

Equality and Equity Toolkit

5. Epstein's model of school-family-community partnerships

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Epstein's model of school-family-community partnerships

In this section, teams will build understanding that:

- schools, families and communities all have a role in making sure children and young people have equity in learning and education
- schools, families and communities achieve most by working together in partnerships where everyone is equally important
- relationships between families and school staff are the starting point for this work, so needs and priorities are understood
- families need to know what is happening in school so they can support learning
- different strategies need to be used to engage more and different families.

The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about children's families. (Epstein, 1995)

Dr Joyce Epstein's **School-Family-Community Partnership Model** is an influential model in parent engagement research. Using a partnership model recognises that parents, teachers, and others in the community share responsibility for a young person's learning and development. When parents, teachers, pupils, and others view one another as partners in learning, a caring community forms around young people.

You can read about the six types of involvement below.

Involvement type	Description
Supporting Families supporting, nurturing, loving, understanding	Help all families understand child and adolescent development and help them to support their child's learning at home. Help nurseries/schools understand families' backgrounds, cultures and goals for their children.
Communicating relating, reviewing, and connecting	Make sure there are effective, family-friendly forms of nursery/school-to-home and nursery/home-to-school communications about learning and children's progress.
Volunteering supervising, advising, giving skills and time	Offer families and others the opportunity to support the school community by providing support and flexibility so that families know their time and talents are welcomed and valued.

Involvement type	Description
Learning at Home managing, recognising, interacting, enriching and rewarding	Provide information to families on how they can help support learning at home and recognise what they already do. Provide opportunities for young people to demonstrate their learning.
Decision-making contributing, considering, participating	Include parents in school decisions and develop parent leaders and representatives.
Collaborating with the community co-operating, assisting, developing, problem-solving, and sharing	Use resources and services from the community for families, children & young people, and the school and provide services for the community.

When using or sharing this Toolkit, please acknowledge Connect as the source.

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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