



***What works to build Family/Professional Partnerships?***

**Here are recommendations from the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee to develop effective partnerships between special education providers, general education teachers, administrators, AND local parent groups as well as individual families.**

- Focus on the needs of students first to develop a common starting place.
- Reassure families that their child is seen as an individual with unique needs; not just as part of a group.
- Listen to the hopes and dreams of families for their child.
- Identify common purposes and goals with families or parent groups.
- Maintain high expectations for the achievement of students with disabilities.
- Utilize family expertise in solving challenges for individual children as well as addressing challenges for educational systems.
- Seek out existing local parent groups in the school district and provide regular information on special education services to these groups.
- Communicate openly and frequently with parent groups to keep them informed of district successes and challenges.
- Use technology that enables families to access information about their child's program and to communicate frequently with special education staff.
- Provide an electronic forum where families can post questions and receive answers from local special education providers.
- Model family partnerships as the Response to Intervention (RtI) process is developed in the school district

- Use CSEAC, local SEAC, PEAK Parent Center and Parent 2 Parent groups to provide support and expertise for Response to Intervention (RtI) initiatives.
- Offer joint training opportunities to special education staff and families in the district in order to develop common understanding.
- Add “Family Partnership” subcommittees to existing district committees.
- Sponsor family members to attend local and state conferences with a partner from their school or school district (special education provider, general education teacher, administrator, etc.).
- Provide special education department representatives as a speaker’s bureau for school parent meetings (PTA, Accountability Committee, etc.) and local parent group meetings (ARC, Autism Society, etc.).
- Develop a family liaison position within the special education department to link with families of children with disabilities.
- Provide user friendly materials that individual special education teams can share with family members when a child is newly identified with a disability.
- Solicit annual feedback from families and parent groups about their child’s special education services and any unmet needs in the district.

*The most effective way to build family/professional partnerships in your district:*

**Form a local Special Education Advisory Committee if your district does not currently have one!**

**The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee is ready to help you in this effort!**

*Please contact the CSEAC at 303.866.6943 so that local CSEAC members can provide you with support for the formation of a local special education advisory committee.*