



# Social Emotional Learning & Family and Community Engagement

## SEL IS KEY

Family and community engagement is important for promoting equity in education, and strong social emotional learning (SEL) competencies are crucial for achieving that goal. When families and community members actively participate in SEL initiatives, it creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.



## INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

When families and community members actively participate in SEL, it promotes inclusivity and ensures that the perspectives, cultures, and values of all students are represented. By adopting a definition of family that includes diverse structures and recognizes families' foundational role in young people's learning, schools create an environment where students and families feel valued and supported. Schools can learn more about families and encourage them to share children's strengths and areas for growth. Schools can also invite diverse family representation in planning teams.



## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING PRACTICES

Family and community engagement brings lived experiences and cultural knowledge to the school, and SEL competencies support its inclusion in the curriculum and school community. Integrating these perspectives into SEL lessons and practices promotes equitable access, affirms students' cultural identities, and enhances well-being. An ongoing commitment to Adult SEL allows school personnel, families, and community members to strengthen relationships and examine social and emotional factors, including the role of bias.



## HOME-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

When families and community are actively involved in SEL, they gain a deeper understanding of their children's SEL skills. Schools can regularly share SEL strengths, growth areas, and positive feedback with families using preferred communication methods and languages to provide access to SEL materials. This helps families provide consistent support and promotes equity through consistent practice for all students.



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## RESOURCE & SUPPORT NETWORKS

Family and community engagement in SEL provides resources and supports for students and families. Community organizations, afterschool programs, and mental health services offer supports, such as counseling, mentorship, and enrichment. By leveraging these partnerships, schools expand resources and support systems, particularly those who may face socioeconomic challenges.



## KEY POINTS



- Engaging families and community members in SEL initiatives promotes inclusivity and supports diverse perspectives, cultures, and values.
- Family and community engagement brings lived experience and cultural knowledge to the school community and affirms students' cultural identities.
- Strong partnerships bridge home, school, and community support systems, creating a collaborative and supportive learning environment for students.
- Community engagement in SEL can offer resources such as counseling and enrichment.
- [New York's revised SEL Benchmarks](#) reflect this priority.

## RESOURCES

- CASEL. District Resource Center, [Develop and Strengthen Family and Community Partnerships](#)
- CASEL. Guide to Schoolwide SEL, [Focus Area 3: Family Partnerships](#)
- Mapp, K. L. & Bergman, E. (2019). [Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships \(Version 2\)](#).
- Shafer, L. (2018). [Family Engagement and SEL: Enhancing social emotional learning with a whole-family, whole-day approach](#). Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## RESEARCH

- McWayne, C., Hyun, S., Diez, V., & Mistry, J. (2022). [“We Feel Connected...and Like We Belong”: A Parent-Lead, Staff-Supported Model of Family Engagement in Early Childhood](#). Tufts University, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School