



**2020 SSIO-USA National SSE
Refresher and Enrichment
PARENT-TEACHER AN ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIP**

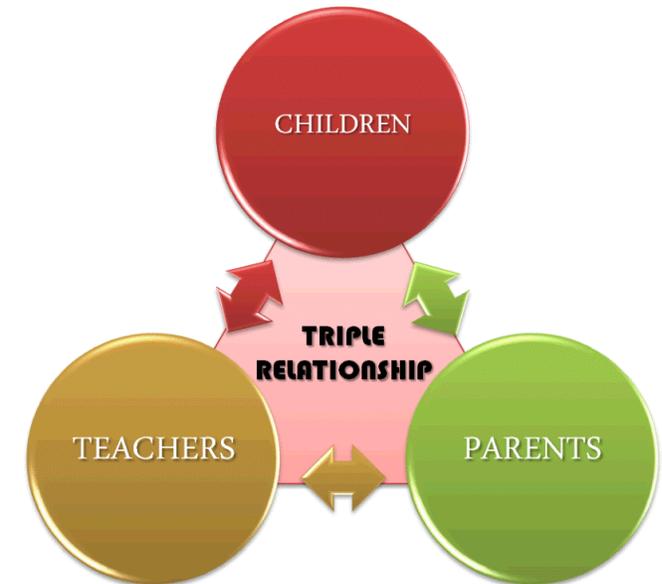
July 2020

What Swami Says...

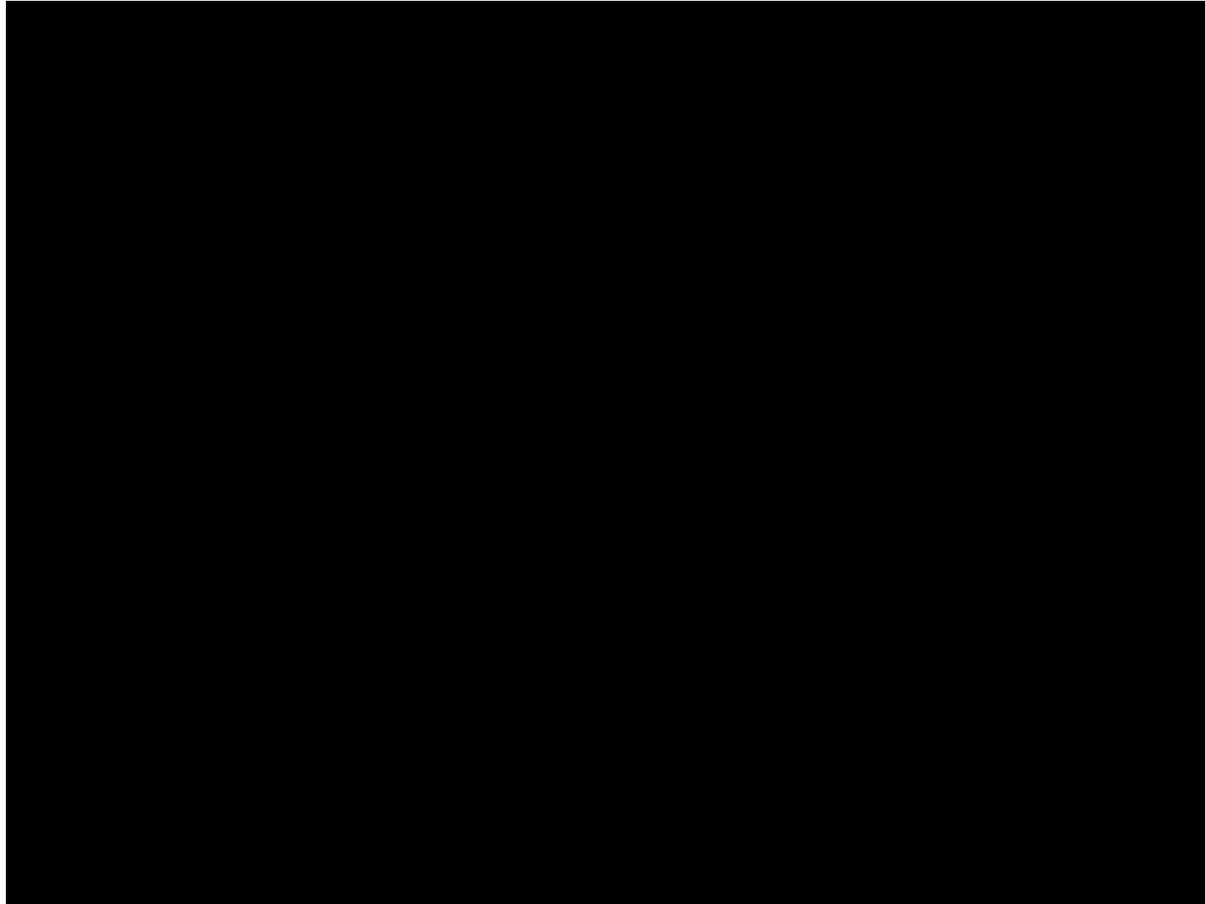


Instruct the children of the Bal Vikas to revere their parents. This is the first thing to do. It is a simple act of gratitude, for those who endowed them with the material instrument for life.

- Sathya Sai Speaks Volume 9 Page 9



How Swami explains the connection between Parents, Guru and God!

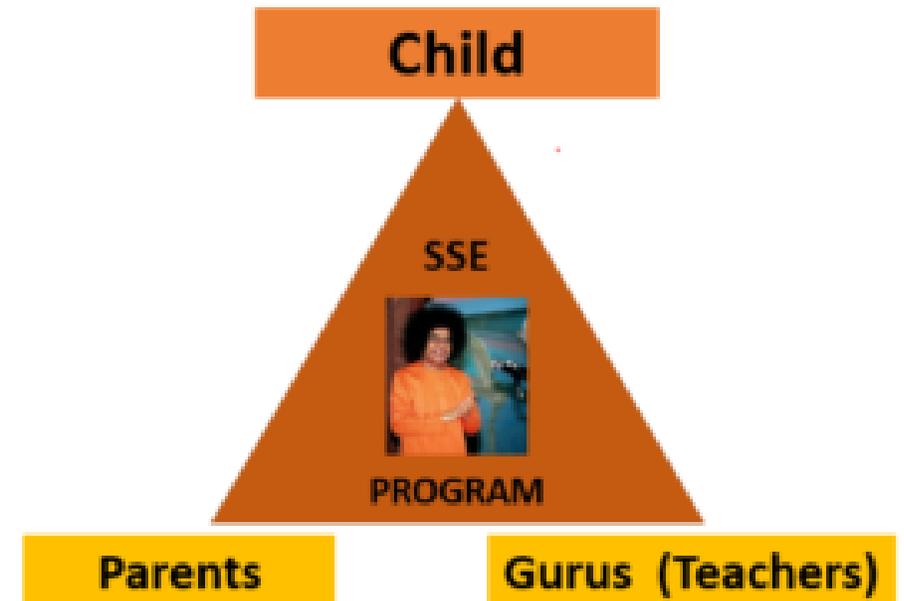


Objectives



1. Why: to understand why the parent-teacher partnership is essential to the success of the SSE student and program.
2. What: learn what a teacher can do to build and maintain strong connections with the parents of their SSE students.
3. How: share tools and techniques on how a teacher can overcome challenges.

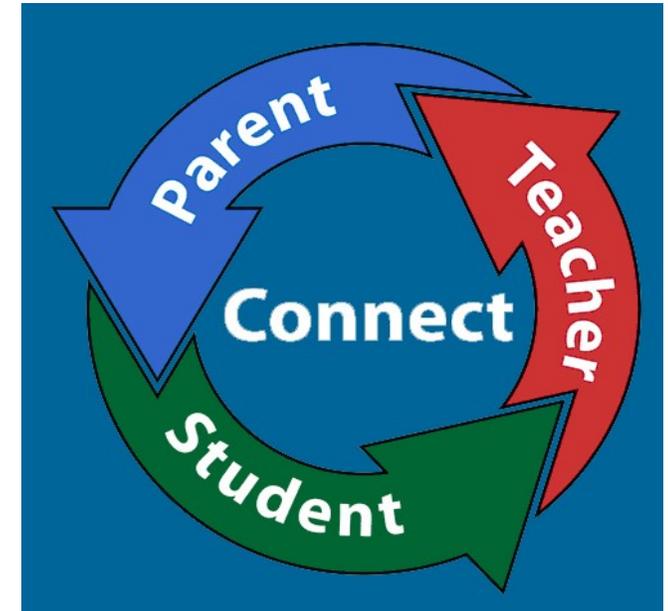
SSE Program – Triple Partnership



Outline



- What is the essence of the Parent-Teacher Partnership and why is it so essential? What does Swami say about it?
- How are we effectively engaging parents currently?
- What are the ways SSE Teachers can maintain a strong and continued partnership with parents?
- How to overcome challenges in engaging the parents?



Essence of the Partnership



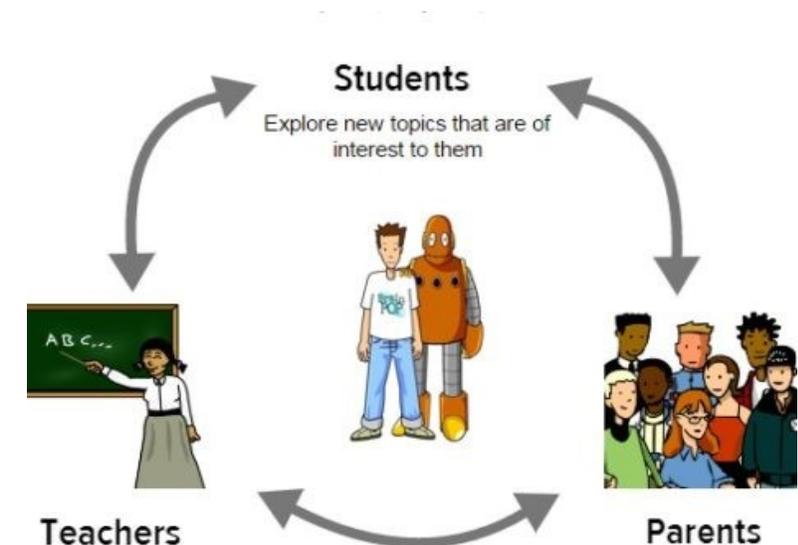
Parent-Teacher Partnership

Make Parents Partners in Achieving Goals of the child's Educare (MIND SHAPED BY THE DIVINE SOURCE WITHIN)

- Make Parents realize of the common objective
- Make Parents feel as an important member of Sai Family
- Establish a bond with parents and nurture the bond
- Engage Parents in the SSE program's activities
- Engage Parents at all levels –before, during and after the SSE lessons in different ways



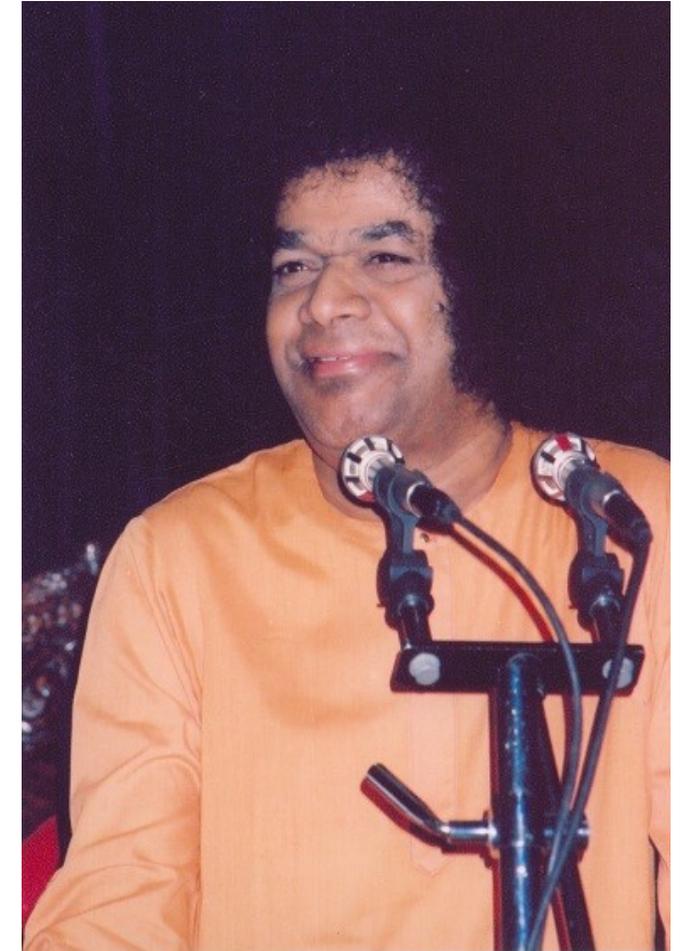
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Importance of the Partnership - What does Swami say?



- Parents and teachers have a duty to see that children are brought up along right lines through love, precept and if necessary, corrective measures...It is because if parents and teachers fail to enforce discipline that students behave in the most irresponsible ways and indulge in disorder and violence.
 - Sanathana Sarathi, March 1984, page 62
- By shaping these children in Divine Form, you are helping their parents too to set their minds right; you are brightening and cleansing the homes of the pupils.
 - Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, June 6, 1978



Importance of Partnership – Examples



Make a bond with the child by connecting with them through including their interests in the class. The best source to know about the child is their parent. So we need to have productive communication about the child and family.

- Example: If a child is a fan of a basketball player, we can have motivational videos, use that sport to spark interest in the child to play a value based game using the sport of interest as a medium. Child could be into music, or other art forms...

We should know if the child has any possible personal losses so that we are mindful not to hurt their feelings, we can know this only if we maintain a good rapport with the parents

Insights into Current Parent Engagement Practices



Parents partner most for

1. Preparation for major events
2. Life Application & Spiritual Tracker
3. Bhajans

100% of teachers agree that partnership with parents is **ESSENTIAL** and **IMPORTANT**

Most Effective methods of communication are

Phone calls or 1:1s (54%) & WhatsApp (34%)

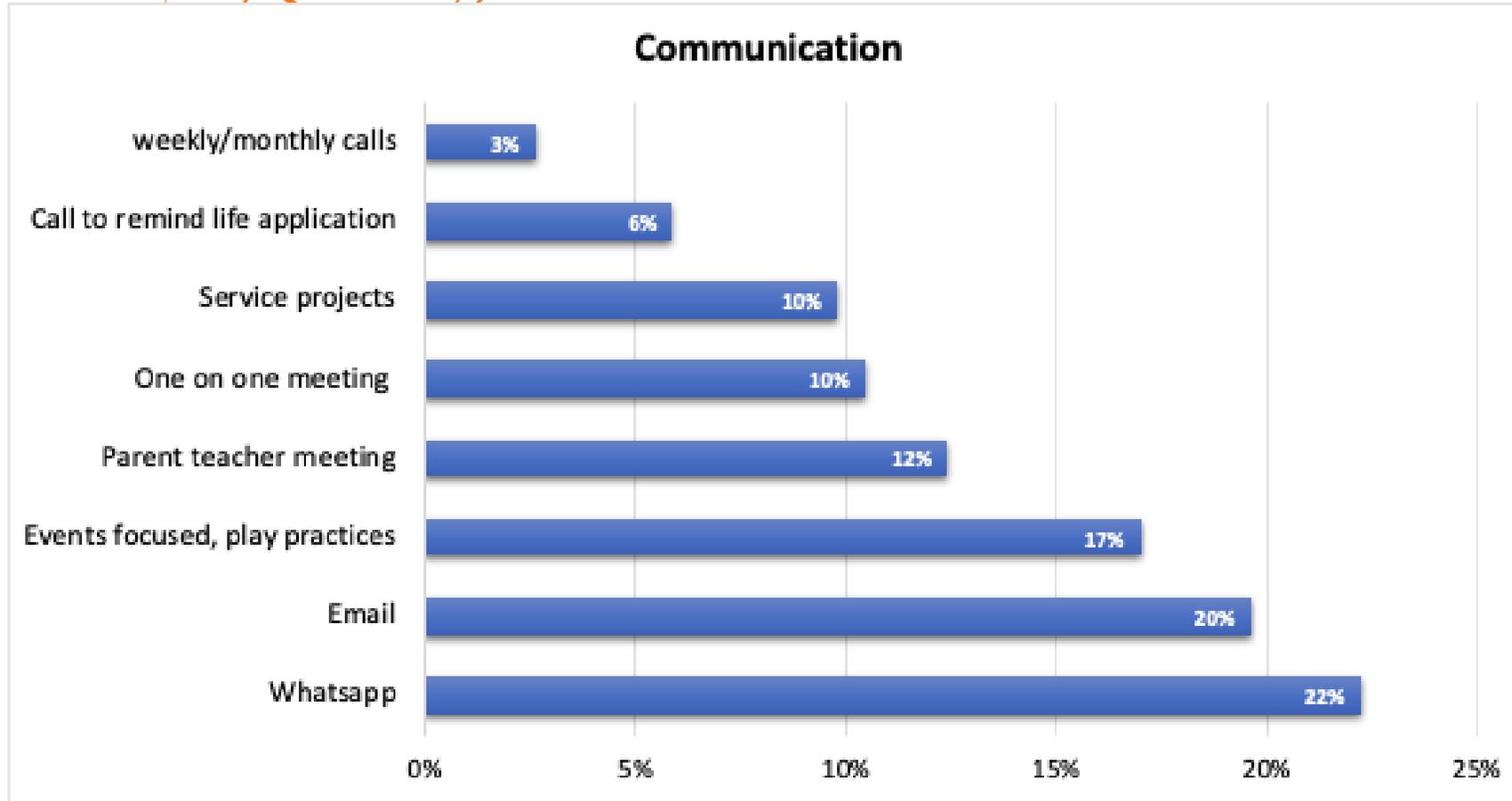
Least Effective is **Emails (4%)**

8% are good with **Biannual meetings & Quarterly meetings**

Insights into Current Parent Partnership



But in reality!!!



We are using:

- WhatsApp (22%)
- Emails (20%)

Most Effective methods are used the least:

- One on one meetings (10%)
- Life application reminder calls (7%)
- Weekly/Monthly calls (3%)

Introspection - A Quote from one of you!



When we slowly understand and start living up to Swami's expectations of us, we will be in position to communicate the importance and seriousness of our program and impress on parents' involvement.

The change begins with us, spreads to our students, and slowly creates change in their families. So the focus is first us, next our students and last parents.

- SSE Teacher, USA



Breakout room details

Pre-SSE & Group 1 - Sathya

Group 2 - Dharma

Group 3 - Shanthi

Group 4 - Ahimsa



**2020 SSIO-USA National SSE
Refresher and Enrichment
Parent- Teacher: An Essential Partnership
Breakout Room #**

July 19, 2020

BREAKOUT ROOM GUIDELINES



- 1. Each facilitator will ask for a volunteer to act as a scribe. The scribes will send their notes via email to Kandarp Patel kpatel@sathyasai.us**
- 2. Each participant has a few minutes to share, please be mindful of the time.**
- 3. Each participant does not have to answer all four questions; please feel free to share your experiences with parent engagement of your SSE students.**
- 4. Your group's facilitator will go over the specific ground rules for the discussion.**
- 5. Please identify and commit to one specific and measurable action point that you will implement for this coming SSE year to improve parent engagement.**

BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS



- 1. Share one positive parent engagement experience – Method, Results, and Purpose**
- 2. Share any challenges faced in engaging parents**
- 3. What new practices will you adopt to effectively engage parents in SSE?**
- 4. How important is a parent's connection with a Sai Center to create a successful SSE experience for the child?**

What Swami Says



The parents have to be persuaded lovingly, through the example of bright, cheerful, and cooperating children from the Bal Vikas classes, to send their children also to these classes.

As you know, you cannot draw children to your side if you hold a stick in your hand; you will have to hold some sweets instead. So the teachers have to be embodiments of love and patience.

- Sathya Sai Speaks Volume 10 Page 161



What Swami Says



The home too must feel the change in the child's behavior. It may be **advisable to gather the parents of the children once a month, or even more frequently, and give them guidelines on child-care and on the higher ideals of family and social life.**

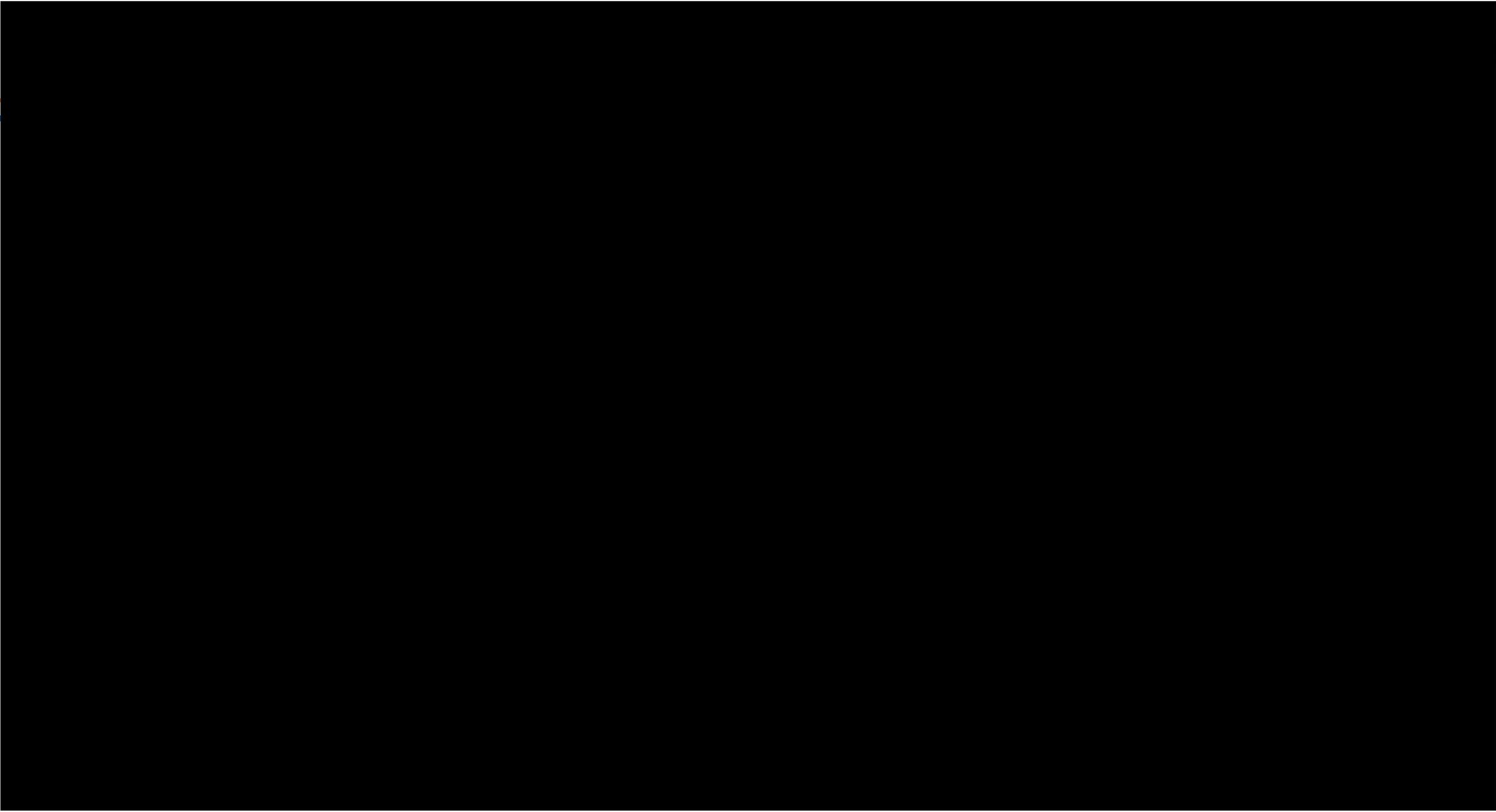
You can suggest to them ways and means of following up the work of the Bal Vikas in proper upbringing of children, while allowing freedom to these children at home.

While allowing them due freedom, they should nevertheless hold harmful tendencies in check. They should promote respectful behavior to elders in the family.

They should be careful how they themselves behave in the presence of children, for youngsters learn a lot by emulation.

A spirit of understanding and sympathy has to pervade the home. This can be emphasized with the parents at these gatherings. **This would be a necessary supplement to the Bal Vikas.**

- Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 14, June 6, 1978





**Please join the Prema Hall for the closing remarks
from the Guest Speaker**

Interesting Conclusions from the Survey Responses



- ❖ It is surprising that most teachers use e-mail to contact parents even though it is the least effective method.
- ❖ Similarly, one of the most effective methods of communication is phone calls but only 7% of the respondents use that modality. WhatsApp is one of the most used tools for parent engagement.
- ❖ When parents join their children in the practice of the Life Application or in other joint projects, they are more successful.
- ❖ Some responses indicated that some parents are not yet in the Sai fold and their participation is the least. Swami decides which students join SSE; our focus is the child, once the child shows signs of good practices, the parents may become interested and participate.
- ❖ In the first general meeting, delineating the objective and scope of SSE education helps to clear confusion
- ❖ Most parents had a high attendance at the opening and closing day meetings, celebration events, service projects, and outings. However, lack of a sense of belonging by the parents is a common challenge to parent engagement.

Your New Ideas



- **Parents' Group:** A **parent coordinator** can plan and arrange special activities, involve parents in creative ways. A separate **parent study group** that meets at least monthly to discuss parenting issues and share what is going on with the SSE Life Applications. It will help to make the parents feel like a cohesive group that spans the multiple SSE groups.
- **Parents Survey:** Survey on how we can increase their partnership and participation and what are their expectations for the class.
- **Sai Family Day:** Setup a Sai family day involving the parents to participate in some activities to do for the event.
- **Parents as Teachers:** Find out what parents can offer: skills like art, small projects, and parent-led classes where we make them feel they are part of SSE.
- **Parents as Panelists:** They can also present workshop or speech to other parents in the group such as meditation, mindfulness, yoga etc.

Building Strong Relationship



For regular Follow up of Life Application and maintaining strong relationship:

- Phone calls – Regular with positive feedback
- Text/WhatsApp – Regular with positive feedback
- One-on-One meetings – couple times a year
- **Parents-Kids Partnering in Life Application**
- Example: Gadget Detox
- Include parents to take charge to help with certain projects or service activities.
- 30 Minutes Prayers for the World as a family
- Service Projects
- Not getting cooperation
 - Introspect, don't force

Private phone calls have worked consistently for me. Also WhatsApp messaging works well. I can communicate faster this way. Most parents work full time and take care of little kids. They don't have time to look at my announcements.

Gr. III Teacher- USA

SSE teacher needs to communicate with the parents about their child's achievements, successes & failures, spiritual growth etc. listen to their suggestions, & make any recommendations, adjustments & gain their confidence. This will make the parent-teacher partnership powerful.

Gr III SSE Teacher- USA



Some ideas and perspectives on parent connection

- We should know if the child has any possible personal losses so that we are mindful not to hurt their feelings, we can know this only if we maintain a good rapport with the parents
- Include parents to brainstorm on projects with the class lessons
- Use an app to update the lessons promptly or be an ideal example through communication
- Give our valuable feedback to parents, good / bad to the parents so that we can work on the total character development of the child
- Try to set up a get together with the families outside of SSE so that the parents can communicate more freely and the children feel that their parents are also part of SSE.
 - Example: A trip to bowling alley, beach, park, movies etc.. with parents
 - Field trips to local places with spiritual connection
- In some classes, we can invite the parents and play a game/activity that includes them too for SSE
- Maintain a friendly relationship through phone calls with parents to know the background of the child, their interests/hobbies, the possible areas that the parent thinks needs improvement or a change etc. We include the parents and children on a WhatsApp where we update the lessons after our class, remind the life application and requests feedback and affirmation from them on a daily basis



Some ideas and perspectives on parent connection

- **More ideas**
 - Gather feedback from parents before the start of SSE classes
 - Parents may have suggestions on emphasizing on some things
 - See how it differs from students' suggestions
 - Provide a year-end summary to parents (by each teacher or by the EC)
 - Invite parents to showcase projects, plays, videos and musical programs
 - Invite parents to a meditation session or discussion on sattvic food practices, recipes
 - Invite parents to share some real world examples of practicing values at workplace

Inspiration by Mr. Piyush Ghayal



Mr. Piyush Ghayal

Mr. Ghayal has been a global citizen, living on 4 different continents. Currently, he engages in Sai activities on a full-time basis after his retirement from a successful career in Information Technology. He has dedicated his life to Swami's work; Swami has been the focus of his life. After Swami's Darshan in 1984, he became involved in the Sathya Sai Spiritual Education and began serving as an SSE teacher. He has also served as a YA advisor and as the Region's President for the Mid-Atlantic Region. He has been conducting Parenting Work Shops and, Grief Workshops.. He is always very willing and ready for any Sai Seva at any time.



PARTHI PILGRIMAGE



USA National Pilgrimage - July 11, 2010
Children in Divine Presence
Play - "All Our Relations"

The Promise (Yogakshemam)



The year 1961 was important for the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organizations.

Swami came to the Mandir and addressed the huge assembly and declared,

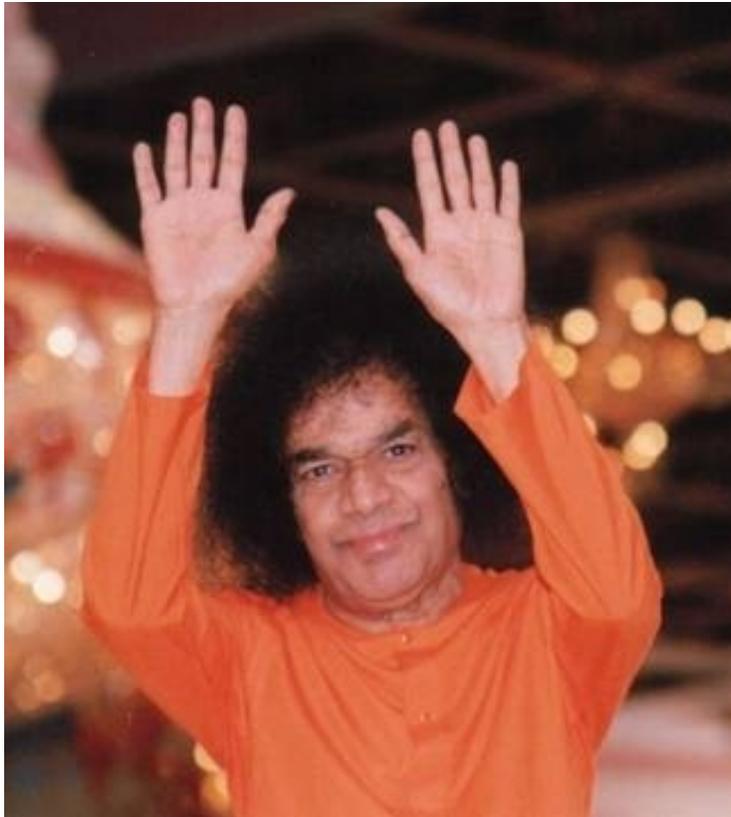
“I am starting a Seva Samithi. The persons who become members of this Samithi and perform selfless service will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death; not only they, but also their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But the test will be severe. I will see how many will withstand this test and emerge victorious in the end.”

- Excerpts from “Sri Sathya Sai Anandadayi (Journey with Sai)”
by Karunamba Ramamurthy, pp 139–140.

Acknowledgements



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Mr. Piyush Ghayal

Ms. Aparna Murali

IT Team

SSIO

**National, Regional and Center Officers, SSE
Coordinators, and Teachers**

Parent-Teacher: an Essential Partnership Team
(Rajini, Rashmi, Kavitha, Madhuri, Sai Latha, Smitha,
Latha, Puneet, Praseed, Anjanbhai, Kandarp)



ADDITIONAL SLIDES

Why is the Partnership Essential?



Today students do not know how to convert their knowledge into skill. Where does the mistake lie? Does it lie with the parents or the teachers or the leaders? It is the mistake of everybody. The students are pure and tenderhearted.

- Sathya Sai Speaks, Volume 33, September 25, 2000

100% of teachers agreed that partnership with parents is **ESSENTIAL**

How many of us think it is the teacher's job to teach Truth, Righteousness, and Love?

Challenges - SSE Improvement Opportunities



What an SSE teacher and SSE Program can change to meet these challenges:

Parents lack sense of belonging

Boredom: Parents are bored doing the same activities

Priorities

for students' time: SSE competes with dance, music, sports & academic extracurricular classes

Busy Parents/Priorities of Parents

New Devotees

The parents have to be persuaded lovingly, through the example of bright, cheerful, and cooperating children from the Bal Vikas classes, to send their children also to these classes. As you know, you cannot draw children to your side if you hold a stick in your hand; you will have to hold some sweets instead. So the teachers have to be embodiments of love and patience.

- Sathya Sai Speaks

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Building A Strong Relationship



For Relationship with the Center/SSE Program

❖ Opening day General Meeting

- ❖ Introduction of the program's foundation, objective, goals, methods, role of parents, teachers and events calendar

❖ Year-End General Meeting

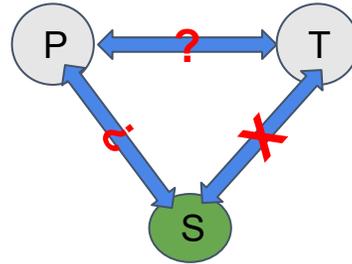
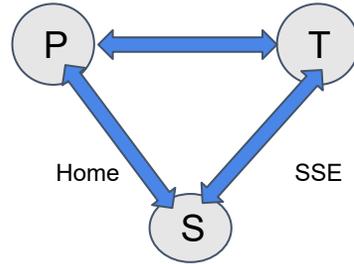
- ❖ Summer Life Application, Outings
- ❖ Service Projects
- ❖ Festival Celebrations
- ❖ 'Share & inspire' series invited parents to talk during our summer classes
- ❖ Have more interesting and interactive sessions in the Parents' Group

I see the biggest challenge in parents' involvement is making them understand the program expectations and how their involvement is crucial for success of their children. For many of us, it is still a learning process to understand Swami's expectations and living up to them. When we slowly understand and start living up to Swami's expectations of us, we will be in position to communicate the importance and seriousness of our program and impress on parents' involvement. The change begins with us, spreads to our students, and slowly creates change in their families. So the focus is first us, next our students and last parents.

SSE Teacher, USA

Some ideas and perspectives on parent connection

- **The level of parent engagement depends on the strength of the teacher-student link**



- Focus on S-T link while not forgetting others
- This one link can keep others intact or more importantly
- Helps in the spiritual well-being of the student
- Is student not the MVP?

- Is there a disconnect, are you able to sense it in the first place?
 - Litmus test: Is the child happily attending? Feels bad on missing a class?
- Do you feel it's important what you want to teach over what children are happy to learn? It's a balance but - in favor of the child?



Some ideas and perspectives on parent connection

Working on the Student-Teacher link

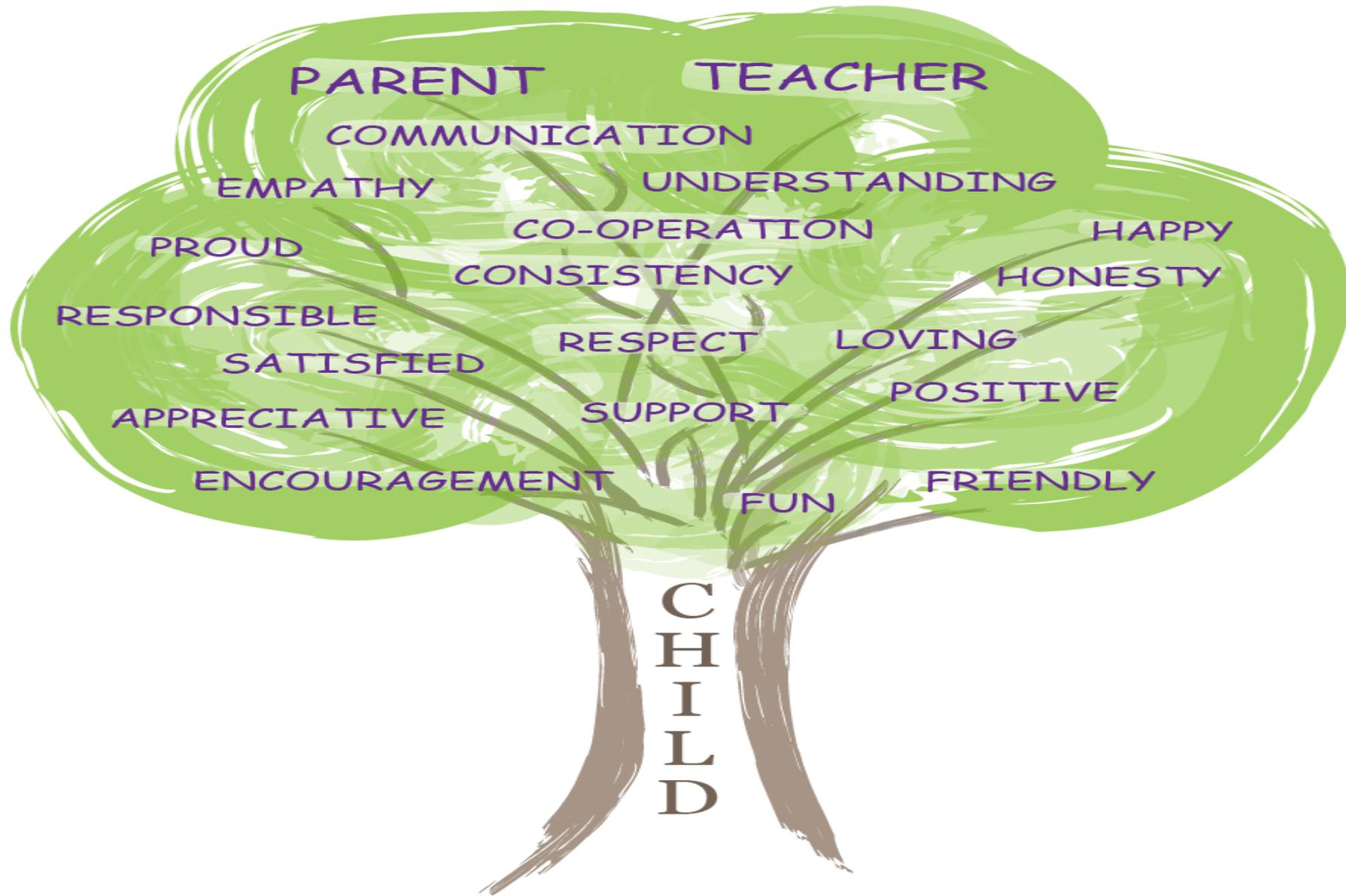
- Have you had feedback from students?
 - What would they like to talk about in the class?
- Students bring their “home”, to class already
 - What do they take back home?
 - School and other environments are also brought to class subtly
- Are we recreating “home” inside the class?
 - Think from student point of view - school, and all other activities are non-stop, SSE should be different - fun, and an environment that student looks forward to coming to
- Be mindful of whether the family members are devotees of Swami
 - Focus on basic human values and sub-values and their life applications



Some ideas and perspectives on parent connection

Revisit the methods

- Just call or visit the parent once in a while whichever way it works
 - Your lesson plan covers a wide range of values-sub-values, focus on what method of teaching works or doesn't rather than outcomes (notes)
 - Communicating post **every** class - analyze how is it helping you do better in your class?



PARENT - TEACHER Relationship Tree

