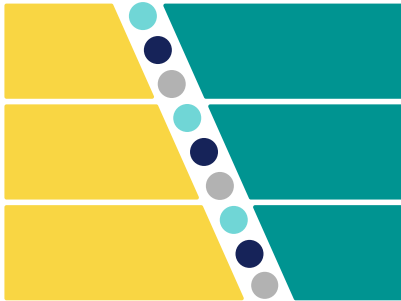


Steps to Get You Started

Trusting Family Partnerships



Take the specific action steps below to implement this feature in your school.

Engage with students and families.

- Personally contact each family in your class or school at the beginning of the academic year to establish open lines of communication and a partnership for student success.
- Know students in your class or school by name and be actively involved in a variety of their performances, competitions, and clubs.
- Ensure you communicate to families that school administrators also are approachable and available to students and family members.
- Know the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of families in the school. Incorporate this knowledge when planning school activities, celebrations, and opportunities for family involvement.

Obtain feedback from family members and school staff.

- Be sure to get both formal and informal feedback from your students' families. One way to obtain informal feedback is by letting families know school administrators have an "open-door policy."
- Encourage your students' family members to share ideas and suggestions about in school activities as well as after school events.
- Assess school staff members attitudes and beliefs about family partnerships and use these data to plan professional learning opportunities, policy changes, and other actions to support family partnerships
- Conduct annual or bi-annual school climate assessments among a range of stakeholders. Include in the survey questions about family members' perceptions of the quality of partnerships between families and your school staff.
- Develop a questionnaire to obtain suggestions and feedback from all families for your school governance decisions.

Provide family members multiple opportunities to engage with the school.

- Create a family-led team at your school that helps facilitate family-to-family communication and inform new families about the school and opportunities for involvement.
- Provide activities for families that create a sense of community such as international events, back to school functions, and parent education opportunities.
- Facilitate family participation by offering activities at different times during the day and evenings, and providing transportation and childcare during the events.
- Recruit families from all segments of your school population to participate in various committees, including leadership and school governance committees.

Facilitate communication between home and school.

- Identify and use families' preferred modes of communication. Consider the following questions: Who in the family prefers to communicate with the school? What forms of communication does he or she prefer, such as phone, text, or email? What time of day does he or she prefer to be contacted?
- Provide classroom and school newsletters written in a casual and friendly style and that inform families of schoolwide and classroom-specific events, activities, and lessons.
- Use home-school notebooks to facilitate daily communication.
- Provide quick and effective responses to families' questions and concerns.

Provide families information needed to support their children's educational progress.

- Equip families with knowledge of benchmarks and core content standards for their children's grade levels.
- Ensure that families know how and can access their children's individual student performance data in your school systems, and that they know how to interpret these data.
- Supply guidance and tools for families to regularly monitor, reinforce, and guide their children's academic and behavioral progress.
- Provide families with information about practices that support literacy and math skills development.