Welcoming All Families into the School Community

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Engaging families is important!

Engaging families in children's learning has a positive impact on student achievement.

www.seld.org/connections/research-syntheses.htm

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community
Standard 2: Communicating Effectively
Standard 3: Supporting Student Success
Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child
Standard 5: Sharing Power
Standard 6: Collaborating with Community
Standard 1
Welcoming All Families into the School Community

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our School</th>
<th>Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conduct workshops or panels: information for parents on U.S. or homeland education</td>
<td>1 3 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Provide information, training, and guidance to all families who want it on who is to be in the school and who can assist with getting or managing at the school building.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>3. Produce information for families that is clear, usable, and referred to children's business in school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>4. Assist families for informing about children's goals, strengths, and talents.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>5. Sponsor family volunteering projects or neighborhood initiatives to help families understand schools and help others with lower family income</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td>6. Establish communication on developing home curriculum or enrichment programs that support learning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Respond to family members or representatives in our student population</td>
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PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Ideas, suggestions, and examples related to this standard can be found on the following pages in Anne Henderson's book Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships:

- p. 28 Core Belief 1
- p. 39 Core Belief 4
- p. 43 Conclusion: Barriers to Achieving the Beliefs
- pp. 48-49 The Joining Process
- p. 50 Welcome All Families to Your School Community

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“Core Belief 4”

School staff brainstorm: what would improve family involvement?

Looking out the window:

- Families who are “just like us”
- More respect for the value of education
- More money to hire staff to work with parents
- More discipline and better behavior at home

Looking in the mirror:

- A more welcoming school building and front office
- Positive phone calls home at least once a month
- A family center with learning materials families can take home
- More planning time to meet with parents
“Conclusion: Barriers to Achieving the Beliefs”

Teachers said:
• “The parents and kids will break the computer.”
• “They’ll mess up the software.”
• “The children will roam the halls and go into our class rooms unsupervised.”
• “Equipment might get stolen or misused.”

Principal said:
• “The PTO has agreed to replace any computers that are broken.”
• “They can’t really damage the software. Besides, we have lots of copies and it’s free.”
• “We really should lock our doors when we leave for the night anyhow.”
• “The PTO and Parent Advisory Committee members will monitor the room to make sure things are done properly.”

Getting Started:
The role of Action Teams
1. Ask all stakeholders to identify ideas, needs & priorities.
2. Organize into committees, based on the priorities selected.
3. Develop a one-year action plan (include all areas, a budget, and funding sources).
4. Establish goals and guidelines for teamwork.
5. Meet regularly (at least monthly) as a whole team.
6. Gather ideas and plan program and activities. Publicize activities and team meetings.
In the three-part joining process, the school community:

1. Welcomes parents into the school
2. Honors their participation
3. Connects with parents through a focus on the children and their learning

Beyond the Bake Sale

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“Honoring Families”
Honoring Families

Do More:
• Hello! Welcome. How may I help you?
• Welcome signs with name of principal.
• Thanking parents for contributions large and small.
• Small discussion groups of parents with a leader.
• Surveying parents to get their ideas and opinions.

Do Less:
• Who are you? What do you want?
• “No Trespassing” signs.
• Complaining that parents don’t do more.
• Parent meetings dominated by a few “officers”.
• Planning events, then publicizing them to parents.

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p. 50 Welcome All Families to Your School Community
The Welcome Mat is Out (p.50)
The Whole Family Enrolls in the School (p.50)
The School Feels Warm and Friendly (p.51)
People Are Accessible (p.52)
Smaller is Better (p.53)
Honoring Families (p.55)
Adopt a Partnership Philosophy (p.56)
Embrace Your Families (p.57)
Listen and Respond to Families (p.58)
Honoring Families (p.59)

CHECKLIST

STANDARD 1 CHECKLIST
How Family-Friendly Is Your School?

Welcoming Environment
• Friendly signs inside and out welcome families and visitors and explain how to get around the building.

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<tr>
<th>Already doing this</th>
<th>Could do this easily</th>
<th>This will take time</th>
<th>This will be hard</th>
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• The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including bus drivers, security guards, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

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• Front office staff are friendly—recognize visitors right away, provide information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes people glad they have called.

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• There is a comfortable family resource room stocked with books, games, and educational information that families can borrow and where parents can meet.

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Reflect and Connect

How does creating an inviting, respectful, welcoming climate for families increase engagement?

As involved parents, what can we do to help families feel more welcomed and connected?