

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

QUICK GUIDE

Through welcome calls, home or community visits, and other informal beginning of the school year conversations, relationships are built between educators, students, and families. These relationships serve as the foundation for all other interactions throughout the school year, and it is with a strong, positive, two-way relationship that shared power can be achieved. Multiple studies have shown that strong family engagement, including trusting relationships, are correlated with a reduction in absenteeism and higher academic performance.

Core Components of Relationship Building:



GET TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

Ask open-ended questions to spark conversation rather than questions with yes/no answers, be sure to practice active listening.



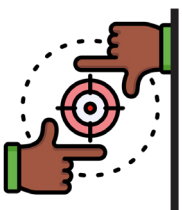
BE AUTHENTIC

Relationships are two way, so share some of your interests and background with the family to build rapport.



CENTER ON THE CHILD

Ask questions about the child's interests, needs, and when possible, include the child!



FOCUS ON WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THE FAMILY

Unless the family asks, don't talk about classroom logistics and expectations, instead let the family share what matters most to them.



ELEVATE HOPES + DREAMS

Ask the family and child about their hopes for the upcoming year and the rest of their educational journey.



FREQUENT + CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Trust takes time and effort to build – follow up on commitments you make to the family, use their preferred language and method of communication to keep in touch.



STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

HOME + COMMUNITY VISITS

Flip existing power dynamics and ask to meet families in their home or community, wherever they feel most comfortable, be flexible to the family's needs.

WELCOME CALLS

When you get your class roster, reach out to families with a welcome call – introduce yourself as their child's teacher and make a strong first impression, focus on your desire to build a relationship, not classroom logistics.

FAMILY + STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Show families and students that you want to understand their needs and preferences by sending out a questionnaire and applying their answers to your practice.

MOST EFFECTIVE

PARTNERED COMMUNICATION

Consider who at your school might already have a strong relationship with the family who can help you build trust or who might also work with the student and want/need a relationship with the family.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING MEETINGS

Foster relationships between educators and families AND among families to foster a sense of belonging within the school community.

LEAST EFFECTIVE

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How will I utilize the information I learn as I build relationships? How will it impact how I communicate with families? How will it impact how I support their students?
- What assumptions might I be making about families? How can I challenge my own bias?
- Who from our community should I include as I build relationships with families?
- What kind of support might I need to feel confident building relationships with families?
- How will I know I'm successful building trust with my students' families?