



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A framework of six major types of parent involvement has evolved from many years of research. Understanding these categories will enable your school to design a comprehensive plan for increasing parent involvement. There is no one-size-fits-all plan. Each school must design a partnership based on the unique makeup of its families and community.

“There is no topic in education on which there is greater agreement than the need for parent involvement. Everyone wants it, but most do not know how to develop productive partnerships.”
Joyce Epstein – John Hopkins University

“When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of the parent’s economic level or ethnic/racial background. The most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the family’s ability to (1) create a home environment that encourages learning; (2) communicate high, yet reasonable expectations; and (3) become involved in their children’s education at school and in the community.”
National PTA

Parenting

What?
Help all families establish home environments that support children as students.

Increase family’s understanding of their children as students. Provide information on health, safety, nutrition, and adolescent development. Increase school’s understanding of families and their concerns.

Why?
Students have increased awareness of parental supervision and gain positive habits and skills at home that balance chores, homework, and other activities.
Parents feel supported by school and gain increased understanding of their child’s development and home conditions that support learning.
Teachers gain better understanding of families cultures, strengths, goals, and needs.

How?
Promising Practices:
Child development classes
Adolescent development classes
Parenting classes:
 Love and Logic
 Effective Parenting
 Successful Parenting
Increased attendance project

Communication

What?
Design effective two-way communications about school programs, policies, and student progress.

Frequent communications (in some cases daily, weekly, and/or monthly) between teachers and families creates a relationship that in turn increases cooperation between school and home

Why?
Students gain understanding of school policies and can make informed decisions affecting their education.
Parents are better able to monitor child’s progress and understand school programs and policies.
Teachers gain increased ability to communicate with families and gain more information about children.

How?
Promising Practices:
Newsletters
Post cards
Positive phone calls
Parent/Teacher conferences
Flyers
Surveys and feedback forms
School and district websites
Handbook

Volunteering

What?

Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Increase family's presence in schools as both volunteers and audiences.

Why?

Students receive targeted attention from other adults to increase learning of skills.

Parents gain a better understanding of teacher's job and feel welcome and valued at school.

Teachers are aware of parent talents and interests. Volunteers allow teachers more time with individual students.

How?

Promising Practices:

Parent patrols
Lunchroom helpers
Senior volunteers
Field day
Transportation
Calling tree
Parent interpreters
Field trips
Room parents
Tutoring programs in math, science, and literacy

Learning at Home

What?

Provide parents with the information and resources they need to help their students with homework and educational decisions.

Help families learn how to help their children with homework and curriculum-related activities.

Why?

Students gain in skills linked to homework and classwork.

Parents learn how to support and encourage their child at home.

Teachers learn better designs for homework assignments and recognize the parents role as a motivator and reinforcer.

How?

Promising Practices:

Interactive homework
Homework workshops
Family math nights
Curriculum fairs
Writing workshops
Summer learning packets
Reading workshops
Assessment/intervention workshops

Decision-Making

What?

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Provide parents with good information about school policies and increased opportunities to be part of high-impact decisions through volunteering for the Site Accountability Committee and School Improvement Planning Team.

Why?

Students are aware of parent representation in school decisions.

Parents feel ownership of school and empowerment to make meaningful contributions.

Teachers gain an awareness of the parents' perspective relating to school policies and programs.

How?

Promising Practices:

Parent Involvement Team
Site Council
Parents on staff interview committees
Parent organizations
PAC (Parent Advisory Council)
District-level committees (FAT)
Legislative workshops

Collaborating With the Community

What?

Identify and integrate community resources and services that support families, students, and the school.

Facilitate two-way cooperation and collaboration among families, the school, and the community.

Why?

Students gain specific benefits related to community resources.

Parents gain increased knowledge and resources.

Teachers gain skills in using mentors and community volunteers to assist with student learning.

How?

Promising Practices:

Community resource fairs
Partnerships
Neighborhood newsletter articles
Host neighborhood meetings
Community service projects
Neighborhood clean-up projects
Business tutors/mentors
Foster grandparents
Senior citizens
Retired educators



FAMILY ACTION TEAM

August 2004