

### Learning Guide – Solution-focused Collaboration



Alberta **Regional** Consortia

This learning guide is designed for use by Professional Learning Communities, instructional/learning coaches, teacher-leaders or as a self-paced study to enhance and support instruction, conversation and critical reflection about creating inclusive learning environments.

This conversation guide is intended to be used after viewing the video clip entitled Solution-Focused Collaboration on this website.

### General Synopsis

Solution-focused collaboration between parents and teachers focuses on building solutions together from a strength-based approach, rather than merely 'solving problems'. In this video we see several examples of using a strength-based approach, in which parents and teacher have collaborated to focus on the child's strengths in support of his learning.

### Key Understandings

- Solution-focused collaboration is a powerful strategy for teachers to use in working with all parents, including parents of children with disabilities.
- Successful collaboration is based on understanding the point of view of the other person. Teachers can then have a clearer understanding of how parents see their own situations.
- In this context, solution-focused collaboration is an interactive process in which individuals with varied life perspectives and experiences join together in a spirit of willingness to share resources, responsibility, and rewards in creating an effective educational program and environments for students with unique learning capacities and needs.
- Solution focused meetings are collaborative meetings that emphasize building solutions together rather than solving problems.
- An important focus to give to parents is to ask them to simply "keep the change happening." The more often a positive behaviour or learned response can occur, the more likely that it will successfully replace what preceded it.
- Successful collaborators look for what is happening when the problems is not occurring and shares those observations

## Key Understandings

- A strength-based approach keeps a strong focus on setting a child up for success by focussing on interests and strengths.
- A solution-focused collaboration between teachers and parents can help them both to:
  - **Keep their own perspective by focusing on strengths** --- observing what the child can do, setting new goals, and tracking progress.
  - **Have the conviction that they can make a difference** --- committing to teaching, learning and supporting changes
  - **Dwell in the present** --- finding the best in each day and celebrating whatever growth each day brings.
  - Solution focused collaborators share and celebrate successes

For further information on this topic, please see *Support for Implementation Tip Sheet: Solution-Focused Collaboration*.

### Continuing the Conversation: Questions for Discussion

1. Which examples of a strength-based approach stood out for you in this video? What did you observe about the ways in which the family collaborated with the school to find solutions to potential learning issues?
2. A key to a strength-based approaches is to identify a student's strengths and interests. What are examples of ways that you currently use or have previously used to identify your student's strengths and interests in your classroom? What new processes could you put in place?
3. Once you have identified student strengths and interests what are ways you incorporate them into the day to day operation of the school day? What new ways could you implement?
4. Live in the present. Share and Celebrate successes, big and small. The more we begin to focus on successes, the more we'll experience. Celebrating success has a snowball effect. As you reflect upon this statement, think about how you apply strength in your school. What recent successes have you had that you can share? How did you celebrate them? Do you currently have any activities/practices in place for sharing success?

## Research References

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