

Activity 4.2: Think About It: Recognizing Strengths

Time: 20 minutes

Purpose

To reflect upon and identify the strengths of the families in your school according to Epstein's Six Types of Family Involvement

Materials Needed

- Pens/Pencils
- Family Involvement Type Response Chart (attached)

Roles

1. Facilitator: Explain to participants the steps for the activity and direct the follow-up discussion.
2. Participants: Working in small groups, fill out the response sheet, and participate in whole group discussion.

Activity

1. The facilitator will direct the participants to divide into six groups.
2. Facilitator will assign each group to analyze a different type of family involvement and provide them with the correct response chart.
3. Facilitator will read the following statement: "Renowned family engagement researcher Joyce Epstein has identified six ways in which families are involved in their children's educational lives: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Take ten minutes to consider the type of involvement and ways in which your families excel at this type of involvement. Remember that we value many different ways of being involved so think outside the box and reflect positively. Please fill out the response sheet for your involvement type and prepare to share out."
4. Facilitator will time the discussion (10 minutes) and lead the discussion.
5. For a follow-up activity, the Facilitator could also ask participants for suggestions on how the school could support and enhance differences in family involvement.

Family Involvement Type I: Parenting (Care-Giving)

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type I (Parenting) considers the ways in which families support the health and safety of their children and promote physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.	<p>Do the families at your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take steps to provide necessities to their children• Ask for help when needed• Pursue knowledge• Involve their kids in social groups in or out of school• Talk to their kids about feelings• Express disagreement• Have knowledge of educational rights• Attend trainings• Seek support of other individuals	

Family Involvement Type II: Communicating

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type II (Communicating) considers the ways in which families communicate and share information with community members and school personnel.	<p>Do the families at your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate through any means: phone, email, texting, conversations in the parking lot, zoom meetings, etc.• Tell you when they don't understand or know something• Provide you with information their children's strengths and needs• Access educational portals or school websites• Utilize social media accounts	

Family Involvement Type III: Volunteering

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type III (Volunteering) considers the ways in which families support school needs, programs, initiatives, and events.	Do the families at your school... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in school organizations like the PTO• Attend school events like concerts, opening houses, or literacy nights• Provide needed supplies (like tissues, disinfectant wipes, etc.)• Engage in fundraising activities• Help out with class parties, field day, etc.• Read to their children's classroom	

Family Involvement Type IV: Learning at Home

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type IV (Learning at Home) considers the ways in which assist their children in learning when they are away from school.	<p>Do the families at your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help their kids with homework• Tell you if they don't understand how or why their children is working on an assignment• Serve as learning coaches during virtual learning• Provide their kids with supplies like pencils, paper, etc.• Establish routines, learning spaces, and schedules that work for their kids• Get help from tutors, friends, and family members	

Family Involvement Type V: Decision-Making

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type V (Decision-Making) considers the ways in which families participate in decision-making activities for either their children or their school population as a whole.	<p>Do the families at your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend parent-teacher conferences or IEP meetings (in-person, on the phone, virtually...) • Complete surveys • Provide information on their children's hope and dreams • Participate in committee meetings (virtually or in-person) • Express opinions about their children's educational goals • Offer suggestions for how the school can do better 	

Family Involvement Type VI: Collaborating with the Community

Definition	Considerations	Identifying Family Strengths (Think Outside the Box!)
Involvement Type VI (Collaborating with the Community) considers the ways in which families connect to their communities to better support their children's education.	<p>Do the families at your school...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek out community resources to help their children• Visit places like museums and libraries• Attend out of school events, such as community celebrations• Participate in community organizations, such as youth sports leagues, churches, etc.• Make connections between school and community	