Family engagement for learning

Planning tool

Promising approaches

Research evidence shows these 3 approaches for engaging with families can have a measurable positive effect on student learning outcomes.

① Recognising and supporting family engagement in learning at home	Establishing	Extending	Enhancing
In my practice as a classroom teacher, I:			
a) actively seek to understand how my students' families already support their children's learning			
b) encourage my students' families to talk with their child about school and what they are learning			
c) have explicit discussions with my students' families about having high expectations for learning			
d) encourage my students' families to harness resources available in the local community that link to the school curriculum (for example, local cultural sites and outdoor environments)			
e) I have a process for introducing families to homework; and I explicitly discuss the role of families in supporting homework as per the 'Not promising' approaches.			

② Supporting two-way, positive communication and providing light touch updates about learning	Establishing	Extending	Enhancing
In my practice as a classroom teacher, I support two-way, positive communication, by:			
a) actively encouraging communication with and from my students' families			
b) drawing on the knowledge and expertise of families about students' learning needs and achievements			
c) drawing on available supports in place to help me communicate with my students' families (for example, translation services)			☐
d) ensuring my communications cater to differing levels of adult literacy			
e) consulting with my students' families about their preferred frequency, method/s, and time of day for communications.			

3 Collaboratively planning and problem-solving with families	Establishing	Extending	Enhancing
In my practice as a classroom teacher, I support a culture of listening and responding to families, by:			
a) practising the school's expectations for communicating with families			
b) finding out and using each family's preferred method/s for receiving information			
c) ensuring my students' families know what to expect from their communications with me; for example, how long it typically takes me to answer an email or phone message.			

3 Collaboratively planning and problem-solving with families (continued)	Establishing	Extending	Enhancing
In my practice as a classroom teacher, I promote collaborative planning approaches, by:			
d) having systems in place for encouraging two-way communication between myself and my students' families			
e) inviting and working together with families and their children to identify students' individual goals			
f) inviting and working together with families and their children to identify strategies to achieve students' individual goals			
g) having a system in place to communicate students' goals and successful problem-solving strategies with other school staff as students transition from one year to the next.			

'Not promising' approaches

Research evidence shows that the following approaches are risky. They may have no effect or, in some cases, even have a negative effect on secondary school students' learning outcomes. Secondray school teachers should reduce or avoid:

- relying on inviting families to activities on the school grounds
- relying on one-way communication from families
- encouraging families to monitor, assist with, or check homework.

Instead, secondary school teachers should aim to strengthen their efforts in the promising approach areas.

More details about 'promising' and 'not promising' approaches can be found in AERO's Engaging with families to support student learning in secondary school practice guide