



# Involving Parents and Caregivers in Mental Health Programming at Tier 1: Novel Ideas and Research from the Field

Linda M. Raffaele Mendez, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Fairleigh Dickinson University



# Agenda

Overview

Goals for Involving Parents in Mental Health at Tier 1

Types of Information/Opportunities to Provide

CASEL's 6 Key Strategies for Establishing Family-School Partnerships

Tiered Models for Supporting Parents and Caregivers

Do school personnel feel confident in engaging parents in student mental health?

Self-Efficacy Item	% Confident or Highly Confident
1. Build relationships with individual students at this school.	91.5
2. Notice social-emotional troubles in your students at this school.	85.1
3. Start conversations with students at this school when you are concerned about their well-being.	87.1
4. Recognize signs of mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, trauma) among students at this school.	72.2
5. Respond to students at this school when they misbehave.	78.4
6. Respond to students at this school when they tell you about their troubles.	84.3
7. Respond to students at this school when they are experiencing a crisis.	69.5
8. Connect students at this school with support or resources they might need.	72.1
9. Share concerns about the wellbeing of students at this school with their parents/guardians.	66.4
10. Collaborate with other teachers at this school in order to support students.	87.8
11. Collaborate with administrators at this school in order to support students.	79.3
12. Collaborate with support staff (counselor, social worker) in order to support students at this school.	82.2
13. Collaborate with parents at this school in order to support students.	64.9

# Poll #1

What is your biggest challenge in involving parents in mental health at your school?






# Adverse Childhood Experiences



\* The child lives with a parent, caregiver, or other adult who experiences one or more of these challenges.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

The signs of an adverse childhood experience can include:

	
Fear of other people.	Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
	
Bedwetting.	Changes to their mood.
	
Difficulty showing affection.	Difficulty learning in school.
	
Avoiding situations or events that relate to a traumatic experience.	

 Cleveland Clinic

What attitudes and beliefs should educators bring to the family-school relationship?

Start with the assumption that others care about the child and that you have a shared goal of finding solutions that will support the child's development.

## C-O-R-E beliefs

### Connected

- Trust develops when participants feel valued, heard, and understood.

### Optimistic

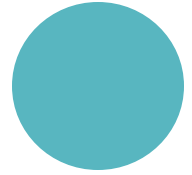
- When facing difficult situations, I believe that each person is doing the best he/she can and that every family has strengths and resources.
- No one person is to blame for a problem. Blaming only interferes with solving that problem.
- Problems are system problems; successes are system successes.

### Respected

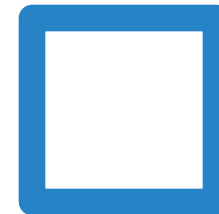
- In interactions with families, each person is an expert and a learner.
- Children must be active participants in decisions that affect them.

### Empowered

- Power, responsibility, decision making, and action should be shared when planning interventions. Families should be the main decision makers.
- Advice giving is disempowering and should be avoided.



Kathleen Minke, Executive Director of NASP



Minke & Vickers (2014)

<https://kappanonline.org/families-schools-navigate-mental-health-issues-minke-vickers/>

# Shifting Our Questions About Families

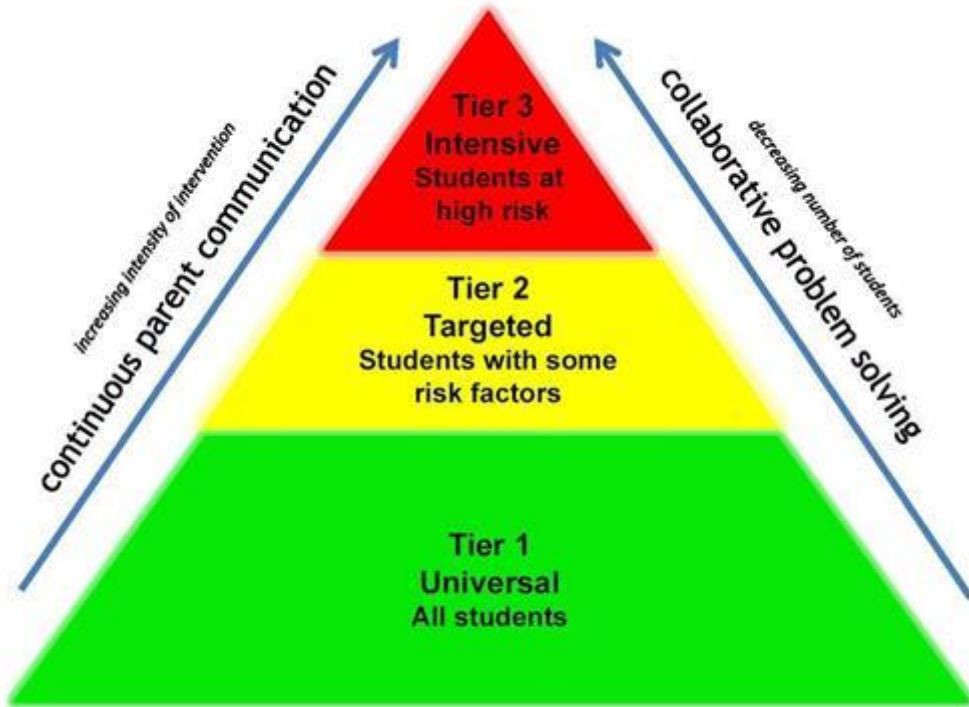
## • **A Family Deficit Approach**

- Why don't families respond to our messages and outreach?
- Are some groups of families simply unreachable?

## • **Equity Minded Introspection**

- Does our outreach match family preferences and build trust?
- What policies and practices disproportionately make some families feel less welcome and supported at our school?

# Goals for Involving Parents in Mental Health at Tier 1



Establish	Establish the idea that educating the whole child includes attending to mental health and well-being
Create	Create positive connections between home and school
Educate	Educate parents about how to support children at different points in development
Provide	Provide information about community resources to support mental health





## Setting Up a Tier 1 Mental Health Communications Team

- **Suggested Members of the Team:** Student support staff (e.g., school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker), administrators, parents, community service providers, secondary students
- **Goals of the Team:** To identify which mental health information to share with parents and caregivers and how to disseminate this information

# What Information to Provide?

A needs assessment is a starting place.

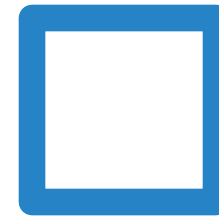
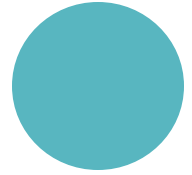
**Purpose of the needs assessment:** To gather information from stakeholders about the information needed by parents to support their children's mental health.

## **Options for gathering information:**

- Student, parent, or educator focus groups
- Student or parent surveys

### **Sample Question for Student Focus Group**

*"What are some of the mental health challenges that teens experience that parents or teachers may not understand?"*



### **Sample Question for Adult Focus Group**

*"What do you see as the biggest challenges parents face in supporting their children's mental health?"*

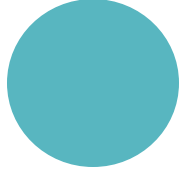


# Chat #1:

In the **chat box**, answer the following question:

*“What do you see as the biggest challenges parents face in supporting their children’s mental health?”*

# Toolkit for Schools: Engaging Parents to Support Student Mental Health and Emotional Well-being



[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/connectedness/connectedness\\_toolkit.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/connectedness/connectedness_toolkit.htm)

## Background

Information on school connectedness and family engagement in schools

## Social Media

Messages you can post on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

## Newsletters

Sample text you can use in newsletters, emails, and more

## Graphics

Images you can use for social media, websites, and presentations

# Getting Information Out to Parents



Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.: **Draw attention**




Newsletters: On school website or in hard copy form: **Provide more substantive information**



Be sure to include contacts where parents can get more information or get involved: **Open the door for two-way engagement**



## Poll #2



On which social media sites does your school post information for parents?

Select all that apply.

# Sample Social Media Post



Hey Parents and Caregivers!

The Bogota Public Schools are making mental health and emotional well-being a priority. Our goal is to create a healthy and supportive school where students feel connected to adults and peers. But we cannot do it alone. You have a powerful role in supporting your child's learning, health, and emotional well-being at home and at school. When parents are engaged in their children's school activities and initiatives, they get better grades, choose healthier behaviors, and have better social skills. Learn what you can do to help build a healthy and supportive school. #CDCHealthySchools

# Sample Graphic



**DYK?**

A healthy and supportive school can help students

- Recognize and manage emotions.
- Set and achieve positive goals.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships.





# CASEL's Ideas and Tools for Working with Parents and Families

<https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/schools-families-and-social-and-emotional-learning.pdf>





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# Key Strategies for Establishing School-Family Partnerships

[https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fschoolguide.casel.org%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F2%2F2018%2F12%2Ftool-strategies-for-establishing-school-family-partneships\\_R3\\_Revised\\_ga.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fschoolguide.casel.org%2Fuploads%2Fsites%2F2%2F2018%2F12%2Ftool-strategies-for-establishing-school-family-partneships_R3_Revised_ga.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

# Strategy #1: Use Two-Way Communication with Families



Start the Year Right

Engage families with welcoming letters and ask them to complete brief surveys about family preferences for school-home communications and involvement (Albright, Weissberg, & Dusenbury, 2011).

Ask about Strengths

Ask families to complete “talent cards” or student information sheets to get family perceptions of their student’s strengths.

Think Back and Forth

Use “notes-back-and-forth” or a traveling journal where school staff can highlight students’ successes and SEL skills. Families can reply with information about SEL in the home.





## Strategy #2: Engage Families in Multiple Ways

- ✓ Encourage parents to attend events like family nights or a “family of the week” program to share occupations, interests, hobbies, culture, and stories.
- ✓ Assign SEL activities that involve families as homework.
- ✓ Listen to families’ ideas about ways their children’s SEL skills are benefiting them at school and at home.



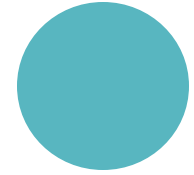
## Strategy #3: Increase Family Involvement in SEL

- Organize workshops to help families meet students' developmental needs in appropriate ways. Workshops for families with younger children can focus on school readiness, mastery of basic skills, and motivation (Tolan & Woo, 2009).
- Provide informational sessions about schoolwide SEL practices and standards and how they connect to learning goals for literacy, mathematics, and other core content areas. Discuss ways families can support their students' success in these areas.



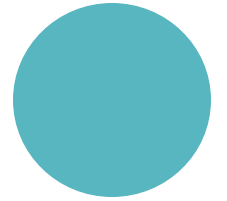
# Strategy #4: Involving Families in Decision-Making

- ✓ Invite families to participate as members of decision-making committees and groups. Encourage participation on the SEL team, school improvement team, and district committees.
- ✓ Encourage families to participate in school climate surveys and elicit feedback from families on how they think the school year is going.



# Strategy #5: Bridge Constraints

- Meet with families outside of the school or during evenings or weekends.
- Provide interpreters for families to accommodate speakers of various languages. If resources allow, hire a family liaison to help address language and cultural challenges by developing newsletters, assisting in conferences and meetings, and planning family outreach events.



# Strategy #6: Increase Capacity of School Staff to Partner with Families

- Facilitate professional learning opportunities related to partnering with families and encouraging family involvement in the school.
- Focus professional learning on how to cultivate productive relationships with families, personalize connections and interactions with families, and collaborate and leverage cultural richness and diversity for effective engagement strategies.

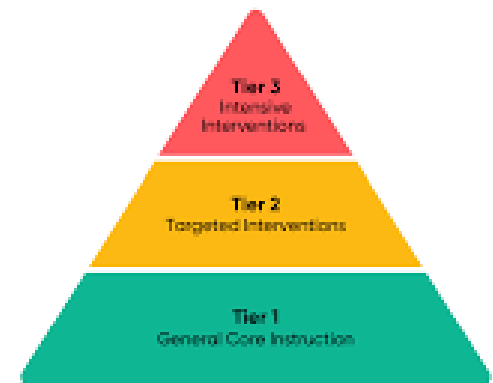






# Two Tiered SEL Programs Involving Parents

- **Positive Parenting Program** (Dishion & Kavanaugh, 2003)
- **Triple P** (McTaggart & Sanders, 2003; Sanders et al. 2008)



# Positive Parenting Program

(originally the Adolescent Transitions Program; Dishion & Kavanaugh, 2003)

## Tier 1

- Family Resource Center established at 3 middle schools in one school district.
- Staffed by 3 therapists from the community.
- Services included brief parent consultation, feedback on students' behavior at school, access to books and videotapes, and phone consultations to any parent who sought assistance.

## Tier 2

- Family Check-Up

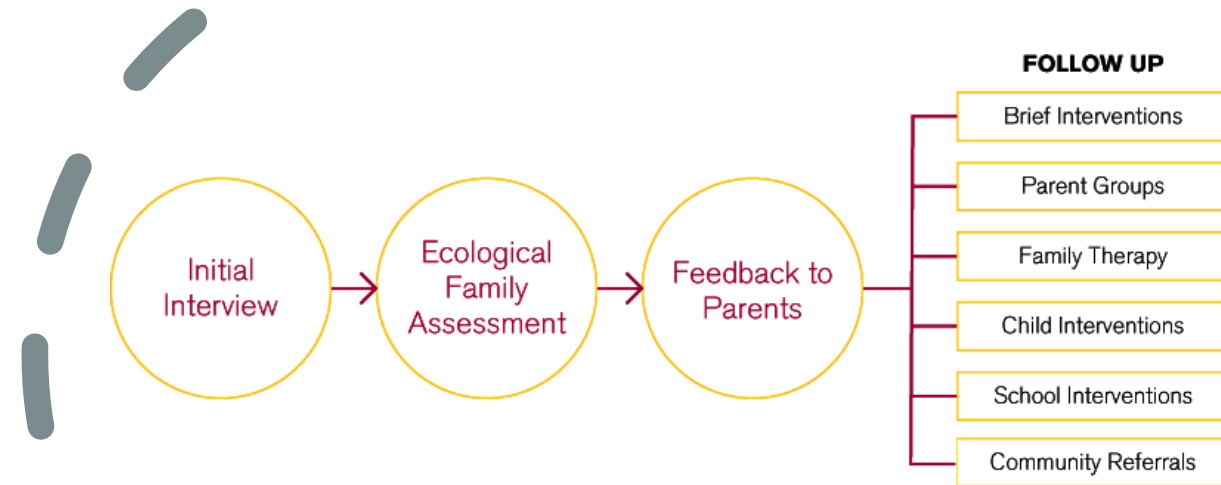


## Tier 3

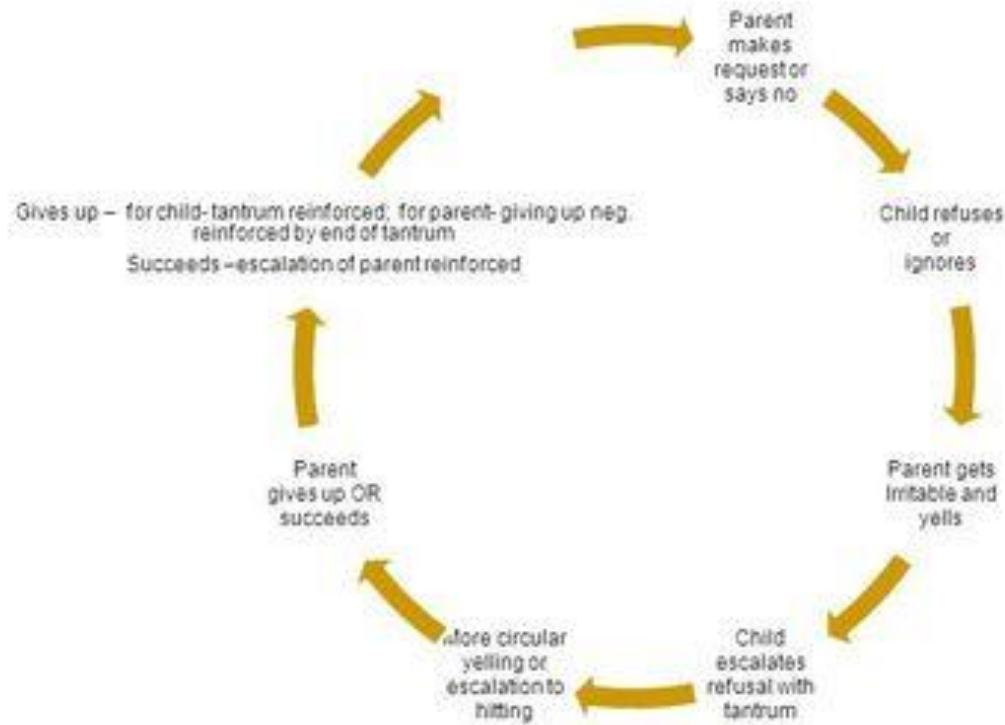
- Determined collaboratively by Family Check-Up interventionists and family
- Individual or group parent training
- <https://thefamilycheckup.com/>

# The Family Check-Up

- An intervention designed to increase parent motivation to engage in proactive family management to promote positive outcomes for youth.
- **Three parts:**
- (1) **an initial interview** that involves rapport building and motivational interviewing to explore parental strengths and challenges related to parenting and the family context;
- (2) **an ecological family assessment** that includes parent and child questionnaires, a teacher questionnaire for children that are in school, and a videotaped observation of family interactions; and
- (3) **tailored feedback** that involves reviewing assessment results and discussing follow-up service options for the family.



# The coercion cycle



Examples of  
Family  
Management  
Issues:  
Coercive  
Family Process

Vermont Center for  
Children Youth & Families  
Vermont Family Based Approach

# Examples of Family Management Issues: Parental Monitoring



## **Parental monitoring includes:**

- 1) the expectations parents have for their teen's behavior;
- 2) *the actions parents take to keep track of their teen;* and
- 3) the ways parents respond when their teen breaks the rules.

## **Parental monitoring questions:**


- Where will you be?
- Who will you be with?
- What will you be doing?
- What time will you be home?

# 5 Levels of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)

- Level 1: **Communications strategy** designed to reach a broad cross section of the population with positive parenting information and messages
- Level 2: **Seminars on positive parenting**
- Level 3: Targeted counseling for parents of a **child with mild to moderate behavioral difficulties**.
- Level 4: For parents of children with **severe behavioral difficulties**
- Level 5: Intensive support for families with **complex concerns**.
- Specialized Groups: Parents of children with disabilities, families going through separation or divorce, parents of overweight children, indigenous families, couples preparing for parenthood

# Recommended Additional Readings

- Albright, M. I., & Weissberg, R. P. (2010). School-family partnerships to promote social and emotional learning. In S. L. Christenson & A. L. Reschly (Eds.), *Handbook of school-family partnerships* (pp. 246-265). Routledge.
- Albright, M. I., Weissberg, R. P., & Dusenbury, L. A. (2011). *School-family partnership strategies to enhance children's social, emotional, and academic growth*. National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, Education Development Center, Inc.
- Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Routledge.
- Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Minke, K.M. & Vickers, H.S. (2014). Get families on board to navigate mental health issues. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96 (4), 22-28.
- National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement. (2021). Catalyzing family, school, and community partnerships: A review of the work of the statewide family engagement centers.
- Sheridan, S. M., Smith, T. E., Moorman Kim, E., Beretvas, S. N., & Park, S. (2019). A meta-analysis of family-school interventions and children's social-emotional functioning: Moderators and components of efficacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 89(2), 296-332.
- Skoog-Hoffman, A. (2022, October 19). Families are students' first social and emotional learning teachers. Here's how to engage them: 4 steps for building stronger family-school partnerships to enhance social-emotional learning. *Education Week*.



The way to get started  
is to quit talking and  
begin doing.

Walt Disney



# Linda M. Raffaele Mendez

raffaelemend@fdu.edu

Thank you for  
being here!

