



Families, Educators, and Communities Fostering Student Success

Best Practices For Involving Parents In Higher Education

Effective Communication

Institutions of higher education should ...

- Give consistent messages about specific issues concerning the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Jeanne Clery Act, parental notification in event of emergency, housing and residence life, financial aid, counseling, student conduct, and academics.
- Use focused messages that provide opportunities for families to understand student development in college, as well as the institutional goals and philosophies related to family involvement.
- Provide a point of access where parents can direct their concerns or pose questions.

Welcoming Environments

Institutions of higher education should ...

- Invite the expertise of families by including them in recruitment, social and cultural activities, policy development, and decision making.
- Give parents access to information about assisting their child with academic success based on the unique population at the institution such as gender, racial and ethnic diversity, disability and other characteristics.
- Help parents understand the academic environment such as faculty freedom and environment, the academic expectations for their child, advising policy, and institutional culture.
- Provide outreach to parents and family members such as including them in orientation, electronic communication, family weekends, sibling events, and convocation and graduation events.



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Collaborating with the Community

Institutions of higher education should ...

- Communicate resources that are available to students such as tutoring, employment, health and counseling services, ministries, recreation and other services that are accessible to their college student.
- Provide opportunities for students to organize groups that support specific causes that pertain to their needs.
- Invite local businesses, policymakers, and other relevant community members to be a part of the campus community as opportunities for service-learning, field study, and internships as well as communicators to the opportunities for employment after graduation.

Sharing Power

Institutions of higher education should ...

- Involve families in current assessment of programs, services and family needs.
- Involve families in development of family involvement and associations in the institution.
- Involve families in development of crisis planning.
- Involve families in recruitment, support services for students, and serving as a parent member voice about policies and procedures in the institution.
- Recognize that parents are stakeholders in their child's education.

Staff Training and Professional Development

Institutions of higher education should ...

- Provide training to staff members on responding to the needs and concerns of the population of the families the institution serves.
- Provide training to staff members to be successful in responding to the energies and emotions of families with students in college.
- Provide training to staff members on communicating with and to families, including best methods.
- Provide training to staff members on student development and family theory so that staff are able to communicate information to families in a skillful manner.
- Provide training to staff members on how to create reflective relationships with families.



Families, Educators, and Communities Fostering Student Success References

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Additional Resources

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Please contact Dr. Kristine Greer, author and SACPIE Higher Education Committee Chair, at GREER_K@fortlewis.edu for further information.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education (SACPIE) and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the Colorado Department of Education or the Colorado State Board of Education.