

# A PEATC

Do You Know....



## Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

### Family Engagement in Early Childhood: It Takes A Village

#### I'm Already Involved so What is Family Engagement?

**Family engagement means building ongoing, positive and respectful relationships between family members and the early childhood professionals** (teachers, therapists, community members) who work with your child. Establishing these relationships early in the child's life helps set him for long term success and helps establish long term trust between families and professionals. When done well, families are involved not only in decision-making about their child, but also in the services, systems, and programs that support the child.

Family engagement benefits everyone involved, by:

- Empowering families **to make informed choices about services.**
- Increasing the quality of parent child interactions and improves **family stability.**
- Improving **child outcomes and** increases **student achievement** regardless of financial status, ethnic or racial background, or parent education levels.
- Improving **student self-esteem, self-discipline, and behavior**
- **Reducing placement** in special education and remedial (catch up) classes.
- Building family knowledge and skills and provides a sense of belonging and accomplishments for parents.
- Improving **services and service delivery** by improving the skills of staff.

#### What are Key Principles of Family Engagement?

Successful family engagement takes work by everyone involved. But it is worth it. This is what you will want to see and feel as a family member.

- An environment that is **welcoming and respectful** to you.
- Teachers and other professionals who consider you a **key team member.**
- Professionals that recognize and support your **cultural, language, and faith** background, traditions, and experiences.
- **Shared responsibility** between family members, school settings, and the community, i.e., we are a team and are in this together.
- **Support for your family's well-being** beyond just the school setting (for example, if your family is experiencing financial or medical issues).
- An understanding of **your concerns and priorities.**
- Continuous **communication and help with problem-solving.**

#### Resources on Family Engagement

##### Virginia Department of Education

<https://bit.ly/2VJT92I>

##### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/FI/benefits/>

##### National Association for the Education of Young Children

[www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement)

##### National Center on Parent, Family & Community Engagement

<https://bit.ly/2IjYVzP>

##### U.S. Department of Education

[www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/parent-checklist.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/parent-checklist.pdf)

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## How Can My Family Become Engaged?

As a family member, there are a lot of ways for you to be engaged. The list below **provides ideas on some possible** ways to be involved.

- Be involved in setting goals and in decision-making about the child and his activities and learning. Ask questions and provide feedback and follow up to see if your suggestions have been put into action.
- Work with staff to help develop activities and events that work for everyone.
- Participate in parent workshops and school and social events (fundraisers, book sales, restaurant events, PTA meetings)
- Volunteer in or outside of the classroom; chaperone activities.
- Support your child's early learning by having him read to you every day.
- Ask the teacher to send home daily notebooks and folders so you can track your child's progress and work with staff to address any challenges.
- Follow up with what is being taught at school and help teach those same skills at home. Let the staff know if your child has learned something new at home.
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences and ask for one if you have questions, want to share information, or problem-solve.
- Share information about your family's culture and traditions and develop activities around them.
- Keep two-way continuous communication open; ask for help when you need it.



## What Can the Rest of the Team do?

- Engage families as equal partners.
- Share knowledge, ask for information, and include parent ideas into learning activities
- Keep open communication and communicate in the parent's native (primary) language
- Work with families to create activities that reflect cultural traditions.
- Include families in leadership roles.
- Be attentive to family stress or change; talk to the family about any challenges they may be experiencing **and any help that can be provided**.
- Conduct home visits and outreach into the community
- Provide information on resources that families can use at home and in the community.
- Provide mentors to families to help teach skills or involve families in activities they may not have done before.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

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