

Engaging with Parents

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Chapter 3. Engaging Parents to Support Healthy School Environments; Engaging with Parents. Report cover of Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Image of Active Child icon. Collage of report covers of resources: guides, checklists, idea sheets, PowerPoint presentation slide. Image of PowerPoint presentation slide, Parents for Healthy Schools: Making a Difference in Your Child's School. Separate images followed by a collage of Ideas for Parents.

Video Summary

- Schools should offer a variety of opportunities for parents to engage in school health activities.
- Six types of involvement that schools can use to engage parents are as follows:
 1. Providing parenting support
 2. Communicating with parents
 3. Providing a variety of volunteer opportunities
 4. Supporting learning at home
 5. Encouraging parents to be part of decision making in schools
 6. Collaborating with the community

Audio Script

Schools should offer a variety of opportunities for parents to **engage** in school health activities.

According to CDC's *Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health* based on the research of Joyce Epstein, there are six types of involvement that schools can use to engage parents:

1. Providing parenting support,
2. Communicating with parents,
3. Providing a variety of volunteer opportunities,
4. Supporting learning at home,
5. Encouraging parents to be part of decision making in schools, and
6. Collaborating with the community.

Providing Parenting Support:

Schools can build parents' leadership, decision making, and parenting skills through educational opportunities, such as classes or workshops. These activities enable parents to develop positive health attitudes and behaviors to support students and help build healthy home and school environments.

Communicating with Parents:

Parents can become engaged through clear, two-way communication channels between them and the school or district. Schools can send communications to parents, and parents can communicate with teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff about their children's health.

Providing Volunteer Opportunities:

Schools can offer a variety of ways for parents to become involved to maximize engagement and meet their different needs. Inviting parents to volunteer in schools can enrich health and physical education classes, improve the delivery of health services, and help create safe and healthy environments for students.

Supporting Learning at Home:

Schools can engage parents and students in health education activities at home. Engaging parents in homework assignments or other health activities at home increases the likelihood of students receiving consistent messages at home and in school.

Encouraging Parents to be Part of Decision Making:

Schools can include parents as participants in school decisions, school activities, and advocacy activities through the PTO or PTA, school health council or team, school committees, and other school groups and organizations.

Collaborating with the Community:

Schools can seek help from the community by engaging parents in school health programs and activities. When schools coordinate with community organizations, parents can more easily obtain useful information and resources and have access to community programs and services.

The *Parents for Healthy Schools* resources can provide a starting point to motivate and educate parents to get involved in school health programs and activities. Specifically, school groups can encourage parents to make a difference in their child's school health environment by putting suggestions from the *Parents for Healthy Schools: Making a Difference in Your Child's School* PowerPoint Presentation and *Ideas for Parents* into practice.

The following videos will highlight some suggestions from *Ideas for Parents* in order to engage parents about what they can do to support a healthy school environment for nutrition, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions.