Slide 1

Family Partnerships for Whole Child Development and Learning

Kindergarten - Third Grade

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Slide 2

Objectives

- Examine what family partnerships look like and why they are important
- Discuss existing barriers to family partnerships
- Learn practical strategies for developing and supporting strong family partnerships
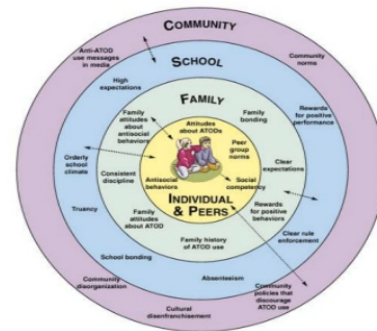- Share resources and ideas

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Slide 3

Think about…

Think about an interaction or conversation you've had with a student's family.

How has that interaction impacted your career/attitude/beliefs about family partnerships?

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Slide 4

Bronfenbrenner's actual representation of his Ecological Theory

Based on Bronfenbrenner, U. 1979. *The Ecology of Human Development.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

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Slide 5

Start with this premise…

"All families, no matter what their income, race, education, language, or culture, want their children to do well in school— and can make an important contribution to their children's learning."

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Slide 6

Core Beliefs

- All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them
- All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning
- Parents and school staff should be equal partners
- The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders

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Families bring knowledge about:

- their child

- their culture and values

- their understanding of the community

- their own interests, accomplishments, and skills

- their needs, resources, and strengths

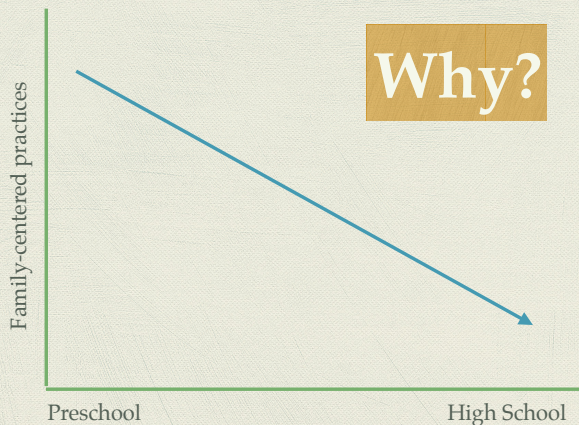- ideas about how to improve student achievement

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Aha moment!

"Teachers are the experts in pedagogy, but families are one hundred percent the experts in their children."

-Kristin Ehrgood, Flamboyan Foundation

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Why?

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Families want to be involved!

(Christenson, Hurley, Sheridan, and Fenstermacher, 1997)

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But...

- Three things influence parents' choices about being involved in their child's education:

  - How parents see and develop their job description as a parent

  - How confident they feel about their ability to help their child

  - Whether they feel invited (by their child and the school)

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Teachers think family partnerships are important too!

(The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Collaborating for Student Success, 2009)

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Family-School Partnerships defined

- working together to support children's learning

- mutual effort toward shared goals

- shared responsibility and shared power for supporting students as learners

- recognizes and validates the essential role of families AND educators

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Family-School Partnerships defined

- pervasive attitude and belief held by professionals

- proactive approach

- steady, intentional practices

- should span a child's educational career

- should be a norm in schools

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Family-School Partnerships defined

- families are **KEY** team members who have valuable information to share

- educators recognize family as point of contact when addressing children's needs

- More than parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and bake sales

- appropriate for **ALL** families

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Family-School Partnerships defined

- "family partnership" and "family involvement" are **NOT** the same thing

- **Goal**: to maximize positive and healthy outcomes for children

- **system-wide** effort involving principals, teachers, classroom assistants, etc.

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Aha moment!

"You have to meet parents where they are, not where you think they should be."

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Four Versions of Partnership

- Partnership School

- Open-Door School

- Come-if-We-Call School

- Fortress School

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Mind Shift

Lopsided relationships

"Have your children follow my directions about their homework and other assignments."

Mutual relationships

"Here are some ways to monitor your children's homework & build their skills. Tell us what else you do to help your child."

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Turn & Talk

- Finish these sentence stems:

  - One thing my school/organization does to promote family-school partnerships is _____.

  - One way my school/organization could improve in this area is _____.

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Benefits of family-school partnerships

- improved student achievement

- decreased discipline issues

- improved parent-child relationships

- improved teacher-child relationships

- parents support schools & bond issues

- increased understanding & trust

- more homework completion & higher quality homework

- positive attitudes toward school & better attendance

- improved teacher morale

- continuity in programs

- parents become more confident and knowledgeable about how to help their child learn

- stronger school performance

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Benefits of family-school partnerships

- Study of Title I elementary schools found that teacher outreach to parents improved student performance in reading and math.

- Teacher actions linked to improved student performance:

  - Meeting face-to-face with each family at the beginning of the year

  - Sending families materials each week on ways to help their children at home

  - Calling routinely with news about how their children were doing, not just when there was a problem.

  (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Why are family partnerships important?

- families are the **stable connection** for children

- families have the **greatest impact** on a child's growth and development over time and across child's educational career

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1 year = 8760 hours

approx. 1,300 hours

7,460 hours

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Why are family partnerships important?

- school and home reciprocally influence each other and determine the path a child's development takes

- consistent messages between school and home can reduce barriers students face, especially when there are cultural or ethnic differences

- mentioned in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) & Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Aha moment!

"Every family functions as a home learning environment, regardless of its structure, economic level, or ethnic and cultural background. Consequently, **every** family has the potential to support and improve the academic achievement of its children."

(Moles & D'Angelo, 1993)

Barriers

- Hard-to-reach families

- lack of time and energy

- economic constraints

- lack of transportation

- lack of child care

- language & communication

- diverse linguistic and cultural practices

- work schedules

Barriers

- parents' negative school experiences

- fear, frustration, or anxiety

- parents' mistrust of educational system

- "difficult" parents

- parents' lack of knowledge or "cultural capital"

- staff beliefs and attitudes

- lack of staff training

- no school policy

So what do we do about it?

- Schools are responsible for reducing barriers and creating:

  - framework

  - attitudes

  - climate

- Quantity **AND** quality matter

- Think in innovative and nontraditional ways

- **Disclaimer**: It will take time, possibly up to five years

Aha moment!

Dauber and Epstein found that *how schools reach out to families* is a more important determinant of parent participation in education than parents' educational, socioeconomic, or ethnic backgrounds (1993).

Practical Applications

So what can we do **_tomorrow_**???

Create an Action Team

- Potential members: teachers, social workers, counselors, school psychologists, administrators, parents, students, community representatives

- appoint a leader

- efforts should be well planned, goal oriented, and carefully executed

- collect data

Potential Team Responsibilities

- create a guiding philosophy

- assess and identify student, family, and school needs, strengths, and priorities

- address obstacles and barriers

- identify resources

- develop an ACTION plan and create committees

- monitor implementation of the action plan and its impact on student, family, and school outcomes

- set ground rules for family involvement

Answer these questions...

- "What do we **believe** and **value** about parent engagement?"

- "What school variables affect the degree to which a family-centered approach is fostered within educational settings?"

- "What might a school look like that has created a **genuine** culture of school-family-community partnership?"

Conduct building walk-throughs

- **Sample questions**: (☐ Already doing this ☐ Could do this easily ☐This will take time ☐ This will be hard)

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

  - All programs and activities for families focus on student achievement- they help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards.

  - Families are involved in planning how they would like to be involved at the school.

  - School committees and the PTA/PTO reflect the diversity of the school community and actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds.

  - Families and staff have opportunities to learn together how to collaborate to improve student achievement.

    (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

Conduct family/staff surveys

- examine school beliefs/school climate/ hidden rules

- Ask families what they want FOR their child, what they need FROM the school, and what they want FOR the school

- conduct a homework survey

Sample Homework Survey Questions

- Is a parent home after school?

- Do you have a set time for homework?

- Is homework done in the same place every day?

- How many times do you have to tell your children to do their homework?

- How do you know when your children have homework?

- What do you need to help your children with their homework?
  (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Staff trainings

- "Just Do It" doesn't work

- 31% of new teachers rated engaging and working with parents as their greatest challenge

- 24% of new teachers felt they were not prepared to engage families in supporting their child's education

- 20% of new teachers describe their relationship with their students' parents as very or somewhat unsatisfying

  - (From MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships, 2004-2005)

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Re-think School Events

- break down big events into smaller events

- grade-level breakfasts/dinners

- class meetings with families

- 4-6 week orientation program for new parents before school starts

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How inclined would you be to come to a school event if you…

- Had three young children and no child care?

- Did not have a car or money for public transportation?

- Did not speak English and were pretty sure there would not be an interpreter?

- Had been ignored or treated rudely by a school staff member?

- Did poorly in school yourself and think your child's problems are your fault?

- Saw the PTA as an "in-crowd" that ignores people who don't dress a certain way or live in a certain area?
  (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Aha moment!

"To help their kids at home, parents need to know what's going on at school."

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

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Communication Strategies

- parents should know what their child is learning, whether that learning is on track, and how they can work *with* the teacher to help their child succeed

- be proactive

- set the tone for parent-educator meetings

- good news phone calls, postcards, or emails

- electronic newsletters, social media accounts

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Ask yourself…

- What information would I want to hear from the teacher at the beginning of the year?

- How and when would I want to be approached about a problem?

- How would I want to be spoken to? How would I want to be heard?

- Would I like to hear from the teacher when my child is doing well or only when there is a problem?

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Family Survey - 2nd grade

Please complete this survey so we can learn more about your child and family. Thank you!

What does your child like to do in his/her spare time?

Your answer

What are your child's strengths?

Your answer

How many siblings does your child have?

○ 0
○ 1
○ 2
○ 3+

SUBMIT

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Kindergarten family contact log

	Student name	Teacher	Date of contact	Type of contact	Brief description of contact
1	Student name	Teacher	Date of contact	Type of contact	Brief description of contact
2					
3	Sanchez, Sean	Mrs. Apple	4/25/2016	phone call	Called Sean's dad to report incident on the playground
4	Sanchez, Sean	Mr. Orange	5/4/2016	in person	Saw Sean's mom at pick-up and asked family to come for a SAT meeting

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Enhance families' confidence & skills

- support to families may be provided in three forms: informational, material, and emotional

- trainings/workshops/classes

- help families learn skills to be:

  - advocates & problem-solvers

  - members of school/district teams

  - leaders of school teams and committees

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Possible parent training topics

- what their children are learning/doing in school

- how to enhance the degree to which the home is a positive learning environment

- how to have productive meetings with teachers, including good questions to ask

- general strategies for how parents can support and reinforce learning at home

- specific learning activities linked to curriculum

- ideas for how to talk to children about goals and dreams

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Re-think parent-teacher conferences

- Conduct a survey to gather data about conferences and talk about ways to improve

- Hold student-led conferences

- Provide parents AND teachers with sample questions to ask/topics to discuss

- Hold a workshop about asking good questions

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Re-think parent-teacher conferences

- Create an "education checkup card"

- Use a "round robin" approach where teacher speaks last

- Engage in shared goal setting

- Videotape conferences, show to teachers, and provide feedback

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Home Visits

- gain parents' trust, build rapport, provide information

- an investment in families and community

- especially helpful if parents are reluctant or unable to come to school

- can increase participation at home and school

- rapport built can make tough conversations easier

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Home Visits

- Study comparing students who received home visits during 12-13 school year with similar group from same school who did not receive home visits

  - Visited children ➡ absent 2.7 fewer days than children who did not receive visits (24% reduction in absences)

  - Visited children ➡ higher odds of scoring proficient on a reading comprehension test

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Home Visits

"I don't think you can quantify it and tie it to an assessment, but the visit changes the dynamic. Parents feel comfortable sharing information about traumas that might be haunting their children. Children open up to a teacher who has seen their bedroom or patted their dog."

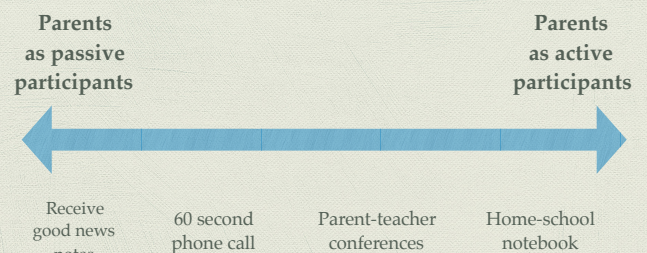-Jennifer Thomas, Principal, Hearst Elementary

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Home Visit Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEn06v3Pl_4#action=share

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Create a Continuum of Involvement

Reporting Student's Progress

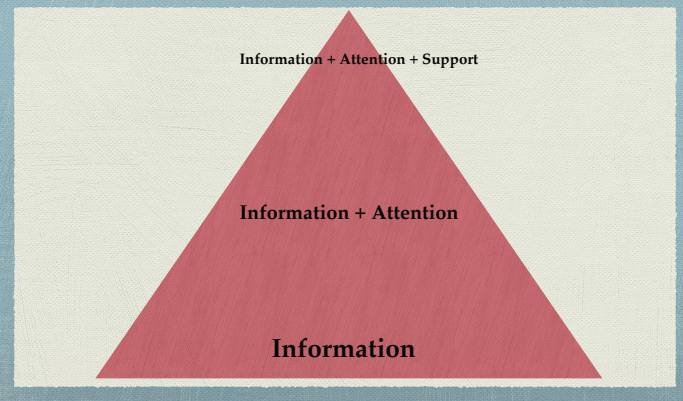**Parents as passive participants**   **Parents as active participants**

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Receive good news notes   60 second phone call   Parent-teacher conferences   Home-school notebook

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Sample Continuum of Involvement

Parent Education

Parents as passive participants			**Parents as active participants**

←———————————————————————→

| Check parent bulletin board | Attend open-house | Read materials / lending program | Participate in workshop or course |
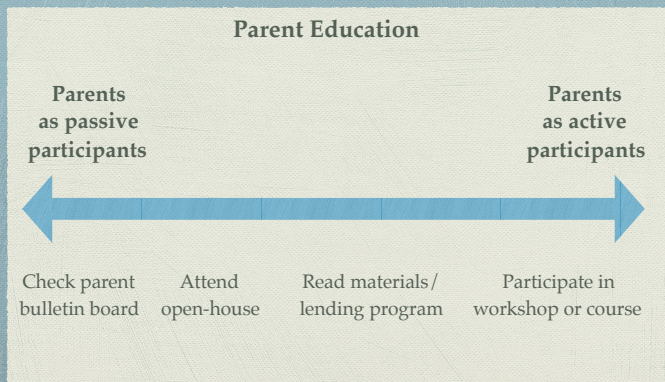
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Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Information + Attention + Support

Information + Attention

Information

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MTSS

- Strategies for <u>all</u> families: school or classroom newsletters, website, back-to-school night, positive notes home, assignment notebooks

- Strategies for <u>targeted</u> families: attend to particular constraints through parent education and training

- Strategies for <u>intensive</u> families: more individualized, extensive, ongoing support through use of personal contact (i.e. home visits, phone calls, conjoint consultation, use of a case manager)

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Think about technology…

- Parents' attitudes about technology matter

- Promote joint media engagement (JME)

- Families' relationships with school staff are critical to how they integrate technology at home

- Involve parents on technology teams and seek input before adopting new technology

- Technology training for parents BEFORE students get devices

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Miscellaneous strategies

- Design learning opportunities that require children to talk to someone at home

- Ensure your school's parent group (i.e. PTA) is inclusive and reflects school population

- Encourage parents to be advocates

- Never ignore parents' disengagement

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Advertise and promote your brand!

- Mission statement
  - Sample from Boston Public Schools: "To create a *culture of partnership* in the district among schools, families, and community members that supports high standards and quality educational outcomes for all students."

- article in newsletter

- use of social media

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Delve & Dialogue

In our school/organization, who are the families who are the hardest to reach? How might <u>more</u> families, <u>different</u> families, or **_all_** families be involved, engaged, and better informed?

Powerful Quotes

"We didn't know we were supposed to check homework. Tell us how to do it and what to look for. Explain what the teacher wants."

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

Powerful Quotes

"For a district to be serious about closing the achievement gap, it will also have to be serious about closing the gap between Fortress Schools and Partnership Schools."

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

Final thoughts…

- Be positive, sensitive, friendly, empathetic, and understanding.

- We need to *invite* families, *inform* families, *be informed* by families, and *include* families in decisions.

Resources

- CASEL SEL Parent Packet: Ideas and Tools for Working with Parents and Families
- The Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL)
- *Culturally Responsive Parent Involvement: Concrete Understandings and Basic Strategies*
- Families and Schools Together (FAST)
- Flamboyan Foundation
- Florida Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

Resources

- National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins
  - Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS)
- National PTA
- Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3)
- The Parent Institute
- *School Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action (Second Edition)*
- Student-Led Conferences handbook
- Tellin' Stories Project of Teaching for Change
- U.S. Department of Education's framework for family-school partnerships

One blindingly bright afternoon, I accompanied Ms. Ghalambor to the home of 8th grader Yoveli Rosas— Ghalambor's student the previous year. Ghalambor said she was drawn to the girl by her silence the previous year— a child who was years behind in reading skills but too shy to reach. After that year's home visit, the transition in the class was incredible, Ghalambor said. "I know there's no scientific basis, but the very next day you could see the change. I could tell she knew I cared.

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At this latest visit, the talk meandered from Christmas customs to pimples to bedtimes to Yoveli's concerns about drugs in the neighborhood. The family's pet chicks and pumpkins from the garden were passed around. Josefina Rosas, Yoveli's mother, offered to bring tamales to the school's Heritage Festival, and promised that her husband, a landscaper, would attend a meeting about the upcoming class trip to D.C.

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Finally, Ghalambor asked Yoveli's mother about her hopes and dreams for Yoveli. To go further in school than she and her husband had so Yoveli will "have more chances." Yoveli, whose reading has improved, but still lags, had a more immediate goal: to read a 300-page book. "You remember last year when you came, the bookshelf was half full?" she reminded Ghalambor gaily. **"This year it's overflowing."**

Kronholz, J. (2016). Teacher home visits: School-family partnerships foster student success. Education Next. Retrieved from http://www.educationnext.org.

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Thank you!

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