

## Parents as Advocates: Family Engagement in Schools

### WHAT IS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS?

Family engagement in schools is defined as parents and school personnel working together at the classroom, local, and system level to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents.

Family engagement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and the parents are committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development.<sup>1</sup>

### Why is Family Engagement Important?

Family Engagement leads to:

- Higher grades and test scores;
- Better attendance;
- More classes passed and credits earned;
- Improved behavior at home and at school;
- Better social skills and adaptation to school.
- Increased participation in more challenging academic programs.

<sup>1</sup> Parent Engagement in Schools." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, August 2018 , [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent\\_engagement.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent_engagement.htm)

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### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SPECIAL EDUCATION: You Are a Critical Member of the Team!

#### Understanding and Navigating the Educational Process

- **You know your child:**
  - Share what you know.
  - Take an active role in the development of your child's educational services.
  - Engage your child by helping him/her participate as much as possible in any conversation regarding his/her education. (Self Determination)
- **Inform and Educate Yourself:**
  - Learn the vocabulary\*
  - Attend workshops
  - Call your local Parent Center
  - Research reliable and reputable websites
  - Network with other stakeholders
- **Build and Maintain Relationships with Your Child's Educational Team:**
  - Don't hesitate to ask questions.
  - Address issues/concerns as they arise.
  - Stay engaged in the conversation.
  - Use communication tools.
  - Check the facts and/or ask for clarification before reacting.
  - Be consistent and follow through.

## Parents as Advocates: Family Engagement in Schools

### THE VOCABULARY:

#### Learn How to Speak in Acronyms

[Alphabet Soup](#)

[Your Child's Rights: Important Terms to Know](#)

[Office of Special Education Programs: Glossary of Terms. English to Spanish](#)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Parental Rights under IDEA](#)

[Right to Receive a Complete Explanation of IDEA's Procedural Safeguards](#)

[Confidentiality and Access to Student Records | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Parental Right to Participate in Meetings](#)

[Right to Obtain an Independent Educational Evaluation | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Right to Receive Prior Written Notice \(Part B of IDEA\) | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Parental Consent in Special Education](#)

[The Right to Disagree | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[Five Options, 1-2-3 | Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)