



H3.

LEARNING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL — UTILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES



TARGET AUDIENCE

Parents, guardians, friends, and mentors of students grades 4 through 8; possibly for the parents, guardians, friends and mentors of students grades 9 through 12



90 MINUTES



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Handouts: *Utilizing Community Resources* (handouts 1 and 2)
- Information: Gather information about local community resources, including tutoring, health clinics, after school and summer child/youth enrichment and leadership programs, and school for adults

INTRODUCTION

This Community Conversations session moves away from the teacher-as-expert parent-meeting model by embracing parents' thoughts and experiences as central to any conversation regarding their children's futures. Through facilitated discussion and small group brainstorming sessions, participants will discuss their role as the primary teachers for their children and where or to whom they can turn for support in helping their children reach success. In addition, participants will explore the types of community resources at their disposal, including family, neighbors, schools, libraries, institutions, clinics and community role models.

SETUP

For guidance with setup, see Community Conversations H1: *Looking Ahead — Expectations for Our Children's Future*.

LEARNING GOALS

- ➔ Participants will discuss the importance of their role as their children's first and primary educator.
- ➔ Participants will explore where and to whom they can turn for support in helping their children reach their potential.
- ➔ In small breakout groups, participants will consider the following questions:
 - Where can you take your children when they need help with their homework?
 - Where can you take your children when they need a physical examination to enroll in sports if you do not have medical insurance?
 - What activities can you enroll your children in during the summer?
 - Where can you take your children or what activities can you get them involved in when you feel like your children need more positive role models and peers?
- ➔ Participants will explore the types of community resources at their disposal, including family, neighbors, schools, libraries, institutions, clinics and community role models.

ACTIVITIES

Part 1: Welcome and Introductions

 10 minutes

For guidance with welcome and introductions, see Community Conversations H1: *Looking Ahead — Expectations for Our Children’s Future*.

Part 2: Opening Discussions

 15 minutes

First Discussion:

- ➔ Ask participants, “Who do you think are your children’s primary or main teachers?”
 - While some may say “teachers” (at school) some will say, “We are!”
- ➔ Allow a few participants to answer the question. Once the notion is raised that parents or guardians are children’s first and perhaps main teachers, ask:
 - Why do you think this is?
 - What types of things do parents and guardians teach children that they may not learn somewhere else?
 - How do parents and guardians teach?

Second Discussion:

- ➔ Ask participants: Why do you think teachers take their students on field trips? Possible answers include: have fun, learn outside the classroom, expose them to new things, including people, ideas and history.
- ➔ Allow a few participants to respond.
- ➔ Ask participants: What sorts of new things would you want to expose your children and family to? Allow participants to respond and record their answers on the board. Possible answers include:
 - Trip to library
 - Trip to local museum
 - Trip to local university, including a picnic
 - Attend sporting event at local university
 - Trip to local science or exploratory center
 - Trip to local nature center or reserve
 - Trip to local aquarium

Mention that some of these locations have free admission days.

Part 3: Group Breakout

 30 minutes

- ➔ Break participants into small groups.
- ➔ Provide all participants with the first *Utilizing Community Resources* handout.
- ➔ Ask groups to select one member of their group to take notes during their discussion.
- ➔ Encourage notetakers to document all areas of discussion and ideas raised by the group during brainstorming. Let them know that group members do not all have to agree or reach a consensus.
- ➔ As participants work in small groups, walk around the room to make sure that everyone understands the instructions and questions.
- ➔ Let participants know when there are only 5 minutes remaining.

Part 4: Regroup and Share Out

 20 minutes

- ➔ Get participants’ attention.
- ➔ Inform participants that the whole group will discuss each question and they should feel free to share what was discussed in their group at any time. Everyone is free to share.
- ➔ Begin to facilitate conversation and discussion with these questions as a guiding tool:
 - Where can you take your children when they need help with their homework?
 - Where can you take your children when they need a physical examination to enroll in sports if you do not have medical insurance?
 - What activities can you enroll your children in when they are bored at home during the summer?
 - Where can you take your children or what activities can you get them involved in when you feel like your children need more positive role models and peers?
- ➔ Read the first question aloud; ask participants to share what was discussed in their group.
- ➔ As the facilitator, feel free to make connections to previous discussions or points made by participants and ask for clarification or examples.

As you facilitate these discussions, you may wish to capture responses by having someone take notes on butcher paper or poster board or collecting a note-taker's personal notes. Later, you may be able to use this information to prepare a handout for your school or program to provide to participating families.

PART 5: Distribution of Resources and Information

 10 minutes

- ➔ Thank participants for sharing their thoughts and recommendations.
- ➔ Distribute the second *Utilizing Community Resources* handout and review it with participants.
- ➔ Give participants a few moments to review it on their own.
- ➔ Ask participants to identify which of the handout's resources already have been raised in discussion.

Review the resources and suggestions that were not covered in the discussion. You can do this by reading from the handout or asking someone to read them for you.

PART 6: Closing

 5 minutes

- ➔ If your school or program is conducting this session concurrently with the *Believing the College Dream* student curriculum, this may be a good time to inform participants of the topics students are covering in class and to encourage them to ask their children what they are learning about at school.
- ➔ Ask participants if they have any final thoughts.
- ➔ Thank participants for their presence and participation.
- ➔ Inform participants of the date and location of the next Community Conversations gathering.



HANDOUT: UTILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES



NAME

HANDOUT 1

Select one person to take notes and another person to read the questions one at a time. Take turns discussing your thoughts. Brainstorm ideas and possible ways to answer the question.

1. Where can you take your children when they need help with their homework?

2. Where can you take your children when they need a physical examination to enroll in sports if you do not have medical insurance?

3. What activities can you enroll your children in during the summer?

4. Where can you take your children or what activities can you get them involved in when you feel like your children need more positive role models and peers?

HANDOUT 2

Your community can be a great source of ideas, resources and support as you raise and educate your children. In your community, you can find everything from after-school care to immunizations to free entertainment for children. You can take advantage and enjoy the opportunities that participation in the community provides your family. The experiences you and your children share with your community will help your children in school and in life.

FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORS

Families and neighbors can help each other in everyday life situations.

- Take advantage of your family's rich traditions and cultural values. Consider your children's grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives as useful resources in your children's lives.
- Know your neighbors. They can help you and you can help them. For example, you can set up a playgroup with parents who have children of the same age or trade babysitting time with them.
- Use your neighbors for companionship and friendship. You can also help each other in case of emergencies.

SCHOOLS

Schools may provide a variety of resources to help you and your children.

- Talk to your children about interests they may have. Schools offer sports programs, clubs, music and other group activities during after-school hours.
- Participate in parents' groups, such as the PTA, or in parent training workshops, such as English classes, where you can meet other parents.
- Volunteer and help in your children's school or classroom. Ask the school office or your children's teacher about helping.

LIBRARIES

Libraries have a lot of resources to help not only with your children's schooling, but also with their lives in the community. Ask the school office or your children's teacher where the nearest library is.

- Get a library card and borrow books for free. You can take books home for short periods of time. Ask the librarian about what books are appropriate for your children's ages.
- Find out what children's programs your library has. Most libraries have storytelling, puppet shows or music time.



- Find out about adult programs at your library. Ask the librarian about services for adults, such as immigration lawyers or tax accountants.
- Use the library to play games, listen to music or watch videos. Some libraries also let you borrow these resources.

INSTITUTIONS

Community centers and religious organizations often provide numerous activities for children and adults.

- Check to see if your center runs a preschool or nursery school.
- Find out if the institution offers babysitting services.
- Learn what after-school programs are available for your children to participate in, such as Boys & Girls Clubs or other youth enrichment/leadership programs.
- Ask for guidance, counseling or support groups if you or your children need them.
- Look for announcements about special events that might help your family with clothing, food or health services, if necessary.

CLINICS

Clinics in your community offer free or inexpensive medical services. Use them to take good care of your family's health.

- Ask about vaccinations for infants and children, and health checkups for the entire family. That way you will prevent some illnesses.
- Find out about pregnancy information and services.
- Ask for counseling services in times of stress and crisis. These services are available to adults, adolescents and children.

COMMUNITY ROLE MODELS

A role model is someone whom your children can look up to, someone who can set a good example for your children.

- Make sure your children are comfortable talking to anyone in a position of authority, including teachers, the school principal and police officers.
- Point out people who have jobs in areas in which your children have interest, such as doctors, nurses, architects or auto mechanics. Let them talk to your children about their jobs.
- Be informed about your community leaders. If you know them, let your children meet and talk with them.
- Check out books from the library to read about the lives of the influential people from your community. Ask the librarian about these resources.

Source: *Center for Literacy, University of Illinois at Chicago*
<https://cfl.uic.edu/>

