

Strategies for Partnering with Families to Build Supportive Learning Environments

What this means: Schools partner with their communities to assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, and maintaining safe and supportive homes for children. School staff members understand and support families.

Children raised in safe and supportive homes are better equipped for learning. All families can benefit from information and support for the realities of raising happy and healthy children. When educators understand the families in their school, they are more empathetic and are better equipped to help children learn. Schools that partner with families and communities to strengthen families take the time to assess the needs of families and work to align community resources to meet those needs.



Sample Action Steps

Universal Strategies (for all students and families)

- Schools partner with local agencies to provide parenting workshops on such topics as discipline, nutrition, family recreation or communication. These are offered on a regular basis to all families in the community.
- The school hosts the Parent Academy: Power Up Moves and Food to promote the school lunch program and help families understand the benefits of proper nutrition and physical activity.
- The school provides all families with a directory of community supports and services for families.

Targeted Strategies (for some students and families)

- Schools provide families of gifted and special education students with workshops, support groups and other resources to increase their understanding and skills for supporting their child's unique learning needs.
- Teachers communicate closely with families to understand and respond to stressful events occurring in students' lives such as divorce, death, change of employment, moving and the birth of a sibling.

Intensive Strategies (for a few students and families)

- The school employs a school social worker who coordinates and links families to services such as safe and stable housing, health care, clothing assistance and nutrition programs.
- District policies provide for transportation for students to school when their family moves to a different address within the district, thus allowing the student to finish the school year in the same school.

Resources

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS): Parenting and Collaborating with the Community

NNPS offers a handbook, training and support for implementation of Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement. Parenting and Collaborating with the Community are highlighted as two "types" that are similar to the concept of strengthening learning supports. The Web site offers examples of supporting families, collaborating with the community, challenges and redefinitions.

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes/type1.htm

The Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement

This resource, developed in Ohio, is tailored to meet Ohio's needs and designed to close achievement gaps, increase graduation rates and improve the well-being of children. The model makes school improvement a family and community priority. Each chapter is in Adobe Acrobat PDF format.

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=428&ContentID=8835&Content=64671>

Complementary Learning, Harvard Family Research Project

Complementary learning is the idea that a systemic approach – that intentionally integrates both school and nonschool supports – can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed. This Web site offers tools for understanding the concepts of schools and communities working together to support the education and well-being of all children.

<http://www.hfrp.org/complementary-learning/overview>

Evidence-Based Programs

Click [here](#) to link to evidence-based programs that include family involvement strategies in addressing a variety of learning supports.

