

MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework

2026

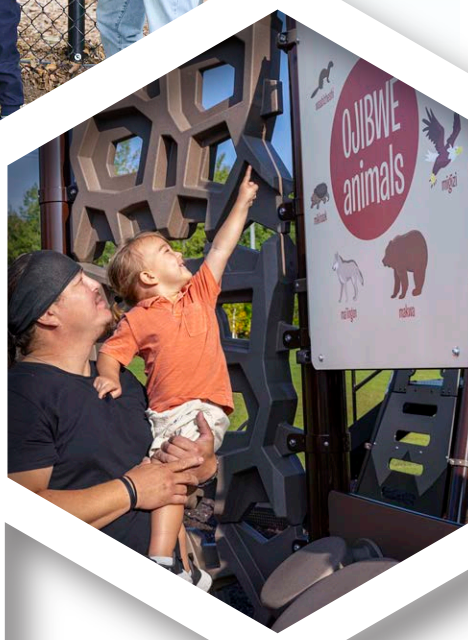












About the Framework

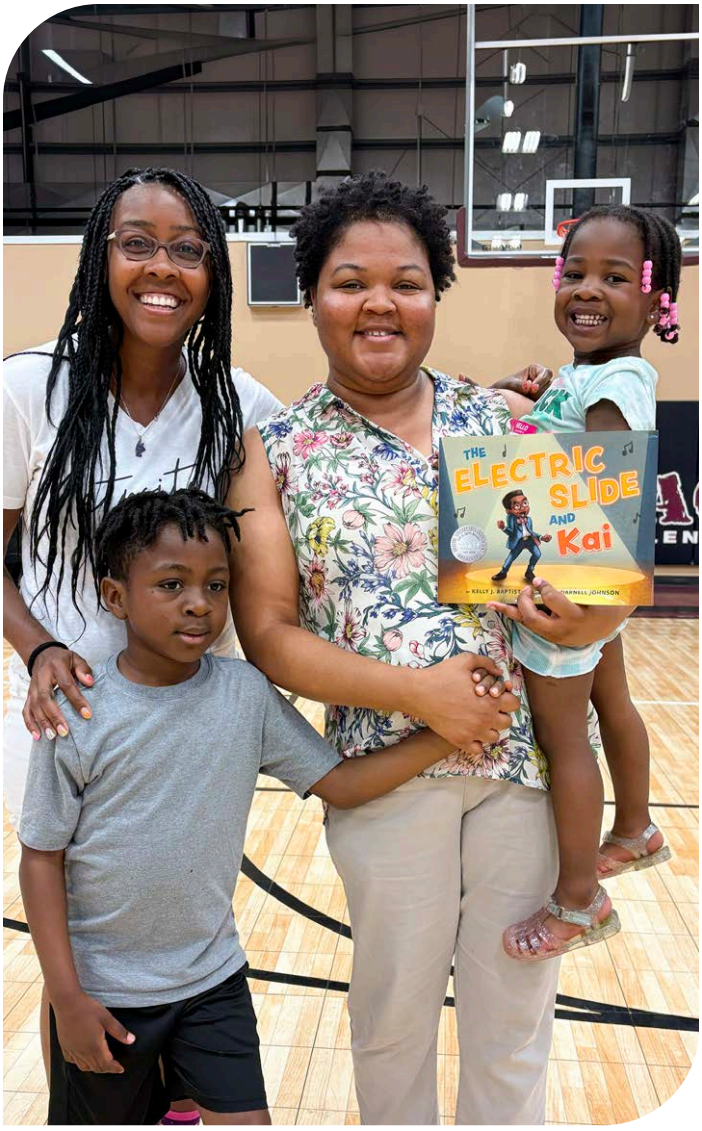
This framework is intended to support family-facing professionals, who are anyone who works directly with families.

The vision of the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential's (MiLEAP) Office of Education Partnerships is to build and sustain partnerships that enhance educational opportunities and outcomes throughout the state, prenatally through postsecondary education. Achieving this vision requires deliberate and strategic action to strengthen collaboration through authentic relationships and setting the conditions for codesigning and leading together.

MiLEAP's revised edition was developed in collaboration with families, educators, and community partners from across the state of Michigan. Together, we drew on the most current research and the real-life experiences of those who work with the children of our state every day. The result is a common vision for family engagement that reflects research-based practices and the needs our communities have shared.

The first edition of *MiFamily: Michigans Family Engagement Framework* was developed and released in 2020. Beginning in the summer of 2025, revisions to the definition, foundations, and the framework began. A first draft of the second edition was reviewed by almost 200 families, educators, partners, and providers through a series of focus groups conducted around the state, with participants from 55 counties. Revisions were made based on common themes that surfaced during the focus groups, resulting in the current version you are reading today.

The MiFamily Framework draws heavily on the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships, Version 2. This framework illustrates how families, educators, providers, and community partners can collaborate as equal partners to support student success. It is called "dual" because both families and educators must build skills, confidence, and trust to create strong, lasting partnerships.[1]



MiLEAP defines "family engagement" as a partnership among families, students, educators and community partners built on trust, respect and common goals, so that every learner thrives.

Glossary of Terms

Educator

A trained professional who teaches, supports, or guides learners in schools or educational programs

Engaged

Actively involved, committed, or participating in a relationship, task or project

Equitable

Fair treatment based on individual needs or circumstances (maybe different based on each family, educator, organization or community)

Family-Facing Professionals

Anyone who works directly with families

Family Partnerships

A collaborative relationship between families and educators in which they share responsibility for supporting a student's learning, development, and success

Foundations

The underlying principles, ideas, or facts upon which something is built or developed

Interdependence

When people or groups work together and rely on one another, understanding that everyone's actions affect shared outcomes

Learner

Everyone in the system: children, adults, students, educators, providers, and partners

MiLEAP

MiLEAP refers to the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential. Established by Governor Gretchen Whitmer via Executive Order 2023-6, it is a cabinet-level department tasked with streamlining Michigan's educational resources from preschool through postsecondary attainment.

Out-of-School Time

Out-of-School-Time (OST) refers to community-based learning that connects youth, families, and program staff with local people, places, and resources to extend learning beyond the classroom. Local community-based programs highlight community strengths, culture, and partnerships to support academic, social, and emotional growth. Examples include STEM clubs, tutoring, sports, libraries, recreation centers, museums, parks, faith-based centers, service learning, community projects, mentoring local leaders, volunteers, health, wellness, or cultural events hosted with community organizations.

Partner

A person, company, or organization that works together with another in a formal or informal agreement to achieve shared goals

Provider

An individual or organization that delivers educational instruction, services, or supports to students or families



Why Systemic, Equitable Family Partnerships Matter

Supporting a child from prenatal to postsecondary is like a space launch. Just like engineers, scientists, and mathematicians must work together to launch a rocket into space; families, educators, providers, and partners must also work together to launch a child's learning. Effective partnerships between families, educators, providers, and partners work like mission control, creating the conditions where all learners can thrive. When all partners stay connected and engaged, all learners can truly "take off."[2]



The Benefits of Equitable Family Engagement

When families, educators, providers, and the community are engaged as equal partners, children do better in learning and in life. In short, "Everyone Wins"![3]

Wins for Children and Students

- Increased school and program attendance
- Improved student achievement, particularly in literacy and math
- Increased graduation rates
- Improved social emotional outcomes

Wins for Educators and Providers

- Strengthened morale and professional satisfaction
- Reduced staff turnover
- Elevated understanding of local needs

Wins for Families

- Strengthened relationships between parents and their children
- Improved relationships with educators and providers

Wins for Schools

- Increased positive learning environment
- Improved pride in facilities
- Enhanced reputation in the community

Wins for Michigan Communities

- Increased participation in postsecondary programs
- Strengthened mental and physical health

"Family engagement is feeling respected, not judged. It means the school sees me as a partner, understands my family's real life, and communicates in a way I can actually use."

— 2026 Framework Focus Group Parent Participant



Foundations

The next section introduces the foundations that anchor this framework—core commitments that define how we work together, guide decision-making, and ensure that family engagement is systemic, sustained, and transformative from birth through postsecondary. These five Foundations serve as the bedrock of our approach to family engagement:

- **Foundation 1:** Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.
- **Foundation 2:** Family engagement efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.
- **Foundation 3:** Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.
- **Foundation 4:** Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.
- **Foundation 5:** Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so all learners are successful.





Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.

FOUNDATIONS

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so all learners are successful.

Family engagement efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.

Family Engagement

Supporting a child from prenatal to postsecondary to career is like a space launch. Just like engineers, scientists, and mathematicians must work together to launch a rocket into space; families, educators, providers, and partners must also work together to launch a child's learning. Effective partnerships between families, educators, providers, and partners work like mission control, creating the conditions where all learners can thrive. When all partners stay connected and engaged, all learners can truly "take off."

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.



Photo courtesy of the Region 3 MiFamily Center

Why Relationships Matter

1. Trusting, positive, collaborative relationships between educators, families, and partners have shown:[1]
   - Improved health, social and emotional well-being, student behavior, and lower rates of student anxiety, aggression, and depression[2]
   - Increased academic achievement, attendance, and likelihood of students enrolling in post-secondary programs[3]
   - Greater access for families to strategies that support their child at home.
   - Educators feeling less isolated and finding more joy and purpose in their work[4].
   - Schools with high trust were usually among the top performers, while schools with low trust tended to have lower student achievement.[4]
2. "When interviewing high school students about why they were successful in school, the answer was overwhelmingly, my parents."[5]
   —Dr. Karen Mapp

When This Is Happening, You Might See...

- **Early Learning Example:** Home visits occur several times a year, so early childhood staff and families build relationships and share information to support smooth transitions to preschool or kindergarten.
- **Elementary School Example:** Administration frees up dedicated time, resources, and support for staff to create meaningful, positive relationships with families early in the school year and sustain them throughout.
- **Secondary School Example:** Through an advisory system, each student is connected with an adult who develops relationships with the student and family, co-designs academic goals, maintains regular communication, and serves as the primary point of contact.
- **Out-of-School-Time Example:** Program staff and families co-develop activity plans that support learners' social, emotional, and academic development.

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Tools to Help Guide You

Beginning of the Year Relationship Building Toolkit

Center for Relational Learning

MiFamily Engagement Center Region 10

Ten Easy Wins

Family engagement efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.



Photo courtesy of Berrien RESA

Why This Matters

1. Purposeful engagement around attendance, behavior, and well-being helps to build family relationships and start conversations with families.[6]
2. Research has shown that partnering with families to provide structured, formal reinforcement of math and literacy skills at home is linked to student achievement versus informal opportunities.
3. Infants' and toddlers' primary learning environment is their home, and their first and most consistent educators are the family members with whom they live. The home language and literacy environment has a strong and lasting effect on language skills, emergent literacy, and related social and academic skills.[7]

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When This Is Happening, You Might See...

- **Early Learning Example:** Educators and family work together to complete developmental screening and use results to plan together for school and home supports for student success.
- **Elementary School Example:** Academic Parent-Teacher Teams meet regularly, data-sharing folders include opportunities for family input, and classroom observations and mini-lessons help families understand grade-level expectations and reinforce learning at home.
- **Secondary School Example:** Students, families, and staff work together to set academic, career, and personal goals and regularly review progress toward those goals.
- **Out-of-School-Time Example:** Program staff collaborate with educators, mentors, and community partners to track learner goals and maintain alignment across settings.

Tools to Help Guide You

Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT)

Head Start: Taking Steps to Strengthen Relationships

Preparing for Effective Conferences

NCIL: How families can partner with schools on literacy

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.



Photo courtesy Region 10 MiFamily Center

Why This Matters

1. Partnering with families of secondary schools is linked to improved academic and social-emotional outcomes, as well as graduation rates.[2]
2. Parents and caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers, responsible for their overall wellbeing. That's why they need to be included as true partners in their child's education. When people are held responsible for something but aren't given a say in it, it naturally creates stress, worry, and fear.[10]
3. By including families as contributing partners in their children's learning, they not only become more informed about the institution their children attend, but also provide valuable information to the institution that will ultimately aid in learning and development.[10]
4. Partnering creates opportunities for all members in a system to contribute, invest, and benefit from students' achievements.[8]

When This Is Happening, You Might See...

- **Early Learning Example:** Families are engaged in co-planning collaborative events across home, school, and community, scheduled throughout the year.
- **Elementary School Example:** Families help select topics, lead workshops, and provide ongoing feedback on resources and supports. Interactive homework, shared learning activities, and family input are integrated into the learning process.
- **Secondary School Example:** Families are invited to postsecondary education fairs and college campus visits and workshops for families on PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams; offer help completing college applications and applying for financial aid
- **Out-of-School-Time Example:** Families, learners, staff, and community partners co-lead events that strengthen shared ownership of the learning journey.

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Tools to Help Guide You

10 Tips for Building Parent Surveys

Partnering with Families to Improve Student Attendance

Flamboyan Academic Partnership Tools

Talking is Teaching: Parent Resources

Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.



Photo courtesy of Berrien RESA

Why This Matters

1. When families, programs, and communities partner, school image is improved throughout the entire community and all partners have more satisfaction.[9]
2. K-12 organizations that effectively engage families and community members see a statistically significant increase in positive attitudes toward their schools. Schools and districts can earn parent and caregiver approval when they focus their efforts on making family members feel comfortable in the school setting.[10]
3. Parents who described their children's programs as welcoming and empowering reported being more involved than parents who did not describe a positive climate.[11]
4. The physical environment reflects a school or organization's culture, climate, and values and often shapes families' first impressions. When thoughtfully designed and maintained, beginning with the exterior, it helps families see themselves reflected, promotes diversity and belonging, supports safety, and encourages collaboration.[12]

When This Is Happening, You Might See...

- **Early Learning Example:** Families are invited to contribute to the learning environment, such as photos, cultural materials, favorite books, etc.
- **Elementary School Example:** Family input informs decisions about school spaces, resources, and practices that foster belonging for all learners.
- **Secondary School Example:** Families, students, and staff actively shape a welcoming school culture through ongoing feedback, collaboration, and shared decision-making by using structured processes like talking or listening circles.
- **Out-of-School-Time Example:** Programs collaborate with local organizations—libraries, recreation centers, health centers, faith-based groups, business and community development partners—to make the site a hub for learning, wellness, and family support.

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Tools to Help Guide You

- Environment and Attendance Diagram (SEAT)
- Strengthening Families Framework
- Welcoming Atmosphere Walk-Through Toolkit
- Welcoming Families Toolkit Environmental Inventory

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so all learners are successful.



Photo courtesy of Berrien RESA

Why This Matters

1. Transportation, work schedules, childcare, language access, and previous negative experiences can act as barriers preventing families from participating in the services providers offer.[13]

2. Building on families' connections, knowledge, and confidence strengthens both family and educator capacity.

When This is Happening, You Might See...

- **Early Learning Example:** Families and early childhood providers do neighborhood walks to meet prospective families and hand out program information, books, and growth charts.

- **Elementary School Example:** Families hold real decision-making power. The representation group elects its own leadership and shapes its own agenda. The parent organization and school council vote on major decisions and budget priorities and receive resources to launch their own initiatives.

- **Secondary School Example:** Family organizations conduct focus groups with families and report back to school leadership.

- **Out-of-School-Time Example:** Family education programs support adults in building networks, growing skills, connecting with others, and advocating for quality learning opportunities.

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Tools to Help Guide You

National PTA Special Education Toolkit

All Your Parents: Provide Information & Strategies

From Vision to Practice

Early Learning

Communication

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families can visit the program site by appointment.	Offer monthly breakfast gatherings for families and staff.	Monthly family meetings are hosted by trained family members. Families take part in meaningful, guided conversations during which they support and learn from each other and collect input and feedback for the program.
Offer back-to-school night where families visit classrooms, meet teachers, and have refreshments.	Programs host a family night where families visit classrooms, meet teachers, view children's work, sign up to volunteer, and receive a family phone tree compiled by staff.	Experienced families share family engagement strategies with new families in familiar neighborhood settings and sign them up for things like home visits, preschool, and community activities. Short videos of families' sharing are sent with texts or emails to families who couldn't attend, with sign-up sheets and surveys attached.
Offer a program newsletter with generic messaging.	Program and families have monthly phone calls, emails, or texts with information on program activities.	A program communication digital app creates two-way intentional and thoughtful communication with families, with the goal of working together to support the child. Communication is consistent, authentic, direct, and caring.
Program communications to families are available in English.	Program communications to and with families are available in multiple languages, including English, to increase accessibility and engagement.	Program communications to and with families are co-constructed in multiple languages to support equitable access and stronger engagement. Families co-develop multilingual communications, drawing on their lived experiences and identities as multilingual households.

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Parent-teacher conferences occur by appointment during work days.	Parent-teacher conferences occur twice a year, available evenings and on weekends.	Home visits occur several times a year, so early childhood staff and families build relationships and share information to support smooth transitions to preschool or kindergarten.
Offering a one-time meet-and-greet for families, such as curriculum night or open house.	Provide an opportunity for families to engage with educational staff at the school throughout the year.	Normalize home visits in all programs. Develop opportunities to meet and create relationships with families prior to the child joining the program.
Program focuses on one group's cultural experiences that reflect "majority" culture. Families may not be able to see themselves represented in the program, curriculum, and communications.	All families are welcomed and diversity is valued; e.g., the program celebrates diverse holidays and classroom libraries include children's books with diverse characters.	Families' cultures and identities are valued and centered across all areas of family engagement. Culturally-relevant practices are co-constructed with families as the experts of their lived experiences and what these mean for their children's learning and wellbeing.

Efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Teachers share student learning goals with families and create opportunities for families to ask questions about the goals. Teachers provide suggestions for how to support the goals at home.	Families and students are given opportunities to contribute to student goal-setting. Families are invited to provide feedback on student goals.	Families and students are active partners with teachers in co-developing student goals. Goals are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, reflect student strengths and areas to grow, and map a clear plan and timeline for outcomes. Goals are reviewed and revised throughout the year to ensure that needs are met.
Invite families to IFSP, IEP, and 504 planning meetings and parent-teacher conferences.	Families are invited to meetings such as IFSP, IEP, 504 plans, and parent/teacher conferences. Families have opportunities to ask questions about information presented.	Families are active partners with teachers in co-developing IFSPs, IEPs, and 504 plans. Families co-develop goals, plans, indicators of success, and timelines. Students are included as active participants in this process.
Providers complete a developmental screener on child and share results with the family.	Providers complete a developmental screener with family input. Providers and family discuss results. Providers share recommendations for school and home supports for student success.	Providers and families work together to complete developmental screening and use results to plan together for school and home supports for student success.

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Providers send home written materials on developmental areas (e.g. social-emotional, motor, cognitive).	At frequent meetings, staff share information regarding areas of child development with families and show how those areas are covered in the classroom.	During family observations of classroom instruction, teachers model strategies to support specific learning at home. Families ask questions and practice strategies with each other then go home with a "tip sheet." Short videos modeling the strategies are sent with emails or texts to families who couldn't attend, and a list of the families' questions and teachers' answers are attached along with the tip sheet. At frequent meetings, staff share information regarding areas of child development with families and show how those areas are covered in the classroom. Teachers send home written materials on developmental areas (e.g. social-emotional, motor, cognitive).
Families participate in activities planned by home, school, and community collaboration efforts.	Families provide some feedback in the planning of home, school, and community collaboration efforts.	Families are engaged in co-planning collaborative events across home, school, and community, scheduled throughout the year.

Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Curriculum night offered for families to attend.	Activities are sent home to families with tips for home learning.	Families are invited to contribute to the learning environment, such as photos, cultural materials, favorite books, etc.

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so that all learners are successful.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Provide registration for early child programs on program website.	Host a Springtime open house for new families, hosted by current families—host open houses throughout the year.	Families and early childhood providers do neighborhood walks to meet prospective families and hand out program information, books, and growth charts.
Providing opportunities for families to attend events at the school.	Meet families in community spaces where they are comfortable and are part of their everyday family lives (i.e. grocery stores, public health clinics, laundromats, public library, local market).	Create inclusive spaces for families to design and implement their own, preferred family engagement opportunities.

Transitions

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Arrange a time for families and children to visit spaces and educators that they are transitioning to during school hours.	Provide families with a tour of the learning environment to build familiarity with the space. E.g., invite a kindergarten teacher to visit as a "guest expert" for the children.	Provide numerous opportunities for families to visit and spend time in the child's new learning environment prior to their first official day and introduce the child's new caregivers and educators to the family before the first day.

✏ Elementary (K-5)

Communications

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Schools use one-way communication methods, such as texts, group emails, messaging platforms, and newsletters to share information with families and expect families to access and use these tools independently.	Before the school year begins, staff send welcome letters introducing themselves and providing guidance on accessing the school's communication platforms. Staff use multiple communication methods, make positive phone calls home with the students, and translate documents into families' home languages when needed.	Staff initiates proactive, strengths-based communication with all families. Families help determine communication preferences, and communication occurs in families' home languages with interpretation available as needed.

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families are invited to school events and conferences through scheduled opportunities. Staff initiates relationships with some families, but communication remains school-directed, with limited follow-up or attention to participation barriers.	Families are encouraged to participate in the school community through volunteer opportunities and classroom activities. Staff intentionally build trusting relationships with all families through consistent, two-way communication. Schools establish structures and accountability measures to support meaningful family outreach and relationship building.	Families are active partners in the school community, collaborating with staff to plan events, welcome new families, and strengthen school connections. Staff receive dedicated time, resources, and support to sustain meaningful relationships, and school, family, and community efforts are aligned to support student success.

Efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Schools communicate learning goals through standard Back-to-School Nights, open houses, and student handbooks. Information is shared with families in a one-way format without clear connections to learner outcomes or strategies families can use at home.	Schools host Back-to-School Nights, class meetings, or school-wide events where families and teachers share learning strategies, review key skills with home learning tips, and develop a communication plan together. Families are informed of their child's learning goals and have opportunities to provide input on strategies to support learning at home.	Families and educators actively partner to set and monitor student learning goals. Academic Parent-Teacher Teams meet regularly, data-sharing folders include opportunities for family input, and classroom observations and mini-lessons help families understand grade-level expectations and reinforce learning at home. Student-led conferences foster ownership and shared responsibility.

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families are offered training opportunities related to their child's education; however, topics, formats, and schedules are determined by the school with limited family input. Trainings are typically offered during the school day and focus on sharing information with families.	Families are offered interactive learning opportunities related to their child's education, including family learning events, resource rooms, and Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework activities. Schools provide materials and strategies for home learning and begin gathering family feedback to inform future topics and supports. **Resources:** • Johns Hopkins—TIP Resource • About TIPS	Families and educators collaboratively identify learning priorities and co-design family learning opportunities that support student success. Families help select topics, lead workshops, and provide ongoing feedback on resources and supports. Interactive homework, shared learning activities, and family input are integrated into the learning process.

Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
School spaces display student work and provide limited representation of family cultures, identities, and home languages.	School environments intentionally reflect the cultures, identities, and home languages of the families they serve. Schools provide family-friendly spaces, accessible information, and opportunities for families to experience and utilize school resources.	Families collaborate with staff to design and enhance school environments that reflect community cultures, identities, languages, and values. Family input informs decisions about school spaces, resources, and practices that foster belonging for all learners.

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so that all learners are successful.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
A family representation group is created, and families are encouraged to be a part of the group to share their ideas and voices. Administration may invite only certain families or family members to be in the leadership roles for the group.	The parent organization meets with the principal to discuss suggestions. The school council has a voice in all major decisions and develops and supports family-initiated projects. Meetings may be held at school or at alternate locations to accommodate families.	Families hold real decision-making power. The representation group elects its own leadership and shapes its own agenda. The parent organization and school council vote on major decisions and budget priorities and receive resources to launch their own initiatives. Meetings offer varied times, locations, and language support so all families can participate.

Transitions

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families are invited to a transition night or open house via standard flyers or automated messages, but little to no details, agendas, or expectations of the event are shared ahead of time. Families follow a rigid schedule to tour the school and chat with teachers.	A "Fall Sneak Peek" Guide and Frequently Asked Questions are sent to families weeks before the transition night event, giving an early look at what to expect and introducing staff they will meet. Families can personalize their experience by touring areas of interest and asking questions.	Families and students co-design and lead transition experiences, including tours, listening circles, and question panels. Families share their hopes and dreams for their children with teachers in writing or in person, and staff use that input to inform their planning. Transition materials and events are available in families' home languages with interpretation provided. Connection continues beyond a single event to support families throughout the transition.

Secondary (6-12)

Communications

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Most communication with families is one-way. Families typically initiate communication when questions or concerns arise.	Multiple two-way communication methods are used with families (e.g., two-way communication apps, emails, texting, face-to-face conversations, phone calls). Staff work to ensure that families understand how to access the communication applications as well as any online grading systems.	Dedicated time is built into staff schedules to support proactive, positive family communication. Staff initiate meaningful, strengths-based outreach with families rather than limiting contact to concerns or crises. This allows families to consistently receive proactive, strengths-based communication and know who to contact when support is needed.

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Staff relationships with families are inconsistent, with no clear system in place to build them equitably across all students and families.	Staff or liaisons regularly check in with selected families, helping build relationships, but this may depend on individual staff rather than a consistent system.	Through an advisory system, each student is connected with an adult who develops relationships with the student and family, co-designs academic goals, maintains regular communication, and serves as the primary point of contact.

Efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
The school identifies and provides training and opportunities to families based on perceived needs. For example, postsecondary opportunities are shared with families at an annual career and college night.	The school surveys families or provides limited opportunities for input on training and support. For example, a school learned during a survey that families had questions about a new grading policy, so the staff designed a video that explains the new policy.	Families, students, and staff collaboratively identify priorities and develop communication, learning opportunities, and supports that promote student success. For example, • Advisors keep families informed on student progress, with a focus on students at risk. • Student-led conferences review the portfolio of student work, support needed to do their best work, and stay on track. • Students, families, and staff work together to set academic, career, and personal goals and regularly review progress toward those goals; coursework and requirements are clear and explicitly shared with families.

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families have access to information about their student's academic progress and educational planning. For example, families can make appointments to confer with guidance counselors and receive a handout with information about how to review the Student Success Plan.	Families understand and participate in educational planning and postsecondary preparation. For example, beginning in middle school, families are aware of their student's educational development plan, and the school offers support and learning for all families each year. School staff reach out to invite families and remind them to review their student's Educational Development Plan.	Students, families, and staff collaboratively develop and regularly review educational, career, and postsecondary plans beginning in middle school. For example, • Families are invited to postsecondary education fairs and college campus visits • Workshops for families on PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams; offer help completing college applications and applying for financial aid

Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families are welcomed at school events but may still feel like visitors rather than equal partners.	School activities reinforce belonging, relevance, and shared responsibility for student success. For example, • Families are asked for input on school events and engagement opportunities, and school staff regularly analyze the feedback and share out changes to be made. • Schools partner with community organizations and local businesses to co-host events to strengthen school–community connections.	Families, students, and staff actively shape a welcoming school culture through ongoing feedback, collaboration, and shared decision-making.

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so that all learners are successful.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Barriers to family engagement are identified, and staff begin addressing them. For example, • Meeting families where they are, volunteers distribute flyers throughout the community to remind families about events and conferences. • The school recognizes and accommodates cultural differences.	Families assist in identifying barriers that exist and prevent access to school services by responding to surveys or through other two-way communication methods, and school staff actively work to eliminate those barriers. For example, • Events are scheduled at multiple times and formats (evening, daytime, virtual) to reduce barriers preventing families from participating. • Families have identified that materials need to be printed in multiple languages that reflect those spoken in the homes of students who attend the school, and the school provides those at future events.	Family organizations and leadership represent all families in the school. For example, • Family leaders sit on school leadership teams. • Family organizations conduct focus groups with families and report back to school leadership. • Families from diverse backgrounds help design engagement opportunities, advise school leadership, and ensure school practices reflect the cultures, languages, and experiences of the community.

Transitions

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families receive information and resources to support successful school transitions. For example, at orientation, families pick up their students' class schedules, bus passes, and tour the school.	Schools provide learning opportunities that help families understand and navigate transition points. For example, schools offer a Fall Family Academy to orient incoming families to expectations of students, such as attendance requirements and credits needed for grade advancement/graduation.	Families and students help design transition supports that reflect community needs and experiences. For example, families and students identify topics that should be included in transition programming.

Out-of-School Time (OST)

Communications

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Staff provides program-initiated, one-way communication that informs and keeps families aware of program offerings, activities, learner opportunities and community-based supports.	Programs incorporate reciprocal communication initiated by program staff and/or families that strengthen learning, deepen relationships, and improve program responsiveness. Families and program staff share daily information verbally, in writing, or digitally. Families provide feedback through surveys, suggestion tools, listening sessions, and informal conversations. Communication is responsive to learner needs and program priorities, strengthening the partnership between home and program.	Programs seek to build shared leadership, strengthen community alignment, and ensure families are equal partners in shaping communication and learner support. Families, staff, and community partners co-design and co-create communication systems, ensuring communication is culturally responsive, accessible, grounded in shared goals and elevates family voice and advocacy.

Relationships are the cornerstone of family engagement.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Staff welcome families during orientation and collect basic information about the family and their learners' goals. Families complete information forms that introduce their needs, strengths, and preferences. Staff inform families about tutoring, enrichment, or other learner supports to begin building trust and open communication.	Program staff and families discuss their learners' strengths, successes, and challenges to deepen trust, affirm family voice, and shape activities and developmental support. Staff build strong relationships with learners and families through supportive mentoring and youth-development practices. Families provide feedback through surveys and conversations about program quality and learner experience.	Program staff and families co-develop activity plans that support learners' social, emotional, and academic development. Program staff interview families regarding their learners' successes and challenges to co-inform planning. Learners, families, and staff co-plan events that celebrate achievements and affirm community identity and strengthen belonging (e.g., beginning- and end-of-year celebrations, cultural events, program activities).

Efforts are purposeful, intentional, and clearly identify learner outcomes.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Staff share tip sheets with families to promote learner health, academic growth, and successful habits. Families provide basic information about learner goals and needs, helping staff design intentional supports. Staff share clear information about learning expectations and targeted supports available in the program.	Staff and families review strengths, needs, and progress to shape intentional learning supports. Staff intentionally align before-school, after-school, weekend, and summer programming with school-day learning when appropriate. Families provide ongoing feedback about learner progress and program quality to ensure instruction remains relevant and purposeful.	Staff and families co-develop activity plans to reinforce specific academic or social-emotional goals. Program staff collaborate with educators, mentors, and community partners to track learner goals and maintain alignment across settings. Families, staff, and partners jointly review learner progress and adjust supports based on outcomes.

Families are engaged and supported partners in their child's education.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Program staff share information about community-based supports (housing, food, counseling, health services, enrichment) and make resources accessible during events or through informational materials. Tip sheets and learning resources are sent home to help families support learner development. Families are invited to attend events that highlight learning and connect them to school or program supports.	Program staff build strong relationships with learners and families through consistent mentoring and developmental practices. Families provide feedback through surveys, conversations, and informal check-ins about program quality and learner and family experiences. Staff and families engage in two-way discussions about learner experience, helping shape program supports.	Community advocates or family liaisons build trusting relationships with all families and help them navigate whole-family supports and opportunities across the community. Regular family meetings allow staff and families to discuss learners' progress, share information, and collaborate on strategies to support learning. Families, learners, staff, and community partners co-lead events that strengthen shared ownership of the learning journey.

Positive learning environments contribute to family engagement and learning.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Program spaces share information about local opportunities through bulletin boards, flyers, and notices. Families are invited to attend celebrations and activities that help them feel comfortable in the learning environment. Staff ensure program spaces are welcoming, culturally responsive, and family-friendly.	The program hosts resource fairs or information sessions where families can independently explore community support and make social connections. Families help provide input on cultural displays, materials, and environmental features that reflect the community. Staff engage families in conversations about how the program environment can better support learning and belonging.	Programs collaborate with local organizations—libraries, recreation centers, health centers, faith-based groups, business and community development partners—to make the site a hub for learning, wellness, and family support. Families and partners help co-design events and environments that promote belonging and community well-being. Staff, family leaders, and partners jointly sustain an environment that reflects community culture and supports whole-family success.

Family engagement efforts are tailored to address all families so that all learners are successful.

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Families are invited to volunteer in ways that reflect diverse interests, cultures, and availability. Program spaces post information about local services and learning opportunities for families with different needs and schedules. Staff provide communications in multiple formats and languages to ensure accessibility for all families.	Programs share information on GED programs, job training, and adult learning opportunities through newsletters, family nights, or resource fairs. Families explore career and learning pathways offered by community partners. Public officials, community boards, and commissions are invited to attend events—such as listening circles, community conversations, cultural nights, and resource fairs—to hear family perspectives and connect them to supports.	Family education programs support adults in building networks, growing skills, connecting with others, and advocating for quality learning opportunities. Parents learn strategies to support their own learning, their learner's education, financial stability, and family well-being. Families collaborate with staff and community partners to identify and remove barriers to engagement, ensuring all learners have equitable opportunities for success.

Transitions

Involvement	Engagement	Partnership
Program staff, families, and learners meet for basic transition updates between year-round learning environments (OST, community programs, and school-day programs). Staff provide families with calendars outlining start/end dates, schedule changes, and upcoming programming transitions (school year to summer, summer to school year). Families receive simple checklists that help learners prepare for transitions (reminders, materials, schedules, transportation details). Program staff share written summaries describing what learners will experience in the next year's program cycle (new activities, staff, or location changes).	Before-school, afterschool, in-school, and summertime program staff collaborate with families and learners to support transitions and maintain continuity in learner goals. Families and learners participate in transition conversations with staff to discuss goals for the upcoming OST cycle (academic, social, enrichment). Learners participate in transition panels or help create mini-presentations to explain what incoming learners can expect in the program(s). OST staff collaborate with families to document learner strengths and needs before each transition, ensuring continuity (e.g., moving from afterschool into summer programming).	Program staff, youth, families, school staff, and community partners co-design a coordinated transition plan that supports learners across OST programs, school, and summer environments. Programs and community-based organizations collaborate with families and youth to create year-round transition supports, such as summer bridge activities or learner portfolio sharing. Families, youth, OST staff, and educators participate in regular transition meetings to align expectations, share learner strengths, identify supports, and coordinate services across the full learning year (before-, after-, in-school, and summertime).

Action Plan

This is an example of a plan for developing desired goals for engaging families in their child's education.

Current Practice	Desired State	Next Steps	Person/s Responsible	Resources Needed	Timeline

Endnotes

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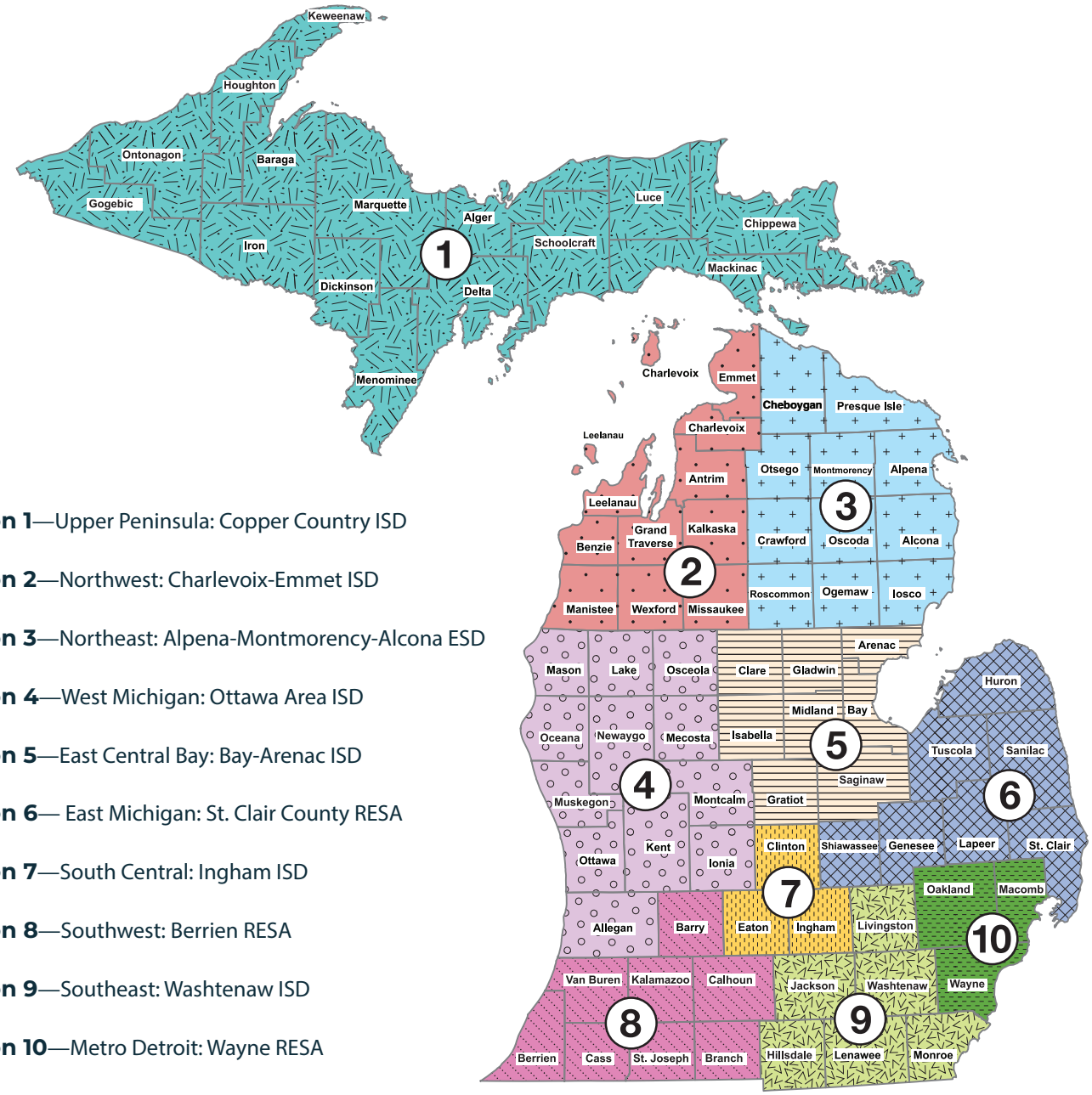
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MiFamily Engagement Center Regions



Region 1—Upper Peninsula: Copper Country ISD

Region 2—Northwest: Charlevoix-Emmet ISD

Region 3—Northeast: Alpena-Montmorency-Alcona ESD

Region 4—West Michigan: Ottawa Area ISD

Region 5—East Central Bay: Bay-Arenac ISD

Region 6— East Michigan: St. Clair County RESA

Region 7—South Central: Ingham ISD

Region 8—Southwest: Berrien RESA

Region 9—Southeast: Washtenaw ISD

Region 10—Metro Detroit: Wayne RESA

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