


# Involvement-Engagement Continuum

Educators sometimes use the terms *involvement* and *engagement* interchangeably when working with families to support student learning. This is understandable given that these terms can be used synonymously in everyday conversation. However, when it comes to students and families, *involvement* and *engagement* denote different approaches and outcomes.

The Involvement-Engagement Continuum includes language that reflects stages along a progression from involvement to engagement, as well as corresponding definitions that describe these stages in greater detail. The Continuum represents family engagement as parent-centered, in which educators and families aim to empower caregivers to support student learning on their terms, and in ways that align with their communities. It is important to note that involvement and engagement are both valuable for supporting student learning, with family involvement considered as a precursor to family engagement.

The Continuum can be employed in a variety of ways to assist educators with their family engagement goals. Ideally, the Continuum would be part of a greater professional learning endeavor that includes time for educators to reflect on their school's, and their own, family engagement practices, and whether these practices are creating the desired results. Use the Continuum in professional learning settings to guide discussions, reflections, and evaluations of family engagement efforts.



## Involvement

Communicating To

## Engagement

Conversing With



**Family involvement is school-centered** and includes promoting ideas to parents about problems and solutions educators have identified, as well as the criteria used to evaluate the success of those initiatives.

**Family engagement is parent-centered** and includes school staff eliciting ideas from families through trusting relationships, with a focus on the needs and priorities that emerge from the school community.

Ferlazzo, L., & Hammond, L. A. (2009). Building parent engagement in schools. ABC-CLIO.

### Involvement-Engagement Continuum Definitions

Language in the Involvement Engagement Continuum describes a progression along different stages of development, from family involvement to family engagement.

**Reporting:** Educators inform families about school goals and resources.

**Connecting:** Educators match families with resources that promote school goals.

**Recruiting:** Educators enlist families to commit their time, talents, and resources to meet school goals.

**Collaborating:** Educators and families work together toward meeting school goals.

**Partnering:** Educators and families share responsibilities and commit to reaching common goals.

**Investing:** Families take the lead in generating and meeting goals that are valued by the school community.