

TATS eUpdate
Family Involvement

Family Involvement in Pre-K

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Numerous research studies provide powerful evidence of the relationship between parent involvement and student performance. This research has found that the extent to which the family is able to become involved in a child's education is an accurate predictor of a child's achievement. Close collaborative relationships between parents and professionals increase family participation and provide support for both parents and professionals.

Best Practice:

Who defines involvement when we are working together with families? What does it look like? Families may define involvement very differently than teachers. Even though families may not attend school functions, they may consider that they are involved. Single parent families or families in which both parents work will have a difficult time participating in traditional activities such as volunteering in the classroom and attending school functions. If team meetings are not scheduled at times convenient to families, involvement is compromised as families are forced to choose between the economics of having to take time off from work and supporting the needs of their child. Creative ways to support family involvement include:

- encouraging families to work with their children at home on material that is mutually agreed upon between families and teachers
- communication via electronic mail or notebooks to assist family/teacher collaboration
- meetings between families and teachers or phone calls to families during convenient times

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (1999) provides some alternative ways families can be involved in the work of the school:

- Read together to help children see the value of reading. Read anything – cereal boxes, instruction manuals, newspapers, magazines, menus, road signs, etc.
- Provide structure by reinforcing family routines involving homework, meals, and a regular bedtime.
- Monitor the use of television by deciding what to watch and how much to watch. Discuss what is seen by the child.
- Be knowledgeable of activities or routines in school by keeping in touch with teachers and school staff.
- Praise and encourage children. Help them become successful, confident learners.

However families become involved in schools, building collaborative relationships with teachers is the key to continued involvement, resulting in increased achievement for their children. The eUpdate on Communicating and Building Partnerships with Families explores the importance of relationship building.

Reflections:

1. How are families involved your district/program activities?
2. How are staff supported in reaching out and communicating with families?

“Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family. Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.” – Jane Howard

References and Resources:

Ammon, MS, Chrispeels, J., Safran, D., Sandy, M.V., Dear, J., & Reyes, M. (2000). *Preparing Educators for Partnerships with Families. Report of the advisory task force on educator preparation for parent involvement.* Sacramento, California Commission on Teaching Credentialing. ERIC Document Reproduction Services Ed. 437369.

Beach Center on Disability Research and Training Center.
One area of research under the Family section includes Family and Professional Partnerships and links to other sites. www.beachcenter.org

Blue-Banning, M., Summers, J., Frankland, H. C., Nelson, L., & Beegle, G. (2004) Dimensions of family and professional partnerships: Constructive guidelines for collaboration. *Exceptional Children*, 70(2), 167-184.

Burts, D.C., & Dever, M.T. (2001). Engaging teacher education students in an authentic parent education project. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 22, 59-62.

Christenson, S. L. (2001). *Parent-teacher partnerships: Creating essential connections for children's reading and learning.* University of Minnesota.

Christenson, S. L., & Sheridan, S. M. (2001). *Schools and families: Creating essential connections for learning.* New York: Guilford Press

Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center
Information on increasing 'parent participation in schools by helping parents develop their leadership skills and preparing educators for parent involvement in their classrooms'; tips for educators and other parent professionals on how to include parents in their work; the latest in parent involvement research. <http://www.cpirc.org>

Epstein, J.L. (2001). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)

Part of the Harvard Family Research Project. Focus on family, school and community partnerships. Current information and resources on school/teacher/family partnerships is available through their resource link. <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine.html>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1999). Building parent-teacher partnerships. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved February 16, 2007, from <http://www.naeyc.org/ece/1999/02.asp>

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

Information on the involvement of parents and families in their children's education, and fostering relationships between home, school, and community. Has current information on the No Child Left Behind Act and a section on disabilities education.

<http://www.ncpie.org>

National Network of Partnership Schools

Brings together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships. Based on the work of Joyce Epstein. <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000>

National Parent Teacher Association (NPTA)

Purpose of the NPTA is to encourage parent and public involvement in public schools. The Parent Resources section of the National Parent Teacher Association website provides helpful suggestions for parents.

http://www.pta.org/pr_category_details_1116956535484.html

Technical Assistance and Training System (TATS)

Statewide project providing technical assistance and training to programs in Florida serving prekindergarten children with disabilities. Website provides information and resources on curriculum and instruction, evaluation and assessment, family involvement, inclusion, program effectiveness/quality, and transition, as well as, linking early childhood partners. www.tats.ucf.edu

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Erwin, E. Soodak, L. (2006). *Families, Professionals, and Exceptionalities: Positive Outcomes Through Partnership and Trust 5th Edition*. Merrill Prentice Hall, Saddle River, New Jersey.



TATS eUpdates are a service of the Technical Assistance & Training System Communities of Practice. The TATS eUpdates are intended to provide current information related to best practices or trends in the education of young children with special needs in the areas of Transition, Program Effectiveness, Inclusion, Curriculum & Instruction, Evaluation & Assessment, and Family Involvement. For more information about the TATS Communities of Practices and the TATS eUpdates, please log on to <http://www.tats.ucf.edu/practice.php>.