



**Family:Schools
Partnership**
**Cooperación
Familia:Escuelas**



TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS

Produced in partnership with parent leaders from New Orleans, this toolkit includes recommendations to improve collaboration and communication between families and schools, to drive positive outcomes for all of our city's children. When families and school teams work together, everyone is pulling in the same direction, and anything is possible.



**NATIONAL
PARENT
LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**

parentswholead.org

**Family Leadership For
A Healthy Democracy**



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www.ParentsWhoLead.org





HOW CAN WE BEST COMMUNICATE?

Parents have different preferences for contact. We find that these methods are usually the most convenient:

Text Messages

Parents like mobile apps, but it's difficult when every teacher chooses a different one. Having a single app used throughout the school best helps parents stay connected. If you use **Powerschool** or other progress monitoring tools, be sure they can be regularly updated so information is always current.

Phone Calls

Remember parents are often working, and receiving communication from multiple sources or multiple schools for their multiple children! Brevity and consistency in methods and points of contact are key!

Zoom Meetings

Language access is necessary. Every communication to families should be in their chosen language. This includes emails, phone calls, texts and mobile apps!

Zoom Coffee with the Principal

Front desk teams should include bilingual staff who can welcome and assist every family in the school community.

For busy parents, calendars that can sync with Google, Outlook or other options can also be a great time-saver!





HOW CAN WE BEST CONNECT?

Start with the understanding that parents care about their children's learning. Parents are their children's first teachers.

Engage parents as essential partners in solution-making from the very beginning. It's not enough for them to just be informed or brought in at the end of an initiative for final approval.

Think about communication as a conversation. Both sides of the conversation have valuable information, and both sides benefit!

Make clear to parents how they can provide their inputs and ideas through web portals, surveys, liaisons, etc.

Find families at kids' sports events, parades, churches and any other community events.





HOW CAN WE BEST BUILD TRUST?

Build community proactively. Your first contact, communication or gathering should be a positive one!

Provide training opportunities for parents for the things they need to know, like curriculum and necessary technology tools and platforms.

Anticipate and address any barriers for engagement such as transportation and childcare.

Bring parents into decisions and planning. Honor their expertise.

Provide cultural competency & implicit bias training to staff, with consistent evaluation and refreshing as needed.

Utilize preferred pronouns and be inclusive of all family structures.

Make your front office the **Parent Welcome Center**, with staff trained to welcome and engage families.

Schedule events around parent availability.

Consistently communicate progress and work completion.

Establish a point person or liaison for families to go to with questions or ideas.

Be transparent and clear about promotion requirements from grade to grade.

Show students and families you value growth over GPAs through celebrations, narrative assessment and honoring learning and progress over work completion and testing.





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TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS

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HOW CAN WE BEST COMMUNICATE?

Work to get on the same page with the school:

Get acquainted with any necessary platforms and technology.

Ask the school for training if you need it.

Learn who the school's parent liaison is.

Remember teachers and social workers often have high caseloads and limited windows of time to communicate. Be clear and compassionate with your outreach. Try to establish a regular, mutually-agreeable time to check in.

Language access is a right. Every communication to families should be in their chosen language. Ask for this right.

Share your best contact information, and update when it changes. Inform the school about other important caregivers and extended family involved in your children's lives.





HOW CAN WE BEST CONNECT?

Start with the understanding that teachers care about your child's success.

Ask for information about how parents can provide their inputs and ideas (web portal, survey, liaison, etc.).

Honor teachers' hard work with appreciation. It can be as simple as sending a note!

Raise the issues you care about to leadership in a way that shows you're ready to roll up your sleeves and help lead change!





HOW CAN WE BEST BUILD TRUST?

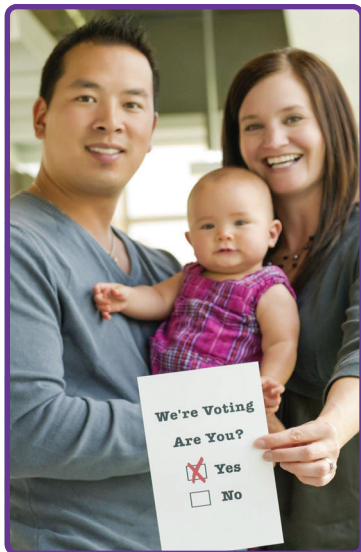
You can volunteer to help coordinate school cultural events by sharing your culture!

Other volunteer opportunities in schools for parents include: chaperoning, class parent, helping at school events. Just ask!

If you encounter barriers to participate in a school event, let the school know what those barriers are instead of just not going. Suggest ways the school could help other parents who may share your circumstances.

Introduce yourself to the front office staff and school administrators, and get to know them!





**NATIONAL
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LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE**

The National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI) is an anti-oppression, nonpartisan nonprofit that empowers families and decision-makers to advocate for children everywhere. We use a multi-generational approach that works across difference to increase the civic engagement of families and partner with stakeholders to build a healthier and more equitable democracy for all.

What We Do



We are innovators in the field of parent and family leadership.

We value the lived experience of families and bring their missing voices to the table to improve child outcomes. We know that to solve problems, those impacted by the problem must be part of creating the solution. We know that for change to last, policymakers, community members, and family leaders must have the skills, knowledge, and chance to share power.

NPLI offers programs and services that:

- » Support and train parents and family members to become effective leaders and advocates for their children and communities.
- » Support and train decision-makers in how to engage families as partners in policy development and implementation.
- » Facilitate cross-sector collaboration and collective action among diverse stakeholders.
- » Provide research, evaluation, and technical assistance to enhance the quality and impact of family leadership initiatives.

How We Work

NPLI is Anti-Oppression



We work for policies, programs, and practices that promote equity, justice, and inclusion for families of all backgrounds and identities.

In our work, we create spaces that increase belonging and inclusion so everyone can be seen, heard, and valued. We intentionally bring people together who are different in many ways. We do this so that everyone can learn from and grow with one another and embrace differences in race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, political leanings, language, faith, geography, and other aspects of identity. Our work helps break down the barriers of racism and discrimination in our society.

NPLI is Non-Partisan



NPLI promotes a nonpartisan approach to the civic engagement of families.

We provide unbiased information and resources that enable parents to understand and respond to the issues that affect their children's well-being and opportunities. We aim to build a healthier, more inclusive and more equitable democracy where all families have a voice and a stake in the future of our society.

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NPLI Creates Positive Impact Through...



Family Leadership

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

NPLI partners with communities to strengthen parent leadership through the proven PLTI model. More than 80 communities across the United States, along with one city in Australia, have been trained to implement PLTI. Through a 20-week engagement in PLTI, parents and caregivers gain personal leadership skills, an increased understanding of public policies, and practical knowledge of how social change occurs. Each PLTI parent leader also develops a community project to make the changes that they want to see in their community.



It was the point and pinnacle of my change... PLTI prepared me in a way that not even my academic career did.

Joshua Vaughn
Naugatuck, Connecticut



If it had not been for the valuable lessons learned in PLTI, I don't know if I could have accomplished any of this. I'm more confident now than I've ever been.

Davida Ambrose
Memphis, Tennessee

Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI)

The PLTI curriculum offers a two-generation strategy for the children of the parents in training, The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI). The CLTI curriculum braids development, leadership, and democracy skills together using interactive learning, play time, and age-appropriate literature to teach parallel content. This creates a full family civics approach, which bolsters parental engagement while promoting the lifelong health, safety, and learning of children and youth.



My activism at school started with CLTI. I wouldn't even be able to begin to think of how I could address these issues without it.

Julian Pena
Mill Creek, Washington

Partnerships & Systems Capacity Work

NPLI works with public agencies, policymakers, and non-profit organizations to prepare them to effectively partner with parents to shape the development, delivery, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices. This type of partnership, where parents are part of the process and where parents, organizations, and policymakers invest in success, both quickens and sustains effective community change.

The Greater Rochester Health Foundation Works To Eliminate Health Disparities for Children of Color in Rochester, NY.

The Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) is working to eliminate health disparities in 0-8-year-olds. The GRHF is transforming child and family systems that have historically marginalized Black and Latino families.

GRHF knows that systemic racism must be addressed, social-emotional health must be supported, and organizations must partner with parents and center family voice in decision-making to truly eliminate health disparities for Black and Brown children.

To truly integrate parents throughout this crucial work to create a long-lasting community change, GRHF has partnered with NPLI to place parent voice at the center of the facilitation, planning, evaluation, and grant-making components of this project.



This project made me feel empowered, and that my voice mattered. It seemed like you really listened to us, took us seriously, and considered what we had to say. And that you made decisions based on that.