

Online Training Module- Learning Journal

for

“Family Engagement: Beyond the Newsletter: Introduction to Family and School Partnership for KY Early Care and Education Programs”

Dear Early Education Educators,

Use this reflection journal to follow along with the 1 hour online training video. There are questions at the end of each of the 4 sections which are approximately 20 minutes each. To receive ECE-TRIS credit and a certificate for the course: At the end of the 4 video sections (1 hour total) you will be prompted to type these answers into an online form. Once submitted, you will receive a certificate you can print and submit along with other needed documentation for ECE-TRIS credit.

Thank you and we hope you enjoy this introductory module.



Learning Objectives (1 hour):

1. Explain the difference between family “involvement” and “Family Partnership”
2. List roles families can play and how you can support each role
3. Learn and apply the Dual Capacity Building Framework to early education programming
4. Name 2 everyday strategies you can start now



Recommended reading and references:

- “Beyond the Bake Sale”, Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, Davies (2007)
- “Powerful Partnerships”, Mapp, Carver, Lander (2017)
- dualcapacity.org
- “Ky Family and Early Education Program Partnership Guide” (2022)

Section 1: Explain the difference between family “involvement” and “Family Partnership”

SLIDE

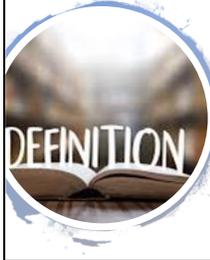
NOTES:



WHAT IF...



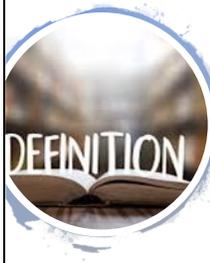
What stood out to you in this video about the possibilities of how REAL family partnership could change the education experience for kids?



Family engagement is a **shared responsibility** in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in **meaningful ways** and in which families are committed to **actively supporting** their children's learning and development.
- NAFSCE, <https://nafsce.org/page/definition>

Family engagement is a **full, equal, and equitable partnership** among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career.
- CT Statewide Family Engagement Center, <https://www.ct.fep.org/about-us/>

Transformative family engagement is a shared effort of families, schools and community leaders to advance programs, practices and policies that **empower every parent** to make their child's potential a reality.
- National PTA <https://www.pta.org/center-for-family-engagement>



KY Family Engagement:
A **productive, equitable and inclusive** partnership among families, educators and the community to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career, and across home, school, and community settings.

Family, school and community partnerships are about **building active, reciprocal relationships** in which schools, families and community agencies and organizations engage in meaningful and culturally appropriate collaboration to improve student outcomes.

We use the following 5 terms interchangeably to reflect the above definition.

- Family and early education partnership
- Family engagement
- Family, early education and community partnership
- Family, early education and community engagement
- Parent involvement (used most frequently in Kentucky regulations)

KY Collaborative for Families and Schools, 2021

We can do this better

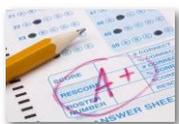
How we used to think...	What we know NOW
"Involvement": Doing TO families	"Partnership": Doing WITH families
Give information	Build family skills
Large group gatherings	More one-on-one conversations; small group convenings
Share when there are issues or problems	Celebrate milestones and progress together
"Come if we call"	Must share "Funds of Knowledge"
Assume families know how to support their child's education	Early education providers set the tone and teach families how to be partners in their kids education and they have the RIGHT to be partners with the school.
Family engagement is a program	Family engagement is often the missing piece in our approach to student achievement.



DID YOU KNOW?

"Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs.
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits.
- Attend school regularly.
- Have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education."



A New Wave of Evidence, Henderson and Mapp, 2002



References: <https://edf.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

End of Section 1 Question:

1. **Explain the difference between family "involvement" and "Family Partnership."** You might also use this space to discuss "ah-has" are you already having about how you thought about family engagement before and how you are starting to shift your attitudes and beliefs? If nothing shifted, what were you reminded of regarding effective family engagement in early education programs?

Section 2: List roles families can play and how you can support each role

Full Article here: <https://prichardcommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/its-time-to-redefine-family-and-community-engagement.pdf>

It's Time To Redefine Family and Community Engagement

December 16, 2020



by

DAHAB HAGOS-FEWELL

Senior Manager

On foot and by every mode of transportation, people have been moving toward opportunity, crossing borders, oceans, and hemispheres for as long as it has been possible. One of the primary reasons people immigrate to North America is opportunities related to education. That's why my parents emigrated to Canada in 1983. Six months pregnant with me, my parents, who are from a northeast African country on the Red Sea coast called Eritrea, boarded a plane to Canada so their children would have access to high-quality education.

Our parents were so dedicated to our education that they helped us with our homework every night. They would borrow or buy next-grade-level textbooks for us to study before we started school in the fall. We had to learn to type 70 words per minute before we could go out to play with our friends, and we weren't allowed to have a job—doing well in school was our job. When my parents found out that our neighborhood school wasn't high-performing, we traveled 45 minutes (two buses and a 15-minute walk) every day to a better school.

Yet, if you asked my teachers about my family, they would have told you they assumed my parents didn't value education. Why? Because they didn't attend my fifth-grade graduation or school bake sales. What my parents were doing to support my education didn't fit the traditional, one-dimensional profile of an engaged parent—someone who shows up and volunteers. Now, it's my mission in life to change both how we view and how we do family and community engagement in education.

I am a member of the ATL Leadership Network team, a five-year school transformation partnership between TNTP and two Georgia school districts: Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and DeKalb County School District (DCSD). The ATL Leadership Network is at the forefront of an important shift in the focus of engagement—a shift toward engaging families and communities as the partners they are. In my role, I engage family and community committees and school leaders in professional learning, and coach these groups toward increasing shared decision-making on school priorities and initiatives that support student learning.

Our goal is to connect engagement to academics and shift the perception that learning only happens in classrooms while family and community engagement only happens in cafeterias after school. The ATL Leadership Network focuses on harnessing the collective power of educators, families, students, and community members in meaningful ways. Common goals and trusting relationships take root as school leaders and teachers see how engaging families and the community can support their academic priorities. And as families and communities understand children’s learning and how to advocate for it outside of school, a collaborative, community-based approach to sustaining school improvement takes shape.

In the context of COVID-19, for ATL Leadership Network schools and schools across the country, aspirations for engagement turned into an imperative. Overnight, schools and families turned to each other as partners; the shared responsibility of educating students intensified. This fall, in both APS and DCSD, family and community engagement were part of remote learning strategies. DCSD’s school reopening plan calls for families to have the opportunity to participate in virtual empowerment workshops to support work with students in the digital space. A key part of the APS school “care team” intervention strategy is coordinating problem-solving conversations with families to ensure students are matched to the academic, wellness, and engagement interventions they need.

This moment has served as a call to action to remove traditional barriers to family and community engagement—to expand our definition of engagement and redefine it in terms of partnership and empowerment. If my teachers had adopted this view of engagement, they would have understood what I always did: My parents were engaged, and they valued education. They invested in my academic success because they saw my successes as theirs, a validation of the sacrifices they made in pursuit of opportunity for their children.

For self-reflection: Can you relate to Dahab’s story from your own childhood? Why does this story matter in an introductory to family engagement training?

Five Roles Families Play to Accelerate Student Learning

At Flamboyant, we have seen - and research shows - that families play five essential roles in their children's education. All families deserve to have access to the information and connections they need to play these roles well. That's why Flamboyant is championing REAL Family Engagement within schools and school systems. Learn about REAL Family Engagement™ at www.FlamboyantFoundation.org/REAL



COMMUNICATE HIGH EXPECTATIONS

An important way families can help their child succeed is to consistently communicate high expectations for student performance. Teachers can help families by sharing information about milestones students should meet to be on a successful academic path.



MONITOR THEIR CHILD'S PERFORMANCE

Families can support their child's success by regularly checking in with them and teachers. Teachers can support families by consistently and proactively engaging with them about student progress and by being available to families in a timely way.



SUPPORT LEARNING AT HOME

When families support and reinforce learning at home, their children do better in school. Teachers can help families support learning at home through consistent academic partnership and ongoing communication. Helping families create a series of thought-provoking, content-specific questions to ask children at home is just one example.



GUIDE THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION

Families play a critical role in navigating their child's educational experience from preschool all the way through college. The school community can support families by connecting them to resources and activities that support their unique needs.



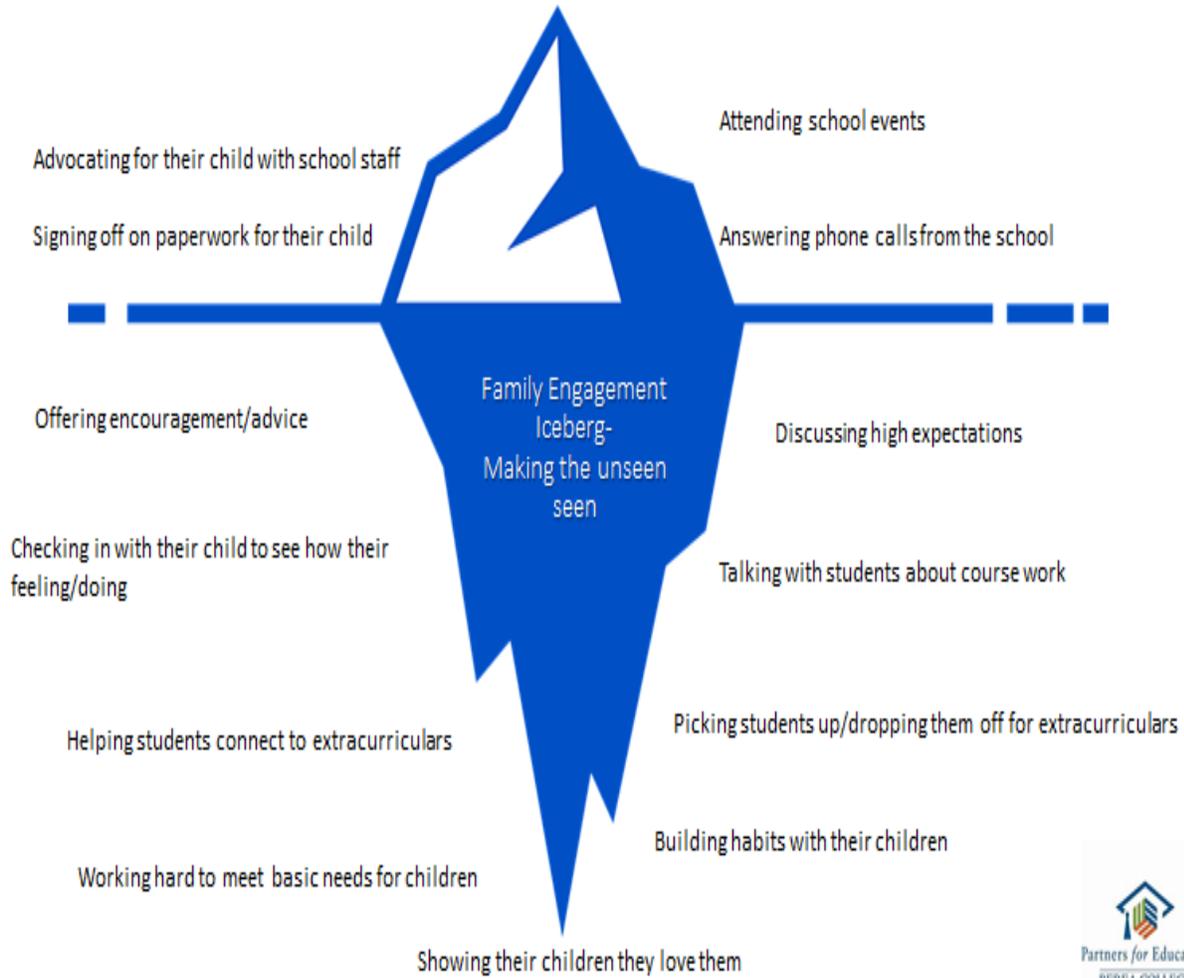
ADVOCATE FOR THEIR CHILD

Families advocate for their children to ensure they get the personal attention and necessary support they need to be successful in school. Teachers can keep open channels of communication with families while school leadership can create a feedback-friendly environment. This could include a family feedback system, expanded office hours for family conversations, and proactively seeking input from families about school policy decisions.



Image retrieved from: https://s28742.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Five-Roles-Families-Play_Flamboyant-Foundation.pdf

For self-reflection: Which role did your parent play most often? Which role do you identify with either as a parent or personality type?



So, what does this mean?

When we think about improving family engagement we have to go beyond how we improve our family events and newsletters, instead we need to put our time and energy into strategies that help staff get to know families so we can build trusting relationships between families and teachers.

~KY Collaborative for Families and Schools, 2021

So, how do we do it?

"We actually sit down and talk to families"- Carnegie and Harvard Presentation, June 2021





End of Section 2 Questions:

- 1. List one way you better support families with skills they can use at home?**
- 2. How can you begin learning how families want to be involved i.e. what role they want to play?**
- 3. How can you begin the exchange of family and provider “Funds of knowledge?”**

Section 3: Dual Capacity Building Framework

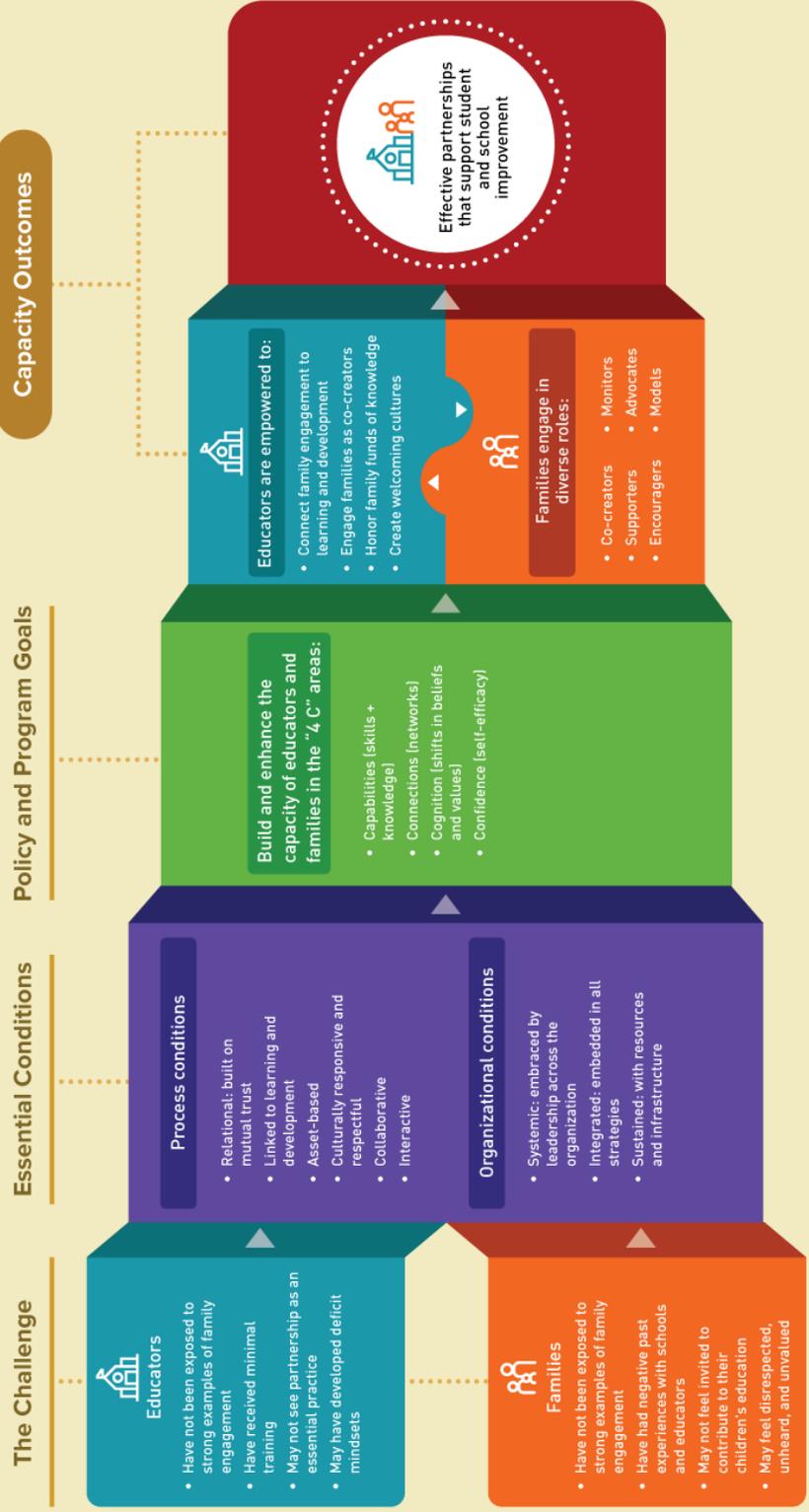
4 Versions of Family-School Partnerships

Check the boxes that have the most statements under them marked or circled. Check only 1 box in each row

Partnership School	Open-Door School	Come-if-We-Call School	Fortress School
<p>All families & communities have something great to offer—we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds.</p>	<p>Parents can be involved at our school in many ways—we're working hard to get an even bigger turnout for our activities. When we ask the community to help, people often respond.</p>	<p>Parents are welcome when we ask them, but there's only so much they can offer. The most important thing they can do is help their kids at home. We know where to get community help if we need it.</p>	<p>Parents belong at home, not at school. If students don't do well, it's because their families don't give them enough support. We're already doing all we can. Our school is an oasis in a troubled community. We want to keep it that way.</p>
<p>Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family center is always open, full of interesting materials to borrow Home visits are made to every new family Activities honor families' contributions Building is open to community use & social services are available to families 	<p>Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers contact families once a year Parent coordinator is available if families have questions or need help Office staff are friendly Staff contact community agencies & organizations when help is needed 	<p>Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better-educated parents are more involved "Many immigrant parents don't have time to come or contribute" Staff are very selective about who comes into the school 	<p>Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families do not "bother" school staff "Minority families don't value education" Parents need security clearance to come in It is important to keep community influences out of the school
<p>Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All family activities connect to what students are learning Parents & teachers look at student work & test results together Community groups offer tutoring & homework programs at the school Students' work goes home every week, with a scoring guide 	<p>Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers explain test scores if asked Folders of student work go home occasionally School holds curriculum nights 3 or 4 times a year Staff let families know about out-of-school classes in the community 	<p>Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house Parents can call the office to get teacher-recorded messages about homework Workshops are offered on parenting 	<p>Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum & standards are considered too complex for parents to understand "If parents want more information, they can ask for it" "We're teachers, not social workers"
<p>Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translators are readily available Teachers use books & materials about families' cultures PTA/PTO includes all families Local groups help staff reach families 	<p>Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office staff will find a translator if parents ask in advance Multicultural nights are held once a year "Minority" parents have their own group 	<p>Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We can't deal with 20 different languages" "Parents can bring a translator with them" "This school just isn't the same as it used to be" 	<p>Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Those parents need to learn English" "We teach about our country—that's what those parents need to know" "This neighborhood is going downhill"
<p>Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clear, open process for resolving problems Teachers contact families each month to discuss student progress Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held 3 times a year for 30 minutes 	<p>Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal will meet with parents to discuss a problem Regular progress reports go to parents, but test data can be hard to understand Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year 	<p>Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School calls families when children have problems Families visit school on report card pick up day & can see a teacher if they call first 	<p>Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents don't come to conferences Problems are dealt with by the professional staff Teachers don't feel safe with parents
<p>Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents & teachers research issues such as prejudice & tracking Parent group is focused on improving student achievement Families are involved in all major decisions Parents can use the school's phone, copier, fax, & computers Staff work with local organizers to improve the school & the neighborhood 	<p>Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents can raise issues at PTA/PTO meetings or see the principal Parent group sets its own agenda & raises money for the school Resource center for low-income families is housed in a portable classroom next to the school PTA/PTO officers can use the school office A community representative sits on the school council 	<p>Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal picks a small group of "cooperative parents" to help out Families are afraid to complain. "They might take it out on my kid" Community groups should mind their own business; they don't know about education." 	<p>Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal picks a small group of "cooperative parents" to help out Families are afraid to complain. "They might take it out on my kid" Community groups should mind their own business; they don't know about education."

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

(Version 2)



End of Section 3 Questions:

Build and enhance the capacity of educators and families in the “4 Cs”

- Capabilities (skills and knowledge)
- Connections (networks)
- Cognition (shifts in beliefs and values)
- Confidence (self-efficacy and advocacy)

1. Rewrite a family engagement touchpoint so all 4C's are accomplished:

2. Bonus points!

A. Can you also give yourself a check mark for all the Essential Process Conditions?

B. How could family members help you CO-DESIGN this project/event/strategy each year?

Section 4: Everyday Strategies you can do now

Quick and Easy Ideas:

Everyday Family Engagement Strategies for Early Education Programs

1. Enrollment Sets the Tone! Give families a one pager that sets the expectation that families are key partners in the success of their child. Lay out what the families can expect from the program such as Monthly newsletter from the director, Frequent communication from their child's staff and describe what is expected of the family stating "You can play a role in your child's education in any of the following ways"... and list multiple roles your Center invites families to participate and have them check-mark which ways interest them for example: Will attend quarterly family nights where they can meet other families and/or I will learn new ways of working with my child at home to support learning at school

2. Greet every family by name instead of "Jack's mom"

3. Learn the home languages of all your families and translate materials

4. Create signage that sets the tone that families are essential to child's success. Ex. "Together we are Better!", "Families and Teachers Funds of Knowledge- Ask us what this means", "You are your child's 1st and most important teacher", "Roles families play in our Center." Use real pictures of current families when you can to expand on the statement.



5. During a staff meeting have staff reflect to the 4 core beliefs and share which families each finds most difficult to partner with and why. You will notice this is different for each staff person and staff can support one another with different types of families.

6. Intentionally make note of families that don't typically respond or participate and choose a staff person to investigate how that family likes to be communicated with and other barriers that may exist.

7. Invite community partners to host "Parent Workshops" where they can promote their services and you can help families connect. Offer childcare and translation when possible.

8. Utilize Zoom and online platforms for communications- YouTube videos explaining new classroom concept and lessons that month. *Look into different online translation features*

- "Zoom Story time"
- "YouTube- About our Classroom Calendar"



- “YouTube-Strength Spotting in 2 and 3-year-olds”



9. Every classroom posts its weekly schedule on Monday outside the door, by text and by email. Always include a “Here’s what you can do at home” section. Even simple questions like, “Did you start a new letter this week?”

10. Every staff person wears a name tag with their first name, posts a short bio outside the classroom and on the school website.



11. Host “Family Conferences” at least 3 times a year this can be in person, on the phone or online video.

12. Make sure that the tone of all family communications is respectful and promote partnership. “If I was a parent, would this feel good to receive?”

13. Highlight and celebrate families and staff who are demonstrating effective partnerships. “Power Partnership Spotlight”

14. Family partnership has a prominent place on the program's website



15. The space where staff and families gather is welcoming and has adult sized chairs :) Make it look like a living room.

16. The program surveys families for their input on program improvements, desired topics for quarterly learning programs, preferred events, guest speakers from the community, etc. Offer multiple ways families can give their input and translate.

17. Classroom staff send home at least monthly activities that families can do with their children.



18. Put up a “Give and Get” Board where families can offer items or services they can give and request things they need. For example “I have toddler boys clothes” “Call me if you need a ride to Kindergarten orientation night. I live in Hallow Woods” and on get things like “Anyone have coats size 3? Text:_____”. Ask a parent to oversee this board each year so it’s for “parents by parents”

19. Ask families to write a “Hopes and Dreams” letters request every year. What do they hope and dream for their child this coming year? Have teachers read these letters to learn more about families.



20. Set families up for success with a strong transition to Kindergarten plan with all local schools. Visits, letters, and introduction phone calls. Send families with a list of their child’s strengths, learning styles, important things to know unique personality, challenges, and how the family is and wants to be involved as a Partner!

This idea list was created for Ky Early Education Centers by Ky Collaborative for Families and Schools. Find more resources here: <https://prichardcommittee.org/familyengagement/> (3.15.22)

End of Section 4 Question:

1. Name 2 of the Everyday Opportunity Strategies you will use now to begin improving your family partnership.

Congratulations! You have completed **“Family Engagement: Beyond the Newsletter: Introduction to Family and School Partnership for KY Early Care and Education Programs”**. Return to the main webpage to submit your End of Section Questions to receive a Certificate of Completion for this module. You can continue your learning journey with individual modules on the KY Family and Early Education Program Self-Assessment which can lead to a Family Friendly Certificate for your program!

More resource and information: <https://prichardcommittee.org/familyengagement/>