

Leadership Team Guide: Program Family Engagement

Family Engagement

What is Family Engagement, anyway?

Families are children's first teachers, advocates, and nurturers. When educators work together with families, it contributes to children feeling safe and secure.

What's the point?

- Recognizes the family as the expert of their own child. Families know their children in ways no one else does.
- When families are engaged, it strengthens the relationship between families and educators and creates a safe space for families to provide feedback about the program.
- Enhances educators' knowledge about families' diverse cultures and perspectives.
- Promotes educator and family's capacity to support a child's social and emotional needs in both the home setting and the Early Learning and Childcare environment.
- Provides opportunities for educators to work with each family to support individual children's participation and learning.

How do I do this?

- Create a welcoming environment for families. Ensure families see themselves reflected in the program (i.e., family photos, cultural artifacts, home language).
- Connect with families on a regular basis and in a variety of ways to build authentic relationships (i.e., face to face, social media, phone calls, emails, etc.).
- Create two-way communication systems with educators and families.
- Develop relationships that are responsive to the uniqueness of each family by seeking to understand their beliefs, values, and priorities for their child's learning.
- Promote family engagement and connection with others (i.e., open house, workshops, family friendly handouts, resources in home language, etc.)
- Learn about and celebrate the ways that families support their children's social and emotional well-being by inviting families to share what works at home.
- Share social emotional resources with families and work together as a team to find strategies to respond to their child's individual needs both at home and in the program.
- Invite families to join the Leadership Team and/or ask for their input on Program Wide goals.

How can ASaP support you?

- Provide resources for the program and families, including the *Family Engagement Workbook*, and support the Leadership Team to use these resources.
- Provide and co-facilitate (if needed) *Partnering with Families Workshop Series*

“When children feel secure in their relationships, and with the relationships between the educators and their families, they are more ready to explore the world and to approach the challenges of learning and living well.”

- Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p 29.

