School Climate: #ConnectTheDots Brief

The Role of Home–School Collaboration

Home–school collaboration is an essential component of a positive school climate. Genuinely collaborative partnerships between families and educators are based on mutual trust, respect, shared goal-setting and problem-solving, common access to critical information, and a focus on the needs of the child. Home–school partnerships benefit students, families, and school employees. Students’ behavior and achievement are improved, while educators report benefits such as increased job satisfaction, and families report benefits such as enhanced self-efficacy (Christenson & Reschly, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

A Few Brief Research Facts
- Successful home–school collaboration is unlikely to occur without systematic planning by school personnel (Raffaele & Knoff, 1999).
- Research suggests that school-based mental and behavioral health interventions are more effective when caregivers are engaged in implementation (Shucksmith, Jones, & Summerbell, 2010).
- Students benefit from home–school partnerships in a variety of ways, including improved attitudes toward school/learning, higher achievement/test scores, improved behavior, increased homework completion, improved school attendance, and a reduced need for intensive interventions and special education services. These positive outcomes have been documented across families from diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Christenson & Reschly, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).
- School–family partnerships can be particularly important when supporting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. When families and schools make the effort to understand each other’s unique cultures, they are better able to work together and affirm for children that their important adults are supporting their success (Lines, Miller, & Arthur-Stanley, 2010).

What Can Be Done to Enhance Home–School Collaboration
- Engage parents as active and equal partners in their child’s education by initiating dialogue regularly, making communication two-way, and being consistent and open to input.
- Ensure that communication and other interactions are culturally and linguistically responsive.
- Involve parents in problem solving, data collection, and goal-setting.
- Develop a clear sense of shared responsibility for and commitment to supporting the student’s success.
- Create school environments that foster trust and convey a genuine sense of caring amongst the faculty, staff, students, and families.
- Provide multiple opportunities for engagement that account for busy family schedules, transportation challenges, and the potential need for child care.
- Empower families to be actively involved in their children’s academic and school lives by training parents to act as tutors and collect data.
- Provide teachers and staff with the necessary resources required to maintain collaborative efforts.
The Role of the School Psychologist

School psychologists are vital members of the school community. They provide services that improve the effectiveness of home–school collaboration, and they contribute expertise in building and enhancing school–family relationships. School psychologists lead by example by intentionally communicating regularly with parents, using their input to inform mental health services and evaluation methods.

Related Resources

Harvard Family Research Project: www.hfrp.org


RTI Action Network: www.rtinetwork.org

References


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