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Newsletter

Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center

WHAT IS HSFEC?

The Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center, also referred to as HSFEC, was established in October 2018.

The University of Hawai'i's Center on Disability studies was awarded grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education to establish the Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center (HSFEC) to implement programming that supports the implementation and enhancement of systemic and effective family engagement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student development and academic achievement.

We plan to accomplish this by providing evidence-based programs, activities, strategies, and technical assistance that are designed to achieve systemic, integrated & sustained family engagement from birth to Grade 12 in Hawai'i. See our website for more information about the [goal and objectives](#).

The Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center was made possible by Grant #U310A180056 from the U.S. Department of Education. The content of this newsletter does not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Education.

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JUNE 12 SUMMIT

A big "mahalo" to all those who helped organize and attended the June 12, Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement in Education Summit.

The Hawai'i Statewide Family Engagement Center in collaboration with the Hawai'i State DOE, Kamehameha Schools, and Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement of Hawai'i (LDAH) organized a full day- family engagement training with Dr. Karen Mapp from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. There were 295 attendees, making this a successful day for learning about the importance of effective family engagement in Hawai'i.

Participants were from O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Hawai'i, Lāna'i, and the mainland with a majority of the participants being teachers, and educators from the HI DOE, Kamehameha Schools, and family service professionals from Community-based organizations.

As a result of the summit, attendees reported having a better understanding of Family Engagement research and practice, the Dual Capacity-Building Framework developed by Dr. Karen Mapp, the importance of capacity building, and effective partnerships for family engagement in education to be fully achieved.

The presentation slides and videos are now available on our website: [HSFEC Training](#).



[Summary Report](#)

[Summary Slides](#)



JUNE 12 SUMMIT LOCAL HIGHLIGHT: WAIPAHU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMBATS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM!

Local Success Story! Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism at Waipahu Elementary School

The Hawai'i Family Engagement in Education Summit was honored to have Vice Principal James Suster from Waipahu Elementary School as a guest speaker at the June 12 event. He delivered an informative and engaging presentation on how Waipahu Elementary School has been working towards battling chronic absenteeism. His story highlighted the effective strategies engaging students with families to ensure students are not absent from school. These strategies include: to meet families where they are at, break down barriers to getting children to school, and increasing phone calls home.

Please find the presentation and an article with this story at our website: [Local Highlights](#).

The presentation slides are now available on our website: [HSFEC Training](#).





PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT VERSUS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

I am already involved with my school, what is the difference between **parental involvement** and **family engagement**?

For educators, families, and community based- organizations, it is important to be engaged with the schools through mutual trust, respect, communication and participation. Parent involvement and parent engagement are both important! The difference is that family engagement is an ongoing and collaborative relationship, and the process is mutual, respectful, and culturally responsive. There is a tendency for involvement to focus on improving what goes on solely within the four walls of the school. Engagement is a recognition that the school is participating in a community-wide effort for improvement, within and outside of the classroom. Engagement ensures a genuine partnership, where the voices of families and parents are incorporated in school wide efforts to improve students' success.

With engagement, the partnership between the school and families includes community organizations to share responsibility for the learning and care of children.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the definition of involvement is “the act or process of taking part in something” while the definition of engagement is “the fact of being involved with something”. A school striving for family involvement often leads with its mouth—identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for parent engagement, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears—listening to what parents think, dream, and worry about. The goal of family engagement is to build strong and effective partnerships that can help children and families thrive- academically and beyond. If you want to learn more about implementing family engagement in your school according to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, check out the [quick brief](#).

References:

[Involvement or Engagement?](#) By Larry Ferlazzo
Cambridge University Press. (2019). Cambridge online dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary online. Retrieved at July 15, 2019.



MAINTAINING STRONG FAMILY TIES THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

These are the best tips for building and maintaining strong family ties throughout the school year, educators, communities, and parents can use these strategies at home with your own families and children.

Strong families have good communication:

- Increase your active listening skills - Listen to understand rather than thinking about your response OR reaction
- Give the person talking your full attention
- Encourage all family members to share their thoughts and feelings (no matter how young or small)

Activities to increase family engagement and social time:

- Have meals together (make it a priority to eat dinner together at least one or two nights a week)
- Get outside - Go for a walk, take a trip to the beach, or visit a local park or botanical garden (for physical activity and to increase bonding)
- Strong families spend time together - a family ritual can be a set time for families to get together and give each other much needed attention

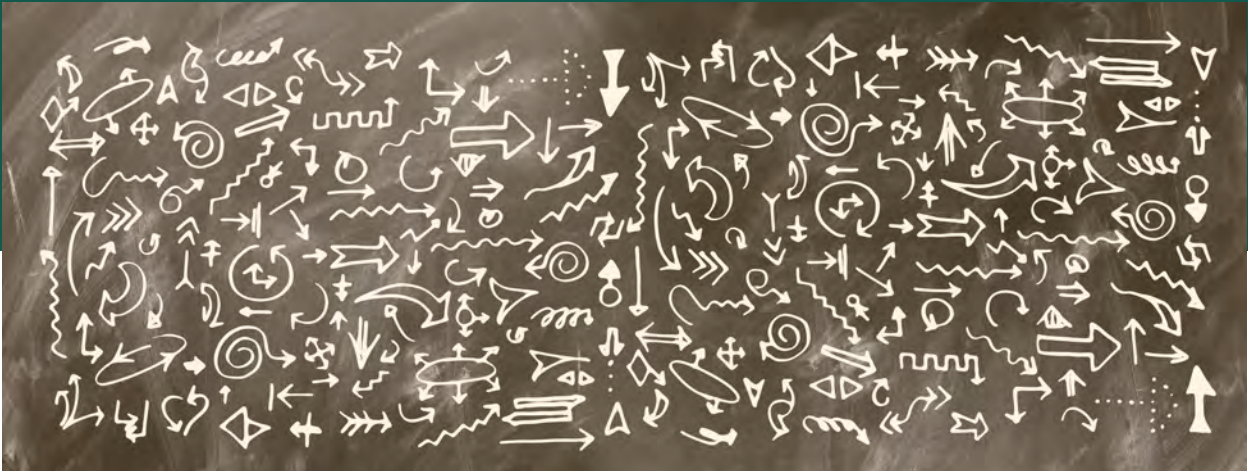
Connect with your child:

- Remember that every child is special and needs some special time when he/she can have the parent all to themselves
- Show your child that you can be trusted and give your child opportunities to earn your trust
- Turn off the electronics and ask your child to read you a book, share the best part of their day, or have them help you in the kitchen

Conflict resolution:

- Resist giving advice or your reaction until you are certain you have fully understood what the person was saying to you (without being asked)
- Use “I” Messages rather than “You” messages when talking
- Saying “I’m Sorry” can be a valuable lesson to teach and use

More Resources: [Building Strong Family Relationships](#) (University of Delaware)



REFLECTION: HOW CAN THESE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, AND TRAININGS BE APPLIED TO YOU, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR SCHOOL, AND YOUR COMMUNITY?

Take a moment to reflect on these questions below

Reflection:

- What is your experience with building partnerships with families across race, class cultural differences?
- What are some barriers to building these partnerships and what supports can help to improve partnerships?



In our HSFECC quarterly newsletters, we include these reflection pieces as a way to develop a positive (growth) mindset for family engagement. These questions are designed to encourage thoughtfulness and a deeper understanding of the values and beliefs that you hold, and how they impact you in terms of family engagement. Send your response to this month's reflection question to our HSFECC email address: hfec@hawaii.edu, with the subject line: HSFECC Newsletter Reflection by October 1, 201 . We will choose the top answers to re post, anonymously, in our next edition. We love hearing from you!



RESOURCES

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT OUR ONLINE [RESOURCE LIBRARY](#)

Highlighted resources for educators, parents/families, and community-based organizations:

[HSFEC Website](#)

[June 12 Summit Slides](#)

[Family Resource](#)

The [Parent Engagement Program and Family Academy](#) provides a free education opportunity that prepares parents to be knowledgeable education leaders. This resource can be found at the Parents for Public Schools Hawaii website.

[Community Resource](#)

[Coalition for Community Schools](#) is a great resource to learn more about community schools, and how a community school can bring educators, families, and community partners together to offer a range of opportunities, supports, and services to children/youth as well as their families and communities.

[School Resource](#)

If you are an educator and would like to learn more about effective home visits, visit the [Parent Teacher Home Visits](#) website. It provides research-based evidence for parent teacher home visits that work!

