



# Family Engagement To Support Early Literacy

Prepared for the Michigan  
Department of Education by the  
Region 8 Comprehensive Center



Photo is for illustrative purposes only.  
Any person depicted in the photo is a model.

# MiFamily Engagement Video



## MDE's Family Engagement Definition and Principles

Family engagement is a collaborative relationship between families, educators, providers, and partners to support and improve the learning, development, and health of every learner.



# The MDE Family Engagement Definition

- » A collaborative relationship between families, educators, providers, and partners to support and improve the learning, development, and health of every learner.

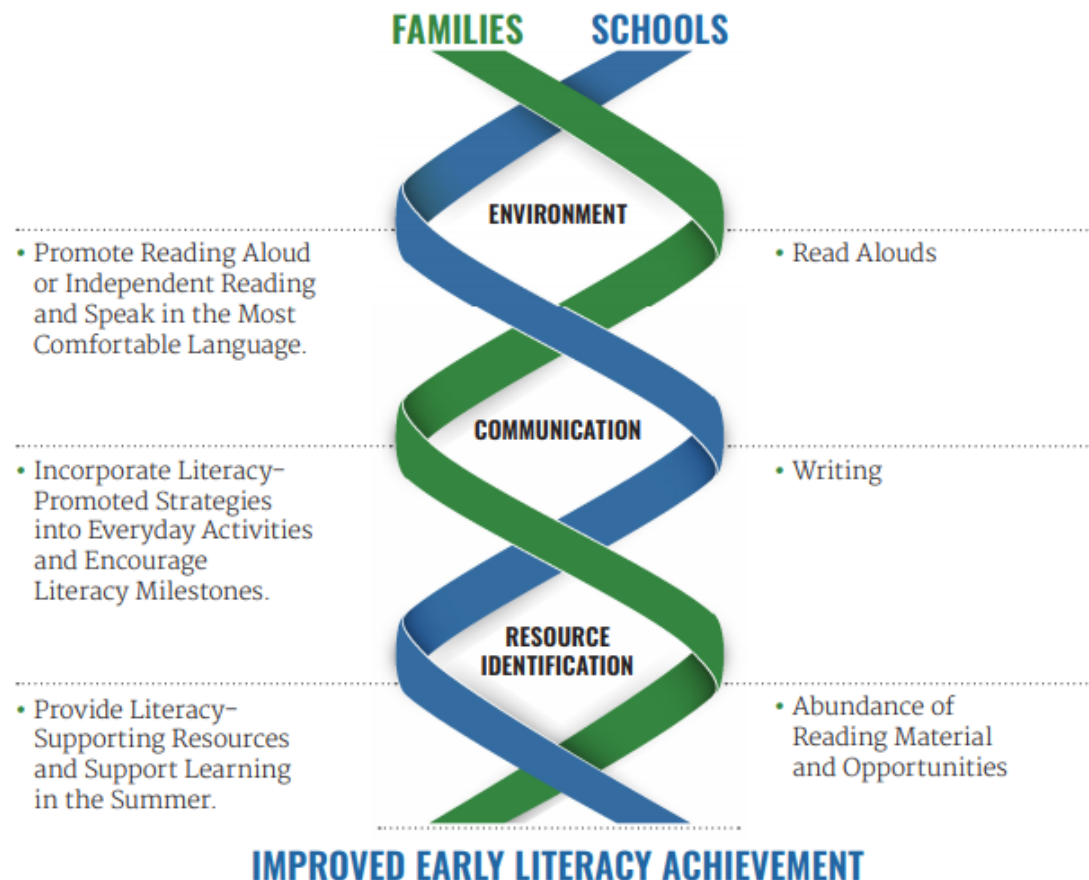


# Reflections

- » What changes, if any, did you make to your family engagement definition and why?
- » How is the definition in the MI Family Engagement Framework different than traditional family involvement?
- » What connections do you see between the MI Family Engagement Framework principles and the double helix?
- » What might high-impact family engagement in literacy look like in early childhood programs/elementary schools?

# Promoting PreK-Third Grade Literacy Development Through Family-School Partnerships

MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework Guiding Principles —  
Relationships, Partnerships, Learner-driven, Tailored to All, Positive Learning Environments



# Integration of Available Resources into Current Work

# An Overview of the Resources

## » Leadership Briefs

- > Creating a School Environment to Support Family-School Literacy Partnerships
- > Develop a Communication Network Between School Staff and Families to Enhance All Children's Literacy Achievement
- > Allocate Resources for School Staff and Families to Increase Children's Literacy Achievement

# Leadership Briefs

Introduction

Strategies

Resources



# An Overview of the Resources

## » Teacher Briefs and Family Infographics

### > Prekindergarten and K-3

- Read Alouds
- Writing
- Abundance of Reading

MICHIGAN Department of Education  
Supporting Family Engagement To Promote Literacy

Pre-K  
10 | 27 | 2020  
Sheila Brookes, Ph.D.

Read Alouds for Prekindergarten  
A Resource for Educators

CCNETWORK

MICHIGAN Department of Education

**FAMILY "HOMEWORK" READ ALOUDS FOR K-3**

**Why Read Alouds?**  
Read alouds help children understand new ideas, build background knowledge about topics, and learn the meaning of words.

**What To Do During a Read Aloud**

**Ask Questions.**  
Develop understanding.

- Ask your child questions before, during, and after you read a book.
- Ask about the characters and ideas and how the book might end.
- For very young children, ask where the cover is, or where to start reading on the page.
- Ask what new information your child learned after reading.

**Talk About Sounds and Words.**  
Point out letters and letter sounds.

- Have your child tell you the sounds of letters.
- Ask what letters or word parts he or she used to identify the words.
- Point to the words as you read if your child still needs help understanding that he or she should read from left to right.
- Talk about the meanings of words used in the text.

**Have Fun!**  
Encourage a love for reading and motivation to read.

- Bring the text to life for your child and enjoy the time reading together.
- Use different voices for different characters.
- Change your tone and use gestures while you read.
- Talk about the pictures, new words and ideas, and what your child is learning.

**Provide a Variety of Materials.**  
Read everything, anytime!

- Seek a variety of different books and materials to read aloud.
- Read cereal boxes while you eat breakfast or read billboards while you are in the car.
- Provide digital and print books, magazines, and comic books.

**Tips and Resources:** [https://www.meadowcenter.org/files/resources/ReadAloud\\_Web.pdf](https://www.meadowcenter.org/files/resources/ReadAloud_Web.pdf)  
Great books to read aloud: <https://www.readingrocket.org/audience/parents>  
Videos: <https://www.readingrocket.org/reading-topics/reading-aloud>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Essential Instructional Practices for Early Literacy: Grades K to 3  
<https://literacyessentials.org>

# Teacher Briefs and Family Infographics

Introduction

Why Included

Strategies

Resources

Infographics

# Jigsaw: Exploration of Resources



## Purpose

To become acquainted with the content and structure of the resources

To discover ways the resources can be integrated into your current work



## Directions

In small groups of six:

- » Identify a facilitator and a timekeeper.
- » Facilitators assign each person to read either a Leadership Brief or a set of PreK and K-3 resources on one Essential Practice (e.g., Read Alouds).
- » Individuals read their assigned resource, complete the windowpanes, and prepare to teach others about the resource. (15 minutes).

# Windowpanes

<p><b>List three key ideas.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe two supporting resources.</b></p>
<p><b>Describe how the resource(s) adds value to both family engagement and literacy development.</b></p>	<p><b>List potential channels available to share the resources.</b></p>

# Jigsaw: Exploration of Resources



## Directions (cont.)

Invite individuals to share information about their resources. (5 minutes each)

Facilitators ask group members if they have any questions and if they would like to suggest additional channels for sharing the resource(s).



## Final reflections

In writing, respond to this question:

- » What did you learn about the content of the resources and ways to engage others in the resources that you want to be sure to remember?

# Benefits of Equitable Family-School Literacy Partnerships





# Reasons Given for Lack of Family Engagement

- » In your Playbook on page 20, jot down reasons typically given for the lack of family engagement, especially with historically marginalized families.

# Barriers to Family Engagement

- Deficit lens
- Hostile racial environments or cultural gaps
- Negative school experiences
- Time conflicts
- Communication built on misinformation, assumptions, or stereotypes
- Language barriers

# Equitable Family Engagement

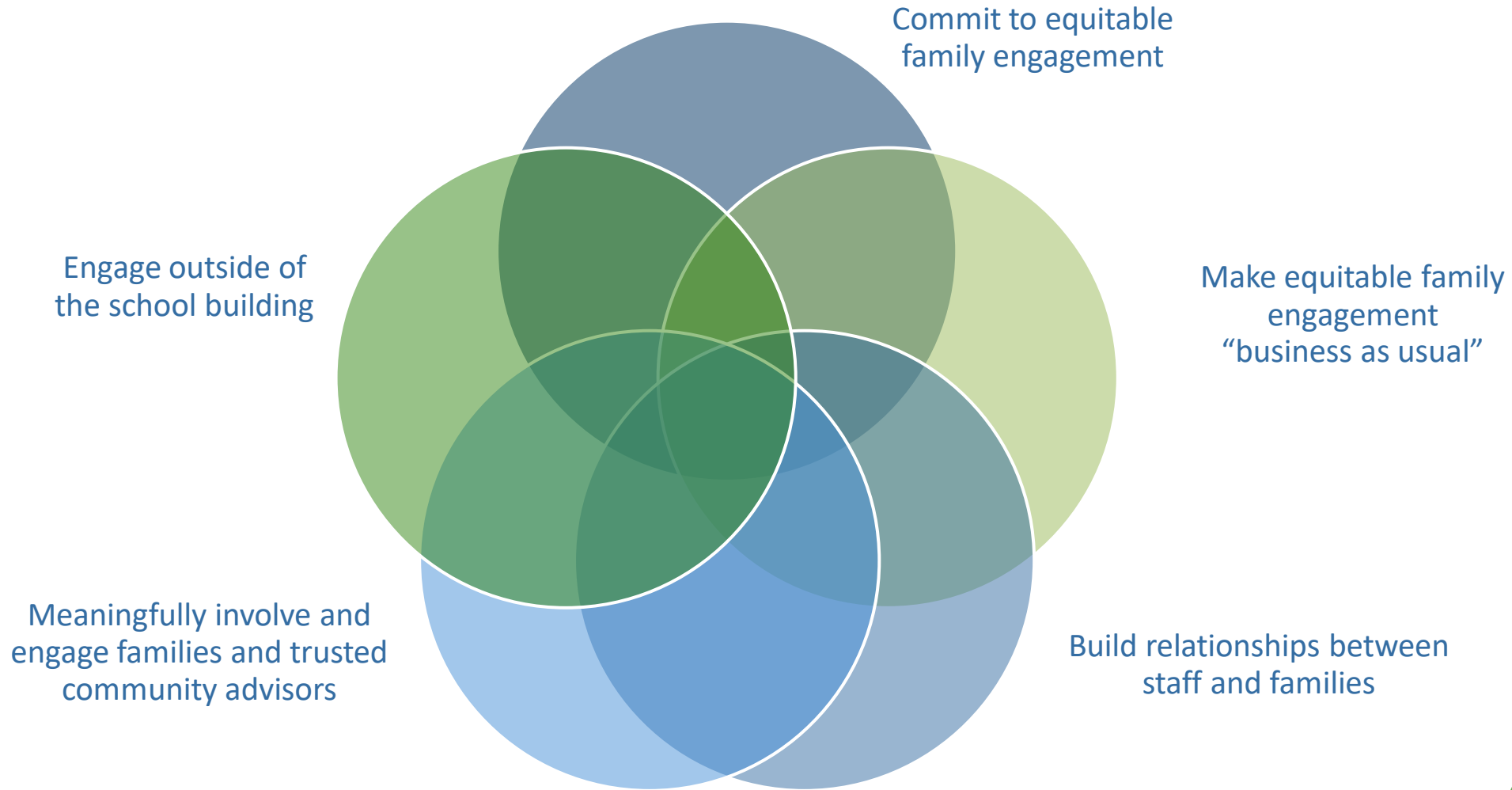
- Equitable family engagement focuses on **meaningful** engagement activities and systems between schools and families that **do not characterize or treat specific parent groups as deficient** in their level of engagement or approach to education (Day, 2013).
- This includes specific practices or approaches that **reflect the values** of a general group of families, as well as systems that foster **tailored** supports, **flexible** engagement options, and **coordination** between families and schools.

Day, S. (2013). "Terms of engagement" not "hard to reach parents." *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 29, 1, 36–53.

# Equitable Family Engagement Practices

- Consult with cultural stakeholders in the community.
- Make materials available in all languages represented within the school community.
- Provide staff professional learning in culturally appropriate practices.
- See families as assets to learning.
- Use frequent and multiple forms of communication.
- Find creative solutions to conflicts of time.

# Equitable Family Engagement



Adopted from: National Center for Improvement of Literacy

# Laser Talk: Benefits of Using the Early Literacy Resources

- A **laser talk** is a structured way to communicate a message succinctly focused and effective like a laser. Another name for a laser talk is an “elevator speech.”
- It is a brief, compelling message that calls another person to act.



# Laser Talk: Benefits of Using the Early Literacy Resources

Effective laser talks have three key parts:

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**The Problem.** The problem or the challenge that needs to be overcome must be painted clearly and something worthy of addressing.



**The Solution.** The solution must provide a compelling vision of the future when the challenge is overcome.



**The Request.** The request is clear, straightforward, and in the locus of control of the individual or individuals receiving the communication.

# Laser Talk: Benefits of Using the Early Literacy Resources

## >> Example:

- > **Problem.** In California, we spend on average \$100,000 annually to incarcerate one youth.
- > **Solution.** Right now, there are programs that are proven to reduce gang involvement that cost an average of \$250 per student per year. Having a Youth PROMISE Act would ensure that we are investing in those successful programs and replicating them all around the country. The cost savings are staggering to consider.
- > **Request.** That is why I am involved in the Peace Alliance. Won't you also join our grassroots effort and help save our young people?

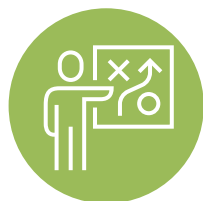
# Laser Talk: Benefits of Using the Early Literacy Resources

In pairs, write your laser talk. Be ready to share it with others.

PROBLEM



SOLUTION



REQUEST



# Supporting Others in Using the Resources

**FOCUS: How will you share these resources with others and support their use?**



**Activity:** *Examine how you will help individuals or groups engage with the resources effectively.*

»» Purpose:

To prepare to effectively share the resources widely and ensure ongoing use

»» Benefit:

To ensure that the resources remain useful and meaningful tools for educators and families to enhance children's literacy development



# In whole group:

Find the sample template on page 23 in your materials.

What groups or individuals are you connected with?	What are the ways you communicate with them?	How will the group or individual engage with the resources?	What are potential challenges or barriers to using the resources?	What are questions the group or individual may have about the resources?	How will you respond to those challenges and questions?
<b>Example:</b> <b>Head Start Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Website</li> <li>List serv</li> <li>Directors' meetings</li> <li>Weekly webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers can use these in the classroom.</li> <li>Programs can share infographics with parents.</li> <li>Teachers can share infographics during conferences or family events.</li> <li>Centers can have these available in waiting areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language differences</li> <li>Access to online versions</li> <li>Lack of paper resources to print for teachers and families</li> <li>Little or no follow-through or up-front support for teachers and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do I know if I am doing this correctly?</li> <li>Are these available in another language?</li> <li>Who should be in charge of sharing these with families?</li> <li>How do I support families once I share this with them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide workshops for families</li> <li>Share any available translations or help translate with Google Translate or similar app</li> <li>Determine policy and procedure for use at program level</li> <li>Provide continued learning opportunities for families.</li> </ul>

# Considerations for Effective Engagement with the Resources

What groups or individuals are you connected with?

**Example: Head Start Programs**

- Newsletters
- Website
- List serv
- Directors' meetings
- Weekly webinars
- Teachers can use these in the classroom.
- Programs can share infographics with parents.
- Teachers can share infographics during conferences or family events.
- Centers can have these available in waiting areas.

# Considerations for Effective Engagement with the Resources (Continued)

What are potential challenges or barriers to using the resources?	What are questions the group or individual may have about the resources?	How will you respond to those challenges and questions?
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# In small groups or “like” pairs:

➤ Complete your template using groups or individuals where your work is currently targeted.

What groups or individuals are you connected with?	What are the ways you communicate with them?	How will the group or individual engage with the resources?	What are potential challenges or barriers to using the resources?	What are questions the group or individual may have about the resources?	How will you respond to those challenges and questions?

## Whole group:

Choose one of your groups from the template and share with the whole group your considerations for effective engagement with the resources across all columns and your first action steps.



## In small groups or in “like” pairs:

- Choose one of the individuals or groups listed in your template that you will be meeting with soon and who you are likely to share these resources with.
- What are your first 2-3 steps you will take to support that group’s use of the resources? (Use page 25 in your materials to record these.)





## Reflection

- » How might you integrate today's ideas into pre-existing plans?
- » How are your selected group's questions, challenges, and use of resources like others'?

# Final Reflections



What squares with your beliefs?

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What is still circling around in your head?

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What are three things you want to be sure to remember?

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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