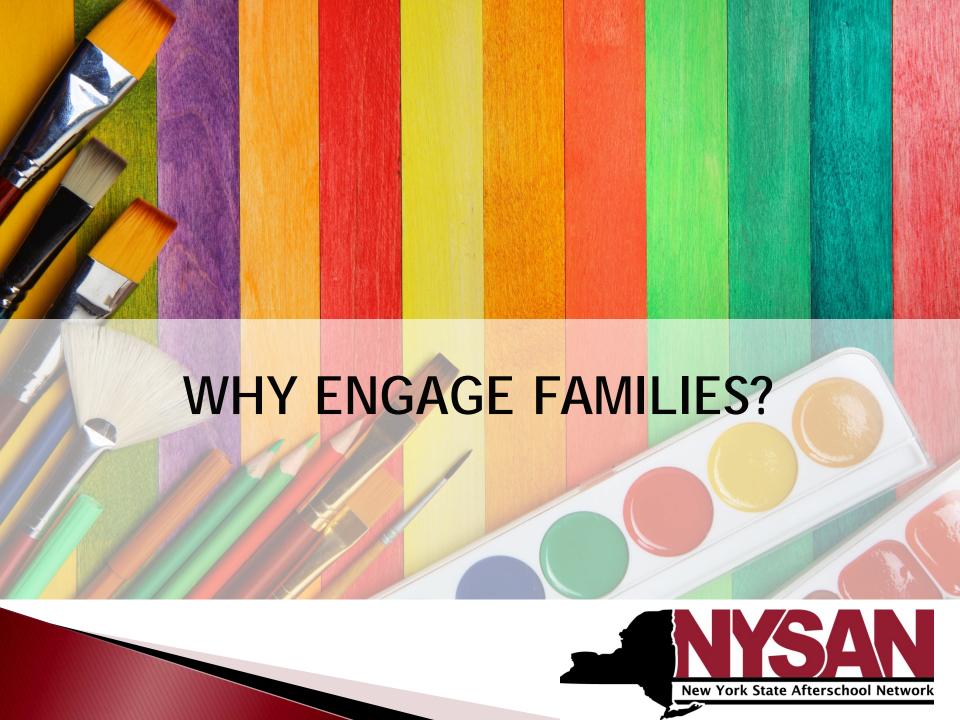


Engaging Families in Your Community School: What Works

Agenda

- Why Engage Families?
- Why Aren't Families Engaged?
- Strategies
- Available Resources
- •Questions





Family Engagement Matters

Research has shown that:

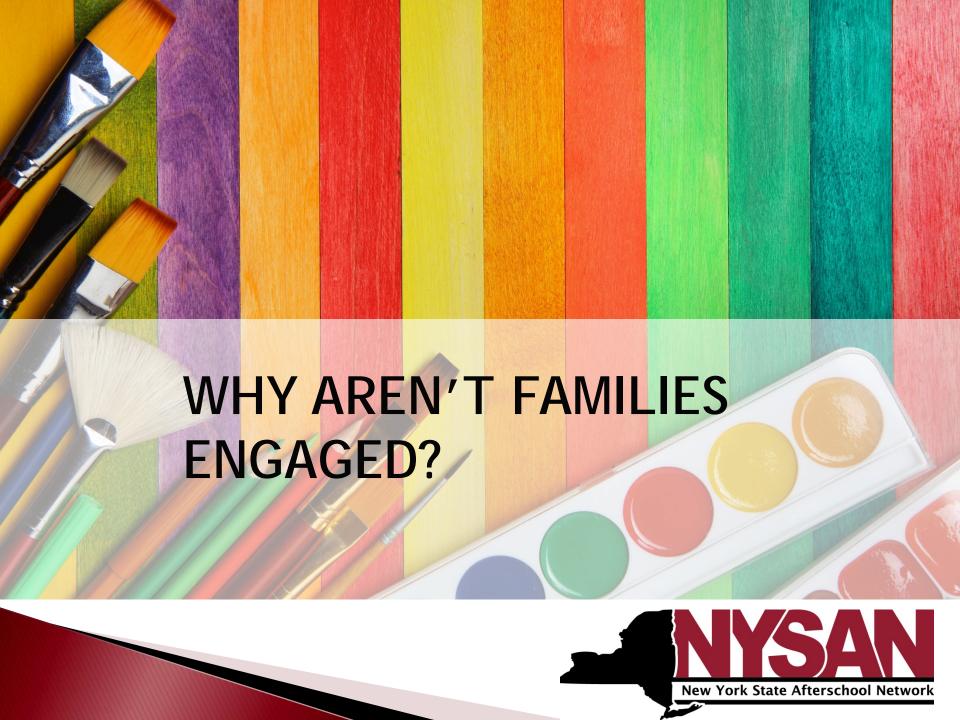
- Family involvement > income/status as a predictor of student academic achievement
- Involved families = continued education
- Teachers expect more -> higher scores/grades
- Youth attitudes towards work/career reflect family attitudes towards education/career



Parent vs. Family Engagement

- Traditional focus on parents
 - PTAs
 - Volunteers in classrooms/on field trips
- Primary caregivers with influence on children
 - Grandparents
 - Older siblings
 - Foster parents
 - Court-appointed guardians
 - Tribal elders
 - Baby sitters/ nannies





Traditional Family Engagement

- **PTAs**
- Parent Night/Spaghetti Dinner
- Classroom Volunteers
- Field Trip Volunteers
- Talent Show
- Principal/Counselor Meetings



Barriers to Engagement

Barriers to Engagement

- Negative Experiences
- Language and Cultural Differences
- Issues of Race and Class
- Lack of Training
- Lack of Planning
 - Timing
 - Transportation
 - Childcare
 - Food*





Family engagement isn't just about offering services—it's about offering a relationship

Have a Plan

Plan Your Work

Program	Target	Goals	Measures	Timing	Provider/ Curriculum
Zumba Class	Working parents interested in fitness/nutr ition	-Engage parents in fitness -Teach nutrition -Build relationship s with teachers	-Number of parents participatin g -Number of teachers participatin g -Parents report positive relationship s with teachers	Thursdays, 6pm-7pm	YMCA



Communicate in Multiple Forms

Communication

- Parent brochures
- Newsletters
- Letters
- Manuals
- Calendars
- Signs/posters

- Texts
- Website
- Social media
- In person
- Meetings
- **Calls**



Bring Parents In

Welcoming Space

- Easy-to-read school maps
- Flags representing diversity
- Considerations for security guards
- Welcoming office staff
- Family centers



Family Center

- Space that is 'theirs' in a school
- Families know where to go
- Information about community resources
- Computers
- Suggestion Box



Classes

- What are the needs?
 - TASC (GED)
 - English
 - Fitness/Nutrition
 - Parenting
 - Parent Summer Camp
- Engage your teachers/staff
 - Builds positive relationships

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Fitness

"Family Get Fit" -

- Families "get fit" together through a set of fitness and nutrition activities facilitated by the local YWCA.
- Families who are involved with this program have four opportunities to meet with a YWCA staff person as their motivational coach to help them through the program.
- All families involved will also listen to fitness and nutrition experts.
- Families have the chance to earn a free membership to the YWCA and to participate in four family fun events during the course of the program.

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Make Personal Connections

Address Staff Attitudes

- The Human Barometer
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Unsure



Engage Community-Based Organizations

- Community partners often have other connections to families
- They hire staff from the community
- They may provide early care
- They may provide other social services
- Afterschool providers are there when parents are available for pick-up
- Staff can serve as family liaisons



Small Group Sessions

- Can include families, teachers, and community partners
- Address incorrect assumptions about each other

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- Build positive relationships
- Lead to more informed contributions

Engaged Principal

- Attends school events
- Attends community events
- Chance to build relationships with families
- Shows they care



Liaisons

- Family Liaison
 - School or community partner staff
 - From community
 - Builds relationships
 - Plans events
- Parent Liaison
 - Parent/family member from school
 - Has connections/relationships with other families
 - Encourages participation and helps build relationships



Home Visits

- Can be school staff or community partner
- Arranged by parent liaison/community member
- Letter or call first
- Staff visit in pairs
- Principals should structure release time for teachers



Provide Meaningful Opportunities

Planning Team/ Self-Assessment

- School Improvement Plans
- Self-Assessments
- Community Engagement Teams
- Opportunities for more leadership roles:
 - Revolving committees
 - Co-chaired committees



Class/Program Contributions

- Sharing stories/cultural customs for Social Studies
- Work expertise or hobbies for related subjects
 - More than "career day" -> have parents run activities
- Translators



Advocacy

- Train parents
 - Phone calls
 - Letters
 - Petitions
 - Press conferences
 - Gain support
 - Train other parents



Make Participation Easy

Planning Considerations

- Timing
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Food



Incorporating Food

- Grants administered by the State Education Department cannot cover the cost of food as incentives
- Meals can be provided as part of programming activities around nutrition



Assess What Works

- Informal feedback
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Community conversations
- Parent liaison feedback
- Continue programs that really work & target areas that need improvement

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What resonates?



Harvard Family Research Project

- Family Involvement Website
 - http://hfrp.org/familyinvolvement
- Publications
- Resources
- Professional development opportunities



Coalition for Community Schools

- Community & Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works
 - http://www.communityschools.org/a ssets/1/AssetManager/CommunityA ndFamilyEngagement.pdf



The After-School Corporation

- Increasing Family and Parent Engagement in After-School
 - http://www.expandedschools.org/s ites/default/files/increasing_parent _family_engagement_in_after_schoo l.pdf
- Handbook
- Examples in programs
- Sample forms



The Quality Self-Assessment Tool

- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- NYSAN
- http://www.nysan.org/quality-self-assessment-tool/elements-program-quality/parent-family-community-partnerships/

ELEMENT 1 ENVIRONMENT/CLIMATE

A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all participants.

A quality program:

- *Provides a stimulating, welcoming, and supportive environment for young people.
- 2. *Uses program space that is safe and clean.
- Has program space that is appropriately equipped and suitable for activities being conducted.
- *Develops, implements, and shares approved safety plans and procedures with staff and families.
- 5. *Provides adequate security for program.
- *Develops and manages effective arrival and dismissal procedures and plans for safe travel home.
- 7. *Provides healthy and nutritious snacks and/or supper.

Performance Level			Plan To Improve			
1	2	3	4	Right Now	This Year	Next Year



Additional Resources

- Afterschool Supporting Family Involvement in Schools
 - Afterschool Alliance
 - http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_ briefs/issue_parent_involvement_32.pdf
- •Afterschool and Summer Programs as Catalysts for Engaging Families
 - Expanding Minds and Opportunities
 - http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/section-v-afterschool-and-summer-programs-catalysts-engaging-families

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