



Chapel Hill Academy
PreK Family Engagement
Plan
2023-2024

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Family engagement is defined as:

“The mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities to build relationships to support student learning and achievement, 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 is both culturally and linguistically appropriate.” Texas Administrative Code §102.1003.

It has long been recognized by both researchers and practitioners that family engagement plays a non-negotiable role in education. It is no longer a suggestion, rather a mandate, in Texas with the passage of house Bill 4 in 2015. Texas Education Code §29.168, created by House Bill 4, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015, requires a school district or charter school to develop and implement a Family Engagement Plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The local Family Engagement Plan shall be based on the family engagement strategies established by Texas Education Agency in collaboration with other state agencies.

The Chapel Hill Academy Prekindergarten program embraces the individuality and uniqueness of families and promotes a culture of learning that is child centered and age appropriate. Building partnerships between educators and families, by way of the Family Engagement Plan, ensures that every learner is encouraged, supported, and challenged to achieve the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and character.

The six Chapel Hill Academy Family Engagement Plan strategies are based on empirical research and are proven to demonstrate positive short-term and long-term outcomes for early childhood education. This plan expresses what is contained in the Commissioner’s Rule (102.1003(f)) in addition to specific examples of how each of the family engagement strategies will be accomplished in our high-quality PK program. The following articulates strategies within each of the six domains.

Facilitate family-to-family support	Establish a network of community resources	Increase family participation in decision-making	Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning	Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children’s learning benchmarks	Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement
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1. Facilitate Family-to Family Support

Chapel Hill Academy's Pre- Kindergarten program creates a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups; invites former program participants, including families and community volunteers, to share their educational and career experiences with current families; and ensures opportunities for continuous participation in events designed for families. Examples of events include:

- "Meet the Teacher" night facilitating family to family interactions, networking, and community/school support
- "Open House" time during the initial days of each school year that creates a welcoming space for parents to gather and talk informally with one another before and/or after the event. This space is intentionally designed to be family-friendly with culturally diverse pictures and materials that welcome all families.
- Room moms and volunteers to support parents and classroom activities.
- "Book Fair" where families can get to know one another and share community and school experiences.
- PTO meetings and sponsored events encouraging parent volunteer opportunities allowing parents to work collaboratively and designed to match families who have similar interests, goals, or challenges and providing opportunities for families to have ongoing connections.
- Class field trips and other activities that include family participation.
- School Health and Advisory Council and Site Base Decision Making Teams provide opportunities for parents to interact and network with other parents interested in supporting public education in the Chapel Hill "Meet the Teacher" night facilitating family to family interactions, networking, and community/school support
- Chapel Hill Academy PK Round-up. Early indicators of the following year enrollment.

2. Establish a Network of Community Resources

The Chapel Hill Academy PreK Family Engagement Plan builds strategic partnerships by leveraging community resources; establishing and maintaining partnerships with businesses, faith-based organizations, and community agencies; monitoring and evaluating policies and practices to stimulate innovation and create learning pathways; identifying support from various agencies, including mental and physical health providers; partnering with local community-based organizations to create a family-friendly transition plan for students arriving from early childhood settings; and identifying partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language.

Examples of Strategies in Action (B) include:

- Partnership with local businesses to provide vision checks for PK learners and other vision resources as needed.
- Holiday Gift Assistance partnerships with Lena Pope for families in need.
- Family counselor assistance information for short term family guidance and needs.
- Educator/Campus newsletters that highlight community resources, events, and services to support diverse needs of multi-cultural families.
- Local Area Fire/Police Department/Military Personnel visits and speakers that share resources with students, families, and the school promoting safety and overall well-being.
- Local partnership to provide food, school supplies, and back to school backpacks for learners in need.
- Chapel Hill Academy ISD Bilingual employees provide (as needed) translation services for families at events, meetings, newsletters, etc.

3. Increase Family Participation in Decision-Making

Chapel Hill Academy increases/promotes family participation in decision-making by developing and supporting opportunities related to and campus goal-setting efforts targeting family engagement; developing and supporting leadership skills for family members and providing opportunities for families to advocate for their children/families; collaborating with families to develop strategies to solve problems and serve as problem solvers; engaging families in shaping program activities and cultivating the expectation that information must flow in both directions to reflect two-way communication; developing, in collaboration with families, clearly defined goals, outcomes, timelines, and strategies for assessing progress; providing each family with an opportunity to review and provide input on program practices, policies, communications, and events in order to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of families.

Utilize appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather feedback on the Family Engagement Plan. Examples of family participation in district and campus decision-making opportunities include:

- Campus visitor and volunteer opportunities
At Chapel Hill Academy, we are proud of our school and welcome visitors. For the safety of those within the school setting, all visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Thank you in advance for helping us create a positive and respectful learning environment.
- Share strategies with parents on how to advocate for themselves and their children appropriately.
- Educate families regarding their rights under State and Federal law regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).
- Create and maintain an environment that values and affirms parent leadership.
- Using parents as equal partners with staff in reviewing family engagement results and making decisions regarding plans for continuous improvement.
- LPAC parent representation.
- Parent/teacher conferences two times a year, additional conferences as needed or requested.
- Progress monitoring information is shared with parents encouraging their feedback, questions, and ideas regarding future learning experiences.

4. Equip Families With Tools to Enhance and Extend Learning

Pre-Kindergarten educators in Chapel Hill Academy recognize the families of our learners as the first and best teachers in the child's life. To equip parents with tools to enhance and extend their child's learning, our educators will work with families to strengthen the family/school partnership, provide resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school and offering opportunities for families and children to visit the school in advance of the pre-kindergarten school year; provide learning activities for families to engage with their children. Information will be presented in newsletters, social media, parent/family-teacher conferences, or other school-related events. Information will be provided with a focus on age-appropriate developmental expectations; collaborate with families to appropriately respond to children's behavior in a non-punitive, positive, and supportive way. We will assist families to implement best practices that will help achieve the goals and objectives identified to meet the needs of the child and family. Examples of how Chapel Hill Academy equips families with tools to enhance and extend learning include:

- Chapel Hill Academy offers a high-quality full day PK program to eligible learners, enhancing and extending socialization and facilitating parent involvement for Pre-K families.
- Teacher/parent conferences held throughout the school year and collaborating with them in setting goals for their children while in the PK program.
- Encouraging family members to volunteer in the classroom, using the time to foster enhanced communication regarding their child's development.
- Suggested extension home activities that correspond to activities done in the classroom.
- PK registrations and throughout the summer and school year that include campus tours and school/program information.
- Parents are encouraged to access class/campus information from the Parent Portal on the Chapel Hill Academy website.
- Parents are provided with learner progress by way of regular report cards, weekly teacher communication, etc.
- BOY, MOY, and EOY Reports from Circle PreK testing.
- Chapel Hill Academy Code of Conduct.

5. Develop Staff Skills in Evidence-Based Practices that Support Families in Meeting their Children's Learning Benchmarks

Chapel Hill Academy believes in a continuous improvement philosophy. We provide essential professional development for educators in understanding communication and engagement with families, including training on communicating with families in crisis; promoting and developing family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff; and developing staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies. These strategies include:

- Develop educator skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.
- Promoting and developing family engagement as a core strategy to improve teaching and learning among all educators and staff.
- Continuous professional development achieved through training opportunities from Region 11.
- Educators will brainstorm and actively seek out ways parents can lay a major role in decision-making within the classroom.
- Utilize developmentally appropriate activities to help children understand differences in families, cultures, and traditions.
- Educators will receive training in supporting families in crisis and the resources that are available in the community that support families' interests and needs.
- Educators will participate in professional learning that focuses on strength-based approach to family engagement.
- Implementation of the Chapel Hill Academy Discipline Policy.
- Utilization of resources available in Circle Progress Monitoring platforms.
- Continuing membership in the ESC 11 as a means of professional learning, program effectiveness, and practices associated with HQPK implementation.

6. Evaluate Family Engagement Efforts and Use Evaluations for Continuous Improvement

Self-assessment will be a cornerstone to the overall process of evaluating for program effectiveness and to support future improvements. Our PK program develops a data collection system that monitors family engagement; uses data to ensure alignment between family engagement activities and district/school teaching and learning goals and to promote continuous family engagement; employs an evaluation plan to guide action; uses a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment; and ensures educators and parents play a role in the family engagement evaluation process. Efforts contributing to the evaluation process include:

- Parent surveys will gain information on preferences of program components and parents' perception of program effectiveness. Survey results serve to improve program design and to increase parent outreach and involvement.
- Chapel Hill Academy will conduct an annual EOY program evaluation and review of the results will support improvement efforts for the new school year considering all areas of the Family Engagement Plan.
- Child-centered goals setting collaborations with parents will continue at the BOY. Progress monitoring and reporting will occur at the BOY, MOY, and EOY.
- Survey parents at least annually on the effectiveness of the prekindergarten experience for their child and their family.
- Incorporating goals related to family engagement into the program/campus strategic planning initiatives.
- Utilize the "High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Self-Assessment" instrument created by TEA to include results indicating strengths, opportunities to grow, and next steps for continuous improvement.
- Participation in family involvement activities will be quantitatively documented and monitored at the campus levels. Qualitative data will be collected to ensure the specific needs of families are being address through surveys.