

Building Community: Promoting Relationships Virtually and In Person

Teacher-Family Partnerships for Student Learning



Connecticut State Department of Education

Community Agreements

- **PD will begin and end on time**
- **Be present and engaged**
- **Be willing to share**
- **Solution-oriented discussion**
- **Assume good intentions**



Learning Targets For Today



- Define high-impact family engagement
- Understand the foundational role of trust for effective partnerships
- Learn about families' perspectives on communication
- Become familiar with available resources & learn from one another

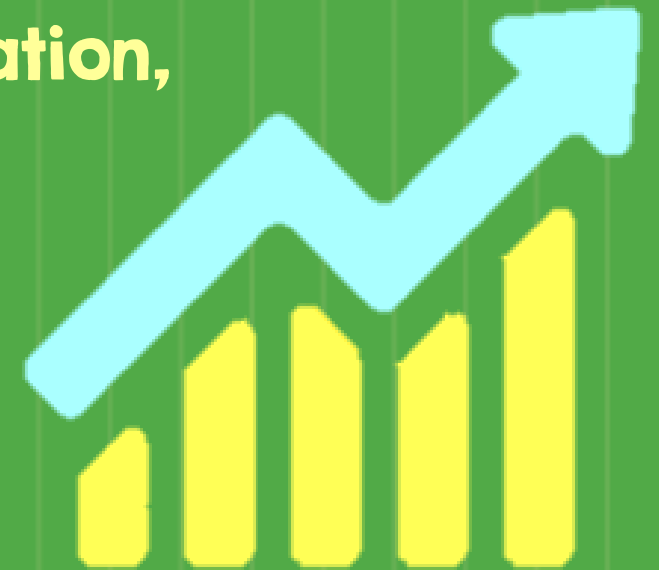


Why Relationships with Families Matter

Family engagement is regarded as a best practice in education. Decades of research has shown that parent engagement is a powerful influence on children's educational success.

When families are involved in their child's education, data show:

- Increased student achievement
- Improved attendance and behavior
- Improved social-emotional skills
- Increased graduation rates



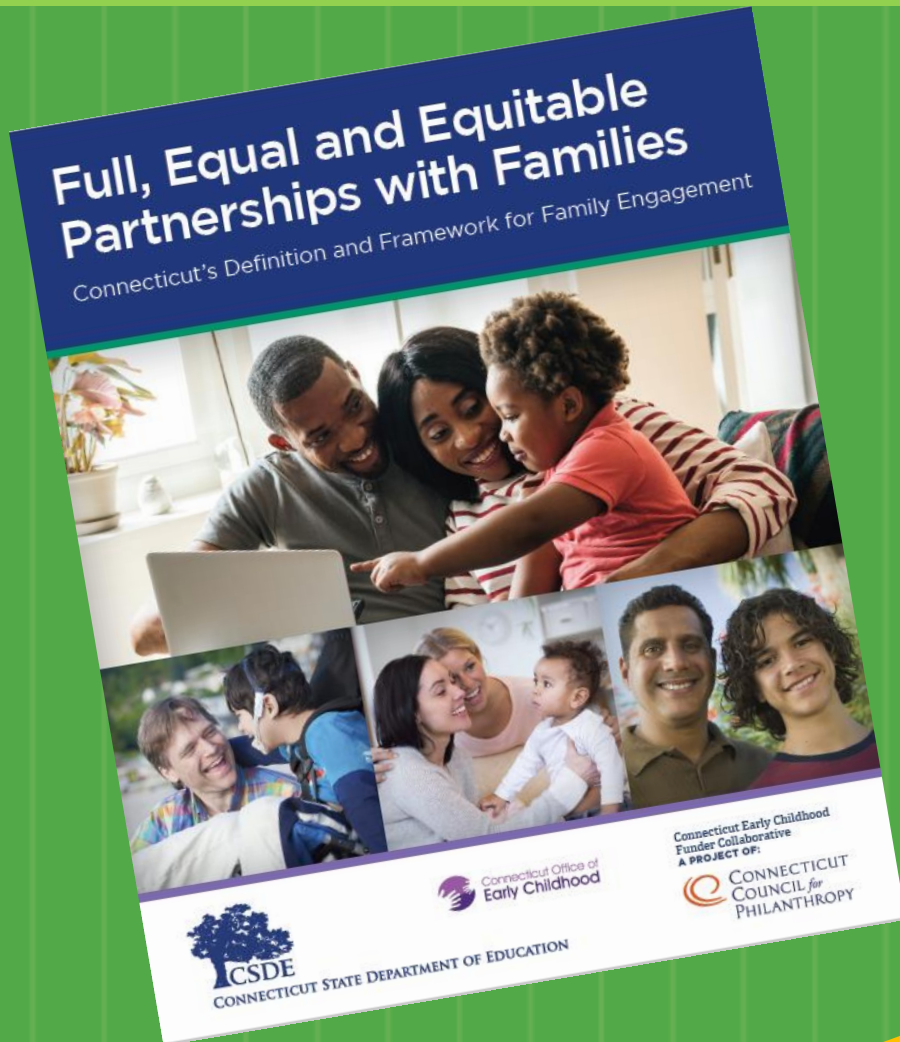
What is Family Engagement?

What does family engagement mean to you?

What does it look like when it is working well?



Listening to Families: What Does Family Engagement Mean to You?



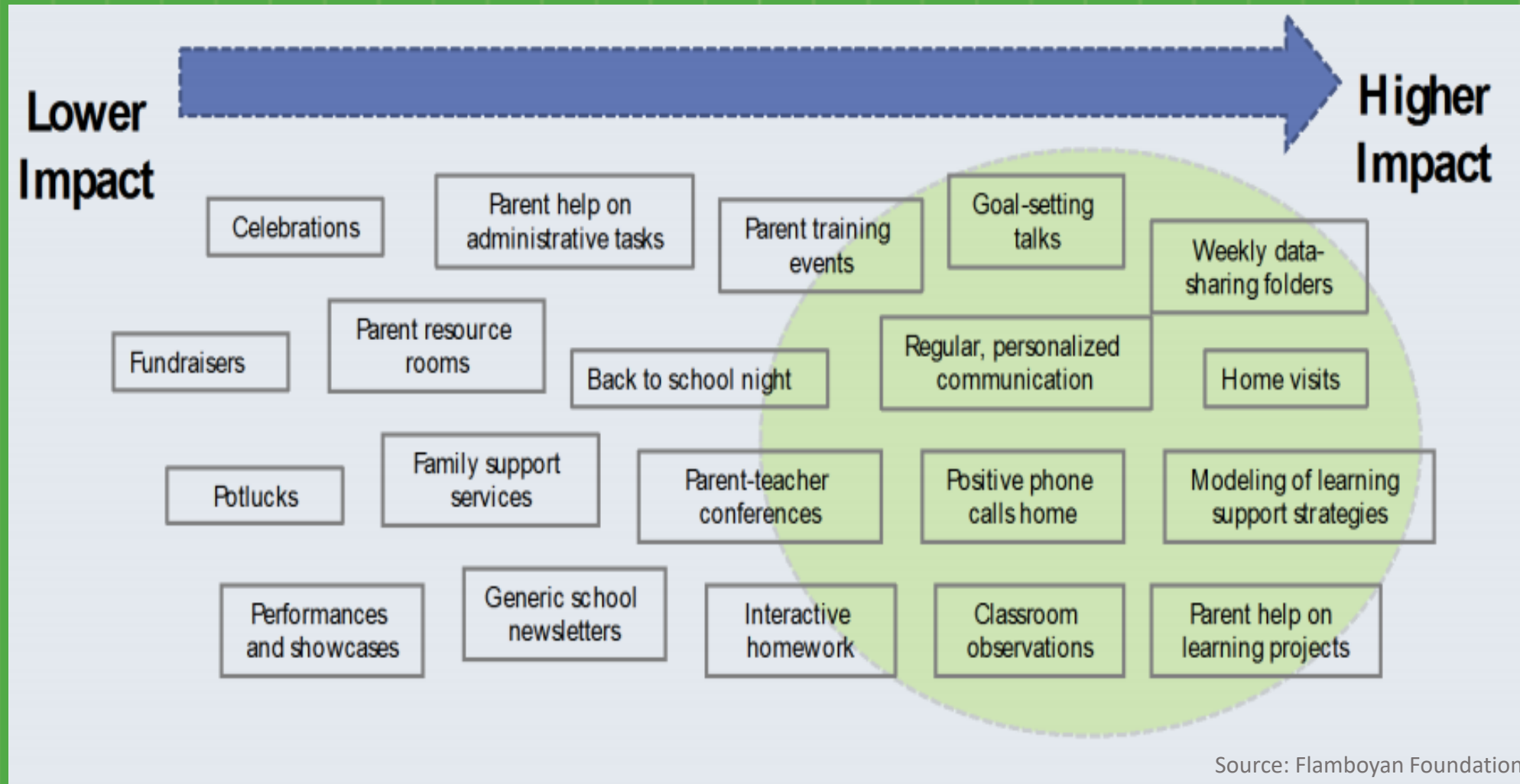
“Family engagement means that parents are seen as welcome partners in the education of children, and have a valued voice in the school.

As a result, families are active participants, and communication is flowing between home and school.”

“We believe that family engagement means mutual respect, honesty and trust.” CT Parents



Impact of Family Engagement Strategies on Student Learning



CT's Definition and Framework for High-Impact Family Engagement

Family engagement is
a full, equal and equitable partnership
among families, educators and community partners
to promote children's learning and development,
from birth through college and career.

Guiding Principles:

- Foundation** | Build Trust and Respect
Listen to Families: Two-way communication
- Target** | Link family engagement to student development and learning
- Essential** | Co-Create Cultural Competence
View Families as Assets and Leaders

← Today

[Link: Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families: Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement](#)



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COMMUNICATION



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What Do Families Want to Know?

1. How is my child doing? *

- ❖ Is my child falling behind?

2. What are they learning now?

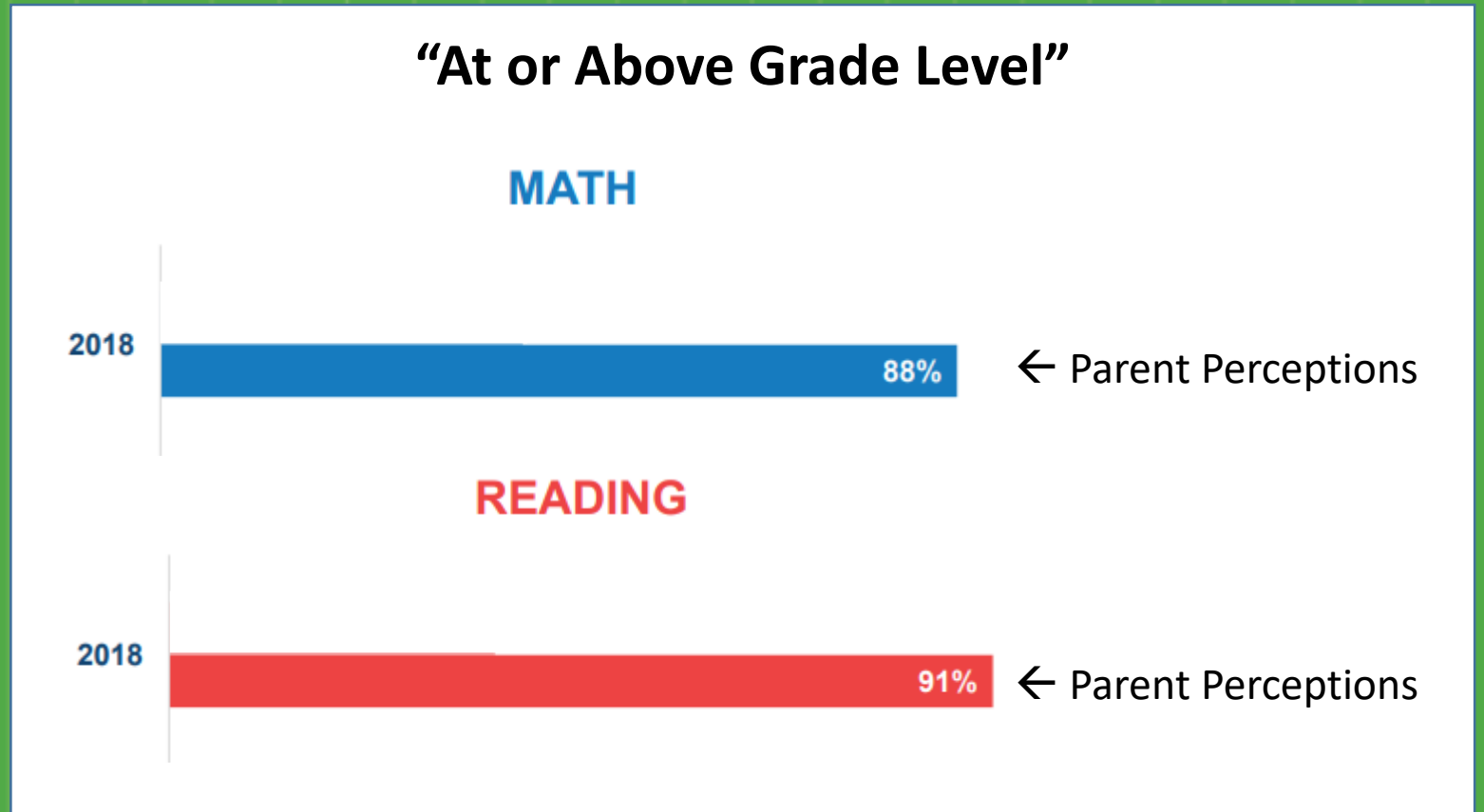
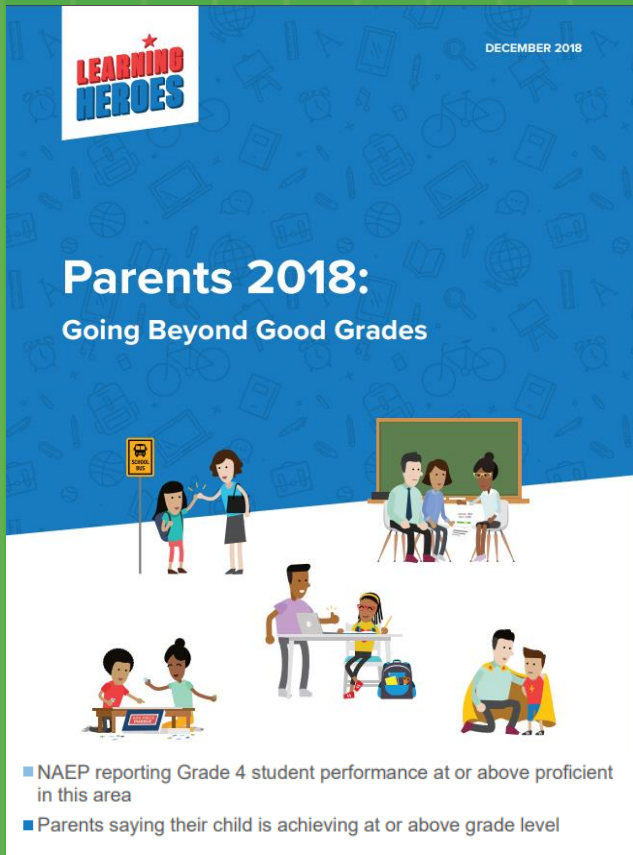
- ❖ Forecast expectations

3. How can I help?

- ❖ Guidance for providing at-home academic support (but not instruction)
- ❖ Technology: Devices, connectivity, assistance with technology and managing online activity



The Disconnect: Parent Perceptions vs National Data



How Can I Help?

5 Essential Roles Families Play to Accelerate Learning



COMMUNICATE
HIGH EXPECTATIONS



MONITOR
PERFORMANCE



SUPPORT
LEARNING AT HOME



GUIDE
THEIR PATH



ADVOCATE
FOR THEIR NEEDS



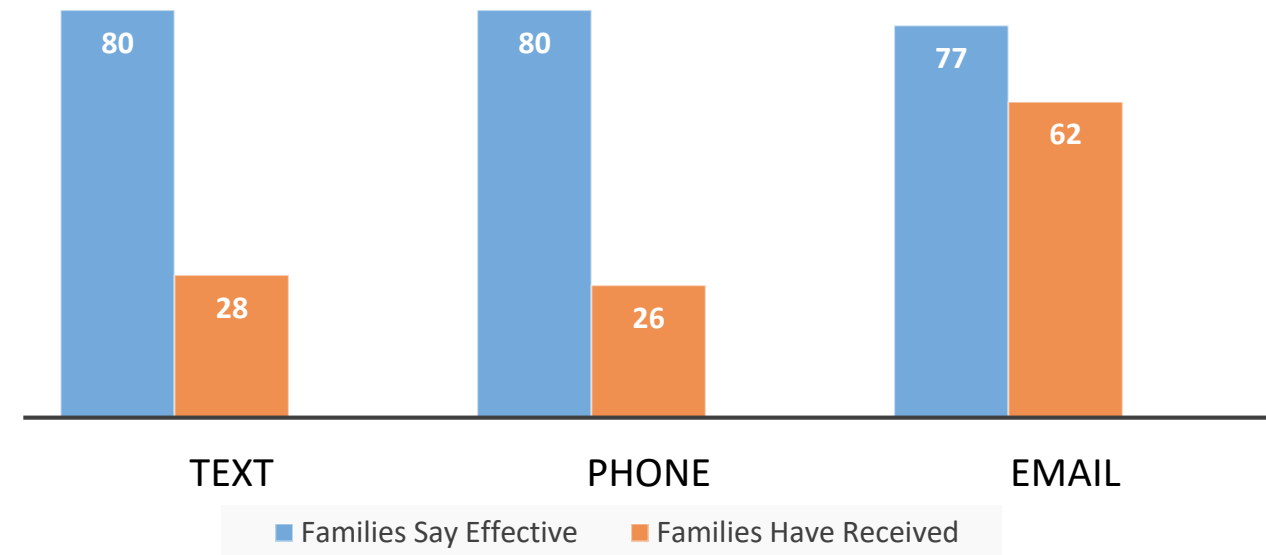
What Works: Communication

Effective Communications are regular, well-timed, and include specific guidance.

- **Content** should be in a positive tone, meaningful and written in plain language.
- **Limit communications** to focus on high-priority needs.
- **Child centered** with individualized and actionable information such as text-message alerts to parents with info on their children's progress.
- **Ask families** which communication channels they use and find effective.

(Texting on weekends is better for low-income families.)

Families' Preferred Modes of Communication vs School Use



[Learning Heroes. Parents 2020: COVID-19 Closures – A Redefining Moment for Students, Parents and Schools.](#)



Communication:

A message sent, received and understood.

One-way Communication

- Linear
- Authoritative
- Limited



Two-way Communication

- Interactive
- Equal
- Feedback-oriented



Communication vs Relationship-Building

1. One-way communication like robocalls, emails, postal mail, website updates and app posts	Impersonal
2. Reciprocal communication like social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), mass texting apps, WhatsApp group chats, conference calls	More personal
3. Relationship-building communication like personal phone calls, personal email or text	Most personal



Impact of Teacher Outreach Strategies

Students' reading and math scores improved 40-50% faster when teachers:

- **met with families face-to-face**
- **sent materials on specific ways to help their child at home**
- **telephoned routinely about progress**

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**Relationships proceed
at the speed of
TRUST**



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Why Relational Trust Matters

“The development of relational trust between home and school is key for any other partnership work to actually take place.”

*-Dr. Karen Mapp, Harvard University
Effective Family Engagement Starts with Trust*

**“IF the relationships between administrators and teachers are trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative,
THEN the relationships between teachers and students, between students and students, and between teachers and parents are likely to be trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative.”**

*-Dr. Roland S. Barth,
Founding Director of the Principals' Center
at Harvard University*



What Does Relational Trust Look Like?

Conditions for Building Trust

Trust Requires Vulnerability

Respect

(Fundamental to trust)

**Acknowledge another's dignity.
Genuinely listening and valuing the
opinions of others**

Integrity

**Keep their word; Consistency
between what is said and done**

Competency

Capable; Ability to fulfil an obligation

Personal Regard

**Compassionate; Benevolent; Open;
Non-judgmental; Go the extra mile**

Relational Trust with Families Means

- Believing that all families want the very best for their children.
- Genuine care for and interest in the family, and not trying to get families to do what the school expects from them.



How Do Schools Build Trust with Families?

- ❑ Actively welcome families and create a safe space.
- ❑ Build families' capacity to support their children's learning and development.
- ❑ Truly listen to families and affirm their value. Focus on the strengths and highlight the positives.
- ❑ Remove systemic barriers to equitable engagement.
- ❑ Be consistent and predicable.

Reflection Questions

What might make a family feel unwelcome at our school?

What resources are we devoting to this?
What resources do we need?

How are we ensuring opportunities for one-on-one conversations with families about their hopes and dreams for their child? their ideas for improvement?

Whose voice is missing? Ask families what the barriers are.

Do we have a planned, ongoing and systemic partnership program?



Tools for Building Relational Trust and Two-Way Communication during COVID



- Flamboyant Foundation
 - [Strategies to Engage Unreached Families](#)
 - [Family Wellness Check-In](#)
 - [Community-Building Meetings](#)
 - [Challenging Assumptions Reflection Tool](#)
 - [Questions for Trust Building](#)
 - [Relationship Building Toolkit](#)
- [Connecting with Families: Tips for conversations with families during calls or virtual meetings \(NCPMI\)](#)
- [Virtual Home Visits \(Parent Teacher Home Visit Project\)](#)
- [Parent Principal Chats \(Teaching for Change\)](#)
- [Tools for Educators to Listen To and Learn From Families during COVID-19 School Closures \(NYU Center for Research on Equity\)](#)
- [Measure of Parent Trust in School and Parent Trust in Principal \(Dr. Wayne Hoy\)](#)
- [The Family Insights Toolkit \(EveryDay Labs\)](#)



Playlist



BUILDING COMMUNITY: FULL, EQUAL & EQUITABLE TEACHER- FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING



The Essential Foundation for High-Impact Family Engagement:
Relational Trust & Two-Way Communication

Read

Read one or more articles

- [Effective Family Engagement Starts with Trust](#) – K. Mapp, Harvard Ed News
- [Cultivating Highly Successful Parent Teacher Communication](#) - D. Meador, ThoughtCo
- [Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform](#) - A. Bryk & B. Schneider, Educational Leadership
- [How Teachers and Parents Can Be Better Allies](#) - W. Lopez-Aflitto, Digital Promise
- [Building Better Relationships With Parents at the Classroom, School, and District Level](#) – H. Wolpert-Gawron, Edutopia

Watch

Watch one or more videos

- [00:10:55] [A Short Guide to Practicing Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Family Engagement during Remote Learning](#) - NYU Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools
- [01:01:40] [Building Powerful Partnerships with Families: Family Engagement Phone Calls](#) - K. Mapp, Scholastic
- [00:11:01] [Building Relationships between Parents and Teachers](#) - TEDx Talks
- [00:09:20] [Teacher and Parent Relationships – A Crucial Ingredient.](#) - TEDx Talks

Apply

Activities to implement

- [School Communication Reflection Activity](#) - North Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center
- Watch [How To Simplify Your Communication to Improve Family Engagement](#) [00:58:38] and analyze samples of your communication with families.
- From Vision to Practice: Use the Low- to High-Impact Practice Charts in the [CT Framework for Family Engagement](#) to rethink a family engagement activity you are currently using (charts available for early childhood, elementary, middle and high school, after school programs and chronic absence).

Reflect

Reflect on the following questions

- What are your strengths? What are you already doing that supports relationship building?
- What did you learn? What are opportunities to strengthen your practice?
- How will you transfer your new learning to your practice?

Upcoming Opportunities



Join
the
Network!



Community and Family Engagement

Dates for 2020-2021

February 26, March 26, April 23,
May 21, 2021

10:00-11:30 a.m.

Friday CAFÉ

A morning discussion and networking series for people who work at the intersection of families and learning.

When is Friday CAFÉ?

- **10:00-11:30 a.m. Friday**
- **Monthly during the school year**

How can I get meeting notices?

- **Join the mailing list at www.fridaycafe.org**



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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!



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