

Parent engagement in schools is defined as **parents*** and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents. Studies have shown that **parent engagement** in schools can promote positive education and health behaviors among children and adolescents.

** Please note that we are using the words parent and family interchangeably. Anywhere you read parent(s), include family(ies), and vice versa.*

30 Ideas That Can Get Parents/Families Involved

Most childcare centers find it a challenge to get parents involved, even though their involvement can mean a world of difference in their child's success. Here are some ideas that can help you to get some parent and family engagement going. Some of these ideas are perfect for school classrooms as well.

1. Make refrigerator notes for parents.
2. Hold your first parent meeting at a fast-food restaurant.
3. Provide "Fact Cards" for parents with school name, address, phone number, name of principal, school secretary, school nurse. This could even be a refrigerator magnet!
4. Send home recorded messages in parents' own language.
5. Celebrate the birthday of an author at your center/classroom and ask parents to come and read the author's books to the class.
6. Hold a dessert night for parents and have children share stories they have written.
7. Hold a "pajama party" reading night and provide parents with books to read with their child.
8. Ask parents to volunteer a skill they can share at your center/classroom and teach the students.
9. Remember the 3 "F"s for success – Food, Families, Fun.
10. Use videos to show busy parents their children in action.
11. Hold a holiday meal as a dinner theater and have the students be the waiters. Students can also make table decorations during art time. Provide theater tickets to parents to attend.
12. Host a game night at your classroom and provide game centers for parents and children to rotate through during the night. Provide popcorn and a drink.
13. Put up parent-friendly signs at school – directing them to the office.
14. Greet visiting parents as quickly as possible – perhaps use volunteers.
15. Have children's work on display all over the center/school – every child's work, not just the work of your "future artists."

16. Train your staff in parent and family engagement.
17. Use parent advisory groups.
18. Conduct surveys to understand how your families feel about your center/school.
19. Reach out to new families-again and again.
20. Always have agendas for parent meetings.
21. Never ask parents questions where there can be wrong answers.
22. Hold several open house programs throughout the year.
23. Publish a calendar for your school.
24. Use simple evaluation forms to get parent feedback at every event.
25. Find ways to praise parents for ways they are helping their children.
26. Work with Dads and other male family members to develop and create projects that call on their special abilities; feature male speakers; proclaim specific celebrations; offer incentives (raffles, etc.).
27. Enlist parental help with developing a center/school handbook.
28. Put up a Welcome sign in every language spoken by students and parents at your center/school and get help from parents in getting the words right.
29. Take family pictures. Tell parents in advance that pictures will be taken with their child, and prepare for a crowd.
30. Present a TV workshop for parents – how to control TV/device screen time.