

Family Engagement

This document provides an introduction and overview for the August 12, 2020 webinar focusing on the family engagement as we return to schooling in the fall.

Introduction

Returning to school for students in Michigan may look different than traditional classroom settings, creating an increased need for families to support learning and education in the home. This document outlines suggestions for engaging families in their child's education through the building and strengthening of relationships between educators, students, and families. It is more important than ever that schools plan for positive communication; develop collaborative relationships; build equitable opportunities through cultural proficiency; adopt home visiting programs; support literacy instruction and strategies; and support all students in navigating diverse educational environments at home and school through creating positive, predictable, and safe environments. By intentionally connecting and building truly collaborative relationships with families, educators can significantly improve outcomes for their students.

Part 1 Relationships are the Cornerstone to Family Engagement

National Presenter: Dr. Sarah Sayko

Strong relationships between school staff and families are an essential condition to successful home-school partnerships for promoting children's academic, social, and emotional outcomes. In Part 1, we will situate home-school literacy partnerships within effective family and community engagement practices, discuss and reflect upon effective home-school literacy partnerships within MTSS-R, and share strategies and resources for systemic implementation of family engagement practices, including a) talking and interacting often; b) discussing literacy instruction, intervention, and assessment; c) sharing literacy resources; and d) addressing concerns together.

Part 2 Relationships are the Cornerstone to Family Engagement

State Presenters: Shanon Everett and Stacie Rulison

Cultivating relationships is paramount to family engagement where families and schools work together and create collaborative environments to improve outcomes for all students (PBIS.org). Engaging families can positively impact children across race and culture and improve high school completion with students aspiring to higher level education (Jeynes, 2003; Boberiene, 2013). Children's home experiences are vital and shape cognitive and social-emotional skills such as self-confidence, attention, motivation, and self-control (Boberiene, 2013). Understanding home life and its context is essential including the cultural and family settings

which have the greatest impact on students' lives and outcomes (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020). This session will outline specific strategies for educators to build and strengthen collaborative relationships for engaging families. Specific topics and strategies covered include:

1. Planning for positive communication with all families which includes communicating using diverse methods which meet the needs of the family, enabling greater collaboration and relationship building opportunities (Sanabria-Hernandez, 2018);
2. Building bridges and facilitating cultural proficiency activities for children across domains impacting classroom dynamics, student and teacher relationships, and cultural competence (McWayne, Melzi, Limlingan, Schick, 2016; Boberiene, 2013);
3. Adopting best practice home visiting programs where gaining insight to the home can allow deeper understanding of the whole child and levels of support needed academically or behaviorally, and can bridge the educational and home experiences to most benefit the child (Boberiene, 2013; NEA, 2009).

Tying it all together with this four-part webinar series:

From a national, state, and local perspective, the cultivation of positive relationships with families through communication, collaboration, and gaining an understanding of the child's physical and cultural home context is vital. Exercising authentic family engagement is more critical now than ever with remote and in person learning situations and can assist in identifying social emotional skills to teach across settings. Educators can additionally assist families in understanding and implementing positive and proactive PBIS practices fostering improved overall social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (PBIS.org).

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