

Dealing with difficult parents

- Life Orientation (LO) educators have commented that parents are becoming more and more concerned about schools' career development initiatives. They have really high expectations that are difficult to meet, while trying to balance the curriculum demands and teaching various other facets of LO in a limited space of time.

Ideas & Solutions

The good news is that there are practical solutions that LO educators have found easy to use:

• Give them a job

While this is a generalisation, many concerned parents are keen to help their child with their career development and decision making, but do not have a clue where to start! You, on the other hand, have limited teaching time and could probably use a little support.

Get started: Researching tertiary education is incredibly time-consuming. It's unrealistic to anticipate that you will be able to sit down with each learner and examine the different institutions that interest them, their entrance criteria and the variety of different courses available. Of course it's important to have an in-depth understanding of this, but with annually changing criteria and complex point systems it would be a considerable task to know every single thing! Besides, your time can be spent more strategically. Send out a letter at the beginning of the year explaining the school's career development initiatives and giving specific ideas of how parents can provide support - such as assisting their child in researching the tertiary options that interest them.

• Keep them informed

While you are likely to be implementing career development initiatives in class, unless you communicate directly with them or they have a particularly communicative child,

parents may have no knowledge of these efforts! Effective communication will enhance the visibility of your career development initiatives.

Get started: If you run career fairs or exhibitions, invite the parents along. It gives them the opportunity to direct some of their questions to the exhibitors and reduces pressure placed on you. When you invite guest speakers, such as university representatives, or simply someone speaking about their career, invite the parents to the presentation.

• LO Teacher's Toolbox

In the March 2012 issue we briefly mentioned the LO Teacher's Toolbox - an accumulation of information, resources and career development strategies that work well. A further tool to assist in dealing with difficult parents is to consolidate your LO Teacher's toolbox in a 'parent friendly manner.'

Get started: Put your toolbox together in a way that parents are welcome to peruse valuable career information. This could be in the form of a small 'careers library' or shelf. Instead of asking you every small query that they have, they can make use of your valuable resources (such as university brochures, career development books etc.) to do so and see the useful information that is being made available to their children.

TO SUMMARISE

When parents pressurise the school or LO educator regarding their career development support and initiatives, it generally comes from a good place. Direct their energy (and hopefully enthusiasm) by giving them clear guidelines as to how they too can provide support. As we have said before, to be a calm, confident and organised LO professional (rather than a stressed out, frazzled one), set some clear expectation parameters for pupils, parents and most importantly, for yourself! ■

JOANNE WOOD • employability specialist and certified career coach



Joanne is the founder of Achieve Careers, an organisation which specialises in providing the necessary support and resources required to ensure that educators are able to provide their learners with practical, up-to-date career development information. To receive regular career information updates, visit Achieve Careers on Facebook or follow Achieve_Careers on Twitter.



Educators, do you have classroom trouble? Joanne is the gal with a plan. Send your questions to joanne@achievecareers.co.za or visit www.achievecareers.co.za



Lesson Plan

SACF has worked around the clock to help simplify the workload for LO Educators. You are allowed to use these lesson plans in the classroom, make photocopies for projects, tasks, whatever! No jokes. Just as long as you remember it is the property of your favourite career mag!

Grade 9 and 10 Life Orientation How relationships can influence me

OVERVIEW

SKILLS	VALUES	KNOWLEDGE
Planning Application Decision-making Goal-setting Problem-solving Discussion Opinion formation	Honesty Respect Understanding Positive	Personal Traits Process

A relationship may be of an interpersonal (social or intimate) nature. It's an association between two or more people. The relationship may last for a short while or an extended period. When we establish relationships during our lifetime we need to understand how to initiate a relationship, maintain one and end a relationship. These are skills that are learnt and adapted over time.

Appropriate ways to initiate relationships

Making new friends may be quite frightening. Here are some tips on how to initiate a relationship:

- Always be kind to everyone irrespective of gender, culture or background
- Introduce yourself to others respectfully
- Do not judge others until you know them
- Be yourself: If your new friends do not accept you for who you are, they were never really your friends.

REMEMBER:

When we establish relationships during our lifetime we need to understand how to initiate a relationship, maintain one and end a relationship.

Sustaining a relationship

It's not always easy being a friend; one needs to work at any relationship you wish to form. The following are important to keep in mind:

- Always respect the other
- Develop good listening skills
- Communication
- Give your friend space. Don't be possessive, clingy or overly dependent. You can still do things together
- Support each other
- Sense of humour – laugh together not mockingly at each other
- Socialize with others
- Have fun
- Compassion
- Honesty

Appropriate way to end a relationship

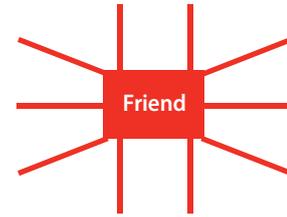
When deciding to end a relationship, be honest with your partner/friend and yourself as to why the relationship must end. However, when you end a relationship, do not slander gossip and spread untrue rumours of the other person. The way you tell someone you want to end the relationship is really important. The words, tone and body language you use is important because it will determine how the other person will receive your message and how they will respond.



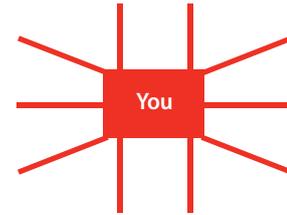
Activity page

Development of the self

1. Choose 10 qualities you would like to have in a friend:



2. List 10 qualities you are able to offer a friend:



3. What can you do to make sure your friendship relationships last?

4. You notice one of your peers is extremely shy and has no friends. You walk over to him/her and say...

5. Name 2 rules for 'fair fighting' when you disagree with someone?

6. Do you think that family relationships help define who you are? Debate.

Memo

1. Learner to provide own examples
2. Learner to provide own examples
3. Learner to provide own examples
4. Learner to provide own examples
5. Do not argue/disagree/fight about anything and everything. Do address the issue if you feel it is important. Do not keep quiet and build up resentment and bitterness.
 Make sure you know what the real issue or the cause of the disagreement is before becoming involved in a disagreement, wait until you are calm. Disagreements can become personal.
 Be respectful, listen to the other person.
 Do not criticize the other person. Express your own feelings and actions.
 Do not always try and win the argument, rather aim to clear the misunderstanding.
 Avoid putting the other person's ideas / viewpoints down.
 Use respectful language.
 Do not yell, use sarcasm or make derogatory comments.
6. You may find identity in family relationships because you are their offspring, you grew up in their house with their norms, values, principles, you have learnt a lot from them, nurturing, loving you, accepting you, etc.

