Family, School, and Community Partnering

Staff Self-Reflection Tool

**Instructions:** Research studies have shown that many educators do not receive preparation or specific training in how to partner effectively with families. This self-reflection tool, anchored in evidence of what works, is designed to support effective practices. It is suggested that individuals or teams complete the tool, assess strengths and challenges, then apply to practice and/or identify possible professional development needs. The tool can be used as a pre-and post-test metric in working towards continuous improvement.

**Name (or Team or Department):**

**Date:**

**Check if action is routinely included in partnering with families. Then tabulate number of checks. Summarize strengths and challenges. Use questions to guide conversations.**

**Do I . . . ?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Connect with every family soon after school begins?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Personally always start with a positive message?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Talk about my desire to work together to help the student?
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Express the fact that family members’ input and perspective are important?
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Convey respect for family members as experts on their child?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Identify the circumstances under which families feel more/less comfortable and

try to understand those feelings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Approach families flexibly, offering multiple times, places, and modalities?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Elicit, openly value, and use families’ input?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Ask open-ended questions to get families’ full thoughts?
4. \_\_\_\_\_Really listen to family members?
5. \_\_\_\_\_Thank the families for listening, caring, and helping?
6. \_\_\_\_\_Tell students that I am partnering with their families?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Always communicate two-way, asking for family ideas, not just sharing my own?
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Productively problem-solve concerns so each student is successful?
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Ask what is needed as far as ideas about homework and various approaches that

can support learning at home?

**# of Checks:**

**Strengths:**

**Challenges:**

**How Can I . . .?**

**Generate an idea(s) to support implementation of each action. Use questions and ideas to guide conversations.**

1. Use partnering language to promote teaming? For example:
   1. Use common language (“us,” “we,” “let’s”)
   2. Use family members’ words
   3. Convey understanding
2. Ask the family for help in a respectful, mutually gratifying way?
3. Clarify responsibilities of each person?
4. Avoid advice giving?
5. Meet families “on their turf”?
6. Make events fun?
7. Make sure roles are meaningful?
8. Plan for and prevent logistical barriers?
9. Make time to build relationships with all families?
10. Gain confidence in my ability to talk comfortably with families?
11. Learn about each family’s unique culture?

*Source:* Adapted from Future of School Psychology Task Force on Family-School Partnerships. *Family-school partnership* *training modules*, 2007. Retrieved from <http://fsp.unl.edu/future_index.htm>.