

Key Elements for Building Credibility with Parents

The Barriers:

- Lack of respect for parents
- Unprofessionalism
- Mistakes
- Misunderstanding roles. The youth minister needs to know he/she is not the parent and the parent needs to know the youth minister is more than a spiritually-minded babysitter.
- Lack of communication

Overcoming the Barriers:

- Act like an adult
- Teach parents respect for your position by:
 - Working hard
 - Preparing well
 - Continuing to grow and learn
- Get to know one another.
- Admit mistakes when they happen.
- Know why you do what you do.
- Be available and approachable.
- Develop listening skills.
- Lead interesting meetings.
- Keep parents informed.
- Allow time for expectations to develop Communication/Programming ideas.
- Keep a "Parents Only" bulletin board.
- Collect a parents' resource library.
- Promote a resource of the month.
- Use bulletin inserts.
- Organize parent support groups, discussion groups & seminars. *Note:* Make sure there is a designated leader(s) for this ministry. The leader(s) should be responsible for setting the meeting time, promoting the meeting, and securing the program and personalities for the meeting. Provide the training necessary for this leadership role.
- Create a Parent Newsletter:
 - Teenage trends.
 - Family Corner.
 - Ask an expert.
 - News (Youth and Family Events).
 - Devotional.
 - Reviews
 - Tips for parents
 - Calendar

- Form a ParentsøSunday School Class.
- Plan parent retreats.
- Design opportunities for single parents.
- Send uplifting notes or emails.
- Make quick phone calls.
- Attend special events.
- Use your camera.
- Make a brag board.
- Sponsor Parent Recognition Sunday.
- Hold an Open House for Parents.
- Involve the pastor in the promotion and leadership of this ministry. He doesn't have to take an active leadership role (unless he desires to), but since he is critically involved in the ministry to families in your church, his support will aid your cause as this parent ministry effectively aids the overall ministry of the church.
- Always stay on target. The number one killer of parent ministry is the idle chatter that disintegrates into gossip which springs from aimless gatherings of parents. If you just come together to talk about youth, that is exactly what will happen and someone will get their feelings hurt and your parent ministry will fail almost immediately. Use Moral Compass suggested meeting plan formats and downloadable parent meeting for effective, targeted meetings.