



Funds of Knowledge:

Family Assets to Enrich Classrooms

Families are their students' first teachers. When students come to school, they bring knowledge learned from family and friends.

Funds of knowledge are the accumulation of:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Traditions
- Experiences
- Interests
- Hobbies

These are assets that are observable in ways of interacting that are culturally, socially, and cognitively complex (*Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg, 1992*). Although students bring valuable assets into the classroom, educators frequently miss opportunities to enhance learning by utilizing students' background knowledge, strengths, and interests.

Building Strong Family Connections

The following strategies and guiding questions can help you learn more about a family's **funds of knowledge** and foster meaningful, lasting partnerships.



1. Family Questionnaires

During the process of onboarding and welcoming families into the classroom and broader school community, engagement can be facilitated using questionnaires. While paper or electronic formats may result in limited responses, these questions can be incorporated into meet-and-greet events.

Such in-person interactions offer valuable opportunities to connect with families, and initial engagements are particularly significant as they establish the tone and foundation for ongoing collaboration.



2. Provide Clear Expectations

Foster strong partnerships with families and support their success by clearly establishing expectations early on. Let families know that the role of the school is to help their student meet the academic and social goals they, their family, and the school develop for the year. Let families know who will be their point

of contact for questions, concerns, or as thought partners in identifying what learning and social strategies work best for their student. Let families know how to reach out and ask them for their preferences in communication. Ask questions of families that help establish and clarify their role in the home and school partnership.



3. Getting to Know Families

Some families may readily share their history and interests, while others may take more time to engage. Allowing families the space to become comfortable and learn about the school staff can help to build rapport. Consistent communication and follow-through on agreed actions support the development of trust, especially in the early stages of relationship-building.

The following handout can be shared with families or adapted to establish a meaningful and intentional partnership with families. If this is done at an event with multiple families, it can help build community and networks by having families share.

Please consider the language and accessibility needs of each family.



Getting to Know Your Family

Building Connections That Help Students Thrive

Building strong partnerships with families helps us better support students in their learning and growth. Please share any information you feel comfortable providing in response to the questions below.

1. In what language do you prefer to receive communication, e.g., English, Spanish?
2. What traditions does your family participate in, e.g., holiday celebrations, foods, arts and crafts?
3. Do you have any family outings, events, or trips planned during the school year?
Example: vacations, visits to family, special celebrations
Please check the school calendar when planning.
4. Are there chores that your student helps with?
Example: gardening, feeding animals, sweeping, dusting, doing dishes.
5. What jobs or careers are represented in your family?
Example: teaching, mechanics, construction, farming

6. What hobbies, activities, or interests does your family enjoy together? Are there any unique to your student
Example: sports, arts, reading, video games, caring for others)?

7. What else would you like us to know about your student or family
Examples: strengths, challenges, routines, health needs, learning preferences, or anything that will help us better support your student.

Additional Information

Student's Name

Your Name

Phone Number

Email

Preferred Contact Method

Phone Call

Email