

Using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) to Build Partnerships with Families

About this Resource

This resource introduces the Question Formulation Technique (QFT), a key component of the Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy educators can use to engage parents in asking questions about their children's education.

As of 2016, over 200,000 educators around the world have implemented the QFT in their classrooms, and have observed how their students become more curious and engaged, take greater ownership of their learning, and learn more deeply than ever before. Educators can also apply the QFT to develop stronger partnerships with parents. By learning to ask better questions, parents can more effectively support their children's education, monitor their progress, and advocate for them when necessary.

Strengths and Benefits of Using the QFT

- The QFT is a strategy and not a program. It can be integrated into ongoing work and doesn't require additional personnel or resources.
- It is easy to learn and use, and can be put into practice immediately.
- The strategy can be learned individually or in groups.

This Resource Includes:

- facilitation tips and a template you can use to help parents produce their own questions, improve their questions, and strategize on how to use them.
- a template, *My List of Questions to Ask*, you can use to guide parents through the process and parents can also use on their own afterwards.
- the *School-Family Partnership Skill Building Log* which can be used to document your use of the Right Question School-Family Partnership Strategy with parents.

Facilitating the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) with Parents

Facilitation Timeframes for Individuals and Groups of Parents	
Individuals : 7-15 minutes	Groups : 30-40 minutes

Facilitator's Instructions

1. Develop a Question Focus.

A Question Focus (QFocus) is brief statement, a problem or concern that serves as a “focus” to jumpstart the production of questions. It can be developed out of topics educators want to discuss with parents or from concerns parents have.

The QFocus should **not** be a question.

Tip: Try your best to develop the QFocus ahead of time.

2. Welcome parents and make them aware you will be working together in a new way for the first few minutes of your meeting.

3. Introduce the rules for producing questions.

1. Ask as many question as you can.

2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss questions.

3. Write down every question exactly as stated.

4. Change any statements into questions.

Tip: For rule #3, when working with individuals, ask parents to write the questions exactly as they come to mind.

Have participants respond to **one** of the following questions:

- What might be difficult about following these rules?
- Which one of these rules might be difficult for you to follow?

4. Producing questions - Instruct parents to ask as many questions as possible about the QFocus, to follow the rules, and number the questions.

Tip: Resist temptation to intervene and give examples of questions during the process.

Tip: Allow time and space for parents to generate as many questions as possible.

5. Improving questions - Facilitate work with closed and open-ended questions.

- Provide definitions for two types of questions closed and open-ended.

Closed-Ended: Answered with “yes,” “no,” or one word

Open-Ended: Require a longer explanation

- Ask parents to categorize the questions as closed or open-ended.
- Ask parents to name advantages and disadvantages for asking closed and open-ended questions.
- Ask parents to practice changing questions from one type to another as follows:
 - ⇒ Change **one** open-ended question into a closed-ended question.
 - ⇒ Change **one** closed-ended question into an open-ended question.

6. Prioritizing questions - Instruct parents to review the list and choose three priority questions while keeping in mind the QFocus.

7. Strategizing on next steps - Discuss with parents next steps with the questions or work with parents developing a plan on what to do with the questions.

8. Reflecting - Ask parents to reflect upon what they learned and how they can use it

- What did you learn?
- How can you use it?