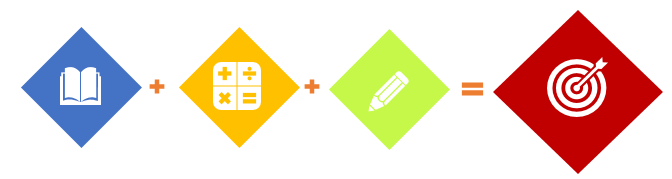
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| Areas of competence | Topics |
| **Cultural identities**  **Cultural awareness**  **Cultural differences, tolerance and constructive interactions**  **Intercultural education and human rights** | 1. Overcoming stereotypes and prejudices and forming cultural awareness |
| 1. Inclusive multicultural classroom |
| 1. Working with the families of students from different ethnic backgrounds, including migrants |

# Topic 3.

Working with families

of students from different ethnic backgrounds

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| **Specific objectives** | * Provide up-to-date information on the specifics of working with the family in a multicultural educational environment. * Identify the family-educational institution interaction stages and obstacles that hinder these interactions. * To form practical skills for involving parents in the work and life of the educational institution. |
| **Expected learning outcomes** | * Apply specific approaches when working with different groups of families to establish trust and effective communication. * Inclusion of the family as a partner of the educational institution in the implementation of inclusive practices in relation to students from different ethnic backgrounds, including migrant. |
| **Basic concepts** | Family; family community; partnership; cooperation; interaction "educational institution – family" |



**Theoretical Definition**

Successful pedagogical interactions are largely predetermined by the teacher's ability to join the student's family and make him a partner in the process of his training, upbringing and socialization. The active participation of parents in the life of the child not only at home, but also in school, creates the conditions for them to feel calm and confident, supported and encouraged along the way of their development.

Establishing and maintaining a partnership relationship with the family requires the use of appropriate strategies and approaches by the educational institution and the teacher to help increase parental involvment and motivation. Their choice should take into account the specificities of the family, its social status, cultural specificities, parental capacity, etc.

Multicultune educational environment means joint training of students from different ethnic backgrounds, respectively interaction of the educational institution with families speaking different languages, with different cultures, religions, traditions and values. The success of the school-family relationship requires a good knowledge of the specifics and specificities of the different ethnic communities to which the students belong, with a view to achieving closer cooperation between the parties in the educational process.

What should be considered when working with families from different ethnic backgrounds?

The first essential element is the difference itself. The value of difference means seeing and respecting the dignity of the child and his or her parents. The school strengthens its influence when it accepts that the people with whom it enters into certain relationships are very different and make different choices based on their culture. Although families share basic needs, there are huge differences in the way people with different cultures respond to meet these needs. Differences should be seen as something positive and valuable.

The second essential element is understanding the role that culture plays in each person's life. Many people never admit how their daily behavior and attitude are shaped by their own cultural values and reinforced by family, friends and social institutions

The third important element is the understanding and awareness of the dynamics of difference. When teachers from the same culture interact with children and parents from another culture, both countries contribute culturally predetermined patterns of communication, etiquette and problem solving. Both sides may bring stereotypes or hidden feelings to the care of or from someone who is different.

Achieving a synchronised and a better partnership between the educational institution and the family community is one of the main priorities for each organisation. The successful implementation of this priority depends on the choice and application of the right approaches and forms of communication, on compliance with established facts and rules in communication and relationships. Effective interaction between the educational institution and the family requires joint adaptation in compliance with the principles of respect and esteem of each of the parties and taking into account, above all the benefits for the child.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In the interaction "educational institution – family" the parties usually use different tactics. The presented teaching tactics in interaction with parents and parental tactics when interacting with teachers are researched and are directly subject to the expectations and claims of both parties.

The tactics used by educators are reduced to:

* *"Compromise"* – applies in cases where there is only partial satisfaction of teacher attitudes until a mutually acceptable solution is found.
* *"Adaptation"* – a type of collaborative tactic. Similar to parental tactics, "Adaptation" applies until the requirements and positions with parents are aligned in the period of adaptation to the educational environment (and later).
* *"Domination"* – it is characteristic of teachers with high self-esteem of professional and personal qualities. They have built their own ideas about the levels of education, performance and preparedness. In these cases, the teacher is not looking for direct intervention and help from the parents, but tries to "impose" their own requirements and claims.
* *"Corrective"* – used in cases where the teacher identifies deficits and offers or seeks with parents solutions to overcome or reduce them.
* *"Collaboration"* - applies when, on the basis of established attitudes, it is working with parents to meet the interests of both parties.

Parental tactics with regard to the educational institution can be outlined as follows:

* *"Compromises"* - apply when despite claims, parents compromise on educational policy, educational "environment" ... and even in certain cases to the teacher's professional and pedagogical competencies.
* *"Avoidance"* - inherently to parents who are negligent to the child and his school commitments. This tactic is used by parents who share their own attitude towards the child superficial - from the end position of strong love to extreme - dissatisfaction with behavior or concrete behavior to the parent.
* *"Adaptation".* This tactics applies to the immediate entry of the child in the educational institution and are related to adaptation to the new learning environment.

• *"Collaboration"* - this is the most preferred tactic from pedagogues. It is characterized by the parents work together with the teacher. They offer and seek help, assistance and support. They are confident and respecting both to the educational institution. Discuss jointly class problems and participate in decision-making.

The interaction and cooperation "School - Family" is not an authentic, it performs certain functions aimed at achieving the global goal in an educational aspect. The following groups of this cooperation can be differentiated[[2]](#footnote-2):

• *Information* – aimed at getting to know each other on both sides. Through mutual contacts and communication, the needs and expectations of each of them will be understood, which will be a favorable prerequisite for a quality educational process.

• *Constructive* – related to increasing parental capacity in terms of ability to implement working models and strategies of education and training.

• *Social* – related to the social roles and responsibilities of each party to society. Cooperation is perceived as a public expression of the common efforts and synergies to achieve educational and educational objectives.

According to the functions, specific **forms of cooperation** between the school and the parent community are offered:

***Forms oriented to information function***

• *Messages to parents*. They aim to provide parents with up-to-date information on specific issues or problems related to their children or the life of the school.

• *Newsletters.* They have an informative character. Most often contain information about the status of class or activities and events in a certain period.

• *Homes visits.* They are aiming to build closer contact and trust with the family, and it is placed in its environment, where it feels safe and calm.

***Forms oriented to constructive function***

• *Consultations and seminars*. They are related to the provision of advice and raising parents' pedagogical experience on various topics related to their children's training and upbringing.

• *Parental meetings*. This is the most common form of interaction between school and family. It combines informing, counseling, putting important issues for students.

• *Parent School.* This is a relatively new form of interaction where parents are involved in trainings, seminars, trainings to increase their parental capacity and expand their skills as a educational and socialistic factor.

• *Exchange of pedagogical materials* (books, educational-aid literature, information about Web-based resources, etc.).

• *Volunteer parents.* This is an effective way of fully "involvement" of parents in their child's life and at the same time showing a good parental example of the child in terms of civil and public activity.

***Forms oriented to the social function of the school.*** They help publicize the school and parental community as significant factors of education and education. Among them are:

• public appearances on the occasion of calendar or national holidays;

• family participation in events in the life of the community and/or school;

• activities for the benefit of the school, the community or its individual members.

One of the new trends in family-school interactions is *the involvement of parents in decision-making*. This can be achieved in several ways:

* the family shares the main mission and vision of the school, which will develop in the coming year;
* Daily and weekly thematic units, activities and activities are reported;
* determine the period of parenting meetings, make a schedule of visits to the classroom and at home

Regardless of what forms, cooperation between school and family is realized, its effectiveness requires it not to be sporadic, chaotic and accidental, but is intended, systematically and justified. This requirement implies well thought-out work strategies to be realized in several successive stages[[3]](#footnote-3):

* *The preparatory stage* covers the preliminary study of families, on this basis the development of a strategy for working with parents, selection of working bodies – parental assets. The process of surveying families is mostly related to the accumulation of data that gives some initial insight into the family community of the class concerned. Depending on this, the strategy for interaction "family – educational institution" is formed.
* *The main stage* involves the implementation of the programme itself. As the cooperation covers a longer time period, the collaborative programme provides for different types of activities – group, individual, global (common to the educational institution).
* During *the final stage*, a comprehensive analysis of the joint action is carried out, positive parties are taken into account, mistakes made and prospects are outlined to ensure the sustainability of synergies.

In order for teachers to accept families unreservedly, they have to believe that the direct involvment of parents will be useful for the formation of the class community to build better connections between the teacher, his child and his parents. The teacher needs to provide the opportunity for parents to become the initiators of activities and thus include them in the everyday life of children.

The following ***activities*** can be offered to families:

* Organizers of special events – celebrations, birthdays and name days, celebrations, outings and excursions;
* Masters – parents who are involved in repair works or various initiatives related to renovation, enrichment and expansion of the material base.
* Teacher assistants – parents who assist the teacher in some activities directly related to the learning process.

Working together and collaborating between teachers and parents in modern multicultural reality creates opportunities for children to more confidently meet the challenges they face on a daily basis. The support of the family, along with the support of the educational institution, is assisted by students from different ethnic backgrounds, including students from different ethnic backgrounds, migrants from third countries to adapt more easily to the new environment and to integrate successfully into it. That’s how they learn:

• to assess the different options for making a choice;

• take care of themselves and others;

• to express their feelings;

• to remain learning for life;

• to follow their interests.

**Practical activities**

**Activity 1**

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| Title | **Multicultural environment** |
| **Purpose** | Participants to generate ideas for creating a accepting and inclusive educational environment in the mulcultural space with the help of parents |
| **Duration** | 40 minutes |
| **Resources** | Posters, markers, paper tape |
| **Description** | Participants are divided into community groups and assigned the following tasks:  1 *group* – development of a project to build an educational environment in a classroom with a predominant presence of students from the host country and fewer students from migrant communities – immigrants from Eastern Europe, refugees from Syria.  2 *group* – development of a project to build an educational environment in a classroom with a predominant presence of migrant students from different countries of Africa and South America – Muslims and Christians.  3 *group* – development of a draft annual newsletter for parents of students from migrant communities – immigrants from Eastern Europe, refugees from Syria, immigrants from North Africa.  4 *group* – developing an annual calendar of holidays in class with students from migrant communities – immigrants from Eastern Europe, refugees from Syria, immigrants from North Africa – Muslims and Christians.  After completing the group work, each of them presents to the others their project. |
| **Group requirements** | 1. Describe how parents from different ethnic communities will be involved.  2. Projects to comply with the following requirements: diversity, originality, timeliness. |

**Activity 2**

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| Title | **Draft cooperation contract** |
| **Purpose** | To increase the skills for initiating and establishing partnership relationships between the educational institution and the family with a clear vision and distribution of the commitments and responsibilities of each party. |
| **Duration** | 40 minutes |
| **Resources** | Sheets A4, pens, markers |
| **Description** | The participants in the group are presented with the following situation: *"On the idea of the school management from the next school year, families whose children attend the educational institution will be provided with a contract that regulates the basic principles regarding the school-family cooperation, as well as the commitments of each of the participants in the educational process.*  Participants are separated and work in small groups within 30 minutes, after which they submit their proposals. |
| **Exemple structure** | *Example contract structure:*  *Parties to the contract*  *Principles (basic rules of cooperation)*  *Rights and responsibilities of each country*  *Forms of cooperation* (in what directions are cooperation, main activities are expected to be carried out)) |

**Activity 3**

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| Title | **Work program** |
| **Purpose** | Participants to exercise their skills for developing a collaborative class and parent activities |
| **Duration** | 40 minutes |
| **Resources** | Posters, markers, sheets A4, paper tape |
| **Description** | The participants are divided into groups of four people.  Each group develops its own plan for working with parents, which includes comprehensive planning, i.e. answers to all the questions of the scheme (additional meterial). In this way, ideas and experience in planning work with parents can be exchanged. |
| **Instructions** | It is specified that in the structuring of the work programme will be used the so-called approach to the six questions, the graphical model of which is presented as additional material to the activity. |

**Additional material to the activity 3**

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**Activity 4**

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| Title | **Бариери** |
| **Purpose** | Participants to identify all challenges and concerns when including the family |
| **Duration** | 40 minutes |
| **Resources** | Posters, markers, sheets A4, paper tape |
| **Description** | *Small group activity:*  The participants themselves are divided into groups of six people. Each group must select one representative to record what the group members say.  For 15 minutes, they have to indicate and discuss the obstacles that would prevent the family's inclusion in the life of the educational institution. Once they have finished, the group selects an obstacle that is considered the most difficult to overcome. A major poster records the obstacles that the groups have chosen as insurmountable. If any obstacle has already been pointed out, the group may choose any other of his list.  *Activity in the whole group:*  Development of strategies to overcome these obstacles by small groups. The answers can be grouped around the question: What ideas would you suggest to overcome this obstacle?  The answers are written against the respective obstacles, which are written on the poster, indicating at least 5 possible ideas for each obstacle.  If time permits, the group can develop strategies for all obstacles listed on the poster. Each small group may be tasked with thinking about strategies to overcome one of the obstacles to share with the group. |
| **Sample list** | Typical obstacles:  • Lack of time.  • Parents do not know how to help.  • Parents do not understand the organization of work in school.  • Lack of childcare.  • Linguistic and cultural differences.  • Lack of transport.  • Do not feel welcome at school.  • Resistance from school management.  • Parents have insurmountable problems.  • Low level of literacy.  • Parents work during the day. |

**Activity 5**

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| Title | **Thanks** |
| **Purpose** | Participants to develop skills for expressing attention and attitude towards families. |
| **Duration** | 30 minutes |
| **Resources** | Posters, markers, sheets A4, paper tape |
| **Description** | Participants are divided into five small groups. Each group receives a specific task:  *Group 1*: Write a thank-you address to the mother of a child who has prepared a treat for the ramadan byram holiday class.  *Group 2*: Express your gratitude appropriately to a group of fathers of children from migrant communities who have participated in the ennobling of the schoolyard before the opening of the school year.  *Group 3*: Write a thank-you note to the parents of the students who, together with the children, provided flowers and participated in the landscaping of the classroom.  *Group 4*: Prepare a poster for the parents to congratulate them on the occasion of the first day of school.  *Group 5*: Prepare a poster – a message to parents from migrant communities whose children from the beginning of the current school year will be educated at the school. |
| **Summary** | The expressed attention and gratitude to the people who have cooperated and empathy for the problems of the class community leads to attracting families to school life, and thus to greater awareness of parents' development and readiness on their part for support. |

**Activity 6**

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| Title | **Catalogue of joint activities with parents** |
| **Purpose** | Generate ideas related to the variety of forms of cooperation with parents |
| **Duration** | 30 minutes |
| **Resources** | Posters, markers |
| **Description** | The participants are divided into groups, the number of which is determined at the discretion of the trainer. The principle of "brainstorming" answers the questions:  • What forms of cooperation with the family do I know?  • Which forms of interaction and cooperation are best suited to working with parents from migrant and refugee communities?  Each group presents its poster, after which a "Catalogue for joint activities with parents" is formed. |
| **Summary** | When families get involved in the life and activities of the school community as volunteers, they offer their personal time, ideas, resources to help their child and thus assist the school in creating a caring parent community.  It's important that all parents get involved. By developing a wide range of inclusion activities, even parents who have little time and energy or those living in difficult conditions can get involved. |

**IDEAS FOR INTERACTION AND COOPERATION WITH THE FAMILY**

1. Consultation with parents at a convenient time for them through home visits.
2. Discussion and conclusion of an agreement with parents at the beginning of the school year to maintain a two-way relationship and mutual assistance on the issues of life and activity in the classroom.
3. Inviting parents to hold joint talks with students to discuss books, films, traditional holidays in the community.
4. Inviting families to voluntarily participate in extracurricular activities to which their children are interested (music group, dance group, theatre troupe, etc.).
5. Development of a calendar with the birthdays of all students in the multicultural class.
6. Setting up an information board on which parents and children could hang photos, information or objects about significant events in the family's life.
7. Placing greetings and wishes to parents for holidays.
8. Conducting an interactive lecture using a video or media presentation to guide newcomers to the school.
9. Organization of the "Talent Show" with the participation of students, parents, teachers, representatives of NGOs.
10. Discussion and organization together with the parents of non-educational events: bazaars for exchange of books, clothes, toys, teaching supplies, flower bazaar, arts festivals, picnic hikes, etc.
11. Organization and conduct of "Day for awarding the best". Students, members of the pedagogical team and representatives of voluntary organizations could nominate those parents who have contributed with their work for the good of the school and the local community. The winners are awarded with diplomas, honorary signs of the school for their contribution to the institution.
12. Issue of the "Newsletter for Parents". It may include a "Exchange of ideas" section through which parents can share and make suggestions to be published. That's how they become dopirs in this newsletter.
13. Preparing survey cards on key issues: school policies, the family-school relationship, the needs of the local community. Assistance can be sought from local NGOs to help disseminate and collect survey cards.
14. Establishment of an information desk by students, parents, local leaders, partner organizations that are willing to promote school initiatives to stakeholders and in the community.
15. Planning of summer initiatives, programs, seminars for hardening, expanding and enriching students' knowledge, skills, competences and relationships, with voluntary involvement of parents.
16. Informing families of vulnerable groups of the opportunities, means available and specialists to help solve their problems.
17. Placing mailboxes for suggestions in key places in the school. One inscription on them "My idea", "I have an idea", "I propose", "I have a question" ... positive contribution of parents.
18. Attract parents' attention to school events through the participation of their children in the program.
19. Organizing a "School for Parents", "Club of Fathers", "Grandparents' Club" to enrich the general culture or talk on topics exciting the community, or for joint activities with the students.
20. Publication of a working calendar, which includes both the educational and sports, and the festive events and activities of the school institution. Thus, parents will have information in advance and could request inclusion in the initiatives.

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