Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services

Effectively Collaborate with Families: Categories of Work

**Promote Positive Interactions Between Educators & Families**
- Communicate with families openly and honestly in a way that is comfortable for both parties.
- Demonstrate a high level of knowledge in the area they are working in, continue to learn and grow as professionals, and communicate high expectations for students and families.
- Treat families with dignity, honor cultural diversity, and affirm strengths.
- Are available, consistent, and go above and beyond minimum expectations.
- Recognize the strengths of every member of the team, share power with families, and focus on working together with families.
- Are reliable and act in the best interest of the student, sharing their vision and actions with families.

**Use Effective Practices for Communicating with Families**
- Communicate in a language and format accessible to the family.
- Use face-to-face interactions in planned, formal, and informal meetings (e.g., open house, community/school events, IEP meetings) to communicate with families.
- Use written and digital communication to share formal and informal information about school activities, parent and student rights and responsibilities, and student educational progress.
- Make phone calls to families as needed to build on students’ strengths and discuss supports or resources.
- Share information and/or resources with families via course management systems, school websites, and classroom webpages/ blogs.

Suggestions for Faculty to Support Candidates’ Learning and Enactment

**Introduce** – Show exemplar video of a teacher sharing power with family member; discuss effects

**Prepare** – Simulate meeting with parents in small group; provide positive and constructive feedback.

**Enact** – Observe or video record teacher candidate participating in and communicating during a meeting with parents; reflect with candidate.

**Analyze** – Read exemplar and non-exemplar transcripts of meetings with parents; analyze and note areas for improvement.

**Introduce** – Provide explicit instruction on the importance of effective communication with parent and families.

**Prepare** – Ask candidates to write example newsletters, invitations, and assignment descriptions for parents and families; provide feedback.

**Enact** – Assign candidates to attend a meeting, school event, etc., and engage with parents and families specifically to learn strengths; reflect on conversations.

**Analyze** - Share examples and non-examples of written communications with candidates; analyze in small groups and share out findings.

Questions to Prompt Discussion, Self-Reflection, and Observer Feedback

- What strategies can you use to ensure families feel respected and valued by the school team?
- How does HLP 1-3 connect to the IEP and IEP process?
- Why is communicating with families for a variety of purposes, and not just for formal reasons, important?
References and Additional Resources

**CEC Standards**

**CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (Initial K12)**
Alignment of the CEC High Leverage Practices with CEC Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (Initial K12).

**Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE)**
Alignment of the Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices (birth- age 5) and CEC High Leverage Practices (age 5-8) with the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists/Early Childhood Special Educators (EI/ECSE).

**Books**


**Journal Articles**


This resource is intended to support educator preparation faculty and staff looking to embed the HLPS in professional development, implementation, teacher observation and feedback efforts at their school site. Additional resources and content can located at www.highleveragepractices.org and at https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/high-leverage-practices/.