

Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning

Dimensions of Family and Community Engagement at a Glance



Dimension	Description	Elements of effective practice	Related underpinning principles from the <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i>	Outcome
COMMUNICATING	Effective communication is a two-way exchange between families and schools that involves information sharing and opportunities for schools and families to learn about each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a variety of communication methods to seek and share information • Reporting student achievements in culturally sensitive and respectful ways • Consulting with all families to identify issues and concerns within the school • Enabling all families to have access to school leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment • Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities • Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust • Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers professional expertise • Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships Family-school partnerships strengthen the connections between schools and their communities. 	Effective two-way communication between families and school use a range of strategies to regularly seek and share information about students' achievements and learning needs, school policies, practices and community initiatives.
CONNECTING LEARNING AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL	Connections between families and school that promote student learning and high expectations from both teachers and family contribute to students' success at school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing multiple opportunities for all families and teachers to discuss students' social and academic progress • Supporting families to participate in their child's learning • Developing families' understanding of learning programs and expected learning outcomes • Smoothing transitions for students and families at key points in the education continuum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families and schools want the best for their children • All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential • Families are the first and continuing educators of their children • Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers professional expertise • Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust • Family-school partnerships improve student motivation and learning. 	Families and the school share responsibility for student learning and wellbeing. They work together to create positive attitudes to learning, develop shared understandings of how children learn and learning programs and build on families' capacity to support learning at home.

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BUILDING COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY	Inclusive school policies, practices and programs build a culture of welcome, inclusion and belonging for all families that reflects and respects diversity within the school's community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing strong relationships with all families • Creating a family-friendly atmosphere • Facilitating connections between families • Respecting and celebrating the diversity within the school community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential • Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment • Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities • Family-school partnerships strengthen the connections between schools and their communities • Partnerships can involve all organisations that support families and schools. 	School policies and practices, learning activities and community building initiatives create a culture of welcome, inclusion and belonging that reflects and respects the diversity within the school community.
RECOGNISING THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY	Families, as the first and continuing educators of their children, assist and encourage their children's learning in and out of school and support school goals, directions and ethos.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing and building on families' knowledge of their children • Recognising and supporting the needs of families • Removing barriers to family involvement • Acknowledging the critical role of families in their child's learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families are the first and continuing educators of their children • Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment • Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers professional expertise • Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust • Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships. 	School policies, practices and programs acknowledge families as partners in their children's education. Schools recognise and build on the capacity of families to assist and encourage their children's learning in and out of school and support school goals, directions and ethos.
CONSULTATIVE DECISION-MAKING	Families play meaningful roles in the school decision-making processes through parent representative bodies, committees and other forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that all families have a voice in decisions that affect their children • Involving families and community members in whole-school planning and evaluation processes • Developing an effective parent body that represents all families • Developing parent leadership capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families and schools want the best for their children • Families are the first and continuing educators of their children • Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment • Families and schools value quality teaching and respect teachers professional expertise • Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust • Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships. 	Families and community members are active contributors to school decision making and planning processes. They engage in relevant decisions about supporting student learning, school policy and practice and community building initiatives.

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COLLABORATING BEYOND THE SCHOOL	Developing relationships with government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses and other educational providers strengthens the ability of schools and families to support their children's learning and development outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting families and students with community resources • Providing families with access to community resources • Creating a community hub within the school • Building capacity in community organisations to engage with schools and support families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children have the right to the opportunity to reach their full potential • Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities • Family-school partnerships strengthen the connections between schools and their communities • Partnerships can involve all organisations that support families and schools. 	Schools establish on-going strategic relationships with government and non-government agencies, community groups, businesses and other educational providers which enhance learning opportunities and outcomes for students and families.
PARTICIPATING	Every member of the school community has something to offer and families' time, energy and expertise supports learning and school programs in many ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing opportunities for families and community to participate in the life of the school • Supporting families to engage in student learning activities • Training families and community members as classroom helpers • Building the capacity of family and community members to lead the learning of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families and schools want the best for their children • Families are the first and continuing educators of their children • Effective schools provide a nurturing and supportive learning environment • Families and schools value the diversity of families and use this as a resource for building partnerships and communities • Family-school partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect and trust • Leadership is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships • Family-school partnerships improve student motivation and learning. 	Families and community members contribute to the life of the school in ways that reflect their interests, skills, experience and capacity to do so.