



Expanded School Mental Health West Virginia

<https://livewell.marshall.edu/mutac>

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Family Engagement

Tool Kit #8

Parent, family and community involvement in education correlates with higher academic performance, student wellbeing and school improvement.¹

– West Virginia Expanded School Mental Health, 2017

Regardless of socio-economic status, parent education, or family structure, ongoing and consistent family engagements contribute to school and community success. Family engagement is a critical component of Expanded School Mental Health.

Expanded school mental health (ESMH) is a multi-tiered system of support where schools and strategic community partners work together to enhance student mental health in schools. It is a framework that:

- includes the full continuum of prevention; early intervention and treatment;
- serves all students;
- builds upon core programs/services being provided by schools
- emphasizes shared responsibility between schools, mental health providers and other community partners

At the school level, practices that promote family engagement include:

- formal policies and practices are in place to ensure family access to school and to strengthen parent and family engagement;

- opportunities throughout the school year to enhance family/staff relationships (e.g. family meetings with teachers and counselors to share grade level expectations, sharing strategies to support student work at home);
- frequent and clear communications with parents about services and supports through the student handbook, website and family events;
- two-way communication (positive phone calls, open door policies, family home visits by relevant school staff to build relationships and provide support);
- a welcoming environment, family friendly culture, including a welcoming space to engage families (i.e. parent friendly signage and customer service training for staff);
- programs and activities that engage families in promoting student achievement (e.g., student work displayed throughout the building, advisory councils, volunteers for workshops, family grade level meetings, open houses, school projects and fairs, etc.);
- activities to develop families' self-confidence related to school/family partnerships (e.g., community schools, inviting families to be involved in planning and making decisions, a school that is open and accessible);
- professional learning for families and staff, including opportunities to learn together (i.e. course content, school crisis plans, student and parent support services, parenting skills, health, personalized education plans, child development and learning expectations, etc.);
- helping support families meet basic needs using a community schools approach (connecting families to each other, to the program staff, to schools and to community resources).

References

2008 NEA Policy Brief: Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education: http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf

Engaging Families: Principles of Effective Practice <https://www.naeyc.org/familyengagement/principles>

Family Engagement

West Virginia Resources

- Parent Education Resource Centers (PERCs) <https://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/perc.html>
- PERCs Directory <http://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/percdirectory.html>
- West Virginia Department of Education Parents 21 Initiative: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/parents21/>
- West Virginia Department of Education Title 1 Resources for parent involvement policies and communication: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/title1/>
- Family Engagement: Real Partners in Education: <https://wvde.state.wv.us/title1/documents/FamilyEngagememt.pdf>
- 12 “Doable” Strategies to Increase Student and Family Engagement: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/documents/LindaWattsJeanetteRowseyTiffanyPitmanandRhondaMcCormick-Handout-FYESKidStrongToolkitStrategi.pdf>

General Resources

- Building Powerful Partnerships with Families: <http://ctschoolparentcompact.org>
- Community Schools http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx
- Engaging Families to Improve Academic Achievement – Advice from the Research: <http://www.aces.org/uploads/files/Early%20Childhood%20Services/Family%20Engagement%2010.16.14.pdf>

- Evidence-Based Strategies for Supporting and Enhancing Family Engagement <http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/evidence-based-strategies-supporting-and-enhancing-family-engagement>
- Family and Community Involvement in Student Learning: http://www.sedl.org/pubs/free_family_community.html
- Four Versions of Family-School Partnerships: http://www.ilcommunityschools.org/images/files/BeyondtheBakeS_rubric%20-%20Sarah%20Ogeto%20ISBE.pdf
- Harvard Family Research Project: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement>
- Home Works! The Teacher Home Visit Program: www.teacherhomevisit.org
- National Association for Parent, School and Community Engagement: <http://nafsce.org/> <http://nafsce.org/who-we-are/>
- National Center for School Engagement: <http://www.schoolengagement.org/>
- National Parent Teacher Association: <http://www.pta.org/parents/>
- Ten Things Schools Can Do to Create Great Family – School Partnerships: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/fscp/pdf/tk10schools-can-do.pdf>

The purpose of these toolkits is to provide a common framework and recommendations to assist schools and community mental health providers to more effectively develop a comprehensive approach to school mental health that is consistent with current West Virginia Department of Education policies and best practices.



These recommendations and resources have been reviewed and approved by West Virginia’s Expanded School Mental Health Steering Team. For more information visit, <https://livewell.marshall.edu/mutac>

Leadership for the West Virginia School Mental Health initiative is a shared commitment. This toolkit was prepared by:

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