



The Family School Partnership Mindset

- **All families have assets** they can bring to the table. All of them. Family members are a child's first and forever teachers.
- We often think about family engagement in terms of activities or information we want to communicate. This work is about **relationships**.
- Like educator voice, **family voice matters**. We can't afford to leave either behind.
- There will be "ouch" moments: times we mess up or get hard feedback from families. **We need to be open and vulnerable**. We don't have all the answers and never will. It's okay for educators to say to families: "I'm not sure what's best. I'm hoping you can help me." That's how **strong relationships work**.
- **Educators don't usually receive training** or support about how to create strong partnerships with families. Family partnership isn't about individual initiative. It's about how the school works.
- Not all "parent involvement" is equal. As individuals and as schools and districts, we're on a continuum, **moving from involvement to engagement to full partnership**.
- Strong family school partnership is an evidence-based strategy for improving outcomes for students. The [research is there](#).
- Family school partnership **is everyone's job**. At the same time, school is our domain and education is our profession. We need to **take the lead** on building trusting relationships with families.
- Family partnership staff shouldn't do everything. **Their role is to help everyone else step forward**, into partnership work, not step back and let family engagement staff do it. Liaisons, coordinators and other family partnership staff can help build capacity in staff and families, or "**dual capacity**."
- Family school partnership is a big topic. People aren't often sure what "good partnership looks like". The [Massachusetts Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals](#) can be a useful tool for establishing a shared understanding and vision and identifying family partnerships strengths and gaps.
- You don't need to do everything at once! This is very strategic work. Focus on an area of growth or improvement that is do-able and meaningful. A "**thin edge of the wedge**" strategy can be a valuable way to model family partnership mindset and attract allies and family co-designers.