

IF THE PARENTS ARE ONLY FOCUSED ON THEIR CHILD PASSING THE CLASS, WHY PRIORITISE ONLINE CLASS CONNECTION?

Situation

You may come across parents who prioritise their child's academic performance and seek homework, tasks, and practice materials, without emphasising other aspects. They might question the need for their child to engage online with the class using a telepresence system.

Reflective questions

1. How can I effectively discuss parent's academic expectations of their child while also addressing the importance of social belonging, inclusion, and the benefits of social connections for their child?

2. What strategies can I implement to align parental goals with the pupil's capabilities and mental well-being? How can I emphasise the importance of social inclusion and overall development alongside academic achievement in this conversation?

3. In what ways can I address parental concerns about online learning and its impact on their child's academic progress as well as the child's mental health? What are the benefits and what could be challenging?

4. How can I collaborate with other professionals, such as school counsellors or social workers, to support parents in understanding the broader goals of education beyond passing grades?

Possible approaches

1. Open Dialogue and Collaboration: Initiate regular discussions with parents to understand their expectations and concerns, emphasising the importance of a balanced approach to education. Highlight the significance of social interaction and emotional well-being – these are just as important – alongside academic performance, reassuring parents that holistic development is a priority. Talk about the goals of using the telepresence system and make sure they have the right intentions. Collaborate with them to set achievable academic goals for their child, considering the pupil's capabilities and the challenges posed by online learning.

2. Providing Resources and Support: Offer parents guidance and resources on navigating online learning platforms and supporting their child's educational journey effectively. Advocate for flexibility in academic expectations, acknowledging that passing grades may not always be attainable and that the pupil's well-being should be the priority. Explore alternative forms of assessment or academic engagement that accommodate the pupil's needs and circumstances, so they do not feel overwhelmed. Work together with school counsellors or social workers to organise workshops for parents or guided conversations to discuss these issues.

Approaches according to the eHandbook

The eHandbook highlights the important role of a sense of belonging to school in children's emotional, social, and academic development. It emphasises that a strong sense of belonging reduces the risk of depression, anxiety, and bullying while promoting higher educational attainment and fewer dropouts. Feeling related to peers positively impacts behavioural engagement and learning outcomes. Therefore, fostering positive peer interactions and a supportive school environment is crucial for a child's well-being and (academic) success, especially in times of illness. Making this clear to the parents, is an important step in supporting the pupil.¹

¹ ABILITI Teacher eHandbook, pp. 11-13.