

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Implementation**

**Guide**



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# **A picture containing text, clipart, table  Description automatically generatedIcon  Description automatically generated with medium confidenceA picture containing clipart  Description automatically generatedIntroduction**

###

### Children have stronger language and literacy skills when they have opportunities, both at home and school, to develop those skills. Many research studies have indicated that this is true regardless of family background. Unlike instruction provided at school, at home children learn on their parent’s laps, in conversation at mealtimes, on daily walks with siblings and friends, on vacations, being rocked to sleep with a lullaby, while shopping, and from hearing and sharing family history and language. Schools encourage and equip families with ideas and practices for supporting language and literacy development in their home and community. Schools also have much to learn from families that would strengthen the instruction and services of the school. Too often this sharing of knowledge happens only in some classrooms, in some schools, or for some families. Partnerships for Literacy helps schools move from some to all, creating more equitable, multi-tiered, systemic supports for partnering with families in the development of their children’s early language and literacy skills.

### **The Process**

Using this Partnerships for Literacy implementation guide, elementary schools develop a core team of parents/caregivers and school personnel, who together create continuity from school to home for students and families, develop relationships with community partners to support early literacy, and systematically implement effective family and community engagement schoolwide.

The tools included in this implementation guide are provided for a coach or school leader who facilitates and supports schools to have focused leadership discussions, form a team, complete an inventory of practices, and implement and track action steps.

Attention is given to developing knowledge, skills and attitudes supporting meaningful and effective partnership between teachers and families of students with disabilities, English Learners, and families living in poverty. The intended result is improved home and school supports and resources for language and literacy development for young students through:

* the implementation of a locally developed plan, aligned with the school’s reading plan and linking to community resources,
* a sustainable, representative, family-teacher team that is linked to the school’s Building Leadership Team and focused on the needs of all families through family and community engagement practices, and
* teachers who practice more effective family engagement.

### **The Content: Three Areas of Family Engagement for Early Language and Literacy**

Partnerships for Literacy focuses on improvements in (1) **Communication** with Families about Literacy, (2) Supporting Language and Literacy **Learning at Home**, and (3) **Community Partnerships** for Literacy. Researchers at The Ohio State University developed Partnerships for Literacy based on current research on effective ways that schools partner with families and community partners to support language and literacy for children.

### **Partnerships for Literacy Connects the Dots**

The Partnerships for Literacy process and tools have been created to align with other important education initiatives. It is not another program to add on to others in the school. Instead, it is a systematic process for schools to implement family engagement consistent with Federal/Title I expectations. Partnerships for Literacy expands and strengthens shared leadership to include families. It also helps schools dig deep to evaluate their school-level family engagement supports for literacy instruction.

* **Partnerships for Literacy Aligns with:**

**School Improvement Processes:**

* + Shared leadership that includes families
	+ Two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders
	+ A focused plan with adult implementation indicators, strategies, and action steps
	+ Building and Teacher teams who make date-driven decisions and coordinate to provide school-wide instructional supports for all students.

**Best Practices for Reading Skill Development and Reading Interventions:**

* + School leadership provides updates on student reading performance to stakeholders, including families
	+ School notifies families about intervention plans for their child
	+ School invites families to collaborate on intervention plans for their child

**The School’s Expectations of Teachers:**

* + Clear and effective communication with families
	+ Shared responsibility with parents/caregivers to support student learning
* **Partnerships for Literacy Helps Schools Meet Federal, Title 1 Family Engagement Expectations.**

**For example:**

* + Regular, two-way, meaningful communication in language families understand.
* Document family engagement activities. Collect feedback from families on engagement strategies. Involve families in planning, review, and improvement of the school-wide program. Disseminate best practices on family engagement, especially for disadvantaged families. Evaluate family engagement plan annually with a team including family representation.
* Offer family engagement professional development for school personnel.
* Programs that reach families at home, school or in community, including family members with disabilities, non-English speaking, & migrant families.
* Integrate other federal, state and local programs. Collaborate with employers/community organizations to increase family engagement.
* Assist parents/caregivers with how to monitor a child’s progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. Offer a flexible number of activities at convenient times for families.
* Provide materials and training to help parents/caregivers work with their children to improve their children’s achievement, such as literacy training.
* Develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how families, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement.

#

# **Roadmap for Schools**

The following is a suggested timeline of activities to implement Partnerships for Literacy for two+ years. The timeline can be shortened or lengthened as needed. The intent is that the practices established in this timeframe become “how business is done” and continue to mature and grow through the sustained implementation.

**Step 1: Prepare your School: August – December of Year 1 of Implementation**

* Schools begin by identifying a skilled coach or school leader to guide the Partnerships for Literacy process.
* Coach meets with the school leadership team to review the whole Partnerships for Literacy timeline and steps, and determine if the school is prepared to implement Partnerships for Literacy this school year.
* Once the school’s leadership team has committed to the process, the coach arranges to meet to complete 4 *focused discussions* between August – December. It is recommended that there are 4 conversations, but some schools have combined the conversations into 2 or 3 meetings, instead of 4.

**Step 2: Build a Team: January – February of Year 1 of Implementation**

* Coach guides the school’s leadership through *Building a Team* (using the guide provided).
* The school arranges a time for the newly formed team to meet, sends out personal invitations, and ensures that any barriers to participation are removed/reduced for families and school staff.

**Step 3: Inventory Practices: March – April of Year 1 of Implementation**

* The Partnerships for Literacy Team meets, gets to know each other, and spends 2-4 meetings completing the *Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory* (using the inventory provided). This becomes the school’s baseline, and each year this process is completed, the school can compare to the prior year’s inventory results.
* In some schools, the coach plays a very active role in guiding the team through these early meetings. In other schools, the school leaders or another appointed team member will take on more of a facilitator’s role, leaving the coach to do more observing and reflecting for the team.

**Step 4: Create/Redesign Action Steps: April - June of Year 1 of Implementation**

* The Partnerships for Literacy Team meets to set priorities and create their *Action Steps* (using the guide provided). The team decides when to begin implementation of their steps. As a team, be sure to celebrate your progress. As a school and community, you now have a team with family voice making decisions that will support literacy!
* The coach and the school leader complete the provided *Coaching Service Delivery Plan*.

**Step 5: Implement and Track: June of Year 1 of Implementation – December of Year 2 of Implementation**

* The Partnerships for Literacy team agrees on a regular meeting schedule. It is recommended that teams meet monthly or every other month. The team’s role shifts to one that oversees and reviews information about how implementation is going at the school. For some teams or members on the team, they will also be directly responsible for implementing the action steps. It depends on what the action steps are.
* The coach ensures that the team stays focused on their priorities, and on track for the year. This may involve additional meetings with the school leader and/or teachers/staff to understand and reduce barriers to progress.
* The Partnerships for Literacy team may have lost members, in which case new members should be invited to be on the team.

**Step 6: Review and Re-inventory Practices, Celebrate Successes: January - June of Year 2 of Implementation**

* While continuing implementation at the school, the team reviews their current action steps, assembles data on what is working and what is not working well.
* The team completes the *Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory* for the second time, and discusses successes, challenges, and changes from Year 1, and assigns a new set of priorities for the new school year.
* At this point, it is a great idea to celebrate the successes of the year with anyone involved with developing or implementing the action steps. Be sure to include families in the celebration. Share the hopes for the coming year!

**Step 7: Sustain Partnerships for Literacy: Year 2 and beyond.**

* This process can be sustained for many years to come at little to no cost and many potential benefits for schools, families, and communities.
* If the school has an external coach, the coach and school leader now determine a long-term strategy for the school’s coaching needs. They may be able to meet less often or not at all.

#

# **Step 1: Prepare your School**

## **Purpose and Objectives**

Step 1 includes four conversation topics that the designated coach or school leader can have with the school’s existing leadership team. These conversations provide school leadership teams with the opportunity to have facilitated discussions about their school-wide family engagement practices and to prepare for the more robust and ongoing Partnerships for Literacy team planning process. It is intended to be a “pre-thinking” time for school teams - setting aside some time to think about family engagement and literacy and about new possibilities. It is not meant to be an overly formal process, but rather a time to pause and think together before jumping in. The number of discussions (four) is not set in stone. School leadership teams should use the resources in this guide, the facilitation support of their coach, and their time in the way that suits their needs to complete the pre-thinking discussions. After each of the four conversations, you (coach/ school leader) can keep track of how the conversation went using our “Evaluating Step 1” handout at the end of this implementation guide.

## **Getting Started with Focused Discussions**

The coach can begin the process of Partnerships for Literacy by meeting with the school’s leader to describe Partnerships for Literacy and the coach’s role in supporting the leader and process.

School leaders should determine:

1. What current or new leadership team in the school will meet to have four, facilitated discussions to do pre-thinking (typically August-December)?
2. How many meetings will the group have *(four or combined discussions in fewer meetings)*? When will the group meet?
3. If the team is different than the building’s leadership team, how will the group communicate with the building’s leadership team(s)?

### **Conversation #1: Getting Started**

The purpose of the first discussion is to provide an orientation to the school team of Partnerships for Literacy and make the connection to the school’s current school-wide family engagement activities (Title I and any other activities or services that engage families).

**Objectives**

1. Provide an orientation about Partnerships for Literacy.
2. Explain the connection of Partnerships for Literacy with:
	* + Title I
		+ School Improvement Process
		+ Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (or other inventory of literacy practices)
		+ Current family engagement practices in the school

**Coaching Notes**

* *This is a whole group discussion.*
* *You’ll need:*
	+ *Partnerships for Literacy Overview handout*
	+ *Connecting Partnerships for Literacy to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/Title I)*
	+ *Optional: Roadmap for Schools (pgs 6-7)*
	+ *Optional: Snapshot of Practices*

**The Discussion – Talking Points for Coach**

* + *Welcome everyone and do introductions if needed. Explain the purpose of the meeting.*
	+ *Share handouts:*
		- *Partnerships for Literacy Overview handout*
		- *Connecting Partnerships for Literacy to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/Title I)*
		- *Optional: Roadmap for Schools*
		- *Optional: Snapshot of Practices*
* The **purpose of having Four Focused Discussions** is to provide school leadership teams with the opportunity to have facilitated, focused discussions about the school’s school-wide family engagement practices and to prepare for the Partnerships for Literacy process.
* It is intended to be a **“pre-thinking” time** for school teams. Setting aside time to think about family engagement and literacy - about what we currently do and about what is possible. It is not meant to be an overly formal process, but rather a time to pause and think together before jumping in. *The number of discussions, four, is not set in stone. School teams should use the resources in this guide, the facilitation support of their Family Engagement Lead, and their time in the way that suits their needs to complete the pre-thinking discussions.*
	+ The **purpose of this first discussion** is:
		- To understand the Partnerships for Literacy roadmap and resources in the implementation guide
		- To connect Partnerships for Literacy with the school’s Title I work, Building Leadership Teams, Teacher Teams, and the school’s overall literacy work.
	+ There are **four focused discussions,** including today. The other discussions:
		- Review the school’s current family engagement activities for supporting literacy,
		- Examine strengths and areas to grow family engagement and barriers that limit some families from participating, and
		- Prepare for recruiting a team of parents and school personnel to form a Partnerships for Literacy team, complete an inventory of current activities and opportunities, and develop and implement action steps (activities) for strengthening and expanding family engagement AND community partnerships for early literacy.
	+ ***Describe Partnerships for Literacy.***
		- ***Use the Overview Handout and possibly the Roadmap for Schools Handout***
	+ The **goal of Partnerships for Literacy** is to help schools integrate and strengthen family engagement to support early language and literacy. To build effective home-school supports.
	+ We will start by having four, focused discussions to get ready by doing some “pre-thinking.”
	+ Then, our school will **recruit families and staff** to come together for regular meetings.
	+ The school will invite families and staff to come together for regular meetings as a Partnerships for Literacy Team.
	+ At the meetings, team members will talk about what the school is currently doing to support literacy with families, and together they’ll **complete an “inventory”** of the school’s current family engagement for literacy practices.
	+ This inventory helps guide the team’s selection **of 2-3 priority areas to create action steps** (activities) to strengthen home and community supports for literacy. The activities can be included in the school’s overall improvement plan or a specific plan for literacy.
	+ School staff, families, and community partners **implement the plan**. The team continues meeting to see how the new ideas are working for the school, students, and for families. Then they will fill out the inventory again to see what progress has been made by the end of the year – and to develop a new plan for the next year.
	+ **What questions do you have so far?**
	+ The **Partnerships for Literacy Process aligns** with other work your school is doing:

**School Improvement Process:**

* + - * Shared leadership that includes families
			* Two-way communication with internal and external stakeholders.
			* A focused plan with adult implementation indicators, strategies, and action steps.
		- Building and Teacher Teams share their work and provide feedback with other teams in the school. They share data and information to communicate across teams and to parents.

**Best Practices for Reading Skill Development and Reading Interventions:**

* + - School leadership provides updates on student reading performance to stakeholders, including families.
		- School notifies families about intervention plans for their child.
		- School invites families to collaborate on intervention plans for their child.

**ESEA Title I Family Engagement (see “Connecting Partnerships for Literacy to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/Title I)” Handout)**

* + - Looking down this list of Title I family engagement activities, which one or two do you think this school is doing well? How do you know?
		- Which one or two activities are the most challenging, or need to improve the most? How do you know?
	+ The Partnerships for Literacy process aligns with your school’s Title I family engagement. When you “do” the Partnerships for Learning process - form a team, complete the inventory, and create a plan – you are completing many Title I requirements.
	1. This is a good place to start our discussions, and to stop for this meeting.
	2. **Are there any questions before we end?**
	3. *Close with setting the date and time for the next meeting.*

### **Conversation #2: Taking Stock**

The purpose of the second discussion is for the school team to do an overall assessment of family engagement activities of the school and then examine those practices through the lens of four factors of effective family engagement.

**Objectives**

* 1. Build a common understanding of all of the current activities of the school to support family engagement with a focus on activities supporting family engagement in supporting children’s language and literacy.
	2. Find opportunities within the current school family engagement activities that support home-school communication, and language and literacy at home or in the community.

**Coaching Notes**

* + *This can be done as one group, or in small groups and then reported out.*
	+ *You’ll need: chart paper and markers, white board, or other place for groups to write a list where all can see. The lists and labels the group creates at this meeting will be used at the next focused discussion.*

**The Discussion - Talking Points for Coach**

* Let’s take a look at all of the **family engagement activities we are already doing** in this school. We’ll start with brainstorming everything we can think of and write them down. Think about as many things as you can and list them. Think about school-wide activities, individual grade levels, classrooms. Be as thorough as you can. *If you have two groups, have each group report out and create one big list.*
* Now that we have our list, what do you think about it? What are commonalities or categories that you see?
* Let’s take some time to look for **four factors of effective family engagement** activities. The four factors we will consider are two-way communication between home and school, goal-oriented activities linked to student literacy, collaborating with community resources, and sustaining practices school-wide in all grades in the school. *If the group thinks of more activities they had not listed before, they may add them throughout this discussion.*
	+ First, look for activities that directly promote **two-way communication** between home and school (*you may want to have a short discussion about what “two-way communication” means to the group*);
		- Place a “**C**” next to these activities.
	+ Next, look for activities that **directly help families support their children’s developing language and literacy** skills (*you may want to have a short discussion about what “directly” means to the group*);
		- Place a “**LL**” next to these activities.
	+ Next, activities that are a collaboration between the school and a **community partner**;
		- Place a “**P**” next to these activities.
	+ And finally, look for activities that are implemented **school wide**;
		- Place a “**SW**” next to these activities
* *Wrap up your discussion by talking about what the group notices in their list of activities and labels of factors of effective practice*.
	+ Are there activities that are in none of these categories? If so, what is their purpose?
	+ Are there communication, or language and literacy activities that are not practiced school-wide?
	+ How many activities directly support literacy AND are practiced school wide?
	+ How many activities directly support two-way communication AND are practiced school wide?
	+ *What else do you notice?*
* This is a good place to start our discussions, and to stop for this meeting. We’ll use our lists of activities for the next focused discussion.
* What are our biggest take-aways from today?
* Are there any questions before we end?

**Post-Meeting Coaching Notes**

* *What did you notice about this conversation as a coach? Is the group coming from a defensive stance or ready to improve? Reflecting on the “mood in the room” will help you plan your next steps as a coach and facilitator.*
* *Save the meeting notes from this conversation for Conversation #3*

### **Conversation #3: Looking Deeper**

The purpose of the third focused discussion is for the school team to examine one of the school’s family engagement activities for which the goal is improved literacy skills for students, and consider how the activity could be expanded to reach all families.

**Objectives**

* 1. Examine the current school’s current resources or practices of family engagement to support language and literacy and identify strengths to build on, and challenges or weaknesses to address.
	2. Consider one family engagement activity intended to impact student language and literacy and examine aspects of the activity that may present barriers that limit some families from accessing this opportunity.
	3. Practice redesigning the activity to allow all or more families to have access to this opportunity for supporting their children’s learning.

**Coaching Notes**

* *This discussion can be done as one group.*
* *You’ll need: Lists of current family engagement activities from focused discussion #2, and Redesign handout (one per participant or projected for all to see).*
* *If time is short, skip straight to the 3rd bullet point below.*

**The Discussion - Talking Points for Coach**

* Looking at our list of family engagement practices that we created the last time we met, what is going well? **What are the most impactful family engagement activities** the school is doing for student language and literacy development?
	+ *List strengths and activities*
* What is (are) areas where there is room to grow? Where is the school not having the impact we intend? **What are the least impactful family engagement activities** we are doing in this school for student language and literacy development?
	+ *List opportunities for growth identified by the group.*
* Let’s **pick one activity to look at closely**. Think about what barriers there are for some families to access this opportunity because of how we have designed it and possible changes we could make to reach more families.
* *Help the group quickly select one activity to focus on such as a literacy night for families, parent-teacher conferences, books and activities sent home, etc.*
* Family engagement is not one-size-fits-all. Rather, with more choices, supports and flexibility, more families will be able to access and partner in supporting their child’s education.
* As we work through this re-design, we’ll keep in mind that more families will access opportunities to support their children’s learning if we are:
	+ encouraging and motivating
	+ present information in multiple ways
	+ flexible, giving families different options for supporting their children’s learning
* *Using the handout, talk with the group as they answer each question on the redesign handout. Help the group to keep moving through the activity so they touch on each question. If the group is having a rich, important discussion, finishing the handout is not the priority. Ask the group if they want to keep moving to consider each question, or if they want to forgo answering all questions to give more time to their current discussion.*
* What is the goal for the student? What is the goal for the family?
* Who would not have access? What barriers exist? What are some ways we could eliminate the barriers for families?
* What would motivate families to fully and gladly engage in this activity?
* Thinking creatively, how can we revive this activity for engaging the families of all students?
* What are some other ways we can communicate with families, or other opportunities we can provide to get to the same goal?
* What incentives, hooks, or attractive options can we build in to motivate families to support their child’s education and meet the intended goal?
* What options or choices do families have to act for their child's education to meet this goal?
* This is a good place to wrap up. What are our biggest take-aways from today? Are there any questions before we end?
* I know we had some great ideas today, but the reality is, we need the perspective of families to make the best improvements upon our current work. In our next conversation, we will get started with planning our Partnerships for Literacy team.

**Conversation # 4: Ready to Go**

The purpose of the fourth focused discussion is for the school team to begin preparing for the rest of the Partnerships for Literacy process, and to consider how this new or repurposed team of parents and teachers will be integrated into the current structures for shared leadership (i.e. Building Leadership Team and Teacher Based Teams). It is a good idea at this point to remind the leadership that this team could become a sustainable part of their overall school system, evolving over time to include families in decision-making on a variety of topics beyond literacy.

**Objectives**

* 1. Diagram how a Partnerships for Literacy team of parents/caregivers and teachers will interface with other leadership groups in the school (Building Leadership Team, Teacher Team, Parent-Teacher Organization, Care Team, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Team, etc.).
	2. List student data and other data that can be shared with the Partnerships for Literacy team for their planning.
	3. Consider how data will be made user-friendly and understandable to families on the Partnerships for Literacy team.
	4. Consider how the school’s focus plan and strategies will be shared in an understandable way for families and school personnel on the Partnerships for Literacy team.
	5. Describe what a representative team of families and school personnel would look like in general terms.
	6. Begin brainstorming who could be recruited for the Partnerships for Literacy team.

**Coaching Notes**

* + *This is a whole group discussion.*
	+ *You’ll need: Markers, chart paper (or some other way to record group’s ideas on the wall so all can see)*

**The Discussion – Talking Points for Coach**

* Research in the field of family engagement shows that when families and school personnel form teams and develop goal-linked, family engagement plans, and implement those plans, more families become actively engaged – even those families not previously involved.
* Our **next step as a school is to form a team of families and teachers** – a Partnerships for Literacy team *(the school may choose a different name that fits with their school and community).*
* This is an opportunity for your school to include families in your school’s shared leadership, to meet Title I requirements for family engagement – and most importantly – improve your school’s family engagement practices.
* The team provides a place for families to share their expertise and experiences, and to have a voice and ownership in decision-making and planning.
* With your Partnerships for Literacy team, your team will create a local plan to help families support early literacy and learning outside of school.
* To get ready for this team, let’s consider:
	+ **How the team will connect** with, and communicate with other leadership groups in the school, and
	+ **What data will be important to share** with this group and how we will share it to it is easily understood
* Let’s list and draw all of the current leadership groups in this school.
	+ *As the group lists the teams in the building, have one recorder draw and label a circle/square for each team in the school on a poster paper, white board, etc.*
* Now let’s show in the diagram how the different teams connect through shared members and communication feedback loops.
	+ *Draw lines (different types of lines if needed) to show the connections.*
* Now let’s add the Partnerships for Literacy team to the diagram. Do we already have a team that fills this need? How should the Partnerships for Literacy team connect and communicate with other teams?
* **The school’s Partnerships for Literacy team should be balanced.**
	+ A balanced number of teachers and parents/caregivers
	+ A group of teachers and parents who are representative of important perspectives, such as Special Education, English Language Learners, men and women, grandparents, general education, Title I Intervention, etc..
* Using the handout with the list of possible team members (within this guide, under Step 2: Build a Team), **list out the perspectives** that you feel would be important to have on a balanced team of parents and school personnel from your school. Rather than listing names, just write roles. For example, “parent of a child receiving Title I reading intervention, parent of EL student, Title I reading teacher, Special Education teacher, first and second grade parents, member of PTO.”
* If you have time, your team can start brainstorming people they can recruit for their Partnerships for Literacy Team.
* *Close*: The focused discussions we have had gave us some time to pre-think about what we are currently doing to partner with families, and what we can do in the future. The next step is bringing together a team of parents and school personnel to roll up their sleeves and get to work.
* This is a good place to wrap up. What are our biggest take-aways from today?
* Are there any questions before we end?

**Handouts and Materials**

* Markers, chart paper (or some other way to record group’s ideas on the wall so all can see)
* Under “Step 2: Build a team” within this implementation guide, have the “Members” page ready for your discussion

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#

# **Step 2: Build a Team**

**Purpose and Objectives**

This guide provides steps for establishing and growing a school team focused on family engagement. The Partnerships for Literacy team gives teachers, families, and administrators a place to work together to support literacy. The team assesses what your school is already doing to support literacy at home and in the community, and develops a plan for improving these supports so all children will develop the skills they need.

The Team provides a meaningful and targeted opportunity for your school to include families in your school leadership, meeting ESSA Title I accountabilities for partnering with families to evaluate and develop a school plan for family engagement.

The Team provides a place for families to share their expertise and experiences, and to have a voice and ownership in decision-making and planning.

The Partnerships for Literacy team also provides a place for families of children with disabilities to provide feedback, and help to improve the school’s facilitation of parent involvement (IDEA, Part C and B). Families on the team bring perspectives and knowledge that will benefit programs for their children, and for other families in their community.

As your school develops tiers of support for learning and behavior, known as a Multi-Tiered System of Supports, families are critical partners.

With your Partnerships for Literacy team you will have the experts you need; parents and caregivers, teachers and a school leader, to create a local plan to support early literacy and learning for young students.

**Getting Started**

School leaders can begin by considering who in your school and community would make the best team. It will be helpful to invite a parent/ caregiver you already have a working relationship with to co-plan the who, what, when, where, and why of this team. Together you can identify individuals who currently have experience related to your primary goals. For example, Partnerships for Literacy teams are focused on language and literacy goals, so parents/caregivers with children from a variety of literacy levels and backgrounds should be invited along with school staff and community partners with a literacy focus.

**Your Team**

Your school’s Partnerships for Literacy team should be balanced. There should be a balanced number of teachers and parents/caregivers, and a balance of diversity that represents the teachers and families of your school so that your team can create the best plan for your students. In many states, schools are required to conduct a language usage survey for every new student upon registration and to have a contact list of bilingual staff/ interpreters/ community liaisons that correspond to the language survey results. These individuals could encourage participation from families who might not otherwise step forward to participate because of language challenges.



**Non-negotiables**

1. A balanced number of teachers and parents/caregivers.
2. A group of teachers and parents/caregivers who are representative of important roles, such as Special Education, English language learners, grandparents, general education, families of students receiving reading interventions, Title I Intervention, etc.
3. The team should have racial, ethnic, gender, and language representation that is consistent with the population of the school.
4. A meeting time and place that allows the highest level of access for participants.
5. A commitment from leadership to establishing a caring, respectful, motivated, productive team.

**Members**

When identifying team members, consider the following list:

School Leadership (e.g., Principal)

Literacy coach

Literacy Intervention Specialist (Title I or other)

At least one parent/caregiver of a child with a disability. Consider including one or more parents/caregivers of children with Individualized Education Plans and or Individualized Family Service Plan.

A parent/caregiver of a child receiving a reading intervention.

At least one other parent/caregiver of a child in the school

At least one parent/caregiver of a child who is an English Learner or who has a home language other than English

School-family liaison (if applicable)

A teacher(s) providing core instruction

A teacher(s) providing supplemental literacy instruction

A community partner representative, such as a librarian

**Contact List of Potential Team Members**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Role on this Team (From list above) | Phone Number | Email |
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**Next Steps**

After answering the planning questions below, use the template on the next page to draft your invitations or create talking points for conversations. Approach the initial meeting plans with some flexibility so that parents/caregivers and teachers can make suggestions.

* Who will talk to potential members and/or send invitations and follow-up with them?
* Who will find a family-friendly meeting space?
* Who will ensure that all members have access to meeting materials and arrange for any translation and interpretation services needed?
* What are some good meeting dates and times during the school year that do not conflict with other events?

**Tentative Plans**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| # Meetings |  |
| Meeting Location(s)  |  |
| Meeting Dates  |  |

**Inviting Team Members**

School leaders extend personal invitations via phone call, email, or face to face (depending on the existing relationship) to all parents/caregivers and teachers. In addition, leaders may also ask teachers or others who have a close relationship with a parent/caregiver or teacher to also invite them. The message in short is “Your perspective and experience with our school is important and we would like to have you as a member of a Partnerships for Literacy team.” Leaders may offer to meet with parents/caregivers to set them at ease and clarify the importance of their perspectives and role on the team.

Offer to provide translation/interpretation, allow a buddy to come, etc. so parents and caregivers feel welcome and able to participate fully. If there is information that will be helpful for team members to understand to fully participate in the meetings and planning, take time to provide that information for team members to read (view on video, listen to recording, etc.) before the first working meeting. If there are parent/caregiver representatives who are still learning English, explain the ways the school will ensure that they will have full access to meeting materials (e.g., translation of documents and interpretation during the meetings).

**Sample Invitation Letter/Conversation Starter/Email for Parents/Caregivers**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

 I am inviting you to join a new Partnerships for Literacy Team for our school. The purpose of the team is to improve our partnerships with parents/caregivers and our community to support children as they are learning to read. You were selected because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., your son’s classroom teacher/case manager/guidance counselor, etc.) thought you would bring a valuable perspective based on your experiences with the school. We want to hear what you think and to have your ideas for how we can improve. The team will meet for about one hour (on date and time). Following that, the team will meet together \_\_\_\_(#) times this year to share ideas, and make a plan for improving our school’s family engagement. We will be keeping the team going next year too.

Please RSVP to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ if you have any questions.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Follow-up Note for Parents/Caregivers**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for joining our Partnerships for Literacy team. As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mentioned to you [when you spoke/on the telephone/in the email], there will be \_\_\_\_ (#) meetings on these dates and times:

Dates: Times: Locations:

We will have refreshments and promise to start and

stop on time. Thank you for sharing your valuable time with us. If you have any questions, please call or email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# **Step 3:** **Inventory Practices**

**Purpose and Objectives**

The Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory is designed to help school teams assess their school-wide, multi-tiered practices supporting family and community engagement for early literacy. Using this tool, teams assess the school’s current practices and reflect on the level of implementation and effectiveness within three areas of family and community engagement: communication, supporting literacy at home, and strategic community partnerships. Within the three sections, items are included for reflection on family engagement for children who need supplemental or intensive supports. Special attention is also given to supports for families of children who are English learners. Using the results of the inventory and other data sources, teams will develop a plan for school- and community-based strategies to build a sustained, multi-tiered system of supports for family engagement.



**Getting Started**

This inventory is intended to be completed by a team of family members, teachers, administrators, and community partners. We call this team a *Partnerships for Literacy* team, though the name of the team is not important. What *is* important is that the team includes family members who are representative of the diversity of families in your school, including families of children with disabilities, families of children receiving supplemental instruction, families who are new to the USA or who are learning English, families led by grandparents, foster parents, or parents who are in the military. It is also important that your team have teacher and administrator members who are actively working with families, and who actively implement language and literacy instruction and supports. The perspectives each family and staff member brings to the team will be critical to the validity of your Inventory data.

The inventory process will include sharing individual experiences and thoughts, group discussion, and consensus. The team members will decide together current practices that can be improved, expanded, changed, or eliminated. The goal is a plan of action steps to be implemented school-wide to support families as partners in the multi-tiered system of supports for students.

**School & Community and Home Practices**

This inventory includes research-based school, community, and home practices that support early literacy. These practices are outlined in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School & Community Practices** | **Home Practices** |
| Welcome families as partners. | Communicate high expectations for learning. |
| Promote family-friendly practices. | Make reading and other literacy-building activities enjoyable. |
| Share information and tools with families. | Visit the library and have books at home. |
| Invite families to partner in progress monitoring. | Communicate with child’s teacher. |
| Build accessible and equitable home-school partnerships. | Read stories and talk about them together; talk about letters and their sounds; draw pictures and write words and letters. |
| Enhance family partnerships for children learning English. | Use home language. |
| Individualize partnerships for meeting reading challenges. |  |
| Citations: Boone et al. (2021); Richards-Tutor et al. (2016) | Caspe & Lopez (2017) |

**Connect the Dots: Aligning this Inventory with Improvement Plans and Funds**

The inventory is not a stand-alone resource, but should be used in conjunction with student literacy progress data, school climate data, and other sources of data available to the school. It aligns with the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (which some states use), allowing school teams to go deeper in their assessment of family engagement at all three Tiers of instructional support. The inventory also provides schools that receive Title I, Title III, and I.D.E.A. funding with a tool and process for including families in evaluating and developing a school plan for engaging families.

**Directions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Select a facilitator**
 | Once a team of family members and school staff members is formed, select a facilitator who will be familiar with the inventory and will lead the team through discussions of each item.  |
| 1. **Identify and remove barriers to accessing the meetings and materials**
 | Considering the team members, determine resources your team will need to allow each team member to participate fully. This may include, but is not limited to an interpreter, a meeting location and times convenient to everyone, childcare, or transportation. If an interpreter is used, be sure to explain the role of the interpreter. For example, that the interpreter should be on the side, or “invisible” as the group communicates with the individual. The group should not talk to the interpreter.  |
| 1. **Distribute this inventory to the team**
 | Distribute this Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory to each team member or provide accessible ways for members to review the document. Depending on the team’s preference, the facilitator may read each item or allow team members to consider each item on their own. A snapshot of the inventory items is included at the end of the inventory and can be used as a handout for team members. Reading the Guiding Questions within each inventory item provides more specific practices to think about.  |
| 1. **Allow individuals time to reflect on the items**
 | As the team works through the items, team members should be given the chance to reflect on the items individually. Their responses should be based on their personal experiences and observations within the last year. |
| 1. **Rate the school’s practices on the two inventory rating scales**
 | For each item, team members should consider two ratings: first, their perspective and experience of the quality of the school’s current practices. In other words, how well does our school do this based on my experience with my classroom, my children, etc.? The second rating is a measure of how much this practice is conducted in the school. Is it practiced in every class, at every grade level, school-wide? One classroom? Not at all?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Scale 1 🡪 (Quality)** | **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **Scale 2 🡪 (Quantity)**  | **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |

 |
| 1. **Discuss as a team**
 | The facilitator will provide time for team members to discuss their individual responses with the rest of the team, citing their experience, examples, or evidence to support their selection. The facilitator should be careful to allow all members of the team to have a chance to share their perspectives. All viewpoints are important and needed. Encourage team members to take notes on their own copy, and to save it for future meetings. |
| 1. **Decide on final ratings for each item**
 | The facilitator should record the team’s responses and conduct an informal vote amongst the members to select one final rating that is agreeable for all team members.  |
| 1. **Is additional information needed?**
 | When additional information is required to inform the rating for an item, the team should record this on the inventory and determine how the information will be gathered and the person(s) responsible to do so. Additional information can be gathered from school records, meetings with parent groups or staff, etc. (See *Focused Discussions with Families* handout). |
| 1. **Reflection Questions and Planning**
 | When all items on the inventory are completed, the school team can utilize the reflection questions at the end, and then make a plan for completing Step 4 of the Partnerships for Literacy process. |

## **Family and Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory**

***Your school practices for…***

|  |
| --- |
| **Communication** |
| 1. **Families are informed about their child’s language/literacy progress in a timely manner.**

Guiding Questions* Are families informed about their child’s progress regularly? How often?
* Do teachers share information with families early in the school year about classroom language and literacy goals, how student progress will be measured, and their child’s language and literacy skills relative to grade-level standards?
* How well do families understand their child’s current status and trajectory for learning?
* Do teachers use a variety of effective communication methods (phone calls, text messages, written messages, and/or emails, communication Apps, face-to-face meetings) to share progress?
* Do families determine the preferred language and appropriate method of communication[[1]](#footnote-2)?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Examples of different formats of communication with families about child’s language and literacy progress
* Examples of classroom teacher communication
* Schedule of communication
* Family and teacher feedback about experience with information provided by teacher(s)
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **School personnel communicate and model high, positive expectations for students’ academics and behavior to families.**

Guiding Questions* Are teachers communicating to families that their involvement in their children’s language and literacy development is expected and wanted?
* Do teachers believe that all families want to help their child and are capable? Have teachers helped families understand how they can communicate high expectations to their child (i.e., Growth Mindset language)?
* Do teachers work with parents/caregivers to build their confidence and understanding about how to help their child at home?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Examples of classroom teacher communication
* Examples of whole-school communication
* Family and teacher feedback about experiences and perceptions of teacher(s) expectations for child
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Information about language and literacy sent to families from the school is understandable (e.g., 5 Areas of Literacy, standards, grade-level expectations, dyslexia).**

Guiding Questions* Have staff provided families with an accurate understanding of literacy and how core literacy instruction in the classroom supports literacy development?
* Are literacy concepts explained using visuals and understandable terminology on communication to families?
* Do teachers practice and revise their family communication methods to ensure all families can access, understand, and use the information?
* Are documents/messages translated or interpreted for families with a home language other than English, families who read braille, or families who read American Sign Language?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Recent classroom-level or school-wide documents sent to families
* Individualized Education Program (IEP) Notices
* Family feedback
* School website or individual class webpages
* Records of communication using American Sign Language or other languages
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **Communication about literacy is two-way. The school listens and learns from families, and also provides information to families.**

Guiding Questions* Are staff encouraged to have relationship-building time with families where they listen and learn about families?
* Do staff provide more than one, easily accessed format for families to provide feedback or ask questions, such as text, email, notes, or phone messages?
* Do teachers learn from families throughout the school year about their cultural or familial knowledge and skills and use this information to create appropriate and engaging literacy lessons for their students?
* Do our Building-level and Teacher-based Teams incorporate feedback from families into the school’s plans and share plans with families?
* How are teachers listening and learning from families in order to support consistency in behavioral and academic expectations between home and school?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Family and teacher feedback documentation
* School-Wide Plan
* Descriptions of school-wide family engagement practices and policies
* Structure of “Back to School” Nights, Conferences, or Open Houses (Is there time for staff to listen to families?)
* Building-level Team/Teacher-based Teams’ meeting notes
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **Families who have home languages other than English are welcomed and encouraged to share their expectations and previous school experiences. They are provided with resources and supports for communicating with the school about their child’s language and literacy development. Language diversity is valued within the school.**

Guiding Questions* What languages do families speak at home and what languages do children speak with their friends? Have families been asked about their preferred method of communication?
* Do families learning English feel welcomed and valued? Are they seen as resources for language diversity within the school community?
* Does the school have a protocol for providing interpreters and translators for meetings with parents and avoid using classmates and siblings as interpreters? Are the translation/interpretation options working for teachers and families? Are interpreters with knowledge of the special education process available for IEP meetings?
* Do families with Limited English Proficiency understand and have access to online processes, communications, and resources used by the school?
* Is there an orientation to the local school system to familiarize families who are immigrants or refugees with the system, school, and staff?
* Does the school have an English learner program and Learning Plans for English learners?
* Do the school staff reflect the diversity of the families at the school? Does the school utilize staff with bilingual skills?
* Do staff understand and share with families the [Stages of Second Language Development](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/language-acquisition-overview)?
* How do staff develop their knowledge about different languages/cultures/minority perspectives?
* Does the school incorporate and send home books in the home language of students?
* Are parent-to-parent support groups available for families learning English?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Documentation of home languages of families of this school
* Record of translation and interpretation services utilized
* Descriptions of school-wide family engagement practices and policies (e.g., family literacy projects, dual language activities, having parents or community volunteers record multilingual stories)
* Notes from staff meetings on implications of language diversity for literacy development
* Feedback from families who have a home language other than English
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **When a child needs additional supports for reading skill development or has been identified with intensive reading needs (Tier II or Tier III), families are provided with school-based intervention plans or programs (e.g., IEPs) for their child and receive more frequent communication (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) about the child’s progress. Families have the opportunity to share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s plan.**

Guiding Questions* How are families informed about important supplemental instruction supports (e.g., S.M.A.R.T. goals, the Big Ideas of reading, new ways their child’s progress is going to be monitored, and how they can encourage literacy progress at home)? How involved are families of students with intensive reading needs in planning and decision-making for their child?
* Are families of students receiving supplemental instructional services satisfied with the level of communication and support they receive? Are parents/caregivers partners on the child’s support team? Is the school’s process intimidating for families? Are there intentional practices of the school team to help the families access the meetings and information, and to feel comfortable participating?
* How involved are families of students identified as needing supplemental language and literacy supports in planning and decision-making for their child?
* Does the evaluation process include identifying perceived barriers for families to participate in the school?
* Do families perceive that they have high quality intervention choices that fit the needs of their child?
* Are all families – including families of English learners aware of the supplemental supports available? Is there a way for families to request these supports for their child? Are interpreters with knowledge of the special education process available for IEP meetings?

Possible Sources of Evidence* School-Wide Plan
* Family Feedback
* Descriptions of school-wide family engagement practices and policies
* Notes from meetings with families
* Communication examples to-from school regarding dyslexia and other literacy-related disabilities
* Family and teacher feedback about experiences
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| **Supporting Early Language and Literacy at Home** |
| 1. **Literacy-building practices are provided to families for use at home.**

Guiding Questions* How does the school promote diverse literacy practices (reading, writing, conversation, drawing) at home?
* What accommodations and adaptations are made so all families can support their child’s literacy development in a way that meets their time, knowledge, and ability?
* Do teachers share ideas with families for how they can build literacy into everyday life?
* Do teachers model practices that support the five areas of literacy for families in person, via video, print, and other means? Do families have the opportunity to try out the practice?
* Do teachers provide developmentally targeted literacy information, support, and encouragement to all families in a variety of formats (e.g., print, video, Apps, modeling skills in person)?
* Are teachers supported/encouraged to make time during events/conferences at the school to share and model fun and simple literacy activities with families?
* Is all communication about literacy practices free of literacy jargon – easily understood and family friendly?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Samples of activities provided by teachers for home use
* Family and teacher feedback
* Examples of videos, meetings, and other ways school personnel share literacy practices with families
* School-wide plan
* Descriptions of school events, meetings, on-line resources, etc. that directly support home-based language and literacy
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **Activities sent home are enjoyable for families to do together, brief, are an extension of content already learned in the classroom, and fit into the daily lives of families.**

Guiding Questions* Are activities sent home fun and engaging?
* Do staff members recognize home literacy practices other than daily book reading?
* Are they time-sensitive for families, given their busy schedules with after school activities, chores, dinnertime, sibling time, etc.?
* Are homework assignments a meaningful extension of literacy activities during school time?
* Do families get a choice of what activities they do at home?
* Is the role families have in regards to activities sent home clear? Are they expected to provide instruction? Monitor? Respond? Listen? Lead?
* Are families asked how they are already doing literacy-related activities with their child?
* Are families provided with a way to provide feedback on activities sent home? Do teachers use the feedback to improve the activities?
* Is the amount of time a family spends on activities sent home from school determined by the family?
* How do teachers ensure that activities at home do not lead to conflict between parents/caregivers and children?
* Do teachers ensure that children are not punished or held accountable if their parent/caregiver does not participate in an activity sent home?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Sample activities/assignments from teachers sent home
* Family feedback
* Teacher reflections
* School-wide policies on “homework”
* Evidence that activities sent home are supporting student literacy progress
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **The school works to ensure that each child has access to books, writing supplies, and other resources at home to support their practice and to encourage routine literacy-building activities in everyday life.**

Guiding Questions* How does the school know if families have, and know how to use, books at home?
* Is there a school-wide system for ensuring the families of all children have access to books and writing supplies every day for home use? Are books made available to children based on their identified interests and culture?
* Do teachers share and demonstrate web-based educational language and literacy resources for families in the family’s home language? Are there school-wide resources and activities that can be shared online with families?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Teacher and parent experiences
* Records of books and other resources provided to families
* School partnerships with community organizations that provide books and other literacy related materials to families in the community
* Local library reports of families accessing library resources
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **When a child is identified for a literacy-related supplemental instruction (Tier II) or intensive instructional supports (Tier III), families are provided with ideas for how to support literacy at home in conjunction with the school’s plan for the child. Families take part in developing and providing feedback about the plan as they try new strategies at home.**

Guiding Questions* How does the school inform families about their choices regarding supplemental supports? Do families with limited English have relationships with interpreters or school staff/bilingual aides?
* How do families experience IEP meetings at the school? Do they feel supported, hopeful, and empowered with ideas from the school’s literacy professionals?
* Are families empowered to try simple and fun strategies at home that are tailored to their child’s learning needs?
* Does the school learn from families about what interventions are more well received by their child?
* Does the school provide parents/caregivers with community resources and web-based resources to support their child’s specific literacy needs?
* Are families fully included as partners and experts in designing their child’s IEP?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Tier II and Tier III Policy
* Family feedback
* Sample Plan from Teachers
* Example home-based literacy and language practices
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **Families learning English are encouraged to read and create a literacy rich environment at home. They are encouraged to speak/read in their home language.**

Guiding Questions* Is shared reading in the family’s home language encouraged?
* Are books, recordings, and/or other resources in the home language provided to families? Are translated books made available for home use?
* Are families encouraged to record stories or help their children write books (perhaps using two or more languages)?
* How does the school show families that their languages and other funds of knowledge are valued?
* Does the school include bilingual staff or use interpreters at school events that EL families attend?

Possible Sources of Evidence* Teacher practices/work sent home
* English learners’ families’ feedback
* School events, communications and other practices honoring language and culture of families
* Multilingual/Multicultural school projects embedded in the curriculum
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| **School-Wide** | **Some Grade Levels** | **Some Classrooms** | **Not Yet** |
| **Strategic Community Partnerships** |
| 1. **The school has partnerships with public, non-public, and Head Start early childhood education programs to promote shared reading and early language and literacy at home. This can include preschool, childcare, or home visiting programs.**

Guiding Questions* What is in place to ensure a seamless transition for children from early childhood programs to your school? Do teachers meet together from other buildings to discuss literacy during transition times?
* How are language and literacy expectations shared with families during the early childhood years so they are prepared once they arrive at the school?
* Does the school have a family transition plan with area early childhood education providers?

Possible Sources of Evidence* List of early childhood partnerships and description of shared activities/communications
* Family feedback
* Transition plan developed by school and ECE programs
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **The school is a hub for literacy development, and brings in partnerships with community resources that support shared reading and language and literacy activities at home (e.g., afterschool programs, mentoring programs, ESL classes for families, summer programs, library, YMCA, churches, etc.).**

Guiding Questions* What current partnerships exist between the school and community resources to support language and literacy instruction or access to resources?
* Do partners have a stable point of contact at the school? Are partners aware of the literacy and language curriculum and how they can provide complementary supports?
* Are teachers/families aware of how community partner services will benefit literacy and language development? Do teachers ask families for feedback on the quality of services provided by partners? Are community services for students with dyslexia and other literacy-related disabilities identified, shared with families if applicable, and reviewed for quality?
* Does the school help families access the local public library for books, access to other media, and learning activities?
* What early literacy resources are available in the community? Where in the community could the school encounter families of young children in need of early literacy support (e.g., doctor’s offices/hospitals, bookstores/libraries, laundromats, immigrant service centers, refugee resettlement organizations, specific cultural organizations, religious organizations, health care centers)?

Possible Sources of Evidence* List of community literacy partners
* List of events/services available to families
* Community partner representative feedback
* Family feedback
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **Community partners build awareness and support for literacy in the community (literacy picnics, library events, guest-readers, etc.).**

Guiding Questions* Are community partners invited to share in the goals of advancing literacy and language development by attending school events and providing literacy-rich activities around the community?
* How are books and other literacy resources made available to families in the community? Are literacy resources available in all areas of the community?
* Are community events and supports for literacy multicultural/multilingual, incorporating the languages and culture of families in the community?

Possible Sources of Evidence* List of community literacy events
* Positive perceptions of literacy/language among staff and families
* Family feedback
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |
| 1. **The school invites families to partner with them within the walls of the school to support early literacy and language development.**

Guiding Questions* Does the school create a variety of roles that fit a wide range of adults (Grandparents, fathers, foster parents, working mothers) for parents/caregivers to support language and literacy in the school?
* Are families empowered to engage in meaningful roles within the school that support language and literacy (e.g., decision-making about programs, interpretation/translation, classroom supports, mentors, cultural informants, or readers)?

Possible Sources of Evidence* List of current roles held by families
* Teacher feedback on success/challenges associated with family roles in school/classrooms
* Family feedback on school’s communication about roles for families within the school
* Training, supervision, materials, and recognition associated with parents/caregivers who volunteer in the school
 |
| **Notes:** |
| **Rating (circle one in each row):** |
| **Well Done** | **Acceptable** | **Needs Improvement** | **Not Yet** |

# **Inventory Summary of Results**

School Name:

Date:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Communication** | **Quality**Well Done, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, or Not Yet | **Quantity**School-Wide, Some Grade Levels, Some Classrooms, or Not Yet | Is this a priority for your team? |
| Families are informed about their child’s language/literacy progress in a timely manner. |  |  |  |
| School personnel communicate and model high, positive expectations for students’ academics and behavior to families. |  |  |  |
| Information about language and literacy sent to families from the school is understandable (e.g., 5 Areas of Literacy, standards, grade-level expectations, dyslexia). |  |  |  |
| Communication about literacy is two-way. The school listens and learns from families, and also provides information to families. |  |  |  |
| Families who have home languages other than English are welcomed and encouraged to share their expectations and previous school experiences. They are provided with resources and supports for communicating with the school about their child’s language and literacy development. Language diversity is valued within the school. |  |  |  |
| When a child needs additional supports for reading skill development or has been identified with intensive reading needs (Tier II or Tier III), families are provided with school-based intervention plans or programs (e.g., IEPs) for their child and receive more frequent communication (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) about the child’s progress. Families have the opportunity to share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s plan. |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Supporting Early Language and Literacy** **at Home** | **Quality**Well Done, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, or Not Yet | **Quantity**School-Wide, Some Grade Levels, Some Classrooms, or Not Yet | Is this a priority for your team? |
| Literacy-building practices are provided to families for use at home.  |  |  |  |
| Activities sent home are enjoyable for families to do together, brief, are an extension of content already learned in the classroom, and fit into the daily lives of families. |  |  |  |
| The school works to ensure that each child has access to books, writing supplies, and other resources at home to support the child’s practice and to encourage routine literacy-building activities in everyday life.  |  |  |  |
| When a child is identified for a literacy-related supplemental instruction (Tier II) or intensive instructional supports (Tier III), families are provided with ideas for how to support literacy at home in conjunction with the school’s plan for the child. Families take part in developing and providing feedback about the plan as they try new strategies at home. |  |  |  |
| Families learning English are encouraged to read and create a literacy rich environment at home. They are encouraged to speak/read in their home language. |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strategic Community Partnerships** | **Quality**Well Done, Acceptable, Needs Improvement, or Not Yet | **Quantity**School-Wide, Some Grade Levels, Some Classrooms, or Not Yet | Is this a priority for your team? |
| The school has partnerships with public, non-public, and Head Start early childhood education programs to promote shared reading and early language and literacy at home. This can include preschool, childcare, or home visiting programs. |  |  |  |
| The school is a hub for literacy development, and brings in partnerships with community resources that support shared reading and language and literacy activities at home (e.g., afterschool programs, mentoring programs, ESL classes for families, summer programs, library, YMCA, churches, etc.). |  |  |  |
| Community partners build awareness and support for literacy in the community (e.g., literacy picnics, library events, guest-readers, etc.). |  |  |  |
| The school invites families to partner with them within the walls of the school to support early literacy and language development. |  |  |  |

# **Inventory Reflection Questions**

**The following reflection questions are intended for school teams as they consider the results of their inventory and determine priorities and action steps for strengthening family and community partnerships for supporting early literacy and language development.**

1. In what areas do you feel most successful?
2. Where is there room for growth and improvement?
3. What action steps came to mind while your team completed the inventory that you could implement in your building?
4. What further information do you need to take action in areas of growth/improvement? How can you get this information?
5. What are your next steps?

# **References**

Boone, B. J., Cunningham, P. D., Bachman, H. F., & Wellman, M. E. (2021). *Partnering with families for early language and literacy development: Research-based strategies for early childhood teachers.* 2nd Edition. Retrieved from: http://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/

Caspe, M., & Lopez, M. E. (2017). *Seven research-based ways that families promote early literacy.* Retrieved from https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Seven-Research-Based-Ways-Families-Promote-Early-Literacy

Richards-Tutor, C., Aceves, T., & Reese, L. (2016). *Evidence-based practices for English learners* (Document No. IC-18). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/

#

# **Step 4: Create/Redesign Action Steps**

# **Purpose and Objectives**

The following guidance is designed to help your Partnerships for Literacy team make a plan for partnering with all of your school’s families to support their children’s language and literacy. Ideally this is a natural complement to the school district’s overall plan for supporting students’ language and literacy development (for example, a Reading Achievement Plan).

You will start by identifying the *priority areas* that you plan to impact. Your team will then select and plan *action steps* that build the capacity of families and school personnel to work together. In addition, your team will build strategic partnerships with your community to support literacy.

The strength of any plan comes from the people who are committed to seeing it through. Your planning team needs parent/caregiver representatives amongst others as outlined in Step 2: Build a Team*.* It is important that parent/caregiver members of your family engagement team are equal partners in this planning process.

# **Steps**

1. If you have not already done so, convene your team and complete the **Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory**
2. If needed, conduct **Focused Discussions with Families** to fill in gaps in your current understanding of family and community engagement practices, strengths, and opportunities (see Handout).
3. Select priority areas using this guidance document, starting on the next page.
4. Develop your local plan with concrete action steps for strengthening your school’s family engagement and community partnerships.

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**Selecting Priority Areas**

Begin this process by determining what you know.

As a team, take a look at:

* The results of your *Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory*
* Student literacy data (formative assessments, achievement assessments, progress monitoring data)

Gather your data into one location and display it for the team. As a team, take some time to review the results.

**Discussion Questions:**

* What are the greatest areas of need based on student data?
* What are the 1-3 priority items from your Inventory that you want to work on as a team this school year (pages 27-28)? You might decide to focus your efforts for now on one area (for example, Communication) or you might decide to select one priority item from each area (for example, one item from each of: Communication, Learning at home, and Community partnerships). This is a flexible process based on your school’s goals and capacity. A ranking process can sometimes be helpful for your team as you discuss the work you will undertake this year.
* Now that you’ve identified some priority areas based on your current student and family engagement data, use the next pages to start putting on paper some potential action steps and details for each action step in your plan. You should complete one page for each priority. The action steps should be directly linked to changes that will have the impacts you want to see.
* Feeling stuck? You can find example action steps from other elementary schools at **go.osu.edu/P4L**

**Priority Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Step** | **Description***How much, how often and with whom?* | **Who will be impacted** | **How will you know if you’ve achieved success? What data will be used?** |
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**Priority Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Step** | **Description of Strategy***How much, how often and with whom?* | **Who will be impacted** | **How will you know if you’ve achieved success? What data will be used?** |
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**Priority Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ­­­­**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Step** | **Description of Strategy***How much, how often and with whom?* | **Who will be impacted** | **How will you know if you’ve achieved success? What data will be used?** |
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# **Check Your Plan**

Once you have drafted your plan using the tables above or another planning document, consider these important findings from research about effective family and community engagement strategies. Return to your plan and make improvements so that the actions planned reflect as many characteristics of effective strategies as possible.



|  |
| --- |
| * Is it clear that the cultures and values of families are understood and accounted for by this strategy?
 |
| * Are you starting your engagement strategy early enough to prevent issues and proactively address your goal?
 |
| * Is the strategy sustained over time – long enough to have the intended impact?
 |
| * Are barriers to access addressed so that all families can participate?
 |
| * Does the strategy provide for multiple ways of gaining information and multiple ways of participating for families?
 |

# **Implementation and Monitoring**

The remaining tables in this document are for ironing out the details of your plan. You can use any planning process you’d like – these tools are just provided to give you structure if you need it!

With your team, consider the tasks needed to implement your action steps.

Who is responsible for completing them? What resources (people, place, supplies, funding, etc.) do you require? What is your timeline for completion?

Use the table below, or another format you prefer, to determine the steps you need to implement the strategies you have planned.

**Tasks and Responsibilities for each Strategy**

**Priority Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Step** | **Tasks** | **Person Responsible** | **Resources** | **Timeline** |
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**Priority Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Action Step** | **Tasks** | **Person Responsible** | **Resources** | **Timeline** |
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**Priority Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Action Step** | **Tasks** | **Person Responsible** | **Resources** | **Timeline** |
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# **Evaluation and Reflection**

Complete this step after you’ve implemented aspects of your plan for a school year or term.

Monitoring the impact of implementation of your plan is another important step. Were your action steps successful? Are there refinements needed to your plan? Use the tables on the next 3 pages to review the action steps you’ve implemented under each priority area.

**Priority Area 1: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Step** | **What impact did this action step have?** | **What steps will you take to continue/improve the impact on the expected change?** (e.g. chose a different action; do more of the same action; change the target population/timing of implementation) |
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**Priority Area 2: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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| **Action Step** | **What impact did this action step have?** | **What steps will you take to continue/improve the impact on the expected change?** (e.g. chose a different action; do more of the same action; change the target population/timing of implementation) |
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**Priority Area 3: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |
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| **Action Step** | **What impact did this action step have?** | **What steps will you take to continue/improve the impact on the expected change?** (e.g. chose a different action; do more of the same action; change the target population/timing of implementation) |
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**Step 5: Implement and Track**

**Purpose and Objectives**

Most of making impactful change in a school system is not in the exciting first days of a project, but in sticking with something and giving it the time it deserves. The following guidance and resources are designed to help your Partnerships for Literacy team follow through with your plans, have efficient meetings where everyone’s voice is heard, and keep careful track of your progress over the course of the year. You already have the tools you need to succeed, now it’s about bringing those plans to life and not losing sight of your goals along the way.

In this section, we offer a sample monthly meeting agenda, sample team discussion protocols, and icebreakers.

**Getting Started**

* Agree on a regular meeting schedule. It is recommended that teams meet monthly or every other month.
* The team’s role shifts to one that oversees and reviews information about how implementation is going at the school. For some teams or members on the team, they will also be directly responsible for implementing the action steps. It depends on what the action steps are. Use our sample monthly agenda below to make sure your meetings are organized and allowing you to reach your goals.
* The coach ensures that the team stays focused on their priorities, and on track for the year. This may involve additional meetings with the school leader or others involved to understand and reduce barriers to progress.
* The Partnerships for Literacy team may have lost members due to any number of valid reasons, in which case new members should be invited to be on the team.

**Our Monthly Meeting Dates, Times, Locations**

* August \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* September \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* October \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* November \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* December \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* January \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* February \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* March \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* April \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* May \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* June \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Icebreaker 1: What do we want our meetings to look, feel, smell, and taste like?**

Use the box below or a different space/method within your meeting to brainstorm ideas to make your meetings life-giving and joyful!

**Icebreaker 2: What’s in a name?**

Have each team member share something about either their first, middle, or last name. Why did their family pick that name? Or, how does their name relate to their family history/origins?

**Protocols for Meeting Discussions**

Why use a protocol during meeting discussions with your team? Protocols encourage equitable participation by providing structures that give each team member a meaningful role and an opportunity to share ideas and feedback. Visit <https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/protocols/> to access all of these protocols online.

**Type 1: Opening/brainstorming:** Use these protocols for warming up before diving into a planning session.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Future protocol](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/future.pdf) | Look into the future to imagine the best outcome for your school. Then, brainstorm steps to get there. |
| [Realms of Concern and Influence](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/realms_concern_influence_0.pdf) | Share concerns and consider which ones your team has influence over. |
| [Ping Pong Protocol](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ping_pong.pdf) | Brainstorm about an issue or problem your team members are facing. |
| [Multiple Perspectives Protocol](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/multiple_perspectives_0.pdf) | Think about an issue from different points of view. Adapt for “What is family engagement, actually?” |
| [Barriers and Bridges](http://schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/barriers_bridges.pdf) | Brainstorm what barriers your team faces and how those can be turned into bridges. |

**Type 2: Looking at survey data:** Use these protocols to look at data objectively/methodically.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Success Analysis](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/success_ana_admin_teams_0.pdf) | Examine successful practices and reflect on what makes them so. |
| [Data Driven Dialogue](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/data_driven_dialogue_0.pdf) | Make shared meaning from data while encouraging equal voices. |
| [Data Mining Protocol](https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/data-mining-protocol/) | For use with two complementary data sets (such as family survey data and staff survey data). |
| [Looking at Data Sets](https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/looking-at-data-sets-a-collaborative-inquiry-and-problem-solving-protocol/) | Allows for sharing of initial reactions, closer examination, feedback, multiple perspectives, and synthesis. |

**Type 3: Revising and asking for feedback**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Tuning a Plan](https://nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/tuning_plan_0.pdf) | Get feedback about a set of goals and associated activities. |
| [Feedback Carousel](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/feed_back_carousel.pdf) | Get different kinds of feedback in a relatively short amount of time. |
| [Equity Protocol](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/equity_protocol.pdf)  | Examine how your plan promotes equity. (Adapt by substituting “families” for “students” in the protocol prompts.) |
| [Consultancy Protocol](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/consultancy_0.pdf) | Present a dilemma in your plan and brainstorm solutions. |
| [Charette](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/charrette_0.pdf) | A protocol in architecture, used to “kick up” the level of performance. |

**Type 4: Reflecting on the process**

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| --- | --- |
| [Process of Developing Understanding](https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/understanding_analysis_0.pdf) | Analyze how a new understanding has developed. |
| [Talking Stick Ceremony](https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/talking-stick-ceremony/) | Debrief your team’s process by using a talking stick to ensure equal voices. |
| [I used to…but now I…](https://pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/I%20Used%20to%20Think%20-%20Now%20I%20Think_1.pdf) | Each participant shares their reflections using the prompt. |
| Revisit Barriers and Bridges (link above) | After working with your team, what barriers are now bridges? |

**Sample Monthly Team Meeting Agenda**

**Ohio Elementary School**

**Partnerships for Literacy Team Meeting Agenda**

**September 22, 2023, 3:30-5:00 pm**

**Our Norms**

* Assume positive intent
* Seek to understand
* Stay on topic

**Roles**

* Notetaker: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Timekeeper: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Intended Outcomes**

* Review data on action step 1 implementation
* Assign action step 2 and break down into sub-steps

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Activity or Topic** | **Purpose** | **Decision-Making Process/Protocol** |
| 3:30-3:45 pm | **Opening*** Review agenda
* Review norms and roles
* Teambuilding activity
 | * Information sharing
* **Relationship Building**
* Learning
* Planning
* Problem Solving
 | Icebreaker protocol |
| 3:45-4:15 pm | **Data analysis*** What did we learn from implementing action step 1? What would we change for next year?
 | * Information sharing
* Relationship Building
* Learning
* Planning
* **Problem Solving**
 |  |
| 4:15-4:45 pm | **Planning Action Step 2*** Review plans
* Assign the work
* Discuss sub-steps to accomplish goals
 | * Information sharing
* Relationship Building
* Learning
* **Planning**
* Problem Solving
 |  |
| 4:45-5 pm | **Closing*** Review next steps
* Feedback on meeting from all participants
* Appreciations
 | * Information sharing
* **Relationship Building**
* Learning
* Planning
* Problem Solving
 | “I used to think \_\_\_ but now I think \_\_\_” Closing Protocol |

Credit: Agenda adapted from Exhibit 8.1 © Elena Aguilar, *The Art of Coaching Teams: Building Resilient Communities that Transform Schools.* Jossey-Bass, 2016.

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**Step 6: Review and Re-inventory Practices, Celebrate Successes**

*“Self-reflection is a humbling process. It’s essential to find out why you think, say, and do certain things – then better yourself.”*

- Sonya Teclai

**Purpose and Objectives**

Everything in life is a balance. In the process of trying out new action steps, your team will need to decide how much of your energy to put into the “doing” and how much energy to put into the “reflecting.” Both are important, and connected.

In this section, we provide an example timeline for reviewing, re-inventorying, and celebrating your work.

Take some time to adapt the timeline to meet your local timeframes, capacity, and priorities.

We also provide some ideas for celebrating your work as a community.

**Getting Started**

* Decide how you will review existing plans and renew your plans for the coming school year. A little bit each meeting? All at once at a longer end of year meeting?
* Complete the *Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory* on an annual basis in the Springtime. Discuss what has changed since the prior year. Identify your successes and challenges, and assign a new set of priorities for the new school year. Assign someone to keep a good record of your inventory discussion results.
* Celebrate the successes of the year with anyone involved with developing or implementing the action steps. Be sure to include families in the celebration. Share hopes for the coming year!
	+ Host an event, or make plenty of space within regular meetings to share these joys.

**Sample Timeline for Reviewing, Re-inventorying, and Celebrating Your Work**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Description** |
| September - March | * Collect data/evidence related to your action steps and discuss during each monthly team meeting.
* Make sure that one or more people are assigned the data collection, analysis, and reporting tasks needed to make decisions as a team.
 |
| April - June | **April/May:** Complete Step 3: Inventory Practices, with your team**May/June:** Complete Step 4: Create/Redesign Action Steps, with your team. Develop a plan for the upcoming schoolyear based on the results from the Inventory.**June:** Celebrate the work you’ve done over the course of the academic year. See ideas below. |

**Ideas for Celebrating Your Work**

Celebrating accomplishments is an important step in the cycle of group work. Consider the celebration ideas below.

* Make time during team meeting agendas to share what team members are proud of from the current year or most excited about for the year ahead.
* Develop a list of successes and talking points that can be shared by different groups across the district.
* Share successes in a newsletter sent to families and/or staff.
* Publicize accomplishments on social media or via a local news source.
* Celebrate individuals via “shout-outs”
* Hold a team celebration at a convenient time to reflect on successes. The celebration can take place on or off of school grounds, depending on the preferences of the group.

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**Step 7: Sustain Partnerships for Literacy**

**Purpose and Objectives**

The Partnerships for Literacy process can be sustained for many years to come at little to no cost and many potential benefits for schools, families, and communities. Strong, lasting programs within schools are woven throughout the fabric of the system.

What does it look like to go beyond annually working through the steps to weave this process more fully into the school system?

This can look like: a set of local communications and products memorialized on a website, a shared team expectation that the work will continue in some fashion regardless of funding or staff/family turnover, establishing more set policies about different aspects of the team’s presence and work, or ongoing professional development.

On the following pages, you will find a brief checklist of ideas to consider as you work to lead and sustain Partnerships for Literacy or other similar initiatives.

**Getting Started**

* Either as a team or individually, review and complete the sustainability checklist below.
* Then, review the big picture reflection questions and decide which ones to discuss as a school or team.
* If the school has an external coach, the coach and school leader now determine a long-term strategy for the school’s coaching needs.

**Sustainability Checklist**

* **People, Time, Resources:** The three most valuable factors to ensure program sustainability are people, time, and resources. Do you have the people in place and the responsibilities properly outlined for each team member to keep the program going? If someone from the current team were to leave, are you confident the work could continue? Is this work prioritized in a way that will ensure it can receive the time and attention required for sustainable practices well into the future? Do you have access to the resources necessary to carry this work into the future?
* **Visibility:** Is there a shared space that anyone in the district can go (like a website) to learn about the Partnerships for Literacy team and their work?
* **Documentation:** Is there a good record-keeping system for team members, and an easy way for the team to keep and share meeting notes and ongoing plans?
* **Policy:** Do we want to develop a formal or informal school policy related to our work. For example, our policy might be that we have a team with family representation that meets at least quarterly to support family engagement in early literacy.
* **Making space for team learning**: Do we onboard new members in an intentional and sufficient way? Are we taking time to learn about local, regional, and national examples of effective family engagement in early literacy?

**Big Picture Reflection Questions**

In addition to the reflection questions provided in the Action Steps section, which assist educators in processing through the results of the Family & Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory, consider the following questions, and discuss one or more of them as a team:

1. Moving forward, are we planning to keep things mostly the same as the prior year? If so, how could we make things more efficient for staff and families within each action step, given that we plan to keep these action steps going from year to year?
2. Do we plan on doing some research into more effective strategies to improve upon this year’s work? If so, consider the following sources of quality information about family engagement in early literacy:
	1. Infographic—[Supporting Early Language and Literacy at Home—What Schools Do, What Families Do](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/2020/08/25/information-sheet-supporting-early-language-and-literacy-at-home-what-schools-do-and-what-families-do/)
	2. Rubric for school teams—[Family Engagement in Early Literacy](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/2019/07/22/family-engagement-in-early-literacy-a-rubric-and-guide-for-school-teams/)
	3. Free, self-paced online course for teachers—[Partnering with Families to Support Early Literacy](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/literacypartnershipscourse/)
	4. Book for a shared book study or personal growth and ideas—[Literacy in the Welcoming Classroom: Creating Family-School Partnerships that Support Student Learning](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/2019/07/17/literacy-in-the-welcoming-classroom-creating-family-school-partnerships-that-support-student-learning/)
	5. Website with many good family engagement in early literacy resources for schools and families—[Reading Rockets](https://www.readingrockets.org/reading-topics/parent-engagement)
3. Are we feeling as though this work is disconnected from the other priorities of the school? If so, who do we need to set up a meeting with to share about this team's work, so that it becomes more connected to the school's overall improvement plans?
4. Will we continue with Partnerships for Literacy in the coming year? Will we expand to include Partnerships for supporting Positive Behavior, or Partnerships for Math, or Partnerships for Learning? There are nearly endless aspects of education that this approach could be applied to, particularly if you have a similar inventory of effective practices to base your work on.
5. What else can we do to sustain our partnerships with families?

# **Handouts**

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## **Overview of Partnerships for Literacy**



**What steps are involved with the Partnerships for Literacy project?**

* Schools learn about and prepare to implement Partnerships for Literacy.
* Schools invite families and staff to come together for a few meetings per year. The school provides supports for families to attend meetings.
* At the meetings, team members talk about what the school is currently doing to support literacy with families, and together they fill out an “inventory” of the school’s current family engagement for literacy practices.
* The inventory will be used to create a plan for the school year, which the school will use to try new family and community engagement practices to support literacy.
* The team continues meeting to see how the new ideas are working for the school and for families, and then they fill out the inventory again to see what progress has been made by the end of the year.

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## **Redesign a Family Engagement Practice**

**Family engagement is not one-size-fits-all. Rather, the more choices, supports and flexibility we can provide, the more families will be able to access and partner in supporting their child’s education.**

**Choose a current school strategy/activity for engaging families in early literacy. Describe it on this page, then use the second page to redesign it.**

Here are the **BIG ideas** to consider:

1. Stimulate interest and motivation for engaging with their child’s education.

How can we communicate the joy and importance of giving precious time to supporting their child’s literacy development?

1. Present information and opportunities in different ways - use multiple means, including technology, to share information.

Can all families access the communication you use? How could you adapt?

1. Allow for multiple ways (roles) that families can choose to be engaged and support their child’s learning.

How can there be more choices? Flexibility?

**Name of the activity:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Questions:**

1. What is the goal for the student?
2. What is the goal for the family?
3. Who would not have access? What barriers exist?
4. What would motivate families to fully and gladly engage in this activity?

******Redesign it!**

Thinking creatively, how can we revive this activity for engaging the families of all students?

1. What are different options we have to eliminate the barriers for families?
2. What are some other opportunities we can provide to get to the same goal? What are other ways we can communicate about this goal with families?
3. What incentives, hooks, or attractive options can we build in to motivate families to support their child’s education and meet the intended goal?
4. How many different ways are there for families to be involved in supporting the goal?

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##

## **Coaching Service Delivery Plan**

School: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School Leader Being Coached:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date Initiated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Select 2-3 concepts/areas to coach based on the school’s action plan for family engagement. Complete the table to use in coaching meetings (as needed), and decide on a Plan for Monitoring the coaching process (to be updated at least Quarterly).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Planning** | **Area I:** |
| What part of the Partnerships for Literacy process is being coached? |  |
| What coaching process will you use to coach this? |  |
| How often will you provide this coaching? |  |
| What will need to be prepared to provide this coaching? |  |
| How will you document progress? |  |
| How and when will you provide feedback? |  |
| How will you know if your coaching is effective? |  |

**Plan for Monitoring** **Adherence to Coaching Service Delivery Plan:** (who, how, frequency, and schedule): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Planning** | **Area 2:** |
| What part of the Partnerships for Literacy process is being coached? |  |
| What coaching process will you use to coach this? |  |
| How often will you provide this coaching? |  |
| What will need to be prepared to provide this coaching? |  |
| How will you document progress? |  |
| How and when will you provide feedback? |  |
| How will you know if your coaching is effective? |  |
| **Planning** | **Area 3:** |
| What part of the Partnerships for Literacy process is being coached? |  |
| What coaching process will you use to coach this? |  |
| How often will you provide this coaching? |  |
| What will need to be prepared to provide this coaching? |  |
| How will you document progress? |  |
| How and when will you provide feedback? |  |
| How will you know if your coaching is effective? |  |

#

# **Family and Community Engagement for Early Literacy**

## **Snapshot of Practices in the Inventory**

**How well does each statement describe my school?**

**Communication**

1. Families are informed about their child’s language/literacy progress in a timely manner.
2. School personnel communicate and model high, positive expectations for students’ academics and behavior to families.
3. Information about language and literacy sent to families from the school is understandable (e.g., five Areas of Literacy, standards, grade-level expectations, dyslexia).
4. Communication about literacy is two-way. The school listens and learns from families, and also provides information to families.
5. Families who have home languages other than English are welcomed and encouraged to share their expectations and previous school experiences. They are provided with resources and supports for communicating with the school about their child’s language and literacy development. Language diversity is valued within the school.
6. When a child needs additional supports for reading skill development or has been identified with intensive reading needs (Tier II or Tier III), families are provided with school-based intervention plans or programs (e.g., IEPs) for their child and receive more frequent communication (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) about the child’s progress. Families have the opportunity to share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s plan.

**Supporting Early Language and Literacy at Home**

1. Literacy-building practices are provided to families for use at home.
2. Activities sent home are enjoyable for families to do together, brief, are an extension of content already learned in the classroom, and fit into the daily lives of families.
3. The school works to ensure that each child has access to books, writing supplies, and other resources at home to support the child’s practice and to encourage routine literacy-building activities in everyday life.
4. When a child is identified for a literacy-related supplemental instruction (Tier II) or intensive instructional supports (Tier III), families are provided with ideas for how to support literacy at home in conjunction with the school’s plan for the child. Families take part in developing and providing feedback about the plan as they try new strategies at home.
5. Families learning English are encouraged to read and create a literacy rich environment at home. They are encouraged to speak/read in their home language.

**Strategic Community Partnerships**

1. The school has partnerships with public, non-public, and Head Start early childhood education programs to promote shared reading and early language and literacy at home. This can include preschool, childcare, or home visiting programs.
2. The school is a hub for literacy development, and brings in partnerships with community resources that support shared reading and language and literacy activities at home (e.g., afterschool programs, mentoring programs, ESL classes for families, summer programs, library, YMCA, churches, etc.).
3. Community partners build awareness and support for literacy in the community (e.g., literacy picnics, library events, guest-readers, etc.).
4. The school invites families to partner with them within the walls of the school to support early literacy and language development.

****

## **Evaluating Step 1: Preparing Your School**

**Directions:** The coach or school leader can use this page to keep track of how each focused discussion goes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Date** | **List of Participants** | **What worked?** **How do you know?** | **What did not work?****How do you know?** | **What are next steps for you and/or the school team?** |
| 1. **Getting started**
 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Taking stock**
 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Looking deeper**
 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Ready to go**
 |  |  |  |  |  |

****

**Focused Discussions with Families**

# **Purpose**

Focused discussions with family members are an effective tool for schools for gathering feedback and input into school decisions and planning. Schools can use focused discussions to gather information (qualitative data) to more fully understand parent and caregiver perspectives. Focused discussions are helpful for explaining and expanding the results of surveys. They are also inexpensive and quickly implemented. The focused discussion guidelines presented in this document are less formal than some focus group protocols that are strictly implemented and contribute to research. These focused discussion guidelines should be considered guidance for hosting focused discussions with adult family members or caregivers about home-school partnerships that support early literacy.



**Selecting a Facilitator & Participants**

Participants should represent the families served by the school. Consider including grandparents who are raising children, fathers, foster families, families of children receiving Special Education services, and families with a range of incomes. When a deeper understanding of one subgroup is desired, such as families of exceptional students, a focused discussion of members from that group should be convened. Before the event, determine if any participants will need an interpreter or documents translated. Each focused discussion should have about 6-12 parents or caregivers.

During the discussions, parents and caregivers can build on and reflect on each other’s responses. No one participant should dominate the discussion. The facilitator’s role is to guide the discussion back to the topic gently, reminding participants of the purpose of the discussion. Facilitators are neutral and should not share their own opinions. Facilitators can use reflection to clarify what they hear, but should refrain from speaking too much.

#

# **Preparing Family Participants**

1. **Arrange the family participants in a circle** of chairs, with or without a table.
2. **Provide nametags** and begin with introductions.
3. **Welcome all** of the participants to the discussion and let them know that the ideas and opinions they share will help the district or school do a better job serving their students. Let the parents and caregivers know that you would like them to share their ideas, personal experiences with the school, as well as their child’s experiences in school.
4. **Explain the process:** that you would like to learn about a certain topic today, and that you will be asking questions and keeping the discussion on track. If parents or caregivers have other topics they would like to discuss, set up a time to talk with them once the discussion is over or at a later time. While this type of discussion group does not provide confidentiality, the facilitator can suggest that the group treat each other’s comments with respect, valuing differences of opinion.



# **Recording Family Participant Responses**

Recording participants’ responses is important. Have a note-taker who is not involved in facilitating.

In addition, recording responses on a flip chart can help focus the discussion and give the facilitator a way to make sure he or she has understood the participants correctly.

# **Questions for Families about Early Literacy**

Facilitators can choose from the following questions from 3 main content areas: Communication, Learning at home, and Community Partnerships. Facilitators can also design their own set of questions around a different topic the school needs to know more about. In a one-hour meeting, plan to cover 3-5 main questions.

**Communication**

 1)

How would you describe the **communication** between school staff and you about your child’s reading and writing?

Select a Few Follow-up Questions to Deepen the Discussion and Attend to Sub-groups:

* How well does our school keep you up to date on your child’s progress in reading and writing?
* Do you get the information early enough to help prevent problems for your child?
* Is the information you get from your child’s teacher understandable and easy to access?
* Is information interpreted or translated for families who are still learning English?
* How do school staff members listen to you?
* Do you feel comfortable raising concerns or sharing your own insights?
* What are some examples of the expectations for your child that you have heard expressed by the school?
* When a child needs additional supports for reading skill development (Tier II or III), are families provided with school-based intervention plans for their child and receive more frequent communication (bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) about the child’s progress? And do families have the opportunity to share feedback with the school and make decisions about their child’s plan?

**Learning at Home**

 2)

How well does the school support you in providing **literacy supports at home**, like access to books tailored to your child’s interests and abilities, things to talk about with your child in relation to what they are doing in school, and incorporating new letters/words into your daily routine?

Select a Few Follow-up Questions to Deepen the Discussion and Attend to Sub-groups:

* Are activities sent home enjoyable for families to do together, brief, an extension of content already learned in the classroom, and able to fit into daily life?
* Does the school ensure that each child has access to books, writing supplies, and other resources at home to support the child’s practice and to encourage routine literacy-building activities in everyday life?
* When a child is identified for literacy-related supplemental or intensive instructional supports (Tier II or III), are families are provided with ideas for how to support literacy at home in conjunction with the school’s plan for the child?
* Are families learning English are encouraged to read and create a literacy rich environment at home? They are encouraged to speak/read in their home language.



3)

**Strategic Community Partnerships**

Does the school have **partnerships with other schools, community agencies, and family members** to promote shared reading and early language and literacy at home?

Select a Few Follow-up Questions to Deepen the Discussion and Attend to Sub-groups:

* Does the school work with local preschools, childcare, or home visiting programs. public, non-public, and Head Start early childhood education programs to seamlessly prepare and transition the children from one building to another, supporting their continued literacy development over time?
* Is the school a hub for literacy development, bringing in partnerships with community resources that support shared reading and language and literacy activities at home (e.g., afterschool programs, mentoring programs, ESL classes for families, summer programs, library, YMCA, churches, etc.)?
* How do community partners currently build awareness and support for literacy in the community (e.g., literacy picnics, library events, guest-readers, etc.)? What more could they do?
* Does the school invite families to partner with them within the walls of the school to support early literacy and language development?

****

**Connecting Partnerships for Literacy to the**

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/Title I)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ESEA: Title 1 Family Engagement** **Expectations for Schools Include:** | **Partnerships for Literacy Aligns** |
| Regular, two-way, meaningful communication in language families understand. | 👍 |
| Evaluate annually family engagement plan with a team including family representation. | 👍 |
| Collect parental feedback on your parent and family engagement activities. | 👍 |
| Document parent and family engagement activities. | 👍 |
| Offer a flexible number of activities at convenient times for families.  | 👍 |
| Family engagement PD for school personnel. | 👍 |
| Programs that reach families at home, school or in community, including family members with disabilities, non-English speaking, & migrant families. | 👍 |
| Disseminate best practices on family engagement, especially disadvantaged families | 👍 |
| Collaborate with employers and community organizations to increase family engagement. | 👍 |
| Involve parents in planning, review, and improvement of the school-wide program plan | 👍 |
| Assist parents with how to monitor a child’s progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. | 👍 |
| Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children’s achievement, such as literacy training. | 👍 |
| Develop with parents a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement  | 👍 |
| Integrate other federal, state and local programs. | 👍 |

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1. [Language Usage Survey](file://Bronco.hec.ohio-state.edu/RMT/SPDG%20Collaboration%20and%20Project%20Management/SPDG%202017-2022/Partnerships%20for%20Literacy/Work%20Products/Family%20Engagement%20Early%20Literacy%20Survey/Language%20Usage%20Survey): http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/English-Learners/ELL-Guidelines/Guidelines-for-the-Identification-and-Assessment-o/Appendix-A-Language-Usage-Survey.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US [↑](#footnote-ref-2)