

What can libraries do to help reengage parents in their children's education? Discover the 6 ways schools engage parents to improve the skills of young learners and how libraries can help parents reinforce what children are learning in the classroom.



Family Engagement Leads to Early Childhood Success

[Family engagement](#) is about the knowledge, values, and actions that enable children to be successful learners. For schools

and libraries, family engagement refers to meaningful partnerships with parents that provide the opportunity to be active in the learning and development of their children.

Family engagement keeps parents informed – via in-person conversations, e-mails, or online communication tools – of their young learner’s academic standing. These practices increase parental involvement in important education-related decisions.

[According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the relationship between schools and parents reinforces learning

and health beyond the classroom. This includes at home, in school, out-of school programs, and in the community. To increase parent engagement, schools can make a positive connection with parents, provide a variety of activities and opportunities to engage parents, and sustain their engagement by addressing common challenges. Through collaboration with schools, local libraries can host afterschool educational programs for early learners and their parents.

Family engagement, however, is not a linear process. Each community is unique and must adapt their own set of best practices. Researchers have identified six types of involvement that schools can use to engage parents and improve the skills of young learners:

1. Providing parenting support
2. Communicate directly with parents
3. Provide a variety of volunteer opportunities
4. Support learning at home
5. Encourage parents to be part of decision making in schools
6. Collaborate with the community

It is important for educators to encourage family engagement both at school and within the community. When teachers take the time to understand families' needs, they invite an opportunity for collaboration. By welcoming parents and families to events focused on their child's early learning, educators build a sense of trust and teamwork with individuals that are critical to early childhood success. [A study discussed in Teaching Young](#) illustrates that these events help to develop a rapport between educator and the family.

[Studies conducted by the Harvard](#) Family Research Project show that family engagement improves academic performance, increases school attendance, and ultimately increases graduation rates. Furthermore, it reduces at-risk behaviors and positively impacts attitudes and overall well-being. Especially in early childhood, active parental involvement in the young learner's education process helps to build early literacy skills. Libraries also place a focus on family engagement and have implemented strategies such as [Every Child Ready to Read](#) to support parents in building their child's early literacy skills. Similarly, 21st Century Community Learning Centers that provide out-of-school learning and afterschool programs also play a fundamental role in family engagement. [Development of this role includes strategies such as:](#)

- Have an adequate and welcoming space to engage families
- Establish policies and procedures to promote family engagement
 - Communicate and build trusting relationships
- Be intentional about staff hiring and training to promote effective staff-family interactions
- Connect families to each other, to the program staff, to schools, and to other community institutions
 - Help support families and their basic needs

Family engagement results in short-term and long-term academic success for young learners. From the child's perspective, it is important to see the collaboration between their family and the educators in their lives. What types of in school or out of school programs would you attend in order to have the most impact on your young learner's early education?

Enjoy our blog? [Subscribe here](#) to receive our quarterly newsletter featuring a new blog directly in your inbox!