

Starting Points

An Inventory of Present Practices of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

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This inventory will help you identify your school's present practices for each of the six types of involvement that create a comprehensive program of school, family, and community partnerships.

At this time, your school may conduct all, some, or none of the activities listed. Not every activity is appropriate for every school or grade level.

It is suggested by Epstein that The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) should complete this inventory with input from teachers, parents, the School Improvement Team, and others, as appropriate. These groups have different knowledge about all of the present practices of partnership in your school.

This checklist can be completed by a special education team to identify the present practices for each of the six types of involvement as it is related to special education and parents of children with disabilities.

After you complete the inventory, you will be ready to write a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. Activities from the six types of involvement will help your school reach goals to improve the school climate, involve all families, and increase student success. Ask a NH Connections facilitator for technical assistance to create a one-year action plan to improve parent involvement, specifically for SPP/APR: Indicator 8: Family Involvement.

Adapted from Epstein's Starting Points.

Directions: Check the activities that your school conducts and circle all of the grade levels presently involved. On the blank lines, you may write in other activities for each type of involvement that your school conducts.

To note how well each activity is implemented, add these symbols next to the checkbox:

- * **Very well implemented** with all families
- + **Good start** with many families
- **Needs improvement**

TYPE 1–PARENTING: Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students. Assist schools in understanding family backgrounds, cultures, and goals.

In Which Grades?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (write the grade(s) next to the sentence.)

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

- We sponsor parent education workshops and other courses or training for parents.
- We provide families with information on child or adolescent development.
- We conduct family support programs with parent-to-parent discussion groups.
- We provide families with information on developing home conditions that support learning.
- We lend families books, audiotapes, and videotapes/DVDs on parenting or parent workshops.
- We ask families for information about children’s goals, strengths, and talents.
- We sponsor home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.



TYPE 2–COMMUNICATING: Communicate effectively from school to home and from home to school about school programs and children’s progress.

In Which Grades?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

- _ We have formal conferences with every parent at least once a year.
- _ We provide language translators/interpreters to assist families as needed.
- _ We provide clear information about report cards and how grades are earned.
- _ We provide clear information about state tests and student and school results.

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

Our school newsletter includes:

- _ A calendar of school events.
- _ Student activity information.
- _ Curriculum and program information.
- _ School volunteer information.
- _ School policy information.
- _ Samples of student writing and artwork.
- _ A column to address parents’ questions.
- _ Recognition of students, families, and community members.
- _ A column on activities for family and community involvement.
- _ We provide clear information about selecting courses, programs, and/or activities in this school.
- _ We send home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comments.
- _ Staff members send home positive messages about students on a regular basis.
- _ We notify families about student awards and recognition.
- _ We contact families of students having academic or behavior problems.
- _ Teachers have easy access to telephones to communicate with parents during or after school.
- _ Teachers and administrators have e-mail and/or a school Web site to communicate with parents.
- _ We provide parents with information on Internet safety.

_ Parents have the telephone numbers and/or e-mail addresses of the school, principal, teachers, and counselors.

_ We have an automated phone system to deliver messages to families.

_ We have a homework hotline for students and families to hear daily assignments and messages.

_ We conduct an annual survey for families to provide reactions to school programs and share information and concerns about students.



TYPE 3–VOLUNTEERING: INVOLVEMENT AT AND FOR THE SCHOOL
Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students.

In Which Grades?

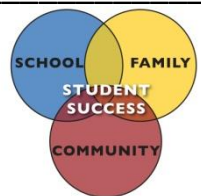
K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

- _ We conduct annual surveys to identify interests, talents, and availability of volunteers and the needs of teachers and administrators for volunteers.
- _ We provide initial and ongoing training and guidance to our volunteers.
- _ We have a parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families.

We encourage families and the community to be involved at school by:

- _ Assisting in classrooms (tutoring, grading papers, etc.).
- _ Helping on trips or at parties.
- _ Giving talks (careers, cultures, hobbies, etc.).
- _ Checking attendance.
- _ Monitoring halls or working in the library, cafeteria, or other areas.
- _ Leading clubs or activities.
- _ Serving as audiences at student assemblies, events, sports, etc.
- _ We provide ways for families to be involved at home or in the community if they cannot volunteer at school.
- _ We have a program to recognize and thank our volunteers.
- _ We organize class parents or neighborhood volunteers to link with all parents.
- _ We schedule plays, concerts, games, and other events at different times of the day or evening so that all parents can attend some activities.



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TYPE 4—LEARNING AT HOME: INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES
Involve families with their children in homework, other curriculum related activities, course and program choices, and plans for the future.

In Which Grades?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

- We provide information to families on required skills in all subjects.
 - We provide information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
 - We conduct family nights or other workshops to help parents understand school subjects and learn ways to help their children at home.
 - We have a regular schedule of interactive homework that requires students to show and discuss what they are learning with a family member.
 - We ask parents to listen to their child read or to read aloud with their child.
 - We provide calendars with daily or weekly activities linked to grade level requirements for families to select and conduct at home.
 - We provide summer learning packets to help students sustain school skills.
 - We help families help students set academic goals, select courses and programs, and plan for college and careers.
 - We provide information on Web sites with learning resources for students.
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TYPE 5—DECISION MAKING: PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP
Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop
parent leaders and representatives.

In Which Grades?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

- We have an active PTA, PTO, or other parent organization.
- Parent representatives are on the School Council, School Improvement Team, or other school committees.
- We have an Action Team for Partnerships to develop a goal-oriented program with practices for all six types of involvement.
- Parent representatives are on a district level advisory council or committee.
- We develop formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives for decision making.
- We use e-mail and quick surveys to obtain parents' input and ideas on school policies.
- We involve parents in selecting school staff.
- We include parent representatives in professional development workshops for members of the School Council, ATP, and PTA or PTO.



TYPE 6—COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY Coordinate resources and services *from* the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services *to* the community.

In Which Grades?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Think in terms of special education topics, processes, policies, and procedures.

_ We provide a resource directory for parents and students with information on community agencies, programs, and services.

_ We provide information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

_ We work with local businesses, industries, and faith-based or other community organizations on programs to enhance student skills.

_ We offer afterschool programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, or volunteers.

_ We sponsor intergenerational programs with local senior citizen groups.

_ We include alumni in school programs for students.

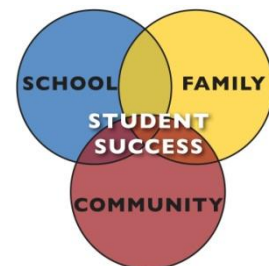
_ We provide one-stop shopping for family services through partnerships of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies.

_ We organize service *to* the community by students, families, and schools.

_ Our school building is open for use by the community after school hours.

School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Third Edition, by J. L. Epstein et al. © 2009 by Corwin Press.

Adapted for schools/school districts to use for special education.



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