

Early Childhood Center Family Engagement Plan

The Flour Bluff Early Childhood Center recognizes that effective school-family partnerships are critical to student learning and success in school.

Research shows that students receive the following benefits from a collaborative partnership with the school, the family and the community: higher grades and test scores, better attendance and homework completion, fewer placements in special programs, more positive attitudes and behavior, higher graduation rates and greater enrollment in post-secondary education. The gain for families includes: improved understanding of their child's development, improved ability to parent, improved ability to assist their children with school and learning, and improved relationships among all stakeholders

Definitions of Family and Family Engagement

- i) Family- adults responsible for the child's care and children in the child's life who support early learning and development of the child.
- ii) Family engagement- The mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities to build relationships to support student learning and achievement and to support family well-being and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated in the child's educational experience, supports the whole child, and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate.

1. (A) facilitate family-to-family support using strategies such as:

- (i) creating a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other in focus groups and family trainings on desired topics;
- (ii) inviting community members to participate in career days, school athlete role models, College and Military t-Shirt day; and
- (iii) opportunities for participation in events designed for families by families such as Parent Teacher Organization events, regional and state parent involvement conferences.

(B) establish a network of community resources using strategies such as:

- (i) partnering with local police and fire department and Timmon's Ministry;
- (ii) working with United Way, Workforce Solutions, Driscoll Children's Hospital, Texas A&M Agrilife extension, and South Texas Children's Home;
- (iii) establishing and maintaining partnerships with local restaurants and businesses;
- (iv) conduct a beginning of the year survey to gather input from parents.

(v) providing and facilitating referrals to family support or educational groups based on family interests and needs; and

(vi) identifying partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language;

(C) increase family participation in decision making using strategies such as:

(i) developing and supporting our Parent Teacher Organization;

(ii) developing, and implementing goals within the annual campus improvement plan targeting family engagement;

(iii) cultivating the expectation that information flows in both directions by using campus newsletter, campus webpages, cell phone text reminders, school webpage;

(iv) developing, in collaboration with families ways to assess progress in their child's learning;

(v) families will have an opportunity to provide information about their child's interest through surveys/conversations and staff will provide timely information about the schools programs and services; and

(vi) using appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather family feedback on the family engagement plan;

(D) equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning using strategies such as:

(i) inviting families to participate in family math and reading nights, ESL parent classes, resource fair, Sneak Peek, Harte Library activities, presentations by personnel related to age appropriate developmental expectations;

(ii) providing families with information through literature and online technology, parent/family-teacher conferences about creating a home learning environment;

(iii) equipping families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offering opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the prekindergarten school year; and

(ix) assisting families to implement best practices that will help achieve the goals and objectives identified to meet the needs of the child and family;

(E) develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks using strategies such as:

(i) providing essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, through attending conferences, in-services, online webinar's and trainings;

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(ii) assisting staff to develop skills in analyzing assessment data to promote student achievement;

(iii) developing staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies; and

(F) evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement using strategies such as:

(i) conducting goal-oriented home visits as needed to identify strengths, interests, and needs;

(ii) developing data collection systems to monitor family engagement and focusing on engagement of families from specific populations to narrow the achievement gap;

(iii) using surveys, technology applications and focus groups to ensure and promote continuous family engagement;

(iv) ensuring teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process.