

Engaging Families Mindfully



Families are by no means a homogeneous group. They come from various perspectives and contexts – from young parents to grandparents raising grandchildren to parents of children with special needs to those who are immigrants or refugees.

To be successful, family engagement strategies must reflect each family's strengths and characteristics, rather than applying the same methodology to all.

For children and adolescents to realize the full benefit of any family engagement effort, relationships have to be developed as well as a sharing of the work in a way that is meaningful to each constituency.

Rev Jan 2018



Check your readiness for family engagement. Are you starting your efforts on solid ground?

- ✓ Is your school a welcoming place for families?
- ✓ Are there positive things being said about families?
- ✓ Has staff received professional development on engaging families?
- ✓ Are the prevailing attitudes and beliefs about family engagement positive or negative? (Use the Family Engagement Perception Instrument).

*"It's not how do we **GET** families involved, it's how do we **LET** them be involved."* Barb Flis, Parent Action for Healthy Kids

The five Critical Components for engaging families authentically are:

1. **Commitment** – Time dedicated consistently for family engagement.
2. **Transparent Relationship** – Be willing and able to speak and hear the truth.
3. **Share responsibility for student success** – Operate without blame or criticism.
4. **Acceptance** – An absence of focusing on fixing or changing families.
5. **Appreciation** – Done in a genuine and demonstrable way.