



Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning resource



Australian Government
Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations



Next 

Resource introduction

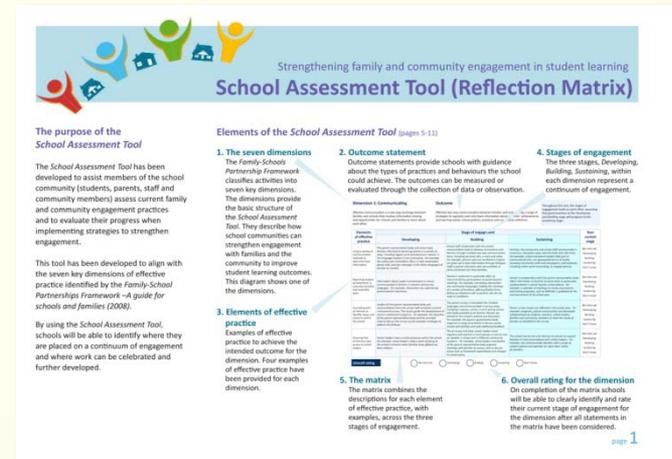
Welcome to the Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning resource.

This resource has been designed to assist school communities to reflect on and strengthen family and community engagement in student learning and the life of the school. It has been developed as part of the parental engagement project, one of the six National Key Reform Projects funded by the Australian Government through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships.

View more information about this project on the Smarter Schools Website

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/supplementary/Pages/ParentalEngagementinSchoolingandLowSESCommunitiesProject.aspx>

The resource incorporates a new School Assessment Tool (Reflection Matrix) to support school planning processes. The tool will help schools to reflect on and decide where they are placed on a continuum of engagement and where work can be celebrated and further developed.



Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning
School Assessment Tool (Reflection Matrix)

Elements of the School Assessment Tool (pages 9-11)

The purpose of the School Assessment Tool
The School Assessment Tool has been developed to assist members of the school community (students, parents, staff and community members) assess current family and community engagement practices and to evaluate their progress when implementing strategies to strengthen engagement.
This tool has been developed to align with the seven key dimensions of effective practice identified by the Family-School Partnerships Framework – a guide for schools and families (2008).
By using the School Assessment Tool, schools will be able to identify where they are placed on a continuum of engagement and where work can be celebrated and further developed.

1. The seven dimensions
The Family-School Partnerships Framework classifies activities into seven key dimensions. The dimensions provide the basic structure of the School Assessment Tool. They describe how school communities can strengthen engagement with families and the community to improve student learning outcomes. This diagram shows one of the dimensions.

2. Outcome statement
Outcome statements provide schools with guidance about the types of practices and behaviours the school could achieve. The outcomes can be measured or evaluated through the collection of data or observation.

3. Elements of effective practice
Examples of effective practice to achieve the intended outcome for the dimension. Four examples of effective practice have been provided for each dimension.

4. Stages of engagement
The three stages, Developing, Building, Sustaining, within each dimension represent a continuum of engagement.

5. The matrix
The matrix combines the descriptions for each element of effective practice, with examples, across the three stages of engagement.

6. Overall rating for the dimension
On completion of the matrix schools will be able to clearly identify and rate their current stage of engagement for the dimension after all statements in the matrix have been considered.

page 1



Instructions for using this resource

The Strengthening family and community engagement in student learning resource has been designed as a 'toolkit' that allows you to access a range of useful documents, other resources and websites in two ways:

- 1) The key documents and proformas that you may need for working through the steps to strengthen parental engagement are embedded in the resource as PDF attachments and are indicated throughout using the symbol below.



To access these attachments, click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar, then double click on the specific document to open.

The new School Assessment Tool is available as an attachment.

- 2) Other articles, publications, resources and websites can be accessed through the blue hyperlinks contained within this resource. Clicking on the hyperlink will take you to an external internet location and therefore will open in a new window. Please ensure you only close your browser window when finished.

To navigate around this resource you can either move backwards or forwards from page to page or click on the bookmarks list to navigate the resource menu. Use the plus icon to expand each section of the resource. Click on a menu item to view its contents.



Section introduction

Section one What is family and community engagement?

In this section we explore in more detail the nature of effective family and community engagement by looking at contemporary educational policies and related research. We also examine the definitions of common terms, dimensions, elements and underpinning principles of effective practice.

Section two Why is family and community engagement important?

In this section we explore the benefits and outcomes of effective family and community engagement for students, families and the school. We also examine the supporting structures that need to be in place to develop and sustain effective family and community engagement practices.

Section three Steps to strengthen engagement

This section will assist school communities to use the school planning cycle to strengthen engagement. As part of a four step model, schools will be able to use a new *School Assessment Tool* to assess where they are on a continuum of engagement and to prioritise areas for further action.

Section four Strategies, case studies and resources

After the school has decided on areas for further action this section will be a useful aid to help schools refine suitable strategies.



What is family and community engagement?



Section one introduction

The Australian, State and Territory governments want all young Australians to have the best education possible. Their policies, programs and strategies reflect the findings of national and international research which shows that when schools, families and the community work in partnership, students get better outcomes from their education.

Read full research article at

<http://www.education.gov.au/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-RW004>



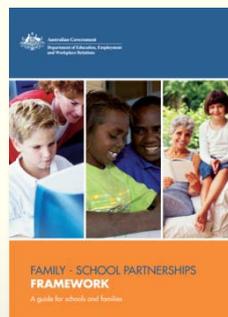
Policy context

One of the goals of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, which was signed by all Australian governments in December 2008, provides a clear expectation that schools will engage with their families and communities:

All Australian schools engage children and young people, parents, carers, families, other education and training providers, business and the broader community to support students' progress through schooling, and to provide them with rich learning, personal development and citizenship opportunities.

View the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians

http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf



Every school community has a range of ways of engaging with families and the wider school community. In 2008 the *Family-School Partnerships Framework – A guide for schools and families* (2008) was developed to support sustainable and effective partnerships between all members of the school community, including teachers, families and students. The Framework was prepared by the national parent bodies in Australia – the Australian Council of State School Organisations and the Australian Parents Council – the Australian Government and other key stakeholders, including state and territory governments and non government school authorities and school principals' associations.

This resource builds on the *Family-School Partnerships Framework* and draws together national and international research (for example Henderson and Mapp 2002) and good practice literature. This resource provides information and tools to assist schools to reflect on their practice and plan for strengthened family and community engagement in student learning.

View the Family-School Partnerships Framework – A guide for schools and families (2008)

<http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf>

Read the full research article at

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>



Policy context *continued*

The Parental Engagement in Schooling in Low Socio-economic Status (SES) Communities Project is one of six national collaboration projects identified as being of national importance in supporting the implementation of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships reform initiatives. The project has worked to identify and promote good practice in parental and family engagement in school communities and in their children's education as a critical factor for improving student attendance, students' engagement in learning and learning achievement.

More information about the Smarter Schools National Key Reform Projects

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/supplementary/Pages/NationalKeyReformProjects.aspx>

View Ms Ann Bliss, member of the national Parental Engagement Taskforce, describing how parental engagement is critical to improving student outcomes

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/media/Pages/NationalParentalEngagementinSchoolinginLowSESCommunities.aspx>

Research confirms that, whilst family, home and community factors are have the most significant influence on the development of young people, the most significant schooling influence on the learning outcomes of students is teacher quality and the quality of teaching (see for example Hattie 2003).

The *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, released by the Australian Education Ministers in February 2011, emphasises the importance of teachers and school leaders knowing their students and how they learn (Standard 1) and being professionally engaged with families and the community (Standard 7).

View the Standards on the Australian Institute for Teacher and School Leadership's website

<http://www.aitsl.edu.au/>

Read the full research article at

<http://www.educationalladers.govt.nz/Pedagogy-and-assessment/Building-effective-learning-environments/Teachers-Make-a-Difference-What-is-the-Research-Evidence>



Definitions of common terms



Families – Refers to any of the wide variety of home arrangements that people establish to care for and rear children.



School community – Generally includes students, families, school staff, other professionals, other support staff and volunteers. The school community may also include members of other organisations in the wider community who support the operation of the school.



Parents – Includes all types of parental figures including carers and legal guardians.

Note: The terms ‘parents’ and ‘families’ are used interchangeably throughout this resource to refer to adults who have responsibility for a student.



Family-school partnerships – Refers to collaborative relationships designed primarily to produce positive educational and social effects on the child while being mutually beneficial to all parties involved.

The central characteristics of effective family-school partnerships include:

- sharing of power, responsibility and ownership; with each party having different roles
- a degree of mutuality, that begins with the process of listening to each other and that incorporates responsive dialogue and ‘give and take’ on both sides
- shared aims and goals based on a common understanding of the educational needs of children
- commitment to joint action, in which parents, students and teachers work together.



Dimensions of family and community engagement

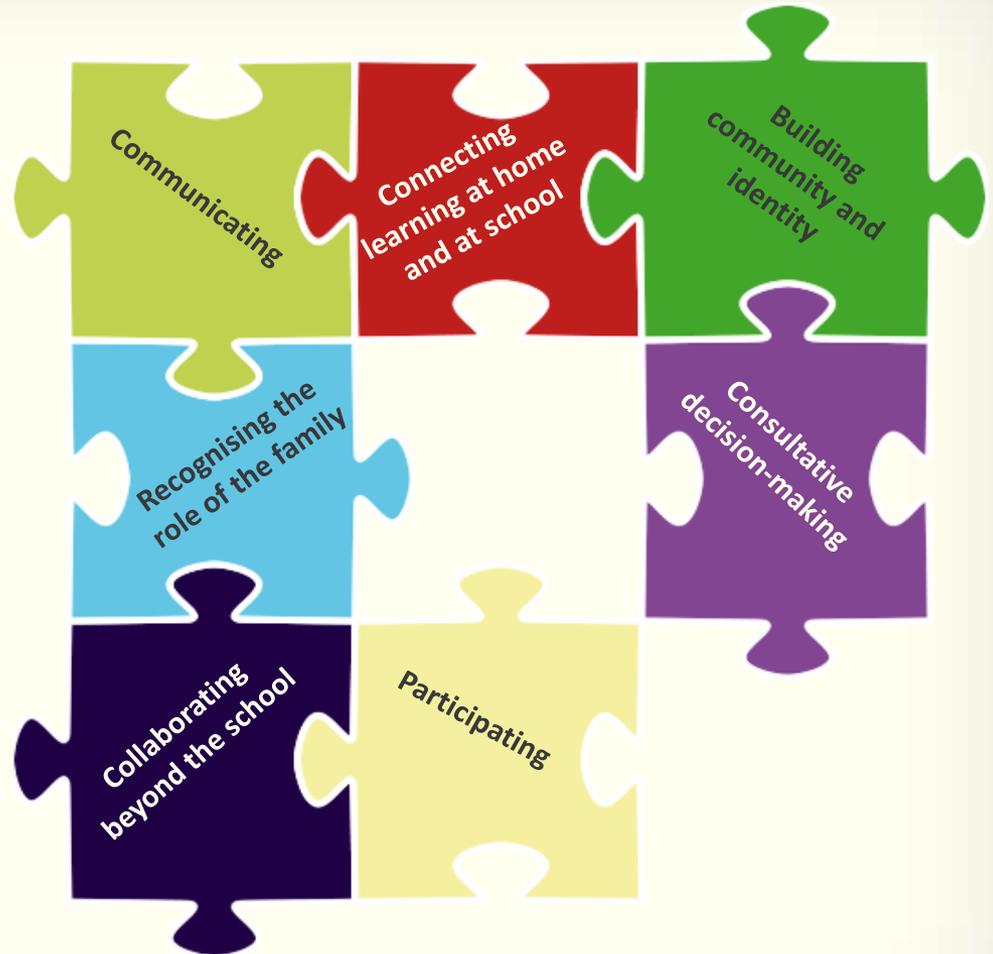
Activities, behaviours and strategies observed in schools demonstrating effective family and community engagement in student learning and the life of the school community can be classified in a number of ways.

This resource uses the seven key dimensions outlined in the *Family-School Partnerships Framework* to describe how school communities can strengthen engagement with families and the community to improve student learning outcomes.

The seven dimensions are not designed as stand alone focus areas. Research shows that effective schools use an integrated, multi-dimensional approach to strengthen engagement with families and their community.

Read the full research article at

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes.htm



 To view each dimension in more detail, click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Elements of effective practice

Literature related to family and community engagement acknowledges that school communities lie along a continuum of engagement in student learning as shown in the following diagram. The literature identifies common elements of practice that positively impact on student learning outcomes along the continuum.

This resource adapts these elements to align them with the seven dimensions. For convenience four elements have been selected for each dimension. The elements form the basis of the *School Assessment Tool* which allows school communities to assess where they are on the continuum of practice.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Principles which underpin effective family and community engagement in student learning

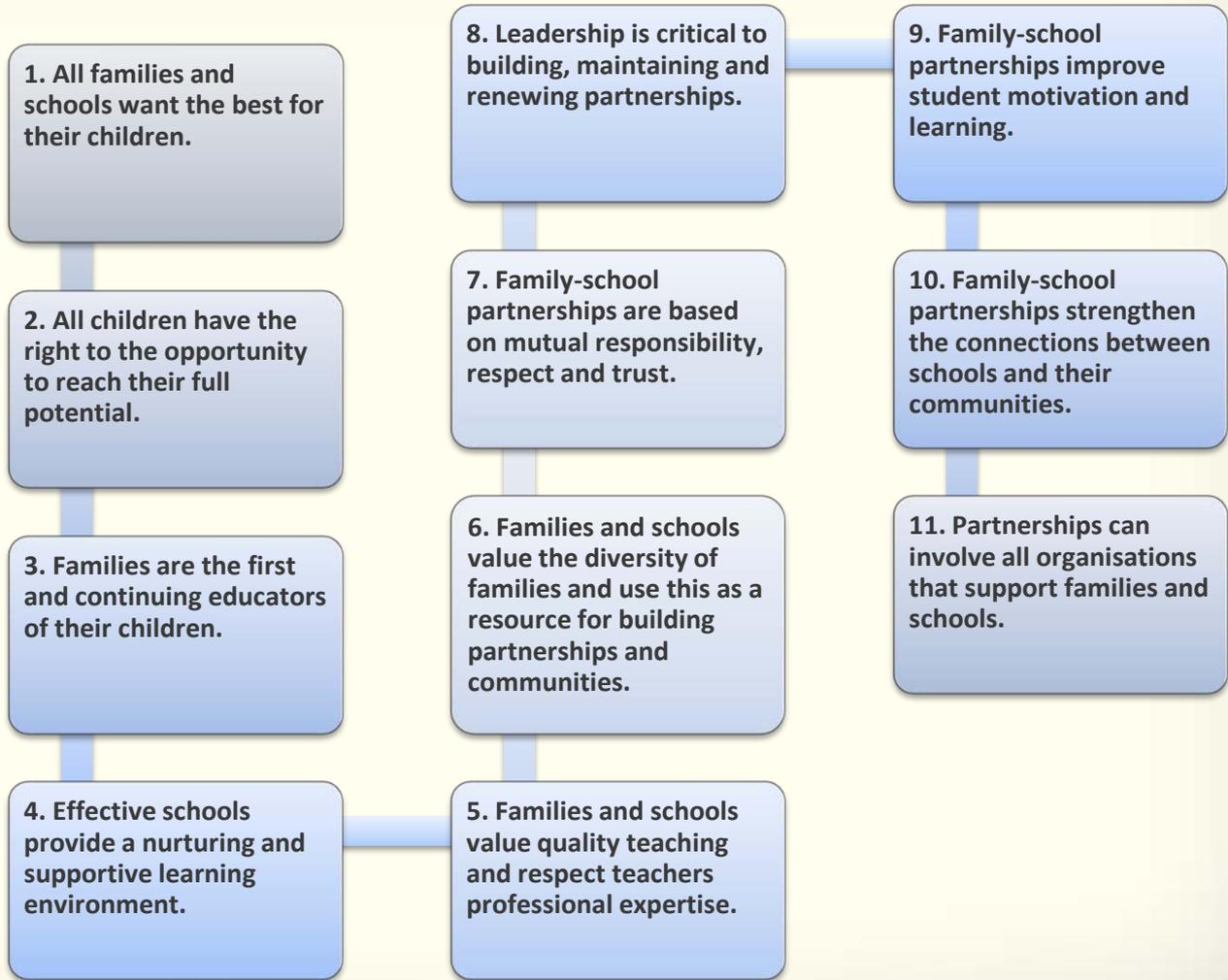
The *Family-School Partnerships Framework* lists eleven principles which underpin effective family-school partnerships.

These principles describe the core beliefs and practices that drive family and community engagement in student learning.

Schools should consider these when selecting strategies for action (see Section 4, *Strategies, case studies and resources*).



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* to find out how these principles relate to the seven dimensions of effective practice



Why is family and community engagement important?



Section two introduction

Vision

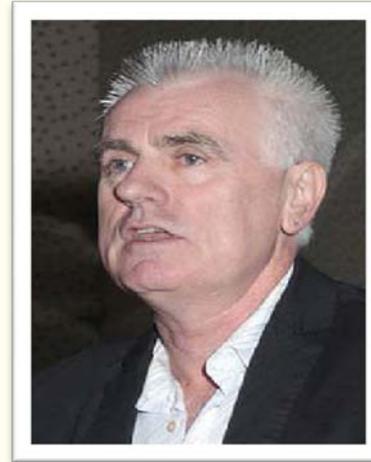
Families and communities work together with schools as partners in the education of children and young people in a planned, systematic and sustainable way.



“All parents can contribute to their children’s education... a paradigm shift is necessary in how we think about parent engagement in school.”

Peter Garrigan, President

Australian Council of State School Organisations



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access a copy of Peter Garrigan’s article ***Engagement must not stop at the gate***



Benefits of effective family and community engagement in student learning

Research from Australia and overseas has found that students achieve better outcomes from their education when schools, families and the community work together to support student learning.

Benefits for schools

Increased:

- respect from staff for families' strengths and efforts
- readiness of staff to involve all families in all aspects of the life of the school
- understanding of the students' strengths, needs and goals
- resources to support schools' learning programs
- attendance of families at school activities
- expectation of families and community to be involved in school programs and governance

Improved:

- connections with the community
- school image within the community
- family and community satisfaction with the school

Benefits for students

Increased:

- self esteem
- engagement in learning
- participation in more challenging subjects

Improved:

- literacy and numeracy outcomes
- attendance
- completion of homework
- behaviour at home and school
- connection to school and learning
- school completion rates

Benefits for families

Increased:

- understanding of their child's learning needs and progress
- confidence in the school environment
- investment in their child's education
- feeling of support from school and other parents
- satisfaction with the work of the school

Improved:

- self esteem
- capacity to help their child do better at school
- involvement in their own education
- connection to the school
- links with community resources and services



What the research shows

‘Support at home increases chances of success’

Read Berthelsen and Walker’s article *Parents’ involvement in their children’s education* at <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2008/fm79/bw.pdf>

Benefits for students

‘The significant role of families, family–school relations, and parental involvement in education has been recognised in promoting achievement across elementary and secondary school levels’

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/dev/sample.aspx>

Benefits for families

‘Family involvement is seen as a component of broader learning systems in which families, schools, and community agencies and others have a shared responsibility for children’s learning’

http://www.equitycampaign.org/i/a/document/12018_EquityMattersVol5_Web.pdf

Benefits for schools

‘There is clear evidence that teachers’ understanding of their local communities, including families and the wider communities, relates to the efficacy of their teaching and their sense of satisfaction in their work’

<http://www.lowsesschools.nsw.edu.au/section/126,122,129-leading-learning/strategic-research/teacher-researching-communities.aspx>



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment

Parental engagement research – Key references

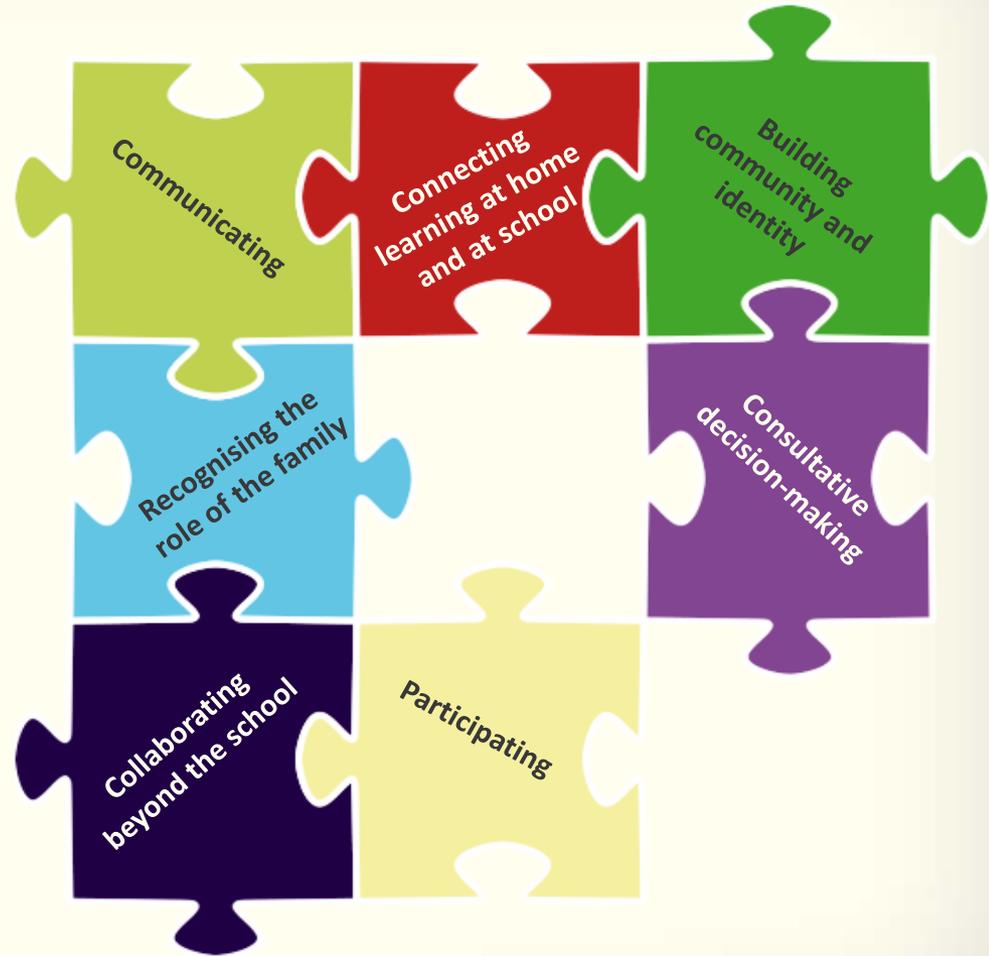


Outcomes

Outcome statements have been developed for the seven dimensions outlined in the *Family-School Partnerships Framework* to provide schools with guidance about the types of practices and behaviours the school could achieve when there is an increased focus on family and community engagement. These outcomes are the result, consequence or impact of focused action and can be measured or evaluated through the collection of data or observation.



To read the outcome statements for the dimensions, click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Conditions for effective practice

For effective family and community engagement practices to be developed and sustained, these supporting structures need to be in place:

1. Leadership commitment to family and community engagement in student learning

2. Respectful relationships with families and communities

3. A supportive and connected school culture

4. A team, reflecting the diversity of the school's stakeholders, responsible for planning, organising, implementing and evaluating family and community engagement activities

5. School policies and procedures which explicitly state and clearly integrate the principles and dimensions of effective partnerships

6. Resources (personnel and funds) allocated for the implementation of family and community engagement activities

7. Support networks, to enable school communities to share ideas, issues and best practice

8. Ongoing professional learning for school leaders and teachers about cultural awareness and communicating with families from diverse communities

9. Skills building for families to build their capacity to support their children's learning at school and at home

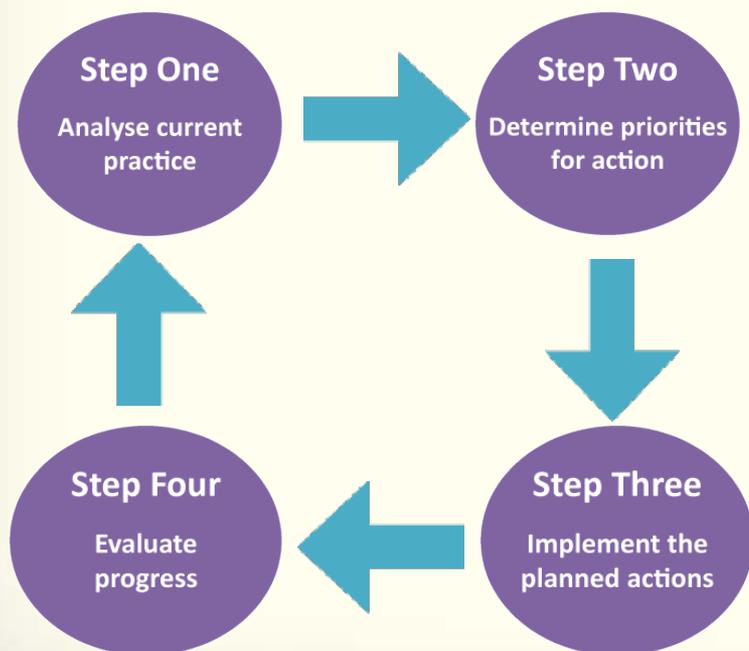


Steps to strengthen engagement



Steps to strengthen engagement

The steps described in the following pages align with a typical school planning cycle and as such the school community (staff, families, students and community members) should be involved in all the steps. When the school community is included it is more likely that all groups within the school community will take ownership and be more committed to action.



Within each school community there will be key people and organisations who can assist families and community members engage in the processes.

Key support people and organisations

Relevant education officers supporting Aboriginal and multicultural education, and other community focused officers.

Local community groups providing advice about Aboriginal education.

Representatives of the culturally and linguistically diverse communities enrolled in the school.

School and regional parent representative bodies.

Local government, non government and community organisations, employers and tertiary institutions.



Step one – analyse current practice

In this step school communities collect data about their current practices related to family and community engagement as part of the school self evaluation process.

A list of questions have been developed to assist school communities review their current practice. These questions are available on the *Reviewing current practice proforma*.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Reviewing current practice proforma*

Schools can use a range of tools to help answer these questions such as through group discussion or surveys. The quantitative and qualitative data collected informs the next step.

Discussion starters

Assessing the school's relationship with its community

<http://www.familyschool.org.au/talk-tools/>

Reviewing current practice

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/cl7partnerships.pdf>

Strengthening community engagement

<http://www.lowsesschools.nsw.edu.au/section/295,304-information-for-schools/low-ses-np-surveys.aspx>

Preparing for family-school partnerships

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/cl7partnerships.pdf>

Surveys

Strengthening community engagement

<http://www.lowsesschools.nsw.edu.au/section/295,304-information-for-schools/low-ses-np-surveys.aspx>

Understanding family engagement in your school

<http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/persurvey.s.pdf>



Step two – determine priorities for action

In this step school communities use the *School Assessment Tool* to identify and reflect on where they are on a continuum of engagement. This process will help determine areas of strength within their current practice and to highlight areas requiring support or development.

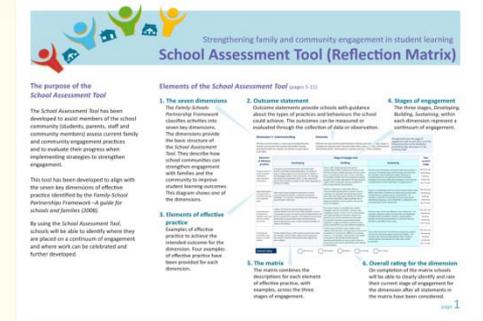
School communities can use the *Analysing current practice proforma* on pg 12 of the *School Assessment Tool* to record effective practices that are already evident in their school; note those that are working well and those that need more work. This information will be useful when determining priorities for further action.

Schools can then use the information previously collected by analysing current practice in Step one and from the *School Assessment Tool* to decide on priorities for further action.

As well as the examples of effective practice given in the *School Assessment Tool*, Section four of this resource, Strategies, case studies and resources, provides a comprehensive suite of ideas for schools to use to strengthen family and community engagement in student learning.

Schools communities can use the *Setting priorities proforma* to identify and prioritise suitable actions.

 Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment [Setting priorities proforma](#)



School Assessment Tool download



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to view or print the [School Assessment Tool](#)



Step three and four – implementing and evaluating action

Step three Implementing the planned actions

Once all possible actions have been prioritised, school communities can embed these into the school plan, relevant policies or programs.

As part of this step, family and community engagement strategies can be written up and promoted within the school community.

Step four Evaluate progress

School communities can develop ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes to continue assessing their progress towards strengthening family and community engagement in learning.

School communities can use the *Evaluation proforma* to document achievements, identify emerging issues and ideas for future action.

When school plans have been implemented, schools can use the *School Assessment Tool* to reflect on their progress and identify areas that require further development.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment

[*Evaluation proforma*](#)



Strategies, case studies and resources



Communicating

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.

 Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- positive phone calls from the school leadership team and teachers to families about students' achievements
- school newsletters written in families first languages
- assistance to families to help them to understand their child's school report
- technology used to communicate between home and school, including emails, blogs and SMS
- formal and informal structures in place to encourage families to initiate conversations with school leaders and class teacher
- professional learning activities for staff on ways to communicate with families from diverse backgrounds
- staff employed or given responsibility for building relationships between families and the school.



Communicating case studies and resources

Putting down new roots (transition to school focus)	Extending school and family partnerships through school-based projects	Connecting with our new arrivals	School and Community: working together Series	Resources
<p>(Coolbellup Community School Western Australia Student enrolment 213)</p> <p>Empowering key parents has been an important strategy for building parental engagement in this relatively new primary school, created by amalgamating several other schools, helping put down 'new roots' in the local community.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 17-19)</p>	<p>(Case study I:-Queensland primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i>)</p> <p>This school employed a parent as a community enhancement officer to improve communication between parents and the school. The officer has been instrumental in providing opportunities for interaction between parents, the school and the wider community.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 36–37)</p>	<p>(Case study L: Tasmanian primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i>)</p> <p>The school engaged a community liaison officer to engage with the new migrant groups and conduct school-based activities to help break down the language and cultural barriers.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 42–43)</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p> <p>Read the full case studies at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>	<p>Communicating tips and ideas for teachers A list of suggestions to assist school personnel communicate effectively with families http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/ts2co mteachers.pdf</p> <p>Interpreters Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS). National Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on Fax: 1300 654 151 http://www.immi.gov.au/living-in-australia/help-with-english/help_with_translating/booking.htm</p>



Connecting learning at home and at school

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- development of kits and resources to help families work with children at home
- families involved in setting goals for their children's learning (personalised learning plans)
- cultural activities, including camps, conducted for families and students
- teachers using student tasks to involve families in student learning
- students and families work together on projects such as murals, art shows, kitchen gardens and research projects.



Connecting learning at home and at school case studies

<i>The power of respectfulness</i>	<i>Effective partnerships in action: Family Maths for years 5 and 6</i>	School and Community: working together Series
<p>Bradshaw Primary School Irrkerlantye Unit Northern Territory Student enrolment 297 Irrkerlantye Unit enrolment 65</p> <p>Reaching out to parents by a student support officer and teachers and a commitment from the school leadership to genuinely listen to parents have resulted in the development of respectful relationships between parents and the Unit.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 11-13)</p>	<p>Case study G: South Australian primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The school built on important links already established between home and school through a series of workshops designed to enhance the capacity of families to support their children’s mathematics learning.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 32–33)</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p> <p>Read the full case study at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>



Connecting learning at home and at school resources

Secondary school strategies – Tip sheet	<i>MakingCents</i> , Finance First Partnership	74 Ways for Families to become Partners in Learning
<p>Research and experience indicate that family participation in their child's education diminishes as children and young people move through their school years. To help halt this decline in participation, secondary schools can reduce some of the common obstacles to family involvement that stem from the organisation and curriculum of the school, and can help families cope with the challenges of adolescence.</p> <p>http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/ts3sscholstrats.pdf</p>	<p><i>MakingCents</i> is a financial literacy program for primary children aged 7–12 years and includes curriculum materials and guidelines to support teachers as well as a guide to help parents with their child's understanding of financial concepts like credit, banking and budgeting, with the aim of building healthy money habits for life.</p> <p>© 2009, Finance First Partnership.</p> <p>http://www.makingcents.com.au/</p>	<p>A list of useful suggestions for families to follow that encourages them to become partners in their child's education.</p> <p>http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/ts10helpchild.pdf</p>



Connecting learning at home and at school resources *continued*

Count Me In Too **mathematics website**

NSW Department of Education and Communities
Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre

The *Count Me In Too* website has classroom activities for students as well as sections for parents, children and teachers. The children's section has online activities which can be used at home.

A range of pamphlets for parents has been developed outlining activities that can be used at home to support mathematics learning at school. These pamphlets on "Helping your child with..." are available in files that can be downloaded in 22 community languages. As well as English, the languages available are Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, Farsi, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Macedonian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Thai, Tongan, Turkish and Vietnamese.

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/primary/mathematics/countmeintoo/cmit/index.htm>

Schoolatoz – practical advice for parents

NSW Department of Education and Communities online resource *Schoolatoz – practical advice for parents* contains tips, tools and resources for parents to help their children with their homework, wellbeing and other growing needs.

Translations provided.

<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/>



Building community and identity

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- specific space in the school to serve as meeting place for families and community
- culturally based community groups used to build networks to support families
- morning teas and other activities scheduled for families to meet staff, learn what is happening at school and celebrate children's learning
- workshops for staff and families on cultural awareness
- employment of teaching and non-teaching staff from different cultural groups
- celebrations of cultural diversity
- Elders and other significant community members involved in developing inclusive curriculum practices
- family-centred focus in school programs and activities
- employment of community development officer or liaison officer to coordinate activities
- community meetings to find solutions to issues that affect the school
- celebrations of traditions, achievements and school milestones.



Building community and identity case studies

<i>Three schools, one parental engagement project</i>	<i>How to engage culturally diverse parents (transition to school focus)</i>	<i>How a focused engagement priority brings success</i>	<i>An open door on the world (Secondary focus)</i>
<p>Elizabeth Schools Connections South Australia Student enrolment – Catherine McAuley 395 St Thomas More 364 St Mary Magdalene’s 195</p> <p>Three schools have joined together to establish a project, governed by its own board, which is specifically focused on increasing the confidence of parents to engage with their children’s learning and their school community.</p>	<p>Dallas Primary School Victoria Student enrolment 320</p> <p>This school has found effective ways of engaging families from diverse language and cultural backgrounds in their children’s learning and the school community. It has created a place where difference is accepted and respected.</p>	<p>East Waikiki Primary School Western Australia Student enrolment 471</p> <p>Now widely recognised as an inspirational model for promoting an Indigenous perspective within school communities, this school has made engaging parents of its Indigenous students a priority focus with a positive impact.</p>	<p>Our Lady of the Sacred Heart South Australia Student enrolment 633</p> <p>With students from a variety of cultural backgrounds and a wide range of languages spoken at home, this school has been pro-active in getting to know the families within its school community and highlighting the value of cultural diversity in school life through its actions and partnerships.</p>
<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 26–28)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 20–22)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 23–25)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 38–40)</p>



Building community and identity case studies *continued*

Rebuilding a school, regenerating a town	Multicultural learning community (transition to school focus)	<i>Welcome new arrivals</i> (transition to school focus)	School and Community: working together Series
<p>Wilcannia Central School New South Wales Student enrolment 101</p> <p>This school is an important part of the fabric of the town. School staff, community members and town and business leaders are working together to build the foundations for strong parental engagement by using every opportunity to encourage family participation in the school.</p>	<p>Case study B: New South Wales primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>This school implemented a number of initiatives to build a stronger community between the school, with 90% of its students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and the parent community.</p>	<p>Case study G: South Australian primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The school implemented strategies to engage families, particularly new arrival families, with the school to make the transition to school for new parents/families as smooth as possible.</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p>
<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 50–52)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 22–23)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 32–33)</p>	<p>Read the full case study at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>



Building community and identity resources

<i>Family diversity checklist</i>	<i>A Guide to Ethnic Naming Practices Book/CD ROM 2004</i>	<i>Behind the name</i>	<i>Behind the surname</i>
<p>This checklist is intended to help school staff to think about how they support the diverse range of families in their community.</p>	<p>This guide, created in 2004, features naming conventions of 66 languages, including languages from newly emerging communities within Australia. It is available for a fee.</p> <p>For more information, please call (02) 8512 0946</p>	<p>This website looks at the etymology and history of given names from many different cultures.</p>	<p>This website looks at the etymology and history of surnames from many different cultures.</p>
<p>http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/cl4famdiversity.pdf</p>	<p>http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/publications/enp.htm</p>	<p>http://www.behindthename.com/</p>	<p>http://surnames.behindthename.com/</p>



Building community and identity resources *continued*

<i>Talk's In. Families of refugee background and schools in dialogue</i>	<i>Parenting between cultures, Marymead Child and Family Centre</i>	<i>School's In for Refugees: Whole-School Guide to Refugee Readiness</i>
<p>Foundation House The Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture</p> <p>A resource to strengthen the capacity of school communities to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for families from refugee backgrounds. The resource includes background information, practical suggestions and resources for workshops with school staff and families.</p>	<p><i>Parenting between cultures</i> aims to strengthen the ability of culturally and linguistically diverse parents to parent confidently and capably in the Australian context by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• raising awareness of what is important in families which work well• strengthening families' ability to transmit their cultural practices and beliefs• increasing parents' ability to meet their own and their children's needs in a way which maintains family harmony• promoting parents' understanding of how the school system operates• increasing parental competency in non-physical discipline techniques and understanding of Australian child abuse laws• sharing ways of gaining support from the informal and formal support systems.	<p>Foundation House The Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture</p> <p>A resource to support schools to recognise and respond to the needs of refugee students. It provides advice on how schools can identify refugee students and understand the impact of their experiences. It suggests policies and practices which a school might adopt in creating a welcoming setting, and curriculum which supports the learning of refugee and other students. Registered users may download copies.</p>
<p>http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/resources/publications_and_resources.htm</p>	<p>http://www.marymead.org.au/publications</p>	<p>http://www.foundationhouse.com.au/home/index.htm</p>



Recognising the role of the family

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.

 Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*

Successful strategies include:

- school vision and mission statement explicitly refer to working in partnership with families
- canvassing families for suggestions on how the school can support them in helping their children learn
- holding workshops on parenting related topics to assist families support their children's learning
- surveying families at the beginning of the year for information about their children to help teachers tailor their programs to reflect family needs and priorities
- community contacts facilitating workshops to develop parents' skills
- charter for parents.



Recognising the role of the family case studies

<i>The impact of an inspirational principal</i>	<i>The central importance of relationships</i>	<i>How a school became a Community's central resource (K–2 focus)</i>	<i>Putting parents and children at the centre of school life (Year 6 focus)</i>
<p>Bathurst West Public School New South Wales Student enrolment 373</p> <p>By valuing home, school and community partnerships, this school has made significant progress in building a cohesive school community. Under strong leadership and by adopting a child-centred focus, the school now works with parents as equal partners in their children's learning.</p>	<p>St Albans Meadows Primary School Victoria Student enrolment 353</p> <p>This school has developed a shared vision of valuing the role of parents in the delivery of high quality programs for their children. Parents have high aspirations for their children and their involvement as co-educators is valued and respected. The school is recognised as a teacher education centre in the field of parental engagement.</p>	<p>St Brendan's Primary School New South Wales Student enrolment 392</p> <p>Through the development of 'personnel infrastructure', a whole school approach to pastoral care and encouraging personal approaches to connecting parents and school staff, this school community has made significant progress in building parental and local capacity and is seen by the community as a central resource.</p>	<p>Toukley Public School New South Wales Student enrolment 533</p> <p>By placing parents and children at the centre of school life, this school has been transforming the school culture into one that unites school and family. This has included promoting high expectations and aspirations in regard to tertiary education for their students.</p>
<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 8–10)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 41–43)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 44–46)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 47–49)</p>



Recognising the role of the family case studies *continued*

<i>Personality, resilience and learning styles – understanding our children and ourselves</i>	<i>Early learning centre and parent community centre (transition to school focus)</i>	<i>Guiding and supporting teens: Taking a triple focus, girls, boys and parents (Year 9 focus)</i>	<i>School and Community: working together Series</i>
<p>Case study H: Victorian primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>A successful conference for families was coordinated by a group of parents who shaped the agenda based on suggestions from parents on topics that would help them better support their children’s learning and development.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 34–35)</p>	<p>Case study A: primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The Early Learning Centre prepares children aged from birth to four years for school, and at the same time educates their parents in how to assist with the child’s development. The Parent and Community Centre is a social support centre for parents and is open to anyone in the community.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 20–21)</p>	<p>Case study D: Queensland secondary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The school made personal contact with a targeted group of parents to take part in a parallel program developed to support at risk Year 9 students.</p> <p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 26–27)</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p> <p>Read the full case study at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>



Recognising the role of the family resources

Example of vision statement	<i>Strengthening Families Resourcing Parents</i>	<i>Triple P – Positive Parenting Program®</i> University of Queensland
<p><i>Charter for Parents in Catholic Schools SA</i></p> <p>http://www.fedparents.adl.catholic.edu.au/Documents/Charter%20for%20Parents.pdf</p>	<p>Nationally available parenting resources and events for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) can be searched by topic or by language.</p> <p>Topics include issues around child development, health, feeding and nutrition, mental health, parenting, parent education, safety and child protection.</p> <p>http://www.resourcingparents.com/resources/parents_cald.php</p>	<p>The <i>Triple P – Positive Parenting Program®</i> developed by the Parent and Family Support Centre at the University of Queensland, teaches a positive approach to parenting, promoting the children’s development in a constructive and caring way.</p> <p>http://www1.triplep.net/</p>



Recognising the role of the family resources *continued*

<i>Raising Children in Australia</i>	<i>Raising kids together</i>	<i>Magic 1,2,3, Dr Thomas Phelan</i>
<p>The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST) in partnership with the Horn of Africa Communities Network (HACN).</p> <p><i>Raising Children in Australia</i> is a resource kit for early childhood services working with parents from African backgrounds. It comprises a guide for early childhood services working with parents from African backgrounds and a DVD for parents from African backgrounds with young children who arrived under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program.</p> <p>The DVD is available in English, Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Somali, Dinka, Nuer, Kirundi, Kiswahili, Liberian, English and Krio.</p> <p>www.foundationhouse.org.au/LiteratureRetrieve.aspx?ID=24938</p>	<p>NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Homecare (ADHC).</p> <p><i>Raising kids together: Information for families who have a child or young person with a disability</i> is available as a booklet with DVD in six languages from NSW ADHC.</p> <p>http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0007/228688/RKT_English_web.pdf</p>	<p>Parenting solutions to deal with difficult behaviours in toddlers, children and teens.</p> <p>http://www.parentmagic.com/</p>



Consultative decision-making

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- families contributing to the development of school policies and programs
- involving families in decisions about finance, curriculum and other aspects of school organisation
- affirmative action approaches to broaden the involvement of all cultural groups in school decision making processes
- promoting and supporting parents and groups
- including parent representatives on all school committees
- creating advisory or consultative groups to support school leadership teams
- school staff using a variety of forums to engage in face-to-face discussions with families
- teachers and families collaborating in the development and review of individual learning plans.



Consultative decision-making case studies

<i>A community takes the lead</i>	<i>Family and community capacity-building (junior secondary focus)</i>	The parent reference group	School and Community: working together Series
<p>Manyallaluk Homeland School Northern Territory Student enrolment 22</p> <p>Community initiated, this school is an integral part of the community, who place a high value on education. Parents take a leadership role in supporting other parents to become involved in their children’s learning and to become active partners in their children’s education.</p>	<p>Case study E: Western Australian secondary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The school focused on empowering parents by holding weekly meetings at the school where parents could discuss issues relating to their children and raise any matters they wish about what is happening in the school. A parent convened and chaired the meetings.</p>	<p>Case study K: New South Wales primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>The school established a new parent representative group to reach out to parents from all cultural groups to increase participation in school activities and contributions to school decision making.</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p>
<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 32–34)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 28–29)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 40–41)</p>	<p>Read the full case study at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>



Consultative decision-making resources

Parents as Partners in School Review

A practical series of ideas for involving parents in consultation processes and school review gatherings. These strategies and activities can be valuable tools for school improvement processes and engaging with parent and community groups.

<http://www.partners4learning.edu.au/consultative/fx-view-resource.cfm?loadref=9&uuid=7933DF27-EE43-7EEC-9D743DD542127B52>

Making the Partnership Work

This resource has been developed by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to support the work of school councils. It outlines the legal framework, governance and operations of school councils. It may be of interest to schools in other settings.

http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/schacc/make_partnerships_work.pdf

Governing Together – What is good governance?

This guide developed by the Victorian Council of School Organisations Inc, begins with a brief section outlining what is meant by governance and why the development of good governance is of the utmost importance. Then, ten good practices for developing good governance in schools are identified and explained. During 2011, the guide will be supported with examples of these ideas in practice. These will take the form of video interviews with parents, teachers, principals, students and education support personnel, together with links to local school initiatives. Further, the guide may be turned into an easy-to-use online self-assessment tool for school councils.

<http://www.edu.org.au/content/governance>



Collaborating beyond the school

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- partnerships with cultural groups, government and non-government agencies to support activities eg play group, school nurse, breakfast clubs
- partnerships with universities to provide therapy services or develop community programs (eg student speech pathology clinics; social work/community development)
- partnerships with agencies and organisations to support student learning
- community use of school facilities, eg community rooms, library, computer rooms, halls and gyms
- participation in community meetings and events
- school membership on community groups
- linking families to support services
- vocational education programs/pathways.



Collaborating beyond the school case studies

The school as community hub

Katoomba North Public School
New South Wales
Student enrolment 155

Now recognised and valued by the local community as a focal point where parents can meet, the community hub established within the school is the centre for building the capacity of parents and the community so that both become partners in supporting the learning and social development of students at the school.

 Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment *School case studies in parental engagement* (pg 29–31)

A school takes the lead in a community partnership (early years focus)

Moe Elizabeth St. Primary School
Victoria
Student enrolment 130

Taking the lead in working collaboratively with the community, this school has initiated a number of important programs that form the core of its parental engagement strategies, with a particular focus on parents with children in the early years.

 Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment *School case studies in parental engagement* (pg 35–37)

Retention and participation program: Engagement and enrichment through the Arts and Sport re-engagement centre

Case study F: Western Australian secondary school – *Family-School Partnerships Framework*

The secondary school utilised many community resources to support families and their children engage in schooling.

 Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Family-School Partnerships Framework* (pg 30–31)

School and Community: working together Series

This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.

Read the full case study at <http://www.whatworks.edu.au/>



Collaborating beyond the school resources

Extended School Hubs

This video showcases the benefits that the Smarter Schools Low SES National Partnership can have for young people living in low socio-economic communities.

It features principals of two Low SES National Partnership schools, North Shore Primary School and Eaglehawk Secondary College, discussing the ways in which the National Partnership has enabled their schools to increase community and parental engagement in the learning of students at the school.

The General Manager of the Smith Family, discusses ways in which the Smith Family has partnered with schools to enhance learning outcomes for students.

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/media/Pages/VICExtendedSchoolHubs.aspx>

Extended School Service Models

This video features the Principal of Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre, discussing the hub of integrated services being delivered through the Early Learning Centre and the Challis Primary School.

The Principal discusses how these new services are benefitting the school community, particularly through increasing school readiness and a strong focus on parental engagement. The Principal also provides advice for other principals interested in implementing a similar initiative.

<http://smarterschools.gov.au/media/Pages/NationalExtendedSchoolServiceModels.aspx>



Participating

The information presented in this dimension is designed to assist schools set priorities for action as part of the school planning process. The attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance* provides further information about this dimension including the elements of effective practice and outcome.

 Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment *Dimensions of family and community engagement at a glance*



Successful strategies include:

- training of family and community volunteers and local staff to facilitate programs and support students
- supporting families to assist in classrooms and school activities (excursions, gardens, kitchens etc)
- building a directory of family skills and interests and providing opportunities for families to lead school activities
- activities where the whole family, including siblings and grandparents, can participate.



Participating case studies and resources

Getting parents involved right from the start (transition to school focus)	Raise-raising achievement in schools	School and Community: working together Series	Resources
<p>Christie Downs Primary School South Australia Student enrolment 150</p> <p>Parents are able to extend their own learning while actively involved in their children's learning through the multiple points for connection created by this school and the individualised and small group approaches to parental engagement used.</p>	<p>Case study J: Western Australian primary school – <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i></p> <p>Volunteer parents were trained in basic classroom skills and in special literacy and numeracy programs to enable them to work alongside teachers in classrooms.</p>	<p>This resource contains numerous case studies that may provide strategies that could be used in similar settings.</p>	<p>Family friendly checklist</p> <p>This is a tool to assess how family friendly your school is. It should be completed by a group consisting of representatives of the school community, including parents.</p>
<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>School case studies in parental engagement</i> (pg 14–16)</p>	<p> Click on the paper clip on the left hand menu bar to access the attachment <i>Family-School Partnerships Framework</i> (pg 38–39)</p>	<p>Read the full case study at http://www.whatworks.edu.au/</p>	<p>http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/commrel/familiesaspartners/cl6famfriendly.pdf</p>



Links to additional strategies for the 7 dimensions

1. The *Family-School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families*
<http://www.familyschool.org.au/pdf/framework.pdf>
2. The State and Territories overviews section of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships website. Details of a variety of approaches undertaken by schools serving low SES communities are provided.
<http://smarterschools.gov.au/nationalpartnerships/Pages/StateandTerritoryImplementations.aspx>
3. The Resources for schools section of the *Families as Partners in Learning* site on the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website.
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/familiesaspartners/schools/default.htm>
4. The *Partners 4 Learning* resource developed by the Council of Catholic School Parents to assist teachers and school personnel to strengthen their capacity to engage with parents, families and communities to support children's learning.
<http://www.partners4learning.edu.au/>
5. The Parents and Community area of the Supporting Low SES School Communities website (NSW).
<http://www.lowsesschools.nsw.edu.au/section/154-parents-and-community.aspx>
6. The *Practical Actions* document developed to support NSW government schools participating in the National Partnerships on Low SES School Communities.
<http://www.lowsesschools.nsw.edu.au/section/295,304-information-for-schools/low-ses-np-surveys.aspx>



Links to additional strategies for the 7 dimensions *continued*

7. The *What Works. The Work Program* website funded by DEEWR *School and Community: working together* series.

This resource is intended to support partnerships between Indigenous communities and schools and includes information on conversations, relationships, partnerships (for parents and communities and for staff); how schools work; learning at home and at school and engagement, case studies that could be used in similar settings.

<http://www.whatworks.edu.au/>

8. The Schools as centres of community activity section of the Successful Language Learners website.

The Successful Language Learners (SLL) project was a joint initiative of the NSW Department of Education and Communities and the Catholic Education Commission of NSW. Funding for the project has been provided by the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The purpose of the project was to improve the English language, literacy and numeracy performance of students who are learning English as a second language, including refugee students.

<http://www.successfullanguagelearners.nsw.edu.au/>



Click on the paper clip on the (PDF) left hand menu bar to access the attachment
Resources for school communities



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<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Programs/SmarterSchools/Pages/NationalKeyReformProjects.aspx>

Disclaimer

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