

SUCCESSFUL PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Beth Black
Head of School

NEWTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

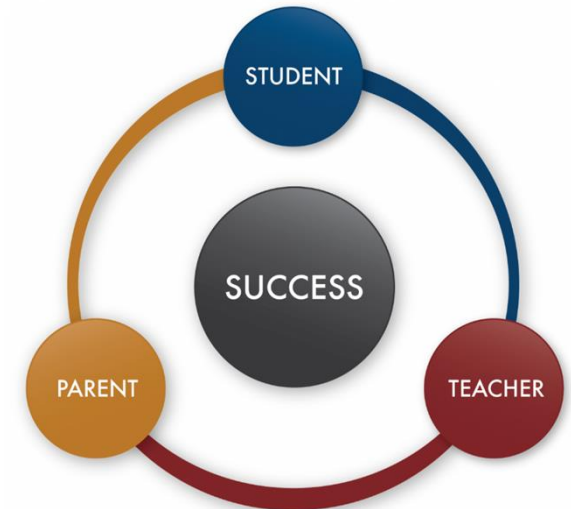
Jennifer Timmins
*Senior Director of Enrollment
and Advancement*

LEARNING GOALS

Increase parent engagement

Develop positive working relationships with parents

Respond effectively to parent concerns



INCREASING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

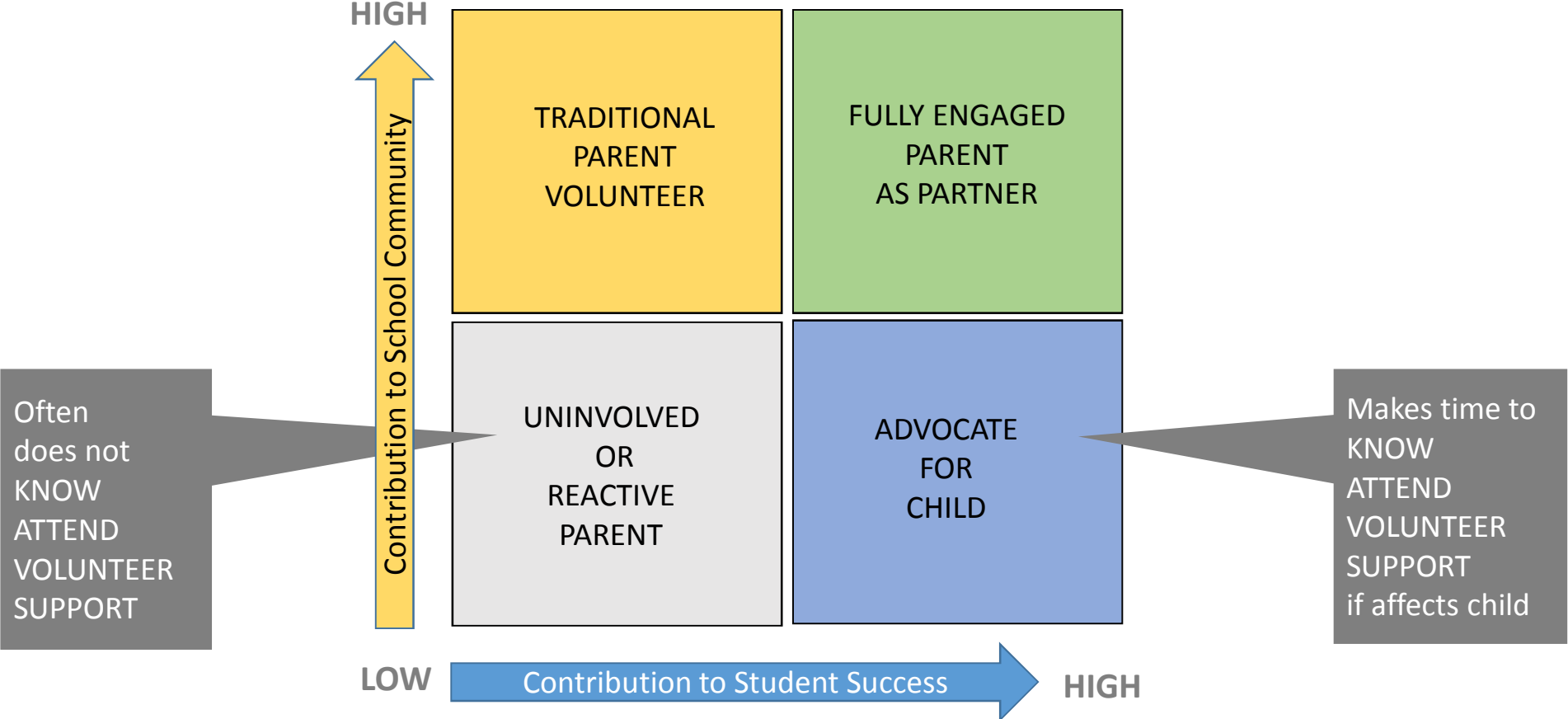


LOW

Level of Engagement

HIGH

A MODEL FOR THINKING ABOUT PARENT ENGAGEMENT



COMMUNICATING SO PARENTS *KNOW*

CONTENT

School-wide

Important vs Routine

Classroom

Routine vs Big Picture

Child-specific

Bad News vs Good

DELIVERY

Face-to-Face

Public vs Private

Alone vs With Help

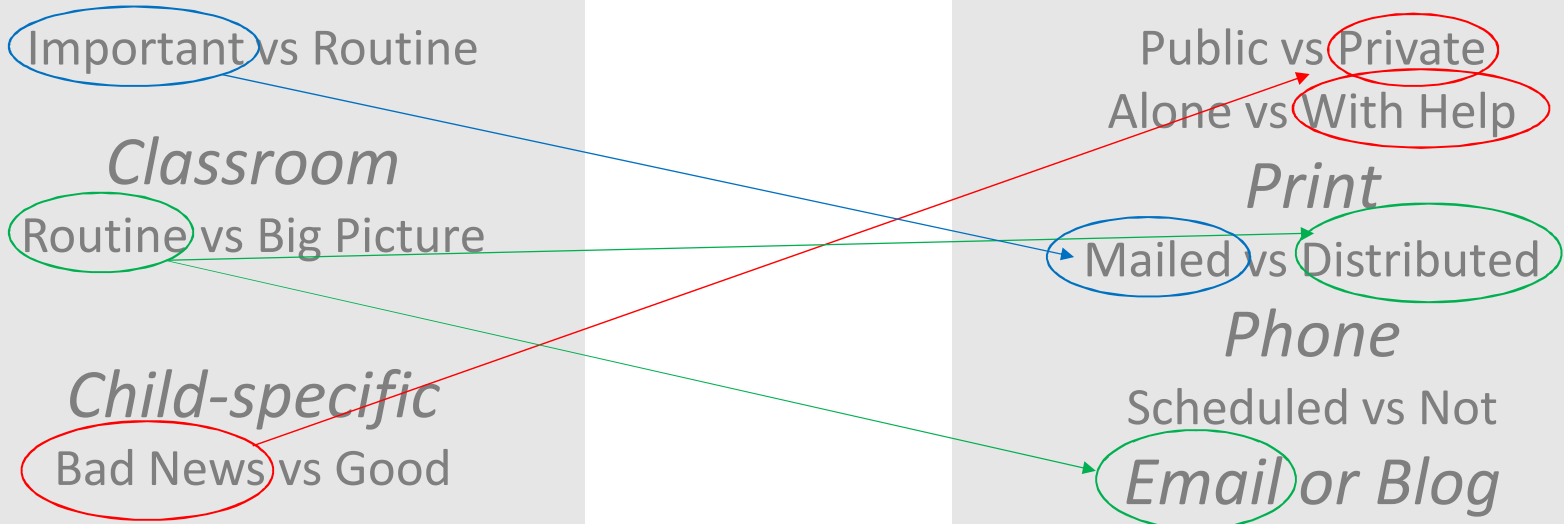
Print

Mailed vs Distributed

Phone

Scheduled vs Not

Email or Blog



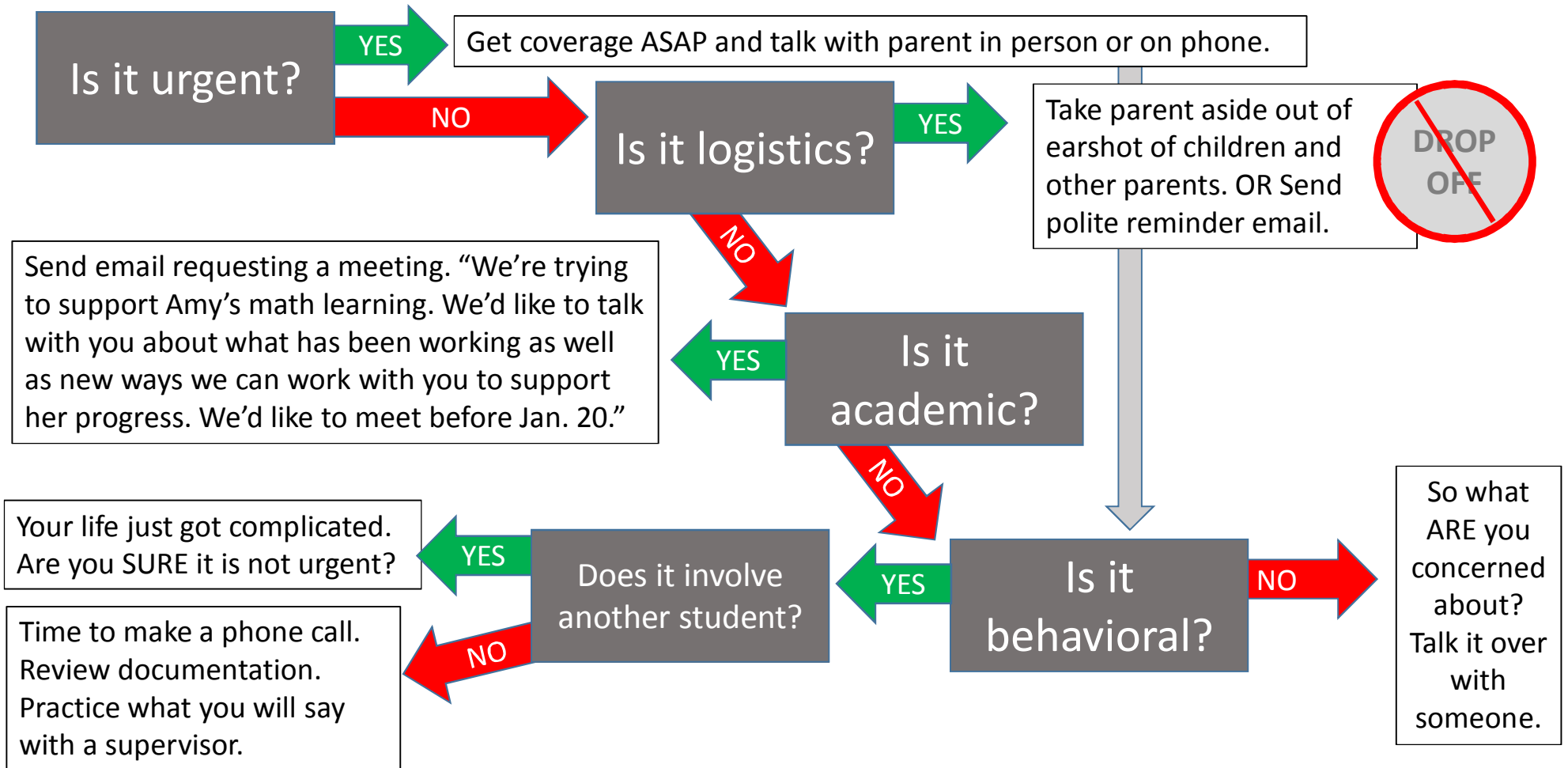
THE EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNT



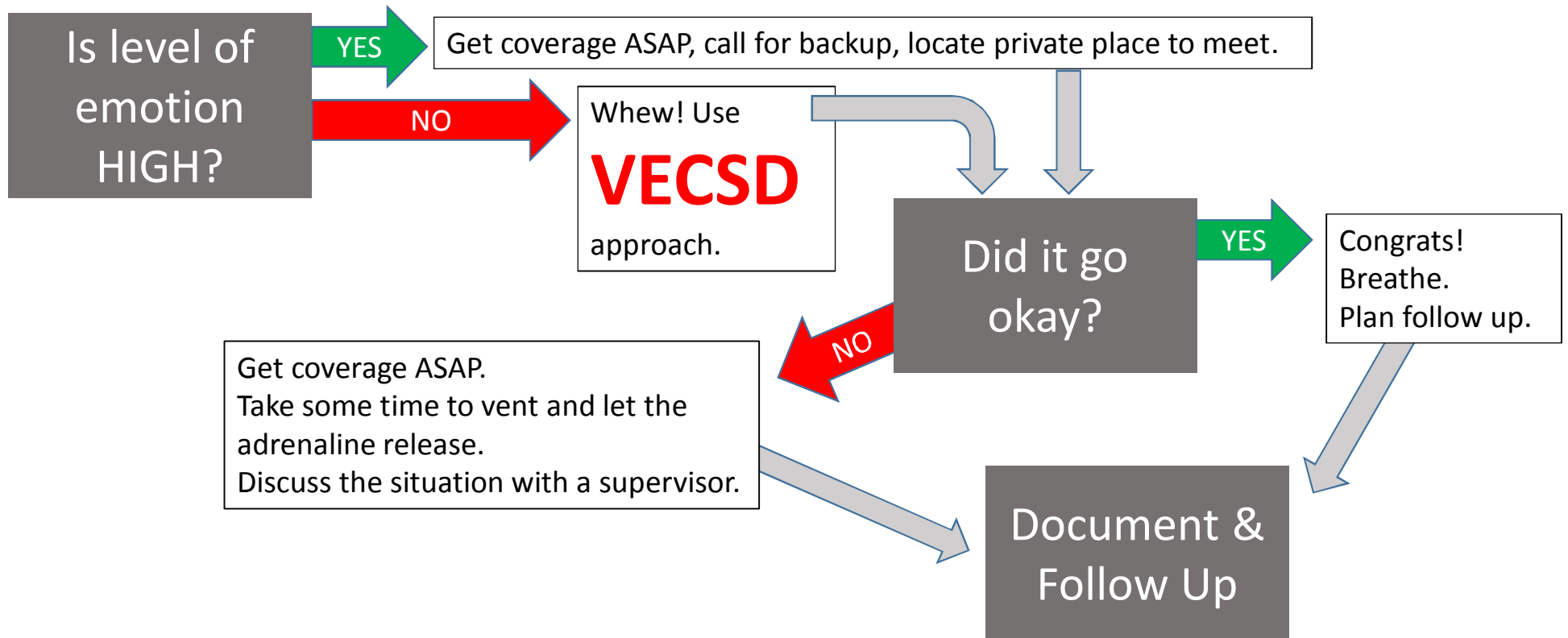
The idea that the actions of others increase or decrease our trust in them and that, consciously or unconsciously, we tend to keep a mental “tally” of each person’s “account balance” – which affects how we respond to them.

Stephen R. Covey
The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN WITH A PARENT



HOW TO RESPOND TO A PARENT CONCERN



THE 5-STEP VECS (“vexed”) MODEL

VERIFY THE EMOTION

EMPATHIZE WITH THE EMOTION

CLARIFY THE CONCERN (NOT THE FACTS)

SUMMARIZE AND SCHEDULE FOLLOW UP

DOCUMENT!

V ERIFY THE EMOTION

“I can see that you’re worried/angry/upset.” OR
“I want to understand your concern. I can’t tell whether you’re worried or angry.”

Be very careful “naming” an adult’s emotion. Unless the person is clearly angry or tearful (or you have a history with the individual and can read his/her cues well), it may be best to ask.

EMPATHIZE WITH THE EMOTION

“I can see why you might feel that way.” OR
“I’d be upset too if I thought that was the case.”

Be careful not to imply agreement with reaction or interpretation of known/perceived facts. You are giving the person “permission” to have that feeling by acknowledging that the emotion and the need driving it is real and valid (even if the way it is being expressed may be inappropriate).

CLEARIFY THE CONCERN (NOT THE FACTS)

“Tell me more.”

Be careful to get the full story as the person *believes* it to have occurred.

Don't react with objections or contradictory evidence or an alternate interpretation . . . YET.

SUMMARIZE AND SCHEDULE FOLLOW UP

“I need some time to think about/look into this. I will get back to you tomorrow about next steps.”

Try to close on a positive note without reaching any conclusions or making any promises other than to follow up.

DOCUMENT! Parent Communication Log

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Student: | | | |
| Parent 1 name Phone Email | Parent 2 name Phone Email | Parent 3 name Phone Email | Parent 4 name Phone Email |
| Date/Time Who <input type="checkbox"/> Parent 1 name <input type="checkbox"/> Parent 2 name <input type="checkbox"/> Parent 3 name <input type="checkbox"/> Parent 4 name <input type="checkbox"/> Nanny name Interaction Type <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> In Person Casual <input type="checkbox"/> In Person Meeting | Topic | | |
| | Next Steps | | |
| | Next Planned Check-In | | |

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THERE WILL ALWAYS BE CHALLENGES . .





PARENTS AS PARTNERS




WHEN ELEPHANTS FIGHT . . .



. . . IT IS THE GRASS THAT SUFFERS.

Kikuyu Proverb



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