

Family Engagement is Key

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**“Families and Schools – Perfect Partners
for Student Success”**



EARLY EDGE
CALIFORNIA





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Agenda

- What does the research say?
- What is family engagement?
- Why is family engagement so important?
- Examples of assignment activities to increase family engagement

Jamboard Activity

Please describe family engagement in one word



SCAN ME

The image shows a Jamboard interface. On the left is a vertical toolbar with icons for drawing, erasing, selecting, text, image, shape, and a lasso tool. Two icons are circled in red: the drawing tool (top) and the text tool (bottom). The main area contains the text 'Please describe family engagement in one word' and a large QR code with the text 'SCAN ME' below it.

What Research Says...

"the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning
2. Express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers
3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (p. 160)

Excerpt from Home-School Relations: Working Successfully with Parents and Families, by G. Olsen, M.L. Fuller, 2008 edition,



“Family engagement refers to ongoing, goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and that support what is best for children and families both individually and collectively. Staff and families share responsibility for the learning and development of children, the progress toward outcomes for children and families, and for parent involvement in the program. Parent involvement is a part of this larger construct of family engagement.”

Office of Head Start



Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

For Early Childhood Professionals



Early childhood professionals have opportunities to build relationships that can positively impact children and their families for a lifetime. Strong relationships with families promote family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of children and parents.

Parent Involvement and Family Engagement: Why Both Matter

Parent involvement and family engagement both include interactions with families. The difference is that with family engagement these interactions occur in the context of an ongoing and collaborative relationship. Meaningful relationships get us closer to effectively partnering with families. When we understand the differences between parent involvement and family engagement, we can make better choices about practices and activities that are based on the goals of our early childhood programs.

“Parent” and “Family”

We use the words *parent* and *family* to honor all adult caregivers who make a difference in a child’s life.

Parents refers to biological, adoptive, and step-parents as well as primary caregivers, such as grandparents, other adult family members, and foster parents.

Families can be biological or non-biological, chosen or circumstantial. They are connected through culture, language, tradition, shared experiences, emotional commitment, and mutual support.

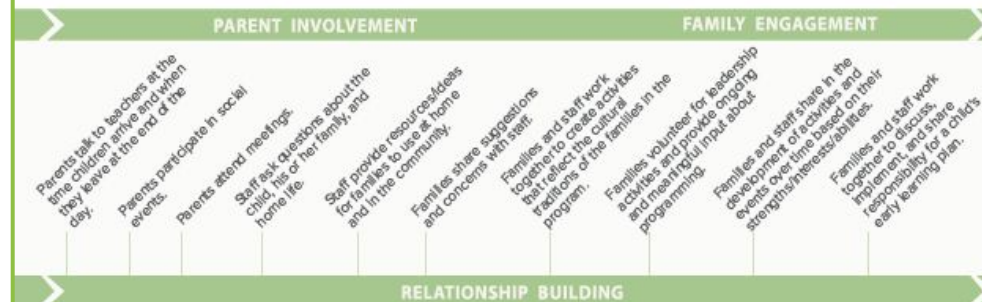
Parent Involvement

Parent involvement occurs when parents participate in activities and take advantage of opportunities at their child’s early care and learning setting. This usually means that parents attend meetings or special events a program offers.

Parent involvement may also include an exchange of information about the child and what happens at home. Professionals may offer advice or recommend resources to address challenges. We may, for example, give written information to a parent about toilet learning for his toddler. Or, we might invite a parent to share information about what quiets her child at nap time.

Early childhood professionals and programs typically initiate parent involvement. These activities are important and often beneficial to families.

What do Parent Involvement and Family Engagement look like?



Family Engagement

Family engagement happens when early childhood professionals and families engage in an interactive process of relationship-building. The process is mutual, respectful, and responsive to a family’s language and culture. Meaningful relationship-building is ongoing, and requires time and attention.

In this approach, we partner with families to share responsibility for the care and learning of children. For example, we work with a parent to plan ways to support the child—a team approach that includes everyone at home and in the program. We make a point to check in, to revisit a plan, and meet when we need new ideas.

Engagement in the early years prepares families to be engaged throughout their child’s school years. Most importantly, family engagement efforts support the parent-child relationships that are key to a child’s healthy development, school readiness, and well-being now, and in the future.



For more information about this resource, please contact us:
PFCE@ecetta.info | 1-866-763-6481



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



What do we know about...



Parent Involvement



Family Engagement



Parent Involvement
&
Family Engagement

Padlet Link



Parent Involvement and Family Engagement: 4 examples of how to use it

Discussion Board



Childhood
Memories



Reading
Reflection



Family
Engagement
Presentation



Discussion Board Assignment

Strategies in action: Family Engagement PreK & TK



Strategies in action: Family Engagement PreK & TK



Authors:
Dr. Linda Espinosa and Dr. Marlene Zepeda

**PreK Language Model: English Language Development
with Home Language Support**

Can be
found on
the MLT
website

Strategies in Action: Family Engagement Kindergarten & 1st Grade

Can be found on the MLT website

In-Person Teaching



Virtual Teaching



Valuing Families Funds of Knowledge

In order to build relationships of trust where families feel comfortable to be involved and engaged in their children's classroom, teachers must value families **funds of knowledge**.





Activity: My Name/Mi Nombre

Resource: Strategy Overview: My Name from ML Toolkit

<https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/My-Name.pdf>

Strategy: My Name / Mi nombre

Children's name are closely connected to their identities. Valuing children's names is part of a strong, respectful classroom community. The use of children's names can also bring personal meaning to writing.

"By highlighting the importance of names and their many meanings and accents across cultures, languages and places, we can create a space for acknowledging the identities children embody and move one step closer toward genuinely valuing diversity in classrooms. By using their own names as a starting point for writing free-verse poems, children are using words that are important to them while learning and reinforcing initial letter sounds."

Mariana Souto-Manning, "Honoring children's names and, therefore, their identities." School Talk 12.3 (April 2007).

This strategy engages children in thinking about, learning about and talking about their own name.

Implementation

1. The Story of My Name

Read books to children that highlight young characters and the story behind their names, nicknames, or terms of endearments.

As a family conversation, ask families to tell their children the story of how they got their name.

2. The "I am called ____" Poster

Begin by telling the class your own "I am called..." story, beginning with your given name, and then explaining all of the other names and nicknames and endearments people in your life use as your name.

Ask them to think about all the different names they are called (by someone who loves them, a family member or friend, etc.)

Using the "I am called..." sentence starter, have children share their names. You may need to prompt them: "And does your father call you that also? What does your grandmother call you?", etc.

After the child has thought of some of their different names, draw a circle in the middle of the page and ask the child to draw a picture of themselves. This becomes the center of the web/poster. As a Family Conversation activity, have families help the child complete the web/poster. They may wish to add photos.

As children bring their posters back to the classroom, provide opportunities for them to share. Children's individual webs can be bound together to create a class book or a posted on the wall to create a "I am called ____" gallery.

Can be found on the MLT website



My Name/ Mi Nombre: 3 examples of how to use it

#1

In Class

Ice Breaker



#2

Assignment

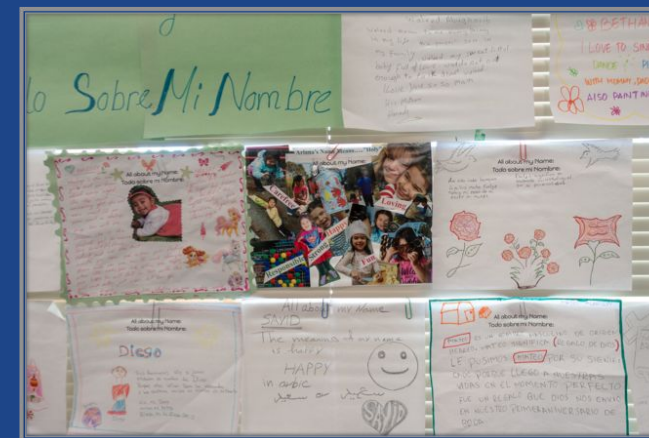
Research at home



#3

Classroom

Families share





Using the Chat

Activity



Practicum Assignment: Family Reflection



Reflect on the past: How was your family welcomed into the classroom when you were in school. Did your family feel welcomed? If so how, if not how could educators better welcome your family?

Reflect on the present: How may you get to know the families at your site? How will you involve and engage families?

Reflect on the future: As an educator, how may you welcome families into the classroom?



Reflect on the future: As an educator, how may you welcome families into the classroom?

Family Questionnaire

Family Interview: phone, video, or in person

Can be found on the MLT website

Child Identifier: _____
Teacher/Classroom Identifier: _____

Family Languages and Interests Interview

RESPONDENT FIRST NAME: _____
RESPONDENT LAST NAME: _____ Date: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

CHILD'S FIRST NAME: _____
CHILD'S MIDDLE NAME: _____
CHILD'S LAST NAME: _____

Child's Gender: Boy ☐ Girl ☐ Child's Date of Birth: ____/____/____
Month Day Year

1. What family members live with you and your child? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY:** (1) mother, (2) father, (3) siblings, (4) grandparents, (5) aunts/uncles, (6) cousins, (7) others, (10) don't know, (11) refused

2. Primary caregiver means the person who spends the most time with a child. Is your child's primary caregiver (his/her... (1) mother, (2) father, (3) grandmother, (4) grandfather, (5) aunt, (6) uncle, (7) sibling, or (8) someone else (specify _____). (10) don't know, (11) refused) **SELECT ONLY ONE**

3. What language does the primary caregiver speak most often with child? (Primary caregiver means the person who spends the most time with the child) [Include closed-ended response codes as per district language prevalence list, other specify, (10) don't know, (11) refused] **SELECT ONLY ONE**

4. What language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk? [Include closed-ended response codes as per district prevalence list, other specify, (10) don't know, (11) refused.]

5. Can you tell me what language(s) each of the following people in your household speak to your child? [ONLY ASK FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IDENTIFIED IN QUESTION 1]

	(N) Not applicable	(1) Only English	(2) Mostly English, some other language (specify)	(3) Mostly other language (specify), some English	(4) Only other language (specify)	(10) Don't know; (11) refused
a. Mother (or you)						
b. Father (or you)						
c. Siblings						
d. Grandmother/grandfather						
e. Aunt/Uncle						
f. Cousins						

Resource: Template: Family Languages and Interests Interview Form

<https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/resource/template-family-languages-and-interests-interview-form/>

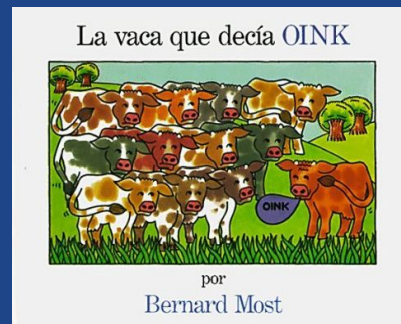


Home Language Strategies for Families

Home Language



Stories/Songs



Traditions/Culture



Environment



Community



Resource: Language at Home and in the Community: Office of Head Start

Parent and Child interacting at home reading books



Resource: Teaching from the Beginning The Joy Of Reading

A Letter From...



Resource: Teaching from the Beginning

Remember...



Parent Involvement



Family Engagement



Questions





Thank you

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