

# Leading Family Engagement in Early Learning: A Supplemental Guide

## Introduction

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This guide examines best practices for family engagement within a variety of spaces, from public libraries to schools. It builds on the work presented in *Leading Family Engagement in Early Learning: The Role of State Library Administrative Agencies* to provide library leaders with a selected list of resources that can inform, inspire, and connect their efforts to boost family engagement.

## What is family engagement?

**Family engagement** is a shared responsibility among families, educators, and communities to support children’s learning and development. Shared responsibility means that families and educators form relationships and communicate information relevant to students’ learning pursuits and social-emotional growth.

- Family engagement begins at birth and continues through young adulthood.
- Family engagement happens everywhere children learn—home, school, and community.
- Family engagement is often broadened to include adult literacy and access to formal and informal community social supports, which create a home environment conducive to healthy learning.

## Using this Guide

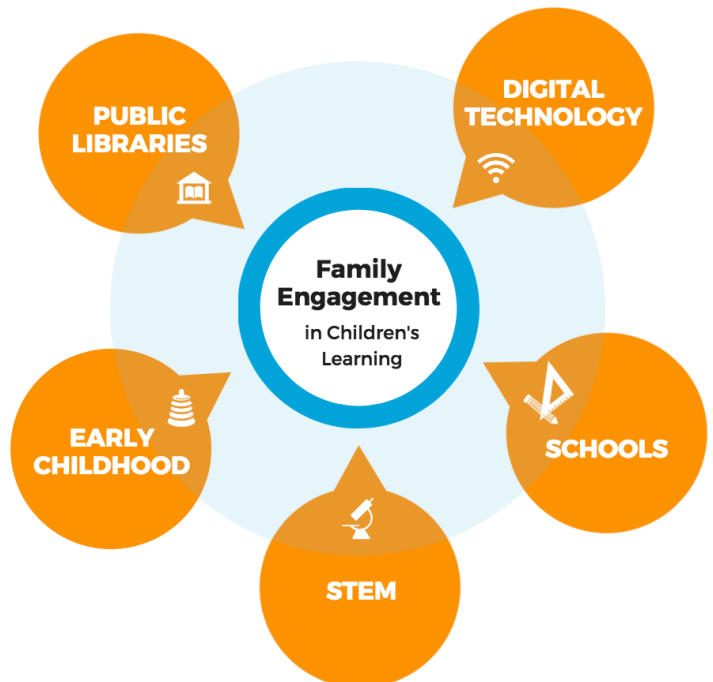
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The resources in this guide are grouped into the following categories:

**Learn More:** Provides multiple perspectives on how family engagement happens across different settings and different ages.

**Build Skills:** Offers tools to expand skills that promote family engagement through empathy, reflection, and learning and improvement.

**Find State Library Resources:** Compiles family engagement ideas and practices from state library leaders featured in *Leading Family Engagement in Early Learning: The Role of State Library Administrative Agencies*.



## LEARN MORE

### Family Engagement: Viewpoints

Research provides multiple approaches—from sociology, behavioral economics, and psychology—for understanding family engagement processes.

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Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67, 3-42. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1170618>

Kraft, M. & Rogers, T. (2015). The underutilized potential of teacher-to-parent communication: Evidence from a field experiment. *Economics of Education Review*, 47, 49-63. doi: 10.1016/j.econedurev.2015.04.001

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft\\_rogers\\_teacher-parent\\_communication\\_hks\\_working\\_paper.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_rogers_teacher-parent_communication_hks_working_paper.pdf)

Small, M. L. (2010). *Unanticipated gains: Origins of network inequality in everyday life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6pLxwRhdCY>

Weiss, H. B. & Lopez, M. E. (2015). Engage families for anywhere, anytime learning. *Kappan*, 96(7), 14-19. doi:10.1177/0031721715579034

<http://www.kappanonline.org/engage-families-for-anywhere-anytime-learning/>

### Family Engagement in Public Libraries

Family engagement takes place across a variety of community settings, such as public libraries.

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Lopez, M. E., Jacobson, L., Caspe, M., & Hanebutt, R. (2018). *Leading family engagement in early learning: The role of state library administrative agencies*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/GFRPStateLibraryPolicy>

Lopez, M. E., Caspe, M., & McWilliams, L. (2016). *Public libraries: A vital space for family engagement*. Retrieved from <https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Libraries-for-the-21st-Century-It-s-A-Family-Thing>

Neuman, S. B. & Celano, D. C. (2012). Worlds apart: One city, two libraries, and ten years of watching inequality grow. *American Educator*. Retrieved from [http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Neuman\\_0.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Neuman_0.pdf)

Weiss, H. B., Caspe, M., Lopez, M. E., & McWilliams, L. (2016). *Ideabook: Libraries for families*. Retrieved from <https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Ideabook-download-form>

## Family Engagement in Early Childhood

Families matter for children's development and learning from birth into and throughout adolescence. Brain science shows that from birth, reciprocal parent-child interactions influence the neural connections that support learning.

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Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2015). *Serve and return*. Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/serve-and-return/>

Iruka, I. U., Winn, D-M. C., & Harradine, C. (2014). High achieving African American boys: Factors that contribute to their excellence in the early years. In J. Moore III & C. Lewis (Eds.), *African American male students in PreK-12 schools: Informing research, policy, and practice* (pp. 27-59). Bingley, England: Emerald Group.

Sénéchal, M. & Young, L. (2008). The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading from kindergarten to grade 3: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4) 880-907. doi: 10.3102/0034654308320319

## Family Engagement in STEM

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are not just subjects students learn in the classroom, but are also opportunities for families to learn together in settings as diverse as home, parks, libraries, museums, and virtual environments.

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Caspe, M., Woods, T., & Kennedy, J. L. (Eds.). (2018). *Promising practices for engaging families in STEM learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Sammet, K., & Kekelis, L. (2018). *Expanding access and inclusion in STEM through culturally responsive family engagement*. Retrieved from <https://stemnext.org/expanding-access-and-inclusion-in-stem-through-culturally-responsive-family-engagement/>

## Family Engagement and Digital Technology

Families that tap into digital media for educational purposes open opportunities to deepen parents' and children's interest-driven learning in the home and community.

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Barron, B., Martin, C. K., Takeuchi, L., & Fithian, R. (2009). Parents as learning partners in the development of technological fluency. *International Journal of Learning and Media*, 1(2), 55-77. doi: 10.1162/ijlm.2009.0021

Donohue, C. (2017). *Family engagement in the digital age: Early childhood educators as media mentors*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, E., Takeuchi, L. M., & Wartella, E. (Eds.). (2018). *Children and families in the digital age: Learning together in a media saturated culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.

## Family Engagement in Schools

Family engagement in schools is associated with positive student outcomes, including attendance, grades, high school completion, and healthy social behaviors. School-library partnerships offer curriculum support for teachers, increased student and family access to technology, and opportunities for family engagement across settings.

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Education Week. (2016). *Spotlight on parent and community engagement*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/products/spotlight-on-parent-and-community-engagement.html>

Murvosh, M. (2013, January 1). Partners in success: When school and public librarians join forces, kids win [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.slj.com/2013/01/programs/partners-in-success-when-school-and-public-librarians-join-forces-kids-win/>

Walker, J. M. T. (2016). Realizing the American dream: A parent education program designed to increase Latino family engagement in children's education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 15(4), 344-357. doi: 10.1080/15348431.2015.1134536

## BUILD SKILLS

California Department of Education. (2017). *Family engagement toolkit: Continuous improvement through an equity lens*. Sacramento, CA: Author.

IDEO. (2015). *Design thinking for libraries: A toolkit for patron-centered design*. Retrieved from <https://designthinkingforlibraries.com/>

Weiss, H. B., Lopez, M. E., Kreider, H., & Chatman-Nelson, C. (2014). *Preparing educators to engage families: Case studies using an ecological systems framework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

## FIND STATE LIBRARY RESOURCES

### California

California State Library. (2016). *Early learning in libraries: A California state library impact report*. Retrieved from <http://elf2.library.ca.gov/pdf/EarlyLearninginLibrariesACaliforniaStateLibraryImpactReport.pdf>

### Colorado

Depriest, M. J. (2016). *Removing barriers to access: Eliminating library fines and fees on children's materials*. Retrieved from <http://hermes.cde.state.co.us/drupal/islandora/object/co%3A25676>

### Georgia

Barr, J. E. (2010). *Stemming the tide of intergenerational illiteracy: A ten-year impact study of Prime Time family reading time*. Retrieved from <https://www.primetimefamily.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/pt10yrstudy.pdf>

### Maryland

Stoltz, D., Sanders, C., & Wilson, W. (2018, January 2). Supporting workforce development with libraries work [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/01/supporting-workforce-development-with-libraries-work/>