

## Discussion Points:

# An Inventory of Family Engagement

Directions: Complete with input from teachers, parents, administrators.

<b>PRECONDITIONS: ATTITUDES</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
Efforts are made to recruit a culturally and linguistically diverse staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff are open to diversity and welcoming to all cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff view parents as equals and understand the importance of the parent's role in educating children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff understand that parents' attitudes about school affect their children's attitudes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff are able to identify strengths in each family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff use information gained from parents to inform classroom practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program philosophy statement references partnership with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff and administrators value shared decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional development is available to staff on diversity-related topics and on how to foster a family-centered program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>PRECONDITIONS: A WELCOMING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
Staff acknowledge the presence of parents and all visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers personally invite parents to visit the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers know and use the parent's names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff initiate partnership with each child's family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special effort is made to reach uninvolved parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>PRECONDITIONS: A WELCOMING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
Special efforts are made to transition families into the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conferences are scheduled at times convenient for parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language translators are available as needed</li> <li>• Child care is provided</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents are invited to join their child for meals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The building and classroom arrangements reflect the children's ethnicity, family culture/traditions, children's needs and their educational accomplishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos from home are on display in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child initiated work is on display in the classroom, in the hallway, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>PARTNERING FOR SUPPORTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENTS</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We sponsor parent education workshops and other trainings for parents on topics requested by parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide families with information on child development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We conduct family support programs with parent-to-parent discussion groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide families with information on developing home conditions that support learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient sleep</li> <li>• Nutritious food</li> <li>• Limited TV</li> <li>• Family meals</li> <li>• Consistent family routine</li> <li>• Responsive adults</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We lend families books or tapes on parenting or videotapes of parent workshops.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We ask families about children's strengths and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We join with families to generate developmental goals for their child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>PARTNERING FOR SUPPORTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENTS</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We develop individual and positive relationships with families; learning about families and helping families understand schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>RECIPROCAL COMMUNICATION</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
An initial home visit is in place which allows parents to share information about and goals for their child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff and parents receive training on effective communication, effective parent-teacher conferencing and constructive feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal conferences and home visits include time for authentic conversation with parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing clear information about the child’s developmental profile</li> <li>• Reviewing progress (home and school) toward parent-generated child development goals</li> <li>• Establishing a partnered approach to achieve “next steps” in child development both in the classroom and at home.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide language translators to assist families as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide clear information about program policies in parent-friendly language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We exchange information daily with parents, emphasizing their child’s activities, interests and strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face    Telephone    Email    Letters</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members send home positive messages about children on a regular basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration notes</li> <li>• Child initiated work with teacher comments and eliciting parent comment</li> <li>• Emphasizing strengths and how the parent can help</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We contact the families of children when we have developmental or socio-emotional concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers and administrators have email and/or a school website to communicate with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents have the telephone numbers of the school, teachers and other appropriate program personnel such as bus drivers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We utilize school voice-mail to deliver educational tidbits, calendar reminders or recognition notes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>RECIPROCAL COMMUNICATION</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We conduct an annual survey for families to provide reactions to preschool, share information and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our school newsletter includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A calendar of school events</li> <li>• Invitations to local events or recreational gatherings</li> <li>• Child activity information</li> <li>• Curriculum and program information</li> <li>• Share new research on early education</li> <li>• Program mission statement</li> <li>• School volunteer information</li> <li>• School policy information</li> <li>• Samples of child-initiated writing and artwork</li> <li>• A column to address parents' questions and elicit suggestions</li> <li>• Recognition of child, families, and community members</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>VOLUNTEERING</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We conduct individual surveys to identify interests, talents and availability of parents as volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer an annual volunteer orientation training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have a parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings and resources for families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We encourage families and the community to be involved at school by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with the children throughout all parts of the daily routine, especially during the 60 minutes of unstructured free choice time.</li> <li>• Helping out on trips.</li> <li>• Sharing a hobby, career or family tradition at large or small group time.</li> <li>• Reading to individual or small groups of children.</li> <li>• Engaging with children as they play outside.</li> <li>• Facilitating a family-style snack or meal with children.</li> <li>• Planning with parents to identify various ways to have presence in the classroom:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing letters or email to the class</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>VOLUNTEERING</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing photographs of family or work</li> <li>• Webcam visits</li> <li>• Improve school environment or equipment</li> </ul>			
We provide ways for families to be involved at home or in the community if they cannot volunteer at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We recognize volunteers in multiple ways:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We schedule parent meetings, advisory council meetings, celebrations and other events at different times of the day or evening so that all parents can attend some activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>LEARNING AT HOME</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We provide information to families on child development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide information to families on how to support active learning at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide information on how to embed learning experiences with their children into a daily home routine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We help parents to recognize the connection between classroom curriculum and family life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We ask parents to listen to their child "read" and to read aloud to their child daily.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide calendars with daily or weekly activities for families to do at home and in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We help families understand why and how to strengthen the dispositions of initiative, persistence and reflection in their child (plan-do-review).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PARENTS AS DECISION MAKERS	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
A written plan describes how the program partners with parents and is reviewed annually.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate funding is budgeted for family engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual orientation trainings are held so that parents can learn about shared decision-making, the importance of parent participation as advisory committee members and how these committees work: time commitment, typical agenda, rules of order, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide parents with an understandable process for raising issues/concerns, appealing decisions and resolving problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent representatives from each classroom are on the program advisory committee. The group is representative of enrolled families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent representatives from our program are on county-level advisory committees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of technology permits parents to participate offsite.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We develop formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives for decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We involve all parents to get input on an annual review of program policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents assist with annual program quality evaluation and goal-setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents are included as we address ways to strengthen parent involvement each year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide parents opportunities to meet with school district officials and learn about the school system. We provide information on local elections for school representatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We involve parents in selecting preschool staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We involve parents in discussions about curriculum and child assessment tool selections.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We involve parents in the budget process for the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We involve parents in generating materials for distribution to families, i.e., handbook, community resource book, activity guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We provide a directory for parents with information on community agencies, programs and services. Translated copies are available to non-English speaking parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We work with local businesses, industries and organizations on programs to enhance opportunities for families with young children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer extended-day care for children, with support from community businesses, agencies or volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We sponsor intergenerational connections with local senior citizen groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnerships of school, counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We organize service to the community by children, families and our program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We engage past-parents to assist currently enrolled families with transitioning into our program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We engage past-parents to assist currently enrolled families with transitioning out of our program and into kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our school building is open for use by the community after hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We house a clothing exchange for enrolled families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer a lending library and a "toybrary" for enrolled families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN</b>	Well Implemented	A Good Start	Needs Improvement
We already work in a collaborative manner with other programs and the elementary school system on other initiatives, i.e., joint training, shared resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents serve on transition planning committees. There is more of parent involvement in the planning for transitions, and less of staff planning of what they think parents need for transition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents plan preschool-ending celebrations, i.e., visually create formal memories of preschool for display in the classroom and at home, create a visual record of the ending celebration in preschool, providing pictures for families to take with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents plan kindergarten-welcoming celebrations, i.e., potluck dinner/breakfast for families with school staff and some of last year's parents, introductions of all key personnel such as bus driver, crossing guard, principal, playground staff, and nurse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents are surveyed as to the information they wish to know about kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We contact new schools to get information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We access and make recommendations on the kindergarten's welcoming tone, i.e., entry/classroom signage, appearance, security, staff interaction strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We help arrange for speakers and trips related to kindergarten, i.e., kindergarten teachers visit preschool to meet with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We set up parent mentors or parent transition support groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We engage past-parents to assist currently enrolled families with transitioning out of our program and into kindergarten.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child information packets are planned with parents to share with the new teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adapted from Epstein, J., 2002, School, Family and Community Partnerships.  
Michigan Department of Education – 2008 Michigan Collaborative Early Childhood Conference