

**Prekindergarten Family Engagement Plan**  
**Lorene Smith Kirkpatrick Elementary**  
**2017-2018**

**Definitions of Family and Family Engagement**

Family includes adults and children significant in the child's life who support the early learning and development of the child.

Family engagement is the mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities; which builds relationships to support student learning and achievements. This cooperative engagement supports family well-being, family-student relationships, and on-going learning and development of children. Family engagement is integrated in the child's educational experience, supports the whole child, and is culturally and linguistically responsive.

**Components and Strategies**

**1. Establish a network of community resources.**

- a. Foster a collaborative exchange of information.
- b. Encourage family participation in decision-making.
- c. Support the development of families as leaders and child advocates.
- d. Identify shared goals of engagement.
- e. Coordinate efforts across communities.
- f. Provide ongoing services/support.

**2. Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning.**

- a. Incorporate voices of all families across race, cultural background, and socio-economic status (SES).
- b. Design a variety of home-educational resources supporting learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership.
- c. Develop family support principles to build relationships and acknowledge and respect family.
- d. Use a variety of means to welcome and communicate.
- e. Facilitate/refer to parental support/educational groups based on family interests/needs.
- f. Help identify practices appropriate at age/state of children.
- g. Provide on-going professional development opportunities for educators on culturally sensitive, evidence-based strategies.
- h. Provide resources reflective of home language and translators.

**3. Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks.**

- a. Promote the value of education as a pathway to success.
- b. Create a safe and respectful environment.
- c. Create an environment that nurtures.
- d. Provide a welcoming environment that reflects on parent experiences, practices, and new strategies.

- e. Support parent-child relationships in a way that values the culture and language of families and recognizes how different cultures may influence family development.
- f. Develop staff skills to support families to meet their learning goals.
- g. Foster a learning environment that supports social-emotional learning.
- h. Work together to help children overcome behavioral changes.
- i. Share home learning activities with families through newsletters and parent-teacher conferences.
- j. Equip families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school. Offer opportunities for early-grade families and children to visit the school in advance of the school year to ease the anxiety of transition to a new place.
- k. Provide parents with developmental expectations.
- l. Encourage staff to respond to family members in a timely, respectful, and culturally appropriate manner.
- m. Encourage parents and families to use positive parent practices such as attachment and nurturing relationships and complement the stages of their children's development.

#### **4. Increase family participation in decision-making.**

- a. Create systems and supports to eliminate barriers to parent participation that address quality, equity, and accessibility.
- b. Develop systems to monitor (data collection) who is engaged in the program towards inclusion of all stakeholders. Focus on engagement of families from different/specific populations to narrow the achievement gap.
- c. Focus on using student data to promote continuous family engagement.
- d. Develop, in collaboration with families, clearly defined goals, outcomes, timelines, and strategies for assessing progress.
- e. Articulate short-and-long term program goals to all stakeholders.
- f. Help parents and families understand the types of involvement that will help achieve the goals and objectives identified to meet the needs of the child and family.
- g. Provide each family with the opportunity to review and provide input on program practices, policies, communications, and events in order to ensure the program is responsive to the family's needs.
- h. Ensure that parent training is culturally responsive, sensitive to diversity, and addresses the varying needs of families.
- i. Establish routines that allow parents to serve as problem solvers and be involved in addressing issues that arise.

#### **5. Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement.**

- a. Provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families.
- b. Instill the belief in educators/staff that family engagement is a core strategy to improve teaching and learning.
- c. Ensure alignment between family engagement activities and district/school teaching and learning goals.
- d. Ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment.

**6. Facilitate family-to-family support.**

- a. Create a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups.
- b. Ensure opportunities for continuous participation in events designed for families to attend.