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NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Continuous Improvement Process Toolkit

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## Family & Community Engagement

**"Partnerships among schools, families, and community groups are not a luxury, they are a necessity"**  
(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson and Davies, 2007)

Engaging Families and Communities as partners with schools is no longer a "good idea" but has become a necessity, as the evidence is clear: partnership contributes to children's academic and social success. This Family & Community Engagement section of the Continuous Improvement Toolkit is designed and updated to help school personnel facilitate family engagement by providing resources, such as current research, websites with stories and promising practices, checklists, and tools for evaluation. Websites, tools, and guiding questions are found under each of the Continuous Improvement Process phases (see the left-hand menu) under Creating the Profile (under Guiding Questions), Setting the Goals, Planning to Improve, and Implementing the Plan, and especially under Websites and Other Resources.

If, however, you are a parent or community member, we refer you to the best current resources we have identified, such as Harvard Family research Project, [www.hfrp.org/family-involvement](http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement), or The National PTA website, [www.pta.org/Documents/National\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.pta.org/Documents/National_Standards.pdf). In addition, check with your local district regarding the parent/community involvement policy and practices. Currently, this document contains tools for educators' use in partnering.

Research studies have shown a connection between school improvement and family engagement. This is not surprising when one considers that children spend 92% of their time outside of school under the influence of their families. Joyce Epstein (Johns Hopkins Univ.), who is a leading researcher on Schools & Family Partnerships, suggests we consider the spheres of influence on a child's learning: the home, the school, and the community. "Regardless of the economics of the school, caring communities can be built, intentionally to include families that might not become involved on their own, to help children succeed, according to the collected research of Sanders, Van Voorhis, Sheldon, Simon. (2004)