

A Guide to Selecting and Applying Evidence-Based Practices to Parent/Family/Community Engagement

USDE guidance defines four levels of evidence for evaluating the strength of evidence indicating the effectiveness of a given program or intervention. These range from “Strong Evidence” to “Demonstrates a Rationale.” Throughout this guide, these levels of evidence will be referred to as “Tier 1,” “Tier 2,” etc. as shown in the table below.

Tier	Level of Evidence	Description
1	Strong Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies .
2	Moderate Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies .
3	Promising Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies .
4	Demonstrates a Rationale	Practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action , are supported by research, and have some effort underway to determine their effectiveness.

The Tables below are organized into four areas of activity:

1. Program Planning
2. Classroom Strategies
3. Professional Development
4. Extended Learning Settings

Parent/Family/Community Engagement Programs/Interventions and Levels of Evidence

1. Program Planning

Evidence-Based Practice and Rationale	Grade Band	Level of Evidence and Source
<p>Build the capacity of staff and families to implement a dual capacity framework through systemic, integrated and sustained family-school partnership initiatives.</p> <p><i>“Systemic” initiatives are purposefully designed as core components of educational goals such as school readiness, student achievement, and school turnaround.</i></p> <p><i>“Integrated” initiatives are part of all aspects of district/school improvement strategies, such as recruitment and training of effective teachers and leaders, and mechanisms of evaluation and assessment.</i></p> <p><i>“Sustained” programs operate with adequate resources and infrastructure support, and senior-level district leadership promote family-school partnership strategies as a component of the overall improvement strategy.</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p> <p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p>	<p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: Bryk, A.S., Bender Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., Easton, J.Q. (2010) <i>Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Weiss, H.B., Lopez, M.E., Rosenberg, H. (2011). <i>Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.</p> <p>https://www.sedl.org/connections/engagement_forum/beyond_random_acts.pdf</p>
<p>Provide district support for school-level Action Teams to develop comprehensive partnership programs.</p> <p><i>District assistance contributes significantly to both basic program implementation as well as to advanced outreach to involve families.</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p>	<p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: Epstein, J.L., Galindo, C.L., Sheldon, S.B. (2011). “Levels of Leadership: Effects of District and School Leaders on the Quality of School Programs of Family and Community Involvement.” <i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i>, 47(3), pp. 462-495.</p> <p>http://ecadmin.wdfiles.com/local--files/literature-research/Levels%20of%20Leadership-%20Family%20and%20Comm%20Inv.pdf</p>

2. Classroom Strategies

Evidence-Based Practice and Rationale	Grade Band	Level of Evidence and Source
<p>Provide parents with weekly text messages about their child’s progress.</p> <p><i>Weekly one-sentence messages from teachers about their children’s schoolwork, empowers parents to support students’ efforts to earn course credit towards graduation. In the process of increasing student-passing rates, this intervention improves student attendance, and shapes outside-of-school parent-student conversations.</i></p>	<p>9-12</p>	<p>Tier 1, Strong</p> <p>Source: Kraft, M.A., Rogers, T. (2015). “The Underutilized Potential of Teacher to Parent Communication: Evidence from a Field Experiment.” <i>Economics of Education Review</i>, 47 (2015), pp. 49-63.</p> <p>https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/todd_rogers/files/empirical_in_press.kraft_rogers.pdf</p>
<p>Create “structured conversations” between teachers and parents about student learning multiple times per year.</p> <p><i>When teachers provide detailed information and training, family engagement increases. Parents’ informed coaching efforts at home contribute to students’ improvement in reading and math. “Structured conversations” provide parents with information about their student’s performance, demonstrate skills taught in the classroom, allow parents to practice the activities together in small groups, and help parents set academic goals for their child.</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8</p> <p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8</p>	<p>Tier 2, Moderate</p> <p>Source: Henderson, A.T. (2011). “Coaching Parents as Team Members: Academic Parent-Teacher Teams,” in <i>Family-School-Community Partnerships 2.0: Collaborative Strategies to Advance Student Learning</i>. Washington, DC: National Education Association.</p> <p>http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Family-School-Community-Partnerships-2.0.pdf</p> <p>Tier 2, Moderate</p> <p>Source: Humphrey, N., Squires, G. (2011). <i>Achievement for All National Evaluation: Final Report</i>. London, UK: Department of Education.</p> <p>https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/12360/1/DFE-RR176.pdf</p>
<p>Conduct frequent, in-person communication with families linked to teaching and learning goals.</p> <p><i>Title I students’ reading and math scores improve 40-50 percent faster when teachers routinely:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet with families face-to-face; • send materials on ways to help their child at home; and • telephone/text routinely about progress. 	<p>PreK-3 4-5</p>	<p>Tier 2, Moderate</p> <p>Source: Westat and Policy Study Associates (2001). <i>The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance (LESCP) in Title I Schools, vol. 1: Executive Summary</i>. Washington DC: US Dept. of Education.</p> <p>https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/esed/lescp_vol1.pdf</p>

Evidence-Based Practice and Rationale	Grade Band	Level of Evidence and Source
<p>Connect school and home literacy by recognizing and incorporating home literacy practices in the curriculum.</p> <p><i>It is essential that teachers value students' backgrounds and encourage them to bring their experiences into the classroom. Teachers must also be informed about individual students and understand their larger social-cultural backgrounds in order to alter curriculum and discourse patterns to include all children. This can be accomplished through strategies like home visits and gathering information about students' home literacy activities.</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5</p>	<p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: McCarthy, S.J. (2000). "Home-School Connections: A Review of the Literature." <i>The Journal of Educational Research</i>, 93(3), pp. 145-153.</p> <p>https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261666297_Home-School_Connections_A_Review_of_the_Literature</p>
<p>Create a welcoming school culture that invites family engagement as a core value.</p> <p><i>Research on why families get involved indicates that a welcoming environment is one of the most influential indicators of family engagement. The degree to which parents feel welcome at the school, trust staff, and have positive interactions with staff is positively associated with student outcomes (i.e., students' grades, problem behaviors at school, and repeating a grade).</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p> <p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p>	<p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., Sandler, H.M. (1997). "Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education?" <i>Review of Educational Research</i>, 67(1), pp. 3-42.</p> <p>https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00346543067001003</p> <p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: Froiland, John & Davison, Mark. (2014). "Parental expectations and school relationships as contributors to adolescents' positive outcomes." <i>Social Psychology of Education</i>, 17(1), March 2014.</p> <p>https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258164787_Parental_expectations_and_school_relationships_as_contributors_to_adolescents'_positive_outcomes</p>

Evidence-Based Practice and Rationale	Grade Band	Level of Evidence and Source
<p>Conduct “relational” home visits with families to build trust and respect between school and home.</p> <p><i>Students whose families receive a “relational” home visit have 24 percent fewer absences than similar students whose families do not receive a visit. These same students also are more likely to read at or above grade level compared with similar students who do not receive a home visit.</i></p>	<p>PreK-3 4-5 6-8 9-12</p>	<p>Tier 3, Promising</p> <p>Source: Sheldon, S.B., Jung, S.B. (2015). <i>The Family Engagement Partnerships: Student Outcome Evaluation</i>. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships.</p> <p>http://www.pthvp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/JHU-STUDY_FINAL-REPORT.pdf</p>
