



MiFamily Partnership Assessment

Administration Guide

Version 1.0
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MiFamily Partnership Assessment: Administration Guide

The *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* is a pair of practical tools for schools that want to build and maintain partnerships with families. The primary purpose of the assessment is to help school staff and families understand their strengths together and find ways to improve their partnership practices. The Family Version and School Staff Version are designed to be used together, not in isolation. This tool is specifically designed to assist schools in identifying strategies to enhance relationships with families, aligned with ongoing school improvement efforts. It is important to note that this assessment is one among various resources available to school staff and families, all geared towards supporting the success of every child and family within the school community.

This document includes background information and administration guidance. The assessment items for Families and School Staff are both available on the [MiFamily Partnership Assessment](#) webpage.

Contributions

Suggested Citation

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Introduction

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) define partnerships in terms of **family engagement**, a “collaborative relationship between families, educators, providers, and partners to support and improve the learning, development, and health of every learner” (2020). The primary principles of family partnerships include:

- **Relationships:** Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement
- **Families as Partners:** Families are engaged and supported partners in their child’s education
- **Purposeful Engagement:** Family engagement efforts are purposeful and intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes
- **Tailored Engagement:** Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so all learners are successful
- **Positive Learning Environments:** Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning

Developing strong partnerships with families is essential to fostering student learning and developmental outcomes. Collaborative efforts between schools and families play a pivotal role in providing students with the necessary support, both at home and in educational settings. The *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* aligns with [Michigan’s Family \(MiFamily\) Engagement Framework](#) (2020), which promotes collaborative identification and planning of activities by families and schools. These activities aim to foster two-way relationships and implement action steps, all to improve student outcomes. The insights gathered from the assessment can inform the development of action plans, leveraging resources provided by MDE, MiLEAP, and the MiMTSS TA Center to enhance family partnerships.

Administration

There are two versions of the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment*: School Staff and Family. The School Staff and Family items address the same five principles and ask near identical questions, with adjusted wording to match the unique perspectives.

Intended Participants

School Staff

All school staff can complete the School Staff version of the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment*. School staff includes any individual employed by the school, inclusive of teachers, support staff, and administrators. Teaching and administrative staff should be able to respond to items across all five Principles. School staff in additional roles (e.g., cafeteria personnel, playground aides) should be able to respond to items included in Principles 3 and 5, but may not be able to respond to items in Principles 1, 2, and 4 due to the items addressing school efforts that may be outside of their responsibilities. It is recommended that school staff participate individually in

completing the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment*, as the majority of items ask for individual staff perspectives, not a perspective based on group consensus.

Families

It is recommended that all families with children enrolled in the school have an opportunity to complete the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment*. This will be done individually by each family. Families include biological parents and adoptive parents, as well as guardians and family members who support the education, growth, and development of children from birth through young adulthood. If school staff also have children attending the school, they may complete both versions of the assessment.

Administration Schedule

After the first administration, it is recommended that the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* be completed at least once per school year. Coordinating the timing of the data collection with cycles of the continuous improvement planning process may increase the likelihood that results will inform the school and district planning and foster the inclusion of family voices into that process. Repeated administrations should be conducted after schools and families have begun addressing insights together from the previous administration.

Completion Time

The School Staff version includes 35 items and the Family version includes 30 items. Each version typically takes less than 20 minutes to complete. It may take longer to respond to the assessment the first time.

Cost

This tool is available at no cost to schools, programs, and families. You are free to share or adapt the resources for non-commercial purposes. We ask that you always attribute MiMTSS TA Center. All publications, materials, and resources on this site are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#)

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Table 1. Key Roles and Responsibilities for Administration

Role	Responsibility
Assessment Coordinators	A school staff and family member co-lead the assessment process from data collection to use. They are responsible for preparing communication with staff and families, monitoring and taking steps to gather high response rates, organizing the results for analysis, and facilitating the shared development of a family partnership improvement plan.
Respondents	School staff and family members with students enrolled in the school.

Preparation for Administration

Allocating dedicated time is essential for the intentional administration of the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment*. This includes effectively communicating with school staff and families to ensure they understand the purpose and intended outcomes. It is recommended that school staff and families receive ample communication regarding the importance and purpose of this set of tools and how results will be used.

Scoring

Each participant should use the provided scoring guide to score each item on a scale of "yes," "sometimes," "no", or "unsure" corresponding to scores of 2, 1, 0, and 0, respectively. Each assessment item includes examples to clarify the intended meaning. The assessment begins and concludes with a satisfaction question that asks respondents to rate their level of overall satisfaction with the school-family partnership. This repeated measure creates an opportunity to assess any shifts in respondents' perspectives after engaging with the assessment content. Additionally, at the end of each section or Principle, participants are asked to identify their top priority for improvement and can respond to an open-ended question to share additional comments and insights.

Results

School communities should interpret their *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* data starting with the Overall Satisfaction items. **School communities using the assessment for the first time should prioritize looking for commonalities among staff and family responses, both among the areas of strength and areas needing improvement** (i.e., principle scores, item scores, items prioritized for improvement). Once schools have successful experiences using the *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* in ways that have led to improved school-family partnerships, they may be more ready to investigate discrepant perceptions between school staff and families, and begin working toward shared understanding and improvements.

Respondent comments also provide valuable insights for action planning but may be daunting to navigate due to the variability in responses, ranging from highly actionable to off topic. To streamline the analysis, we recommend the following approach:

- **Focused Analysis:** Prioritize the analysis of comments in same areas that the school community has prioritized for actions related to sustainability and improvement.
- **Theme Identification:** While reviewing, identify common themes within the comments. For example, themes may arise regarding perceived differences in expectations between school and home, or inconsistencies in communication.

Administration Fidelity Checklist

The Administration Fidelity Checklist is designed for use before, during, and after the collection of *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* data. This checklist is monitored by the MiFamily Partnership Assessment Coordinators.

Directions: Review each step in the table below and either circle Yes (Y), No (N), or Not Applicable (N/A). Yes indicates the step was completed. No indicates the step was not completed, and N/A indicates the step was not applicable.

Table 2. Administration Fidelity Checklist

Protocol Steps	Yes	No	N/A
1. Prepare Materials and Communication: Prepare electronic or print copies of the assessment for all participants in their preferred language (as available). Define the windows and venues for data collection, analysis, and shared planning. Draft communications for staff and families.	Y	N	N/A
2. Plan for High Response Rates: Consider what existing spaces can be leveraged for respondents to complete the assessment (e.g., staff meeting, school-family event, parent-teacher organization meeting). Establish a response goal (number or percent). Consider incentives for completing the assessment or achieving the schoolwide response goal.	Y	N	N/A
3. Invite Respondents: All school staff and families receive an invitation to complete the assessment with an explanation of why the assessment is being used, how the results will be used, and at least a two-week window to respond. Include the school's vision/mission statement to help respondents answer item 3.1. Included in the request to complete the assessment are details about opportunities to review the results and contribute to planning. A primary invitation is followed by additional reminders in varied communication formats.	Y	N	N/A
4. Monitor Response Rates: The coordinators monitor and publicly share response rates for the family and school staff versions until the response goal (number or percent) has been achieved.	Y	N	N/A
5. Data Preparation: After the data collection window closes, the coordinators prepare the results for review in various spaces that include both school staff and families together.	Y	N	N/A
6. Data Analysis and Action Planning: Families and school staff review the results together to identify commonly identified areas of strength and commonly identified areas for improvement. They create an action plan together to sustain strengths and make improvements. The plan includes responsibilities for school staff and identified families.	Y	N	N/A
7. Post-Assessment Communication: Share the results of the assessment and the action plan with all school staff and families, regardless of whether they were able to participate in the shared analysis and planning sessions.	Y	N	N/A
8. Monitor Actions and Communicate: Approximately quarterly, coordinators review and provide status updates for school staff and families about progress with actions and the impact of changes.	Y	N	N/A

Outcomes and Implications for Practice

Expected Benefits of Using the MiFamily Partnership Assessment

The *MiFamily Partnership Assessment* aims to achieve specific, anticipated benefits and results. The following provides an overview of each principle in action:

Relationships

- **Building Trust:** Prioritize opportunities to learn about each family's strengths, needs, and values by conducting home visits or one-on-one meetings with families before or at the beginning of the school year.
- **Enhanced Learning Environments:** Create supportive and inclusive learning environments by fostering trust and understanding between families and educators through bi-directional communication and providing professional learning opportunities to school staff to develop and promote skills.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Involve families as active partners in decision-making processes through surveys, open forums, or including families in school improvement planning, leading to better-informed decisions that benefit students.
- **Cultural Inclusion:** Celebrate and integrate families' cultural traditions and languages into classroom activities and communications.
- **Accessible Communications:** Provide materials and updates in families' preferred languages and formats such as email, phone, or printed handouts.

Families as Partners

- **Increased Satisfaction:** Elevate satisfaction among families by including them on planning teams, using surveys to capture their input, and connecting them with community resources. Establish procedures to ensure families understand how their feedback influences decision-making.
- **Decision-Making:** Prioritize partnering with families in decision-making. Include families in co-developing their child's individualized learning or behavior plans.
- **Community Networks:** Foster connections between the school, communities, and families. Connect families to community resources, support groups, or advocacy opportunities.
- **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Partner with families to address specific concerns, such as creating consistent strategies for managing challenging behaviors at home and school.
- **Empower families:** Equip families with the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions about their child's learning. Empowered families are more engaged and effective in supporting outcomes (Weiss et al., 2015). Schools can host a workshop on understanding Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), helping families advocate for services.

Purposeful and Intentional Engagement

- Consistent, two-way communication: Strong family-educator relationships are foundational for fostering positive child outcomes (Sheridan et al., 2019). Use home visits to understand the family's cultural and personal context and regularly update families with progress reports using positive framing and actionable feedback.
- Intentional Goal-Setting: Research emphasizes that family engagement is most effective when families and educators collaborate on shared goals (Epstein, 2001). During a parent-teacher conference, families and schools can collaboratively set a goal for a child to increase expressive language skills by incorporating family-identified activities like storytelling or singing at home.
- Connect developmentally appropriate practices and family priorities: Schools can provide families with a visual progress tracker to show their child's milestones in areas such as self-regulation or early literacy.
- Scaffold partnership opportunities: Provide families with tools and strategies to support their child's learning at home. Share video demonstrations or workshops on using instruction or positive reinforcement techniques to encourage desired behaviors at home.
- Ongoing progress monitoring: Regularly review and adjust goals and strategies in collaboration with families. Continuous feedback loops help align efforts and celebrate progress (Fan & Chen, 2001). Schedule monthly check-ins to review progress on goals like social-emotional regulation.

Tailored Engagement

- Equity: Promote equity in education by identifying and removing barriers to family engagement, providing interpreters and communications in multiple languages, and offering staff training and childcare provisions at events.
- Cultural and linguistic responsiveness: Understand and respect families' cultural backgrounds, languages, and traditions. Provide materials and resources in multiple languages and ensure interpreters are available at meetings or events. Plan with families to celebrate and learn about diverse traditions.
- Communication and scheduling: To meet families' diverse needs, use multiple communication methods and offer flexible scheduling. For example, offer virtual meetings, evening conferences, or weekend events for families who cannot attend during traditional hours. For real-time communication, use texts, emails, or apps like ClassDojo.
- Resource access: Address barriers families face in accessing resources. Provide transportation for families to attend workshops or offer childcare during meetings. Schools can also partner with local organizations to share resources such as food, housing assistance, or mental health services.
- Ongoing Feedback and Collaboration: Schools should regularly seek and incorporate family input into educational practices. Use surveys or focus groups to gather families' perspectives on what support they need and adapt strategies based on their feedback.
- Staff development: Train educators on effective family engagement practices and cultural competence. Schools can provide workshops for staff on implicit bias, equitable communication strategies, and building strong family-school partnerships.

Positive Learning Environments

- **Safe Schools:** Enhance school safety and inclusivity by involving families in creating security and visiting policies, ensuring visibility of school personnel in key areas, and establishing a community schools approach.
- **Warm and welcoming atmosphere:** Foster an environment where families feel valued and respected. Schools can greet families by name during drop-off and pick-up, display family photos in the classroom, and create inviting spaces for families to visit or volunteer.
- **Shared learning experiences:** Create opportunities for families to engage in their child's learning alongside them. Schools can host family-child activity nights, such as math games, literacy events, or science exploration activities to model learning strategies and foster collaboration.
- **Recognize family contributions:** Acknowledge and celebrate the diverse ways families support learning. Schools can feature a "Family of the Week" bulletin board or invite families to share their skills or cultural traditions in the classroom.
- **Foster family input:** Engage families in decisions about the learning environment and educational programming through family focus groups or surveys to gather input on classroom resources, event planning, or curriculum enhancements.

Consequences of Testing

Ethical Considerations

The MiFamily Partnership Assessment is a valuable tool for schools seeking to improve family participation practices and promote student success. However, it is essential to consider the potential consequences of administering this assessment, particularly within the ethical guidelines outlined in the [Standards for Psychological and Educational Testing](#) (AERA/APA/NCME, 2014).

Intent of the Tool

The primary intent of the MiFamily Partnership Assessment is to facilitate reflective practices and foster collaborative efforts among school staff and families to strengthen family engagement. It is designed to provide insights into current practices and identify areas for improvement rather than serve as a tool for evaluating individual teachers or reinforcing negative beliefs about families. Emphasizing this intent is crucial for maintaining ethical integrity and ensuring that the assessment process remains focused on promoting positive outcomes for students and families.

Avoiding Misuse

One of the ethical considerations when utilizing the MiFamily Partnership Assessment is to avoid any potential misuse of assessment results. It is essential to communicate to all respondents and the school community as a whole that the purpose of the assessment is not to assign blame, evaluate individual teachers, or target individual families. Rather, the assessment process and results should be used as a means of collective reflection and action, with the goal of enhancing family partnerships and ultimately improving student outcomes.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Another ethical consideration is maintaining confidentiality and privacy throughout the assessment process. All responses should be treated with utmost confidentiality, and efforts should be made to ensure that individual responses cannot be traced back to specific individuals. This helps create a safe and supportive environment for honest feedback and fosters trust among school staff and families.

Transparency and Communication

Transparency and clear communication are essential ethical principles when administering the MiFamily Partnership Assessment. Schools should provide clear information about the purpose of the assessment, how the data will be used, and the intended outcomes of the process. Additionally, open communication channels should be established to address any concerns or questions from school staff and families regarding the assessment process.

Continuous Improvement

Finally, it is essential to emphasize the importance of using assessment results for continuous improvement rather than punitive measures. Schools should develop action plans based on the insights gained from the assessment, with a focus on implementing strategies to strengthen family partnerships and support student success. By adopting a continuous improvement approach, schools can ensure that the assessment process remains ethical and aligned with the overarching goal of promoting positive outcomes for all members of the school community.

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[Michigan's Family \(MiFamily\) Engagement Framework](https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/education-partnerships/family-partnerships)

(<https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/education-partnerships/family-partnerships>)

[Standards for Psychological and Educational Testing](https://www.testingstandards.net/open-access-files.html)

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