

Sample Best Practices for Parent Involvement in Schools

Research confirms that the involvement of parents and families in their children's education is critical to students' academic success. House Bill 1, Ohio's education reform bill, requires ODE to post examples of research-based best practices to help schools improve parents' involvement in their children's learning.

The following practices, organized under six categories, are based on the State Board of Education's Parent and Family Involvement Policy, the National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and Joyce L. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of (Parent) Involvement.

BEST PRACTICES BY CATEGORY

1. Create a welcoming school climate.
2. Provide families information related to child development and creating supportive learning environments.
3. Establish effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication
4. Strengthen families' knowledge and skills to support and extend their children's learning at home and in the community.
5. Engage families in school planning, leadership and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
6. Connect students and families to community resources that strengthen and support students' learning and well-being

CREATE A WELCOMING SCHOOL CLIMATE.

Provide a personal greeting and welcome packet for all parents visiting the school, including a community services directory, important school contact information, school calendar and coupons to local businesses.

Have teachers make personal contacts with families through e-mail, phone calls or home visits.

Hold an open house, prior to school opening, at which families can meet their children's teachers, tour the school building and meet other parents.

Provide transportation and child care to enable families to attend school-sponsored, family-involvement events.

Offer translators to welcome and assist families during school activities.

CREATE A WELCOMING SCHOOL CLIMATE

Provide workshops and materials for parents on typical development and appropriate parent and school expectations for various age groups.

Print suggestions for parents on home conditions that support learning at each grade level.

Partner with local agencies to provide regular parenting workshops on nutrition, family recreation or communication.

Have school personnel make home visits at transition points such as preschool and elementary, middle and high school to help families and students understand what to expect.

ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-TO-HOME AND HOME-TO-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION.

Provide printed information for parents on homework policies and on monitoring and supporting student work at home.

Send home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment.

Develop electronic grade booklets so families can frequently monitor their children's progress.

Clearly communicate school policies to all families in their home language.

Establish formal mechanisms for families to communicate to administrators and teachers as needed (e.g., direct phone numbers, e-mail addresses, weekly hours for families to call or meet).

Create a families "suggestion or comment" box (electronic and onsite) for families to anonymously provide their questions, concerns and recommendations.

STRENGTHEN FAMILIES' KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SUPPORT AND EXTEND THEIR CHILDREN'S LEARNING AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

Provide training and materials for parents on how to improve children's study skills or learning in various academic subjects.

Make regular homework assignments that require students to discuss with their families what they are learning in class.

Provide a directory of community resources and activities that link to student learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

Offer workshops to inform families of the high expectations and standards children are expected to meet in each grade level. Provide ways for families to support the expectations and learning at home.

Engage families in opportunities to work with their children in setting their annual academic, college and career goals.

ENGAGE FAMILIES IN SCHOOL PLANNING, LEADERSHIP AND MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES.

Create roles for parents on all decision-making and advisory committees, properly training them for the areas in which they will serve (e.g., curriculum, budget or school safety).

Provide equal representation for parents on school governing bodies.

Conduct a survey of parents to identify volunteer interests, talents and availability, matching these resources to school programs and staff-support needs.

Create volunteer recognition activities such as events, certificates and thank-you cards.

Establish a parent telephone tree to provide school information and encourage interaction among parents.

Structure a network that links every family with a designated parent representative

CONNECT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES THAT STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT STUDENTS' LEARNING AND WELL-BEING.

Through school-community partnerships, facilitate families' access to community-based programs (e.g., health care and human services) to ensure that families have resources to be involved in their children's education.

Establish school-business partnerships to provide students mentoring, internships and onsite, experiential learning opportunities.

Connect students and families to service-learning projects in the community.

Invite community partners to share resources at annual open houses or parent-teacher conferences.

MORE PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCES

Also see a database of promising practices ([/Topics/Other-Resources/Family-and-Community-Engagement/Promising-Partnership-Practices-and-Evidence-Based](#)) for parent involvement used by Ohio school districts, as well as evidence-based strategies for parent involvement.

SOURCES

Epstein, J. L., et al. (2009). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Also see: www.partnershipschools.org (<http://www.partnershipschools.org/>).

State Board of Education, Parent and family involvement policy ([/Topics/Other-Resources/Getting-Involved-with-your-Child-s-Learning/Parent-and-Family-Involvement-Policy-Provides-Guid](#)) [page](#).

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