

Partner with families through purposeful and positive relationships

Partnering with families is a key factor in supporting positive mental health outcomes. Working with families helps to support children and young people's social and emotional wellbeing, learning and development opportunities.

Families are their children's first educators

Family involvement in education is a known protective factor for children and young people's mental health.

The benefits of strong educator-family relationships are clear, with research showing their importance to social and emotional wellbeing and learning outcomes, among other factors.

Many learning communities have a long history of family involvement – families may assist in the classroom or canteen, help with fundraising, or participate in various committees. These interactions support family-educator relationships and offer a greater sense of community. However, there's a difference between involving families and engaging with them.

The importance of family engagement

The goal of engagement is to develop an equal partnership around the child or young person's everyday experiences.

Engaging families motivates them to contribute to mental health and wellbeing and learning outcomes at home as well as at the early learning service or school. Though there are barriers to partnerships from time to time, these can be overcome.

Key principles of effective family partnerships

This module explores the key principles of building effective family partnerships.

Planning, gathering information, preparing staff and promoting the learning community as a place of support takes effort. However, the benefits of this work are significant.

The key principles of effective family partnerships include:

- Trust
- Empathy
- Family-centred practice
- Engagement
- Inclusion.

By completing the Partner module, you will be able to:

- appreciate the benefits of partnering with families to support children and young people
- understand the key principles of effective family partnerships
- apply strategies to establish effective family partnerships that support children and young people
- take action to establish effective family partnerships.