



Key Components for Effective Parent/Family Engagement in Education

1. Collaborative Decision-Making and Advocacy

This goes a step beyond valuing contributions and moves into sharing power. It means that parents are not just consulted, but are actively involved as partners in the decision-making processes that affect their children and the school community.

- **What it looks like:**
 - Including parents in school improvement planning, budget reviews, and hiring committees.
 - Establishing and empowering parent advisory committees that have a real voice in school policies.
 - Training and supporting parents to become effective advocates for their own children and for all children in the school.

2. Two-Way Communication

While "Responsive and Respectful Interaction" is on your list, it's crucial to explicitly emphasize that communication must be consistently *two-way*. This is a frequent point of failure in school engagement efforts, which often default to one-way information dumps from the school to the home.

- **What it looks like:**
 - Utilizing multiple communication channels (e.g., text, email, phone calls, apps, in-person meetings) to reach all families.
 - Actively and regularly soliciting feedback, concerns, and questions from families—and demonstrating that the input is used.
 - Ensuring that communication is timely, positive, and solution-oriented, not just focused on problems or student deficits.

3. Building the Capacity of Both Families and School Staff

Effective engagement is not something that comes naturally to everyone. Both school staff and families often need support and training to build the skills and confidence to work together effectively.

- **For Families:**
 - Providing workshops or resources on topics families have identified as important, such as understanding the curriculum, supporting learning at home, navigating the school system, and advocating for their child.

- **For School Staff:**

- Ongoing professional development for teachers, administrators, and support staff on how to engage families effectively, including cultural competency training, strategies for building trust, and how to conduct productive parent-teacher conferences.

4. Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive School Climate

This component is the foundation upon which trust and authentic engagement are built. Every family, regardless of their background, language, or socioeconomic status, must feel that they belong and are valued members of the school community from the moment they interact with the school.

- **What it looks like:**

- A welcoming physical environment with clear signage in multiple languages and displays that reflect the diversity of the student body.
- A front office staff that is trained to be friendly, helpful, and welcoming to all families.
- School events and meetings that are scheduled at various times to accommodate different family schedules and that offer support like childcare and food.
- Explicit Equity for Diverse Families: Affirm non-traditional family structures. This includes using inclusive, gender-neutral language in all communications and auditing school events (e.g., "Lunch with a Loved One" instead of gender-specific events) to ensure all families feel they belong.
- Addressing Systemic Barriers: Identify and dismantle systemic barriers. This includes conducting an equity audit of engagement practices and ensuring digital tools are accessible to all families, regardless of income, language, or technological proficiency.

5. Community Partnerships

Schools do not exist in a vacuum. Effective schools recognize that they are part of a broader community and actively cultivate partnerships with community organizations to support families.

- **What it looks like:**

- Connecting families with community resources for health, nutrition, housing, and other social services.
- Partnering with local businesses, faith-based organizations, and cultural institutions to provide resources and opportunities for students and families.
- Viewing the community as a source of assets and knowledge that can enrich the school environment.

6. Supporting Learning at Home

A core component of family engagement includes effective partnerships to equip families with

the information and tools needed to support their child's academic and developmental progress at home.

- **What it looks like:**

- Providing families with clear information on academic standards, offering workshops on homework support strategies.
- Share resources that families can use for curriculum-related activities.

7. Centering Student Well-being and Voice

Establish students as active participants in the family-school partnership, moving beyond an adult-centric model.

- **What it looks like:** Create opportunities for students to lead parent-teacher conferences, and include student representatives on parent advisory committees.

8. Contact

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[Parent Portal](#)

[Parent and Family Engagement for Educators](#)

9. Resources:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2016). *Engaging parents, developing leaders: A self-assessment and planning tool for nonprofits and schools.*

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/engaging-parents-developing-leaders>

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National PTA. (2022). *National standards for family-school partnerships.*
<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/runyourpta/2022/national-standards/standards-overview.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. (2019). *A parent's guide to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).* <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-guide-for-parents.pdf>

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