



## Family Engagement Strategies

The **Parent Involvement Survey** measures the percentage of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. In addition to parents, students over 18 years-of-age complete the survey, unless a parent has retained Individualized Education Program (IEP) rights.

Questions fall into one or more of the following four categories: Partnerships, Communication, Family support, and School climate. These tips, used in conjunction with the annual survey question-by-question data and a district or school-based action plan, will have a positive impact on family engagement and student outcomes.

### Partnerships

- Provide a draft IEP prior to the meeting and encourage participation. Include proposals and all relevant documents.
- Greet parents and students upon arrival and introduce all participants.
- Distribute the IEP meeting agenda and review roles and responsibilities.
- Allow equal time for input into each component of the IEP.
- Ask teachers and related-service providers to share strategies to support academic progress.
- Offer to review of the Procedural Safeguards Notice (PSN).
- Review pertinent local policies.

### Communication

- Maintain regular—formal and informal—communication regarding progress. Celebrate successes and discuss concerns.
- Identify a point of contact for student-specific questions (i.e., teacher or case manager) and for general special education questions (e.g., the school parent liaison, student counselor, a Raising Special Kids Family Support Specialist-[www.raisingpecialkids.org](http://www.raisingpecialkids.org)).
- Use family-friendly person-first language and check for understanding.
- Utilize interpreters who are familiar with the special education process and terminology.
- Use a variety of media for effective home/school communication (e.g., newsletters, flyers, phone calls, reminder apps, Facebook, Twitter).
- Notify parents and students of all school activities, including extracurricular events, and encourage participation.

### Family Support

- Be sensitive to how each family is affected by disability and mindful of their cultural values, beliefs and perceptions.
- Offer meeting dates and times to accommodate family schedules.
- Propose a variety of meeting options (e.g., school site, home visit, conference call, video conference).
- Offer special education training and resources to students, parents, and staff (e.g., host workshops, disseminate parent group training calendars, and display resource materials, including self-determination and self-advocacy resources).
- Plan workshops based on input from students and families.
- Develop and maintain advisory councils and support groups.

### School Climate

- Create an atmosphere that welcomes and engages students and families.
- Encourage input in the decision-making process.
- Provide staff development on a variety of topics that impact student and family engagement.

### Family Engagement Programs

- Explore the evidence-based family engagement programs posted on [www.azed.gov/specialeducation/parent-involvement-survey-admin](http://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/parent-involvement-survey-admin).
- Contact Becky Raabe, Parent Survey Coordinator, [ParentSurvey@azed.gov](mailto:ParentSurvey@azed.gov), or (928) 637-1871.