

**Sulphur Springs ISD's
Early Childhood Learning Center's**



**High Quality Prekindergarten Grant
Family Engagement Plan
2015-2017**

Family is defined as the adults responsible for the child's care and children in the child's life who support the early learning and development of the child. Specifically, a unit composed of the parents and teachers, responsible for the care, well-being, safety and education of a child, in addition to the other children with whom the child lives and learns.

Family Engagement is defined as the mutual responsibility of the family, school, and community to build relationships to support student learning and achievement and to support family well-being and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated in the child's educational experience and supports the whole child and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate.

SSISD's Prekindergarten Family Engagement Plan, is the commitment of "the family" to build strong relationships between home and school to support student development, learning and achievement, family well-being and the life-long learning of all.

SSISD's Prekindergarten Family Engagement Plan will create a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embrace the individuality and uniqueness of families, and promote a culture of learning that is child-centered, age-appropriate, and family-driven. Sulphur Springs ISD prekindergarten families will engage in opportunities to become lifelong learners, bridging home to school readiness, by observing, guiding, promoting and participating in the everyday learning of their children at school and home. Parents will be included in planning meetings, school readiness meetings and assessment meetings to become familiar with information about child learning and development and the program's curriculum. Additionally, parents will be encouraged to observe and participate in their child's classroom activities. Staff will also be trained to support these families through the continuous improvement of their instructional strategies by the capture and review of assessment data. The goal of the SSISD Prekindergarten Family Engagement Plan is to ensure that families have ongoing opportunities to discuss their student's strengths and challenges throughout the prekindergarten school year and to learn how best to support that child in all his endeavors.

The Family Engagement Plan for Sulphur Springs ISD Prekindergarten shall:

I. Facilitate family-to-family support using strategies such as:

- A. Creating a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other, as individuals and in groups, by offering training in the parent center on topics such as brain research, stress toxicity, artful learning, study buddy methods, etc.
- B. Inviting former prekindergarten program participants, including families and community volunteers, to share their educational and career experiences with current families.
- C. Providing opportunities for participation in events designed by families for families. Such events include family leadership training by members of the local counseling community, informational sessions regarding post-secondary educational opportunities and job training lead by invited representatives from Paris Junior College and the Texas Workforce Commission.

II. Establish a network of community resources using strategies such as:

- A. Building strategic partnerships by scheduling parent meetings in which community partners share beneficial information for parents through education, parent, and health fairs; childhood nutrition meetings; transition meetings; etc. Partnerships include Johanna Hicks, Texas A&M Agri-Life Extension; Christus Mother Frances Hospital-SS; Sulphur Springs Public Library; Paris Junior College; Smile Corners; Broadway Smiles; WIC; Department of State Health Services; Texas Health Steps; and, SAFE-T.
- B. Establishing and maintaining partnerships with local businesses, faith-based organizations and community agencies by presenting families with the opportunities to learn about such topics as financial literacy, personal safety, physical/mental health and nutrition. Established partnerships include City National Bank-SS; Sulphur Springs Police Department; Sulphur Springs Fire Department; SAFE-T; Christus Mother Frances Hospital-SS; Smile Corners; Broadway Smiles; WIC; Ginger Brooks/Elise Douglas Counseling Services; Hopkins County Agri-Life Extension Office; and Sulphur Springs High School Health Science Technology Education staff and students.
- C. Partnering with local day care feeder facilities to create family-friendly transition plans for students arriving from early childhood settings to prekindergarten.
- D. Facilitating referrals to family support and/or educational groups based on family needs/interests fielded from parent surveys.
- E. Establishing student achievement goals with a review of student data by teachers, parents and students. Goals will be set during home visits in the Fall and reviewed/revised during a parent conferences in the Spring.

III. Increase family participation in decision making using strategies such as:

- A. Developing and supporting a family advisory council by organizing a Pre-K Parent Committee to provide parent input, volunteer services, and parent/community support for the program.

- B. Developing, adopting, and implementing identified goals within the annual campus improvement plan targeting family engagement by sharing with school principal information based upon conferences, home visits, and Pre-K Parent Committee meetings to aid in identifying and addressing common flaws or problems in the program.
- C. Developing and supporting leadership skills for family members and provide opportunities for families to advocate for their children/families by ensuring that parents' opinions are heard in the program-planning processes via Pre-K Parent Committee, parent surveys, parent meeting/parent training evaluation questionnaires, etc.
- D. Collaborating with families to develop strategies to solve problems and serve as problem solvers by having Pre-K staff establish a mentoring system between current and former Pre-K parents, thus, assigning mentors for current Pre-K parents as the need arises. Former Pre-K parents will offer input during orientation to Pre-K at the beginning of the school year as well as in transitioning to kindergarten at the end of the school year.
- E. Engaging families in shaping program activities and cultivating the expectation that information must reflect two-way communication by conducting home visits and parent conferences, using parent communication journals, sharing report cards, etc.
- F. Providing each family with an opportunity to review and provide input on program practices, communications, and events to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of the families by inviting parents to Common Planning meetings, providing opportunities for parent to offer input in the curriculum or daily lesson plans, and eliciting suggestions through a Classroom Suggestion Box or communication app such as Bloomz.

IV. *Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning using strategies such as:*

- A. Providing families with information and/or training on creating a literacy-rich home environment by furnishing parents with login information for Raz Kids and IStation.
- B. Equipping families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offer opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the prekindergarten school year by scheduling opportunities to introduce and orient new students to the Pre-K day. Orientation to kindergarten will be provided as students exit the Pre-K program.
- C. Providing families with information, best practices, and training related to age-appropriate developmental expectations through parent training opportunities with the school counselor, Cheryl Blount.
- D. Emphasizing benefits of positive family practices such as attachment and nurturing that complement the stages of children's development by scheduling a parent training opportunity with Ginger Brooks/Elise Douglas, local professional counselors.
- E. Collaborating with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way by scheduling a parent training opportunity with behavior specialists Ashley Holt, LSSP, and Brittney Preas as well as with Ginger Brooks/Elise Douglas Counseling Services. Parent training opportunities about Conscious Discipline

behavior management strategies embedded in the Frog Street curriculum, will be provided by Kara Ballard, Mental Health/Disabilities Specialist.

- F. Encouraging families to reflect on family experiences and practices in helping children by going on field trips, eating breakfast or lunch with child at school, reading with your child, etc.

V. *Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks using strategies such as:*

- A. Provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, including training on communicating with families in crisis by having staff complete Eduhero professional development modules on child abuse, bullying, medical issues, etc.
- B. Promote and develop family engagement as a core strategy of the PLC to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff.
- C. Develop staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies. In addition to being aware of cultural differences, units of study celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, Christmas Around the World, etc. will be incorporated into the student learning.

VI. *Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement using strategies such as:*

- A. Conducting goal-oriented home visits to identify strengths, interests, and needs by scheduling a Fall home visit and a Spring parent conference. Share teacher-generated goals and ask parents for new goals or to elaborate on teacher goals. Revisit goals as each are met and discuss student success at Spring parent conference or additional parent conferences as needed.
- B. Developing data collection systems to monitor family engagement and to focus the engagement of families from specific populations to narrow the achievement gap. Documentation will include parent meeting/parent training sign-in sheets, parent input sheets on curriculum and lessons, Common Planning sign-in sheets, completed parent surveys, completed parent meeting/parent training evaluation questionnaires, and a three-year data summary of family and community engagement activities.
- C. Using a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment by distributing and collecting parent meeting/parent training evaluation questionnaires at the end of each meeting/training. Progress monitoring will result in focused instructional decisions within the classroom and will drive parent communication to ensure student support at home. A review of parent surveys, sign-in sheets from program activities, parent input through the parent curriculum input letters will refocus family engagement efforts throughout the year and for years to come.
- D. Ensuring teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process by reflecting on the entire process, from collecting student assessment data, to facilitating the setting of

school readiness goals, etc. Student assessment data from CLI Engage, Kindergarten Readiness Test, ASQ-SE, and Pre-K Skills Checklist will be discussed during PLC meetings and Common Planning meetings in order to help establish student goals and improve instruction. Meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and sign-in sheets will reflect the teachers' role in the family engagement evaluation process.