Family-school partnerships boost student achievement and school improvement from preschool through high school. With family engagement as a priority and requirement for Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), family engagement in schools matters more than ever.

The foundation of family engagement is a welcoming school environment for all families. To get started in making it happen at your school, read our 4 tips inside.
Think Family Friendly

First impressions matter to ensure families feel that your school is a place where they belong. To make campus visits a positive experience for family members:

• Post signs, in home languages, to guide visitors to important places on campus and make your site easy to navigate for everyone.

• Assign bilingual staff or volunteers in the office to greet parents and answer questions.

• Set up a family resource center with information on your school and community and encourage parents to drop by.

When a school goes the extra mile to welcome families, home-school partnerships begin to grow to support student success.

Keep the Campus Clean and Safe

Is your school site a clean, inviting and safe place? A well-maintained campus goes a long way to better connect families and schools. To keep your site looking its best:

• Develop a clean campus policy based on feedback from parents, students, teachers and staff.

• Organize campus cleanup days and recycling programs for your school community.

• Maintain playground facilities and shaded areas for outdoor activities to ensure that they are safe and accessible for all students.

Sprucing up a school not only makes it more inviting for families, it affects student performance, behavior and learning in class.

Embed Respect

With a healthy school climate, parents see school as a caring place that students look forward to going to each day. Create a more welcoming and peaceful environment for all stakeholders by focusing on respect as a core value in your mission statement. To reinforce the message:

• Set a positive tone and communicate clear expectations for the campus that students, parents, teachers, and staff work together to build an environment of respect.

• Ensure that books and curriculum reflect all students’ lives in your school and community.

• Engage in professional learning on how to work with families; provide conflict management through assemblies; and offer parent and staff education on prevention of harassment and bullying.

Relying on proactive strategies builds mutually respectful partnerships so students can thrive in school and beyond.

Make Communication Easy

How your school communicates with home signals an appreciation of the diversity of families. Provide regular, two-way communication, in home languages, to share information and receive feedback through:

• Community forums

• Volunteer room representatives

• Home visits

• Backpack express

• Phone calls

• Email blasts

• Social media

Effective communication empowers and engages parents as partners with schools to support student achievement, development and growth.