

School-Home Partnerships

What do parents and teachers expect from a partnership?

Asked to generate characteristics of effective partnerships, parents and professionals identified key behaviors they expect:

Parents	Teachers
Trust	Mutual Respect
Open Communication	Trust
Mutual Respect	Open/Honest Communication
Active Listening	Openness

Parents and teachers share very similar expectations. All of these behaviors are established, nurtured, and maintained through effective communications processes. When building new partnership opportunities, or troubleshooting existing systems, schools should pay particular attention to their communications practices and skills. Self-assessment of the types/functions of messages and the bi-directionality (e.g. LISTENING) of communication are critical.



The Igbo people of Nigeria name their children "Nwa ora" which means **child of the community.**

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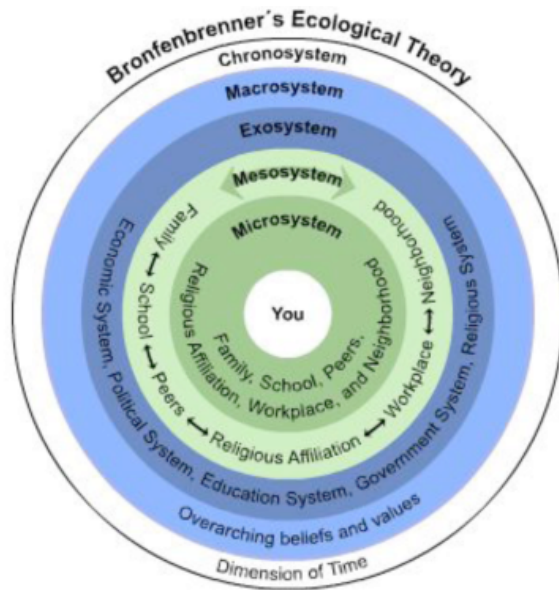
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Comprehensive Models of School-Home Partnerships

There is a shifting paradigm in the relationship of schools and homes. In the old paradigm, school was the sole domain of teachers and after the first few years of schooling parents were not particularly welcome unless invited for specific purposes like raising money, listening to the teacher report progress, or watching a performance. Homes were the sole domain of parents. Parents were to rear and socialize children with minimal need or desire for support from schools and with few occasions that might merit going to their child's school.

The new paradigm is based on an ecological theory recognizing, in fact depending on, the contributions of multiple domains to prepare children for life. The research on

School-Home partnerships, although largely correlational, has supported a premise that parental involvement in schools leads to better academic and behavioral outcomes. This appears particularly true for activities that prepare parents to extend learning opportunities into the home.



Two well developed and documented models for School-Home partnerships include Chrispeels' School-Home Partnership model and Epstein's School-Family-Community Partnerships model. Both models provide a framework for developing school-based Parent Involvement initiatives.

Chrispeels' 5 Tiers	Epstein's 6 Types
Co-Communicators	Type 2 Communicating
Co-Supporters	Type 1 Parenting Type 3 Volunteering
Co-Learners	Type 4 Learning at Home
Co-Teachers	No Comparison
Co-Decision Makers	Type 5 Decision Making

Co-Decision Makers

- Parents should be involved in the formal goal setting and decision making processes of the school. Traditional practices, like PTA/PTO should be extended to include appointments to the School Improvement Team, Positive Behavior Supports Team

Co-Teachers

- Parents are their child's first teachers. Parents can make significant contributions to formal education when provided a framework and supports to extend lessons from the classroom to the home. Parents also possess unique experiences and skills that should be brought into the classroom.

Co-Learners

- Learning together, teachers and parents become stronger partners. Schools discover community talents and resources. Parents learn how to support learning in the home. This is the only Tier with evidence of improved academic outcomes for students.

Co-Supporters

- Recognition that "It takes a village..." Schools can help parents meet child rearing roles through parent education and support programs. Parents can help schools meet their educational roles through traditional volunteer activities.

Co-Communicators

- The foundation of the partnership. Regular, two-way information sharing. Essential for sharing common goals and building trust and respect.