



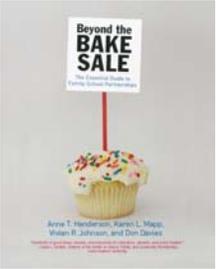
It Takes Two to Tango

Choreographing Meaningful Family-School Engagement

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Beyond the Bake Sale

Key text for practitioners in the field of family engagement



Family Engagement is a Necessity – Not a Luxury



Students:

- earn better grades
- enroll in higher-level programs
- have higher graduation rates
- are more likely to enroll in post-secondary education
- display more positive attitudes toward school
- behave better both in and out of school

Teachers Also Benefit from Effective Family Engagement



- Kids do better and behave better in class
- Parents have a better understanding of the teachers' goals
- Parents tend to rate teachers more highly in evaluations.

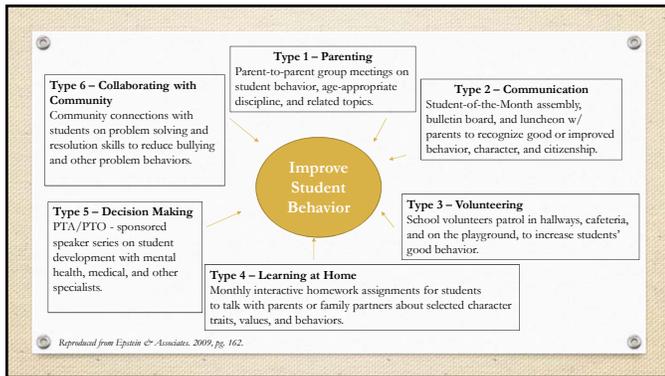
Not All Family Engagement Is Created Equal

To Be Most Effective, Engagement Activities Must Be:

- Targeted to clearly defined goals related to student learning or behavior;
- Strategically linked;
- Comprehensive;
- Sustained.

Harvard Family Research Project (2014).





Trusting Relationships – The Foundation of Effective Family Engagement



All families have dreams for their children and want them to do well

Parents and Teachers Talking Together
(Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Kentucky)

All parents have the capacity to support student learning

Help parents develop a job description
Offer workshops and materials that build parent knowledge, skills, and confidence

Parents and schools should work together as equal partners

Ask parents by survey or focus group about their strengths and preferences as well as needs
Include families when developing family engagement initiatives

Topic	Lopsided Relationship	Mutual Relationship
Academic Support	"Have your children follow my directions about their homework and other assignments."	"Here are some ways to monitor your children's homework and build their skills. Tell us what else you do to help your children."
Parent Support	"Train your children to respect and obey school staff at all times."	"Let's work together to develop a code of conduct and promote appropriate behavior."
Participation	"Parents are welcome at school during designated times and events."	"You are welcome anytime! Please let us know what you want to know more about and when you can come to workshops and other activities that interest you."

Reproduced from Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007, pgs. 37-38.

Relationship-Building Strategies

Create a Welcoming School Environment

- Welcome mat is out
- School feels warm and friendly
- All staff are accessible
- Contact information is easy to find
- Interpreters are available

Reach Out Early and Often

- Start by letting parents know that you care about their child!
- Reach out individually
- If they don't come the first time, ask again
- Try multiple types of communication
- If they don't come to you, go to them
- Use other trusted leaders to help you make connections

Bridging Differences

Different Cultures and Languages:

Recognize, learn about, and affirm all cultures	Connect families' cultures to classroom learning	Enlist community members and organizations to help school and families connect	Recognize and support different forms of parent involvement
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Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Bridging Differences

Racial Diversity

Provide a safe space for dialogue and building positive understanding. <small>e.g. Study Circles, Montgomery County, Maryland</small>	Recognize the impact of race and labels on families' everyday experiences. <small>e.g. Singleton, G. (2nd Ed. 2014) <i>Courageous Conversations about Race</i> (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin)</small>	Emphasize high standards and expectations for all students regardless of race (or any other factor)
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Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Bridging Differences

Class Differences

Family engagement is better predictor of student achievement than family income
(Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994))

Identify the strengths and resources that families and communities have to offer
(walk the neighborhoods - make resource maps)

Take steps to reduce gaps in families' cultural capital

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Dealing with Problem Parents

Wiser to include them than ignore them

Find out what their interests and skills are - build on their strengths

Team them up with parents who have a positive attitude

Try to get to the bottom of what is really bothering them and address it

Professional development in conflict management skills

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Linking Parent Engagement to Student Learning and Behavioral Goals

Parents need:

- A job description
- The necessary knowledge and skills
- Confidence



Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Activities that help parents understand what their children need to be able to know and do

Classroom visits or shadow days

Send parents home with suggestions on how to use what they've learned to start meaningful conversations with their kids

Display student work in school and in the community

In middle and high school, put students in charge of explaining their work to families and communities.

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Connect school events for families with what kids are learning in school

Design Family Reading or STEM Nights with close focus on achievement

- Explain standards and what children are learning in class
- Demonstrate learning activities and give parents a chance to practice
- Send materials home with parent
- Help parents assess how their children are progressing

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Ongoing, Two Way Communication is Key to Effective Engagement



Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. 2007.

Integrate Engagement Regularly into School Communications

Generic Newsletter

This month, students created displays that focused on some aspect of teen wellness (physical, social, mental, emotional health).

Newsletter Linked to Learning

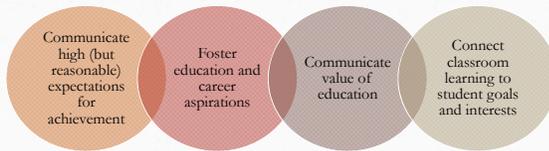
[add] To create the displays, students applied current research on health to develop a personal fitness plan. Ask your student to explain his or her personal standards for healthy behavior and how these standards relate to their fitness plan.

Reproduced from Henderson, A., & Mapp, K. (2007) pg. 96.

Use Parent-Teacher Conferences Effectively

- Give parents advance guidance on what questions to ask
- Include students, particularly in middle and high school grades
- Consider Academic Parent-Teacher Team model for elementary school
- Schedule them at times and locations that parents can attend – food and child care may help.

Academic Socialization: One of the Most Powerful Parent Practices



Jeynes, WH. (2011) Parent Involvement Research: Moving to the Next Level. *The School Community Journal*, Vol.21, No. 1, pgs. 9-18.

Some Tips for Family Engagement in the School Health Context



CDC/US DHSS Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/parents/parenthealth/

A Couple of Final Tips



Engage Parents Beyond the School Grounds



Help Parents Grow Together with their Children

Guide parents to adult learning and leadership experiences that will help build their own skills and confidence



For More Information

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Primary References

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., et al. (2007). *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. (New York: New Press).

Henderson, A., Berla, N. (1994) *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*. (Washington, DC: Center for Law in Education).

Epstein, J. et al. (2009). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (3rd Ed.) (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press).

Harvard Family Research Project (2014) *Redefining Family Engagement for Student Success*. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/redefining-family-engagement-for-student-success>.