

Family Engagement: What, Why, and How

Foundational Webinar - Part 2

Dr. Theresa Pfister & Terry Baker, M.Ed, LMFT-S



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Promoting Family Engagement with Continuous Improvement



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Phase 1: Plan

Choose a barrier and practice to address it.

Choosing a strategy:

- Addresses priority barrier
- Utilizes facilitators

Family Engagement Strategies

Organized into four categories:

- Relationships
- Partnerships
- Supporting staff
- Supporting families

Strategies are:

- Culturally responsive
- Trauma informed
- Strengths based
- Evidence based



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

1. Welcome families into your space and address barriers to attendance
2. Offer home visit opportunities or meet in public, accessible places
3. Communicate consistently and in accessible, trauma informed, culturally responsive ways
4. Establish variety of options for two-way communication
5. Share and celebrate good news



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

Welcome families into your space and address barriers to attendance

- Clear and welcoming signage in families' home languages
- Front office staff are fluent in families' home languages
- Family bulletins and resource rooms
- Host meaningful events that offer transportation support, childcare support, as well as offering flexibility that allow for different schedules



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

Offer home visit opportunities or meet in public, accessible places

- Train staff for home visits, as well as provide resources and flexible scheduling
- Offer meetings in public libraries or other community spaces easily accessible and familiar to families
- Ask families if there's somewhere they'd like to meet



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

Communicate consistently and in accessible, trauma informed, culturally responsive ways

- Introduce yourself, your communication plan, share various ways you can be reached, and make it personal
- All materials and resources are translated to each home language
- Learn about your families' cultures and priorities
- Communicate with empathy and compassion



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

Establish variety of options for two-way communication

- Share your desire to be in contact!
- Offer various modes of communication: websites, social media, text messages, phone calls, and even video calls
- Offer on-demand translation services
- Actively listen to families' needs



Family Engagement Strategies:

Build meaningful, trusting, authentic relationships

Share and celebrate good news

- Contact families with news about growth, accomplishments, and positive effort





Family Engagement Strategies - Relationships

What are your best practices?

Family Engagement Strategies:

Involve and engage families as integral partners in your work

1. Offer structures for families to safely share feedback, priorities, and concerns
2. Engage family members and community members in ongoing and recurring efforts
3. Support family networks and peer groups
4. Bring families into advisory roles and committees



Family Engagement Strategies:

Involve and engage families as integral partners in your work

Offer structures for families to safely share feedback, priorities, and concerns

- Ensure they have the option of remaining anonymous, feedback can be easily provided, and responses are timely, transparent, and solutions-oriented
- Offer surveys, “office hours,” opportunities for one-on-ones, etc.



Family Engagement Strategies:

Involve and engage families as integral partners in your work

Engage family members and community members in ongoing and recurring efforts

- Host open houses, family events, social events like potlucks or breakfast events, and more
- Recruit family volunteers to support events, translation, facilitation, etc.



Family Engagement Strategies:

Involve and engage families as integral partners in your work

Support family networks and peer groups

- Host affinity groups
- Connect families within your class or cohort - even from previous years
- Offer opportunities to connect via social media



Family Engagement Strategies:

Involve and engage families as integral partners in your work

Bring families into advisory roles and committees

- Family-teacher associations
- Family advisory boards
- Family engagement teams





Family Engagement Strategies - Partnerships

What are your best practices?

Family Engagement Strategies:

Support staff in their engagement efforts

1. Provide professional learning for staff on equity, bias, and cultural responsiveness
2. Engage in a mentorship and/or coaching model to support staff in need
3. Establish school / organizational norms and guidance for family engagement
4. Provide funding to support engagement efforts



Family Engagement Strategies:

Support staff in their engagement efforts

Provide professional learning for staff on equity, bias, and cultural responsiveness

- Provide training and reflection opportunities to learn about bias and how to prevent it from showing up in your work
- Create a library of resources on important topics related to equity
- Host discussion groups, book clubs, or affinity groups to discuss equity and bias
- Provide opportunities to learn about families' cultures



Family Engagement Strategies:

Support staff in their engagement efforts

Engage in a mentorship and/or coaching model to support staff in need

- Develop trusting mentorship/coaching relationships
- Provide one-on-one or small group support to discuss issues, develop solutions, and monitor growth



Family Engagement Strategies:

Support staff in their engagement efforts

Establish school / organizational norms and guidance for family engagement

- Co-develop and communicate clear expectations and norms
- Share resources to support the work



Family Engagement Strategies:

Support staff in their engagement efforts

Provide funding to support engagement efforts

- Use funding to support hosted events, volunteer opportunities, and more
- This should include materials, food, transportation, and childcare support
- Ensure your staff are compensated for the work they are doing





Family Engagement Strategies - Supporting Staff

What are your best practices?

Family Engagement Strategies:

Share information, best practices, and strategies with families

1. Provide families with relevant, helpful information on your school or organization
2. Share resources and/or provide trainings for families to help them in supporting their child
3. Provide connections and referrals to help families access needed support outside your school or organization



Family Engagement Strategies:

Share information, best practices, and strategies with families

Provide families with relevant, helpful information on your school or organization

- How the education system works
- Schedules and hours
- Contact information
- Special programming
- How to seek services



Family Engagement Strategies:

Share information, best practices, and strategies with families

Share resources and/or provide trainings for families to help them in supporting their child

- Send home materials on the learning being done
- Offer family workshops (i.e., Family Academy)
- Share free websites, guides, and resources



Family Engagement Strategies:

Share information, best practices, and strategies with families

Provide connections and referrals to help families access needed support outside your school or organization

- Develop strong pathways between schools and providers
- Provide referrals and warm hand-offs to ensure families can access support





Family Engagement Strategies - Supporting Families

What are your best practices?



Choose your strategy!

- Circle your top 5 strategies that address your barrier.
- Of those, *star* the top 3 that have existing facilitators supporting them.
- Finally, rank those 3 strategies by their likelihood of success!
- #1 is your strategy!

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Phase 2: Do

Develop an implementation plan.

1. What permissions or consent do you need?
2. What materials do you need?
3. Who will be involved and in what ways? How can you engage them?
4. What are possible challenges or pitfalls? How can you prepare for them?

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Phase 2: Do

Prepare to study your strategy and collect baseline data.

Two types of data:

- Implementation data
- Outcome data

Sources of data:

- Pre-existing data,
- Observations,
- Surveys,
- Interviews, and/or
- Focus groups

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Phase 2: Do

Implement your strategy.



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Phase 3: Study

Study your strategy.

Describe: What do you see?

Interpret: What does the data suggest?

Discuss: What are the implications of these results?

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Phase 4: Act

Adopt, adapt, or
abandon.

Adopt: Expand your strategy.

Adapt: Adjust your strategy.

Abandon: Discard your strategy.

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Repeat!

Act

Plan



Study

Do





You did it!

(More resources are coming your way!)



Thank You!

Dr. Theresa Pfister
tpfiste@wested.org