

Fact sheet

Students with disability

Parent and community engagement

Advancing Partnerships — Parent and Community Engagement Framework

The Parent and Community Engagement Framework provides useful information for engaging with parents and organisations. This factsheet, for schools and teachers, builds on the Framework's five key elements, with a specific focus on students with disability.

Students with disability

Parent engagement in school communities can improve students' self-esteem, school attendance, behaviour and achievement. It is an important part of the School Improvement Tool (Domains 3 and 9) and the School Improvement Hierarchy.

The importance of parent engagement and collaboration with other organisations to lift student outcomes is recognised in the Department of Education's *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student*, Inclusive Education Policy and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Parent and community engagement occurs at all levels of the school and throughout the year. It can take many different forms, depending on parent and student needs, the reason for engagement and the expected outcomes. Investing in effective engagement, implemented in the right way at the right time, can support teachers and school staff to lift student outcomes.



Parent and community engagement

1. Communication



Parents value communication from their school, their child's classroom teacher and others working with their child at school. We know that parents prefer to hear from principals about how departmental policies impact on their local school, and from teachers about how those policies support their child's learning.

Additional ideas for working with parents of students with disability

- Hold information sessions for parents that focus on supports provided at the school that enable students with disability to engage, participate and succeed.
- Provide regular updates to parents on how their child is progressing, giving information about the supports being provided and their child's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Provide opportunities for parents to give updates on the student's wellbeing and how this may impact on their learning.
- Communicate any concerns to parents in a timely and respectful way, and in person wherever possible.

2. Partnership with parents



Understanding the school, home and community contribution to student learning sets the foundation for meaningful partnerships, shared goals and improved student outcomes.

Effective partnerships involve everyone having a clear understanding of their roles and the contribution they can make to student learning. Partnerships should be founded on respect, understanding and meaningful engagement.

Additional ideas for working with parents of students with disability

- Be open to hearing and understanding parents' aspirations and concerns for their child.
- Develop goals in partnership with parents – reflecting high expectations built on the student's strengths and addressing areas for improvement.
- Discuss plans for major transitions with parents, such as enrolment at a new school, start of a new school year or a change of teacher. Identify how parents can help the student with the transition.

3. Community collaboration



Relationships between schools and the wider community strengthen the ability of schools and families to support student learning, wellbeing and developmental outcomes.

Many students with disability receive supports outside school. These supports can make a significant contribution to students' learning engagement, participation and achievement.

Additional ideas for working with parents of students with disability

- Ensure staff are aware of the wide range of professionals who support students with disability, such as therapists, state school registered nurses, teacher aides, wellbeing professionals, guidance officers and advisory visiting teachers – recognising how these supports may contribute to improved student outcomes.
- Work with these professionals, as appropriate, to identify and implement reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure teachers are aware of, and can access, departmental supports (such as coaches, Principal Advisors, the Autism Hub and Reading Centre) that can assist in improving student outcomes.
- Provide parents with information about access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, if appropriate.

4. Decision-making



Parents, students and community members play meaningful roles in school decision-making.

Sharing goals and conducting meaningful consultation are recognised as critical to improving student outcomes. These actions build trust and ensure informed decisions are made.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 requires schools to consult with parents, and students, where appropriate, about reasonable educational adjustments needed to enable students to access and participate in education.

Additional ideas for working with parents of students with disability

- Support teachers to involve parents (and students, if appropriate) in making key decisions (such as for Individual Curriculum Plans, attendance plans, health plans and behaviour support plans).
- Encourage parents of students with disability to join the Parents and Citizens' Association and other school groups.
- Ensure school consultation processes reach parents of students with disability. Organise interpreters if required.
- Involve parents in designing and promoting learning experiences, school events and activities that enable students with disability to access and participate on the same basis as other students.

5. School culture

Everyday activities and the way a school operates reflect its culture. It is important all staff, parents and the school community are aware of the department's commitment to inclusive education and understand that, with the right support, every student can achieve and succeed.



Additional ideas for working with parents of students with disability

- Create a parent friendly environment throughout the school and welcome parents of students with disability into the classroom.
- Promote high expectations of all students with disability and encourage parents to be involved in school activities.
- Ensure staff are aware of, and supported to meet, their obligations to provide reasonable educational adjustments.
- Implement differentiated teaching practices as part of everyday good practice.
- Celebrate key events such as Mental Health Week, Autism Awareness Week, Disability Action Week and the International Day of People with Disability.
- Provide guidance to volunteers about the school's commitment to being inclusive, school protocols and their obligations.

Tips for effective consultation with parents



More information

Schools can access a range of resources that focus on parent and community engagement including:

- [Equity and Excellence Strategy](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/strategies-and-programs/equity-and-excellence)
<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/strategies-and-programs/equity-and-excellence>
- [School Improvement Tool](https://www.acer.org/au/research/school-improvement-tool)
<https://www.acer.org/au/research/school-improvement-tool>
- [Parent and Community Engagement](https://education.qld.gov.au/parents-and-carers/community-engagement)
<https://education.qld.gov.au/parents-and-carers/community-engagement>
- [Inclusive Education Policy](https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/inclusive-education-policy)
<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/inclusive-education-policy>
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2005L00767/asmade/text)
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2005L00767/asmade/text>
- [Students with disability](https://education.qld.gov.au/students/students-with-disability)
<https://education.qld.gov.au/students/students-with-disability>

