

Tips for Building Trust with Parents & Caregivers: A Guide for Educators & School Staff

Four Essential Elements of Family-School Partnerships
Inclusive Culture - **Trusting Relationships** - Capacity- Building Opportunities - Dedication of Resources

Trusting relationships enable families and schools to partner about the education and health outcomes for kids

1

Stay patient and committed.

Developing trust and solid relationships takes time. Parents/caregivers may need to feel comfortable enough to voice their concerns and ideas.

2

Seek diversity and representation.

Your network of parents/caregivers must reflect the demographic make-up of your students and families. Acknowledge gaps in representation, evaluate recruitment strategies, and identify ways to elevate the voices of community members who may not be able to make a regular commitment at this time.

3

Use multiple methods of two-way communication to encourage dialogue (e.g., texts, emails, phone calls, video conferences, in-person meetings).

Accommodate different languages spoken by members of your community and ensure that your resources and communications are translated. Stay away from any jargon or complex topics used in education and health .

4

Demonstrate empathy.

Strive to reflect and understand the lens of parents/caregivers as they share past and present experiences in school environments.

5

Get to know your families and the strengths they bring.

Your community and families have a deep understanding of their culture, norms, and dynamics. Listen to their concerns, questions, and stories about how they perceive their role in their child's life.

6

Remain reflective and consider your mindset.

Head into every conversation ready to learn and adapt as culture, attitudes, and past experiences may guide parents/caregivers perceptions. Avoid taking comments personal or making assumptions which can bring out biases and cause us to unintentionally act in unkind and unjust ways towards others .

7

Be realistic, flexible, and solution-oriented.

Avoid making promises that put your school in a tough place and work collaboratively with parents/caregivers to find mutually beneficial and attainable solutions to their concerns. Maintain an uplifting, solution-focused tone to keep the conversation moving forward.

8

Turn words into actions.

Once you have established next steps with your team, turn words into action by implementing your plan, together, with parents/caregivers.

