

Activities

to support *The Learning Team* presentation

This set of activities supports *The Learning Team* PowerPoint presentation. The activities are designed to get parents thinking and talking about the concepts and issues raised in *The Learning Team*. There is one activity each for chapters 2 to 7, as well as two warm-up activities and one wrap-up activity. You may use all of the activities if time allows, or choose those that seem most relevant to parents at your school.

Table of Contents

1. Warm-up to Learning: Option One (Everything you always wanted to know)
2. Warm-up to Learning: Option Two (They melt in your mouth, but...)
3. Chapter 2: Crossword Puzzle
4. Chapter 3: Treasure Hunt
5. Chapter 4: ABC Brainstorm
6. Chapter 5: Goal Setting
7. Chapter 6: Building Bridges, not Walls
8. Chapter 7: Finding Answers
9. Wrap-up: How Did We Do?



Warm-up to Learning

Option One for smaller groups

Everything you always wanted to know about your child's education but haven't had a chance to ask!

This activity provides an opportunity for workshop participants to informally introduce themselves to each other, and to begin discussing their questions and concerns. In doing so, it helps participants focus their ideas for the session and also lets them see that others share some of the same concerns and have some of the same questions. Option one, described here, works best with 5–15 people.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Felt pens for each table

Procedure:

1. Open the session by welcoming participants and explaining the purpose of the activity.
2. Invite participants at each table to identify and record any questions they may have related to one or both of the following:
 “What I hope to learn today is...”
 OR
 “One thing I need to understand about my child's education is...”
3. Post the responses from each table around the room.
 OR
 Using chart paper, record participants' questions and concerns in response to the prompts.
4. Conclude the activity by thanking participants for sharing and letting them know that their questions will be answered as the workshop proceeds. Encourage participants to ask additional questions as you move through the workshop.



Warm-up to Learning

Option Two for larger groups

They melt in your mouth, but...

This activity provides an opportunity for workshop participants to informally introduce themselves to each other, and to begin discussing their questions and concerns. In doing so, it helps participants see that others share some of the same concerns and have some of the same questions. Option two, described here, works best with 15+ people. Choose a space that allows participants to move around easily.

Time: 10 minutes (or more, depending on the size of the group)

Materials:

- Bags of M&M's®
- Copy of the M&M's® Discussion Guide for each person
- Chart paper
- Pens or pencils for participants

Procedure:

1. As people arrive, ask them to take a handful of M&M's® from a bowl. Indicate that from that handful, they should pick out their four favourite colours and hold them aside. They can eat the other candies while they wait or hold them for a snack later.
2. Open the session by welcoming participants and explaining the purpose of the activity.
3. Distribute copies of the *M&M's® Discussion Guide* and review the guidelines:
 - Participants are to find another person they do not know who has **one** of the same colour M&M's®.
 - When they find that person, they share their thoughts on the corresponding question from the discussion guide and eat the candy. They may also record their ideas on their discussion guide.
 - If possible, participants should try to find a different person for each colour.
 - The goal is for participants to meet four people and eat all of their candy in a 10-minute period.
4. Conclude the activity by inviting participants to share some of the “burning questions” that they hope will be explored in this workshop. These questions can be recorded on chart paper and posted for the duration of the workshop as a reminder.
5. Thank everyone for sharing their questions and let participants know that as the workshop proceeds, their questions will be answered. Encourage participants to ask additional questions as you move through the workshop.



Warm-up to Learning (Option Two)

M & M's® Discussion Guide

Directions: Find a person who has **one** of the same colour candies as you do and then discuss your thoughts about the corresponding question on the list below. After the discussion period, you may eat the candy. Allow a few minutes for the discussion and then move on to another person and another colour. Your goal is to meet four people, discuss four questions and eat four pieces of candy.

Colour	Question
Red	What do you hope to learn today? or State one or two “burning questions” you hope will be answered in this session.
Yellow	What is one way that you have been supporting your child's learning at home?
Brown	State your personal definition of the workshop title, The Learning Team.
Orange	What do you feel is your major role as a parent member of the Learning Team?
Green	What is one of your child's strengths (academic, social, artistic, athletic, etc.)? What is one of their challenges?
Blue	In what way do you think your child learns best?
Light Brown	What are you most proud of about your child?

Original questions developed for *The Learning Team Workshop*

They Melt In Your Mouth, But ... activity modified from the *Cross-Functional Teams Tool Kit* by Glenn M. Parker. Copyright © 1997 by Pfeiffer, an imprint of Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers, San Francisco, CA.

Found at: <http://www.glennparker.com/Freebees/m-and-ms.html>



Chapter 2: Building the Learning Team

Crossword Puzzle

This activity asks participants to complete a short crossword puzzle, with clues related to Chapter 2. The activity requires participants to look carefully at the information in the handbook, and in doing so, encourages them to think about possible members of their child's learning team and what roles these individuals play, as well as their own role as parents.

Time: 10–15 minutes

Materials:

- Copy of Crossword Puzzle for each participant
- Overhead of completed Crossword Puzzle
- Pencil for each participant

Procedure:

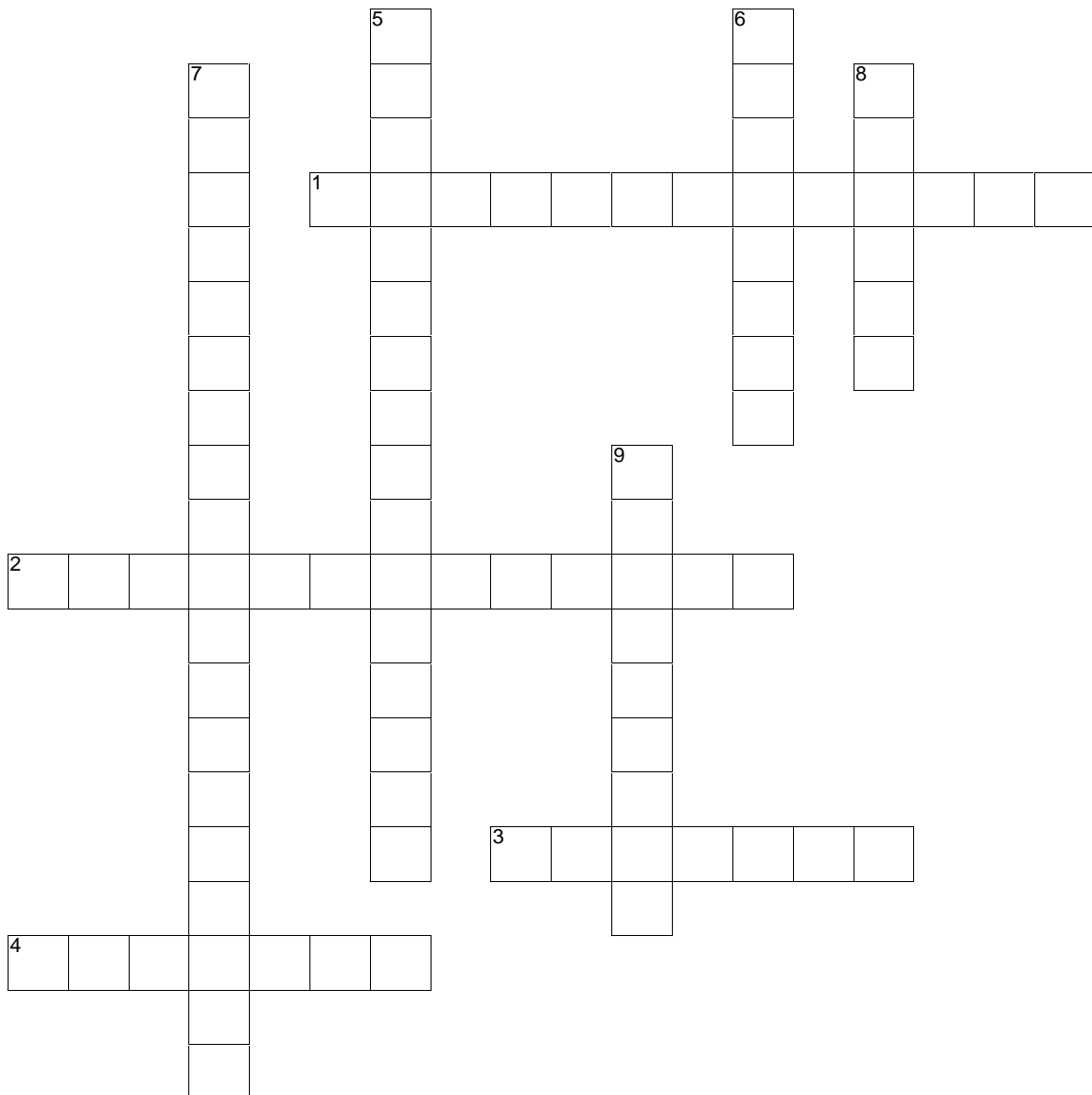
1. Ask participants to work with their neighbour to complete the crossword puzzle. (Allow about 10 minutes.) Remind them to use the information in Chapter 2 to answer the questions.
2. When finished, review the crossword puzzle clues and share answers.
3. Invite participants to discuss their role on their child's learning team.



Chapter 2: Building the Learning Team

Crossword Puzzle

You and a partner have 10 minutes to look through Chapter 2 of *The Learning Team* to complete the following crossword puzzle!





Chapter 2: Building the Learning Team Crossword Puzzle continued

Across

1. A group that provides advice to the principal on school-related issues. (two words)
2. If the learning team is to work well, this is an essential cornerstone of the relationship.
3. This person is ultimately responsible for planning, implementing and assessing student programs.
4. Documents such as medication history, list of specialists, report cards and individualized program plans are examples of _____ you should keep organized and accessible.

Down

5. This person provides supportive services in the classroom to enhance the learning experiences of children. (two words)
6. A person who speaks up for, acts on behalf of, or supports someone else.
7. Resources available from Alberta Learning that outline expected topics and skills for each subject area and grade level. (two words)
8. An adult or older student who commits to working regularly with a child for a certain period of time, usually one to three hours per week.
9. Under the *Standards for Special Education*, this individual is responsible for special education programming in the school.



Treasure Hunt

Chapter 3 is an extensive but important chapter for parents. The Treasure Hunt activity asks participants to locate specific information in their copies of *The Learning Team*. This activity is a way to create a starting point for thinking about and discussing these concepts.

Time: 10–15 minutes

Materials:

- Copy of the Treasure Hunt for each participant
- Overhead of Treasure Hunt answer key

Procedure:

1. Hand out copies of the Treasure Hunt worksheet.
2. The Treasure Hunt sheet lists 16 different items to look for in Chapter 3 of *The Learning Team*. Invite participants to work with the person beside them for the next 10 minutes to find these items in their handbooks and note the page number(s) on their worksheets.
3. Once participants have completed the treasure hunt, the facilitator may choose to quickly go over each of the key concepts using the PowerPoint presentation or separate overheads **OR** choose to invite discussion and questions.



Treasure Hunt

You and a partner have 10 minutes to look through Chapter 3 of *The Learning Team* to find the following information in the handbook and note the page number(s) in the boxes below.

<p>The definition of an accommodation</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>The definition of Individualized Program Planning (IPP)</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Possible accommodations for test taking</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Where to get the <i>Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing</i></p> <p>Page:</p>
<p>Essential information that must be included in an IPP</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>The purpose of assistive technology</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>The difference between long-term goals and short-term objectives</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Tips for effective IPP meetings</p> <p>Page:</p>
<p>The difference between an adapted and a modified program</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Tips for ensuring your child has appropriate accommodations</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>The six steps in developing an IPP</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Examples of placement options</p> <p>Page:</p>
<p>How students can benefit from effective accommodations</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>How the learning team determines priorities for your child’s IPP</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Information parents must provide if school staff are administering medication to their child</p> <p>Page:</p>	<p>Information that you can contribute to your child’s IPP</p> <p>Page:</p>



Treasure Hunt answer key

You and a partner have 10 minutes to look through Chapter 3 of *The Learning Team* to find the following information in the handbook and note the page number(s) in the boxes below.

<p>The definition of an accommodation</p> <p>Page: 36</p>	<p>The definition of Individualized Program Planning (IPP)</p> <p>Pages: 28–29</p>	<p>Possible accommodations for test taking</p> <p>Page: 40</p>	<p>Where to get the <i>Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing</i></p> <p>Page: 41</p>
<p>Essential information that must be included in an IPP</p> <p>Page: 30</p>	<p>The purpose of assistive technology</p> <p>Page: 38</p>	<p>The difference between long-term goals and short-term objectives</p> <p>Page: 31</p>	<p>Tips for effective IPP meetings</p> <p>Pages: 33–35</p>
<p>The difference between an adapted and a modified program</p> <p>Page: 28</p>	<p>Tips for ensuring your child has appropriate accommodations</p> <p>Page: 42</p>	<p>The six steps in developing an IPP</p> <p>Page: 29</p>	<p>Examples of placement options</p> <p>Pages: 44–45</p>
<p>How students can benefit from effective accommodations</p> <p>Pages: 41–42</p>	<p>How the learning team determines priorities for your child’s IPP</p> <p>Pages: 30–31</p>	<p>Information parents must provide if school staff are administering medication to their child</p> <p>Page: 43</p>	<p>Information that you can contribute to your child’s IPP</p> <p>Page: 29</p>



ABC Brainstorm

Chapter 4 looks at ways families and parents can promote understanding of their child's special needs, and offers strategies for promoting confidence and independence, teaching decision-making skills, building communication skills, fostering friendships, and teaching self-advocacy. The ABC Brainstorm activity asks participants to list words or phrases starting with each letter of the alphabet as a way to get them thinking about how they can support their children's social and emotional growth.

Time: 10–15 minutes

Materials:

- Copy of ABC Brainstorm worksheet for each participant
- ABC Brainstorm sample answer key
- Pens or pencils for participants

Procedure:

1. Explain to the group that for each letter on the worksheet, they are to try to think of a word or phrase related to supporting their own child's social and emotional growth. A, B and C are already filled in as examples.
2. Have participants work individually at first, thinking of as many words as they can that could be associated with, and benefit, the social and emotional growth of their child. Have participants fill in the blanks beside each letter of the alphabet.
3. After about five minutes, encourage participants to pair up or work in small groups to fill in blanks for letters they have not yet completed. Encourage them to use their own words or borrow text and ideas from Chapter 4.
4. While the group is working, go around the room and ask participants to share possible terms for the different letters of the alphabet. Be open to a wide range of possibilities!
5. Once everyone has had a chance to work through their ABCs, invite participants to share and explain some of the words and phrases that they found to go with each letter. Discuss how these ideas support children's social and emotional growth.

* The ABC Brainstorm sample answer key has examples of words or phrases for all letters if there are any that participants become stuck on.



ABC Brainstorm

One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children is an understanding and appreciation of their own strengths and needs. With a partner or on your own, use this chapter as a resource to create an ABC collection of ideas that you could use to support your child's social and emotional growth.

A All children have **abilities**. We need to recognize and nurture these.

B Establish a structured, consistent plan for **behaviour** at home.

C Instill a "**can-do**" attitude at home.

D _____

E _____

F _____

G _____

H _____

I _____

J _____

K _____

L _____

M _____

N _____

O _____

P _____

Q _____

R _____

S _____

T _____

U _____

V _____

W _____

X _____

Y _____

Z _____



ABC Brainstorm sample answer key

One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children is an understanding and appreciation of their own strengths and needs. With a partner or on your own, use this chapter as a resource to create an ABC collection of ideas that you could use to support your child's social and emotional growth. Use your own words or take text from the chapter.

- A** All children have **abilities**. We need to recognize and nurture these.
- B** Establish a structured, consistent plan for **behaviour** at home.
- C** Instill a “**can-do**” attitude at home.
- D** Teach **decision-making** skills.
- E** Encourage your child to **express** his or her ideas, feelings and thoughts.
- F** Help your child develop **friendships**. Teach them how to be a good friend. Invite friends over.
- G** Teach your child about **goal setting**. Encourage your child to make realistic goals both for school and at home.
- H** **Help** your child be organized and prepared.
- I** Be prepared to help your child, but try to strengthen **independence** whenever possible.
- J** Create and support opportunities for your child to experience the **joy** of helping someone else.
- K** **Knowledge** is important. Seek resources to provide support and information for both you and your child.
- L** **Listen** to your child.
- M** **Make** a list of your child's strengths and needs.
- N** Provide opportunities for your child to learn **new skills** to help them feel confident and capable.
- O** **Open** up the lines of communication between yourself and your child.
- P** Emphasize the **positive**—recognize, nurture and build on strengths.
- Q** Encourage your child to ask **questions**.
- R** **Role-play** ways to handle different situations.
- S** Assist and support your child in his or her growth towards **self-advocacy**.
- T** Encourage your child to **talk** to you and make sure you actively listen.
- U** **Use** children's literature to teach and inspire your child.
- V** **Value** and celebrate your child's gifts.
- W** Children learn in different **ways** and at different rates.



Chapter 4: Supporting Social and Emotional Growth ABC Brainstorm sample answer key continued

- X** When your child is unsuccessful, try to help them view it as a learning **eXperience** rather than a failure.

- Y** **You**, as parents, are invaluable members of your child's learning team. You know your child best. You know your child's strengths, abilities, developmental capacities and challenges, and as a result, you can be your child's greatest supporters.

- Z** Look after yourself. Get plenty of rest (**ZZZs**) and take time out for your own needs. You will be better able to meet your family's needs if you are healthy and rested.



Chapter 5: Planning for Transitions

Goal Setting

This activity provides an opportunity for participants to start reflecting on their dreams and goals for their children, and developing an action plan to achieve these goals.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- Copy of Goal Setting worksheet for each participant
- Pens or pencils

Procedure:

1. Distribute copies of the Goal Setting worksheet to participants and explain the purpose of the activity.
2. Have participants work individually to complete the worksheet.
3. When everyone is finished their worksheet, invite participants to share their goal and the first step they will take towards achieving it.



Chapter 5: Planning for Transitions

Goal Setting

1. Create a wish list.

Make a list of five things you want for your child this school year.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Focus

Choose one wish to focus on. Put a star (*) beside it.

3. Refine

Turn your wish into a goal by identifying a major step toward fulfilling that wish.

For example:

- *My wish is for my child to enjoy reading.*

- *My goal for my child is that he read for 20 minutes before bedtime every day.*

My goal for my child is _____



Chapter 5: Planning for Transition Goal Setting continued

4. Think about ways to support your child in reaching this goal.

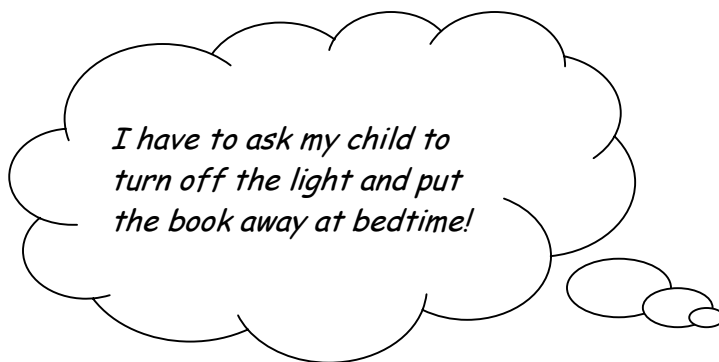
For example:

- *I will take my child to the library every week to choose books.*
- *I will make sure there is room in my schedule to read with my child every evening.*

5. Make an action plan that identifies steps you and your child can take towards this goal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

6. Visualize your child achieving this goal and enjoying its rewards. Imagine what you think would be the best outcome.





Chapter 6: Resolving Differences

Building Bridges, not Walls

An important part of building strong home–school relationships and resolving differences effectively is using language that builds bridges instead of building walls. In this activity, participants will work in two groups to brainstorm sample questions and statements that build bridges between people, and those that build walls.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- Two pieces of chart paper with headings: “Building Bridges” and “Building Walls”
- Felt markers in red and blue
- Tape

Procedure:

1. Divide participants into two groups. Give one group a red marker and the other group a blue marker.
2. Ask each group to choose a **recorder** who will write down the group’s ideas, a **reporter** who will discuss the findings with the other group, and a **transporter** who will bring the brainstorm sheet to the next table.
3. Explain that the first sheet will look at questions and statements that build walls. Start with a few examples such as “It’s your fault,” “You couldn’t understand,” or “You should...”

Then explain that the second sheet will look at questions and statements that build bridges. This could include examples such as “I appreciate...,” “What’s really working is...,” or “What do you think?” One group will start with the first sheet and the other with the second sheet.

4. Each group spends about five minutes recording their ideas on their starting sheet. Then, have the groups switch sheets. After reading over the ideas from the other group, they should add their own ideas on the new sheet.
5. When both groups have completed both sheets, post the sheets at the front of the room. To summarize findings, ask reporters from each group to read their group’s ideas.



Chapter 7: Keeping Informed

Finding Answers

This activity gives participants a chance to further explore the questions they brought up in the opening exercise and also to practise some strategies for finding answers to their questions.

Time: 15 minutes

Materials:

- List of questions generated by group in warm-up activity
- Chart paper
- Black marker
- Pencils or pens for participants

Procedure:

1. Ask participants to form small groups. Explain that each group should choose one of the “burning questions” that came up in the first activity.
2. Have each group list five additional questions related to their burning question. For example, if their burning question was about AD/HD, the group may ask additional questions such as “What are the controversial issues around AD/HD?” or “What are the long-term educational and health implications?”
3. Once each group has generated their questions, ask them to list five sources they could use to find information and answers to their questions. Groups may list either general sources, such as the library, or specific sources, such as a community organization they know does related work.



Wrap-up

How Did We Do?

This closing activity will provide participants with a chance to summarize some key ideas from the session, rethink these ideas in order to focus on some that they will act on right away, and then identify a question they still have.

Time: 10 minutes

Procedure:

1. Thank participants for taking the time to attend *The Learning Team* workshop. Remind them that their ongoing involvement and support as members of their child's learning team will make a positive and meaningful difference in their child's school success.
2. Ask them to now take some time to reflect on the session and fill out the 3–2–1 Activity worksheet. Facilitators may choose to have participants keep their worksheets or hand them in as feedback for the session.
3. Invite participants to share any comments or to ask any questions that might not have been addressed during the workshop.
4. Thank participants again for attending *The Learning Team* workshop.



Wrap-up

How Did We Do?

3 Things You Found Out

2 Things That You Will Start Right Away

1 Question You Still Have