



5 Key Practices and 10 Ideas for Educators to Assist with Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

1 Build Relationships and Be Present. Start with conversations, and keep the child's learning at the center as you ask questions, listen, and share. Chatting with families in their communities helps build relationships, mutual understanding, and respect.



- Enjoy neighborhood walks and porch visits (a less intrusive form of a home visit).
- Attend street fairs and other local events in your families' neighborhoods.

2 Recognize, Honor, and Promote Existing Knowledge. Honor each family's unique knowledge by inviting each family to share with the class/school. This sends a clear message: families matter and are a vital part of their children's education.

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- Invite linguistically diverse families to teach or share their primary language.
- Have culturally diverse families assist you when purchasing books for the school, decorating the school building, or sharing student work in the classroom or halls.

3 Identify and Use What Works for Each Family. Tailor your approach to fit the needs of each family. The better you know families and their cultural beliefs about education the easier it is to engage them effectively, respectfully, and responsively.



- Shed ideas about what family engagement "should be" and reimagine what family engagement could look like based on your knowledge of families.
- With families, co-plan school-based family events or co-design home-based activities.

4 Promote a Culture of Awareness, Learning, and Sharing. Listen and observe before you talk and act. When you listen and observe first—and model that approach for students, families, and other school staff members—learning environments become more inclusive and welcoming to all.

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- Host storytelling and listening groups in which teachers, students, and their families gather to share personal experiences.
- Host reading groups in which teachers and families read books and articles that examine unconscious bias, culture, and other relevant topics that help break down barriers.

5 Foster Community by Building Social Capital. Vibrant and resilient communities flourish when they draw upon the idea that "we're all in this together." Work to foster an authentic sense of belonging and oneness among students *and* families.



- Host mingling events that focus on relationship building and resource-sharing on and *off* school property to connect everyone to the surrounding community.
- Create "knowledge sharing" boards for families and teachers to share local and personal knowledge and pool their "funds of knowledge" ([Lopez, 2006](#)).