

### Why is Family and Community Engagement and Leadership Important?

Engaging families and communities in their visions of education is necessary to creating and sustaining culturally-thriving and academically stimulating places for learning. A wave of research demonstrates that discipline-specific learning—like science education—is more meaningful and engaging to learners when it directly builds from their prior knowledge and ways of knowing and connects to their everyday lives in meaningful ways. Learning occurs in and across the many places learners go to across a day, month, and year both in school and out. This includes the accumulated forms of expertise and ways of knowing about the natural world of learners’ cultural communities. Connecting the knowledge and practices of diverse families and communities to learning enables learners to recognize themselves and their families as doing science, and disrupts the ways in which science is often inaccurately portrayed as primarily emerging from western intellectual traditions. This expansive view of science is not only accurate and more robust but is central to equity. However this can be new for most educators because many educators have not had the opportunity to engage with science in these expansive ways either. This means engaging families and communities in partnership is critical to transformative and equitable science education.

Many learning environments, such as schools, are required to incorporate family and community engagement in their programs as part of their state and federal funding mandates, yet they tend to rely on outdated and inequitable forms of partnering that can actually *disengage* many families and communities. Engaging minoritized families is rooted in a history of schooling that aimed to assimilate racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse families into middle-class, White, heteronormative ways of being. These approaches can contribute to what is called cultural genocide. Additionally, families are often made to feel disempowered, racialized, and deficient when interacting with schools. As such, many families *refuse* to participate in schooling or informal learning environments, but engage in learning and education in their own ways.



- This framework
- 1. identifies **several models of family engagement** that support or hinder familial & communal thriving and learning across places; and
- 2. proposes **key shifts** in family engagement that can support transformational partnerships towards familial and communal thriving and learning across places.

## How to use this framework

**Learner Sense-Making:** Use this framework to elicit family knowledges and practices in instruction. Design activities that purposefully elicit learners' and families' expertise, lived experiences, personal interests, and community practices. This may include facilitating spaces for families to share their interests or knowledge about a particular phenomenon, or space for families to learn together about the histories of places.

**Collaborative Practice:** Use this framework to co-create a plan with your learning community for intentional outreach to families and communities and opportunities for meaningful engagement at organizational and programmatic levels. Schools and other learning environments have a history of soliciting volunteers as unpaid labor to supplement their needs (i.e., fundraising, collating paperwork, grading homework, etc). Volunteering should contribute to vibrancy of the whole learning environment and be meaningful for the families who volunteer.

**Planning and Implementation:** Use this framework to design activities and supporting tools for indoor and field-based learning that directly builds on and extends prior knowledge, familial expertise, and wonderings.

**Educator Reflection:** Use this framework to examine how power, privilege, cultural difference and racialization are occurring in interactions with families and communities as well as how generative moments are occurring and can be supported.

**Co-Design and Assessment:** Co-plan with other educators and families to transform social systems of power in ways that center knowledges and practices from different cultural communities. Design and use formative assessment tools that help you understand how the diverse perspectives that learners are incorporating in their sense-making of socio-ecological phenomena.

### Connections to expert practice:

Increasingly, scientists and policymakers are enacting community based models for ecological management and city planning that build upon the local, traditional, and Indigenous knowledges of families and communities. Families and communities are most attuned to and impacted by fluctuations in socio-ecological systems, and as such have developed reflexive and culturally-situated learning and feedback processes that can be leveraged in participatory monitoring and decision-making. Current school-based, and other formal learning environments, models of family engagement, however, rely on outdated compliance models that do not prepare learners and their families for engaged citizenship in the sciences and in society.

# Family and Community Engagement Model

## How can we cultivate meaningful engagement and leadership for familial and communal thriving and learning across places?

This framework is intended to support educators, educational leaders, families, and community partners consider the range of partnership models that inform their educational practice. Each model in the diagram below represents different practices, relational qualities, and goals and are steeped in power and historicity in unique ways. Likely, no one partnership model will be sufficient to achieve cultural thriving and learning across places but will require several interacting models across individuals, organizations, and institutions. Use the diagram below to consider your own (or your organization's) partnership models, then use the key concepts that follow to think about how these models represent your personal and organizational values for partnership.

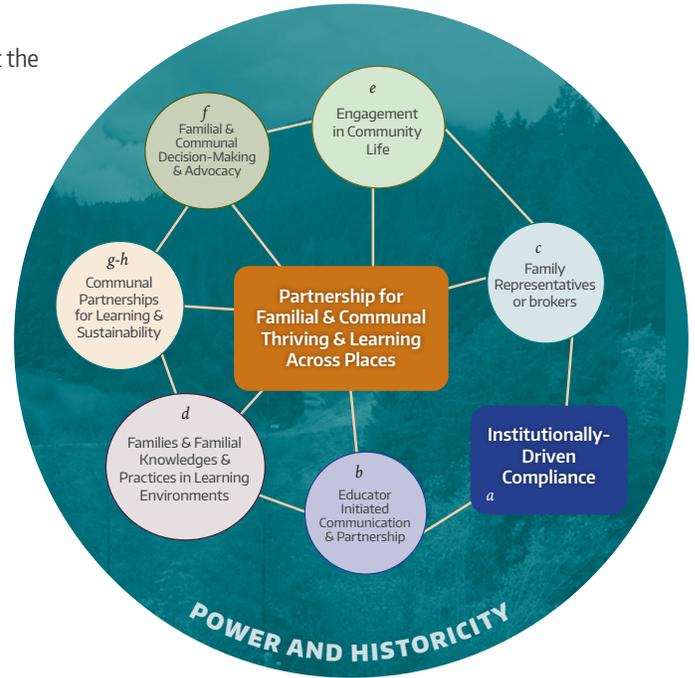
### Dimensions Exploring Paradigms, Positions, & Practices



- Communications and partnership practices center on familial compliance and policing of institutionally-driven expectations and norms. These institutions, including but not limited to school institutions, reflect powered and historicized dynamics that privilege middle class and western norms. \*For example, much of family engagement is driven by school-based compliance that is antithetical to thriving.
- Interactions with families tend to focus on “gaps” in familial knowledge or capacity, and seek to fill in those gaps with relevant knowledge or services. Beginning with a genuine desire to know more about families, their cultural knowledges and practices, and how learning can contribute to their thriving are ways to initiate partnership in dignified ways.
- Several key families advocate for other families and broker relationships between schools/organizations and families to address systemic barriers, problem solve issues, or offer services in learning environments or events. Sometimes these are representative of cultural and linguistic communities within the school or organization.
- Families and communities are engaged in classrooms or visibly represented in the learning and learning environment. Educators and educational leaders know the areas of expertise of the families and their communities in their program/classroom and understand how they can/want to be engaged in the learning setting. Curricula and pedagogy reflects the range of familial and communal knowledges of learners.

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- e. Educators and staff attend community events or go to and learn about the places where families go on their own. Often, educators do not live in the places and communities where their learners live. This can inhibit meaningful or deep connection to the place-based knowledges, practices, and issues that shape learning. Developing communal relationships and engaging in place-based design of learning can support more robust partnerships.
- f. Leadership teams in schools and other formal learning organizations have family and community representation that is reflective of the diversity of the school/organization. Power and historicity is routinely addressed in these deliberation and decision-making spaces to counter historically accumulated power imbalances based in intersectional injustices (e.g., racism, classism, gender normativity, etc).
- g-h. Partnerships with local community centers, cultural organizations, out-of-school programs, civic organizations, and informal collectives of families, are developed and sustained to support learning across the places learners live.



**Partnerships with Cultural Organizations and Community Leaders**

Many cultural community organizations - both formal (e.g., nonprofit) and informal (e.g., collective of families) - have deep expertise in supporting the cultural identity development and learning with families. Further these organizations often engage in a wide range of content learning from community and culturally based perspectives. However, this may not always be readily articulated because non-profit systems have often positioned intellectual or content specific activity as distinct from cultural activity. Finally, many have educational programs geared to young learners that can be partnered with for both informing instruction in learning environments and field experiences that push beyond singular field trips that engage in visiting or show and tell pedagogies only.

**Partnerships with Science, Outdoor, or Garden Organizations and Community Leaders**

Many out-of-school programs, community organizations, garden programs, and more (!) have deep expertise in outdoor learning, science learning, and local socio-ecological issues affecting local places, lands, waters, and communities. Further these organizations often understand the complexity of local social systems that science content interacts with. This expertise is invaluable in Learning in Places.

# Connections to the Learning in Places Rhizome:

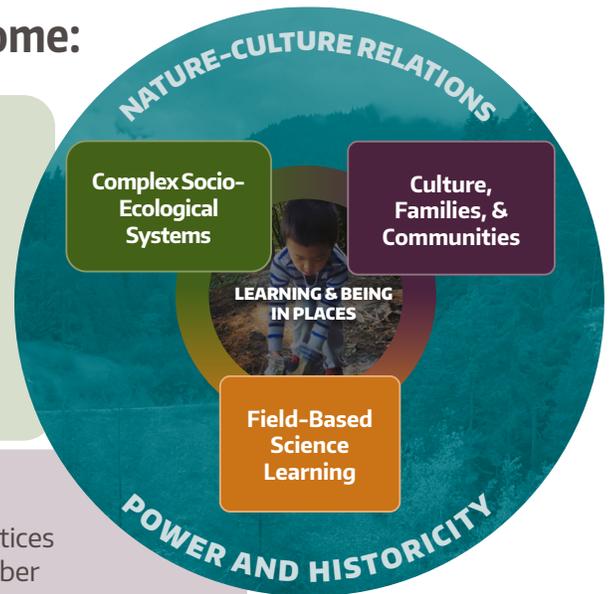
**Complex Socio-Ecological Systems:** All communities engage in scientific sensemaking of the natural world—though they may not refer to this as “science.” Decisions about socio-ecological systems impact all communities, and most often disproportionately impact marginalized communities negatively. Socio-ecological systems learning and decision-making can expand opportunities for families’ and communities’ concerns and solutions to be centralized in education.

**Culture, Families, & Communities:** Families’ knowledges and practices reflect intergenerational engagement in communal practices over time (i.e., culture); however, each family and each family member engages in these practices in unique ways. Meaningfully partnering with families means shifting beyond a generalized view of “families” or “culture” to consider what the families in your learning environment know, do, and care about.

**Field-Based Science Learning:** Families have localized and culturally-specific ways of observing social and natural worlds, as well as have criteria for when, where, and how to accomplish goals. For example, many families know when to plant/harvest foods and medicines, read weather patterns, and make decisions based on their everyday and generationally-accumulated outdoor observations and cultural practices. Learning about and intentionally connecting to these outdoor activities and practices that families and communities already engage in can make science more meaningful and reflective of learners’ knowledges, practices, and identities.

**Nature-Culture Relations:** Cultural communities have unique nature-culture relations that reflect their knowledges, beliefs, and interactions with the natural world. For immigrant and refugee families, their nature-culture relations may reflect their lived histories in other places. Making heterogeneous nature-culture relations visible and consequential to learning also supports deliberation and equitable decision-making skills.

**Power and Historicity:** Interactions between families and most educational institutions and organizations are raced, classed, gendered, and powered. These relations have been historically accumulated and are implicit in interactions. Being intentional about learning from and with families is a critical step to addressing power imbalances. Trust, reciprocity, and humility are recognized characteristics of healthy partnerships and should be considered ongoing goals that require constant reflection and redesign to ensure just and equitable partnering practices.



- “All science learning can be understood as a cultural accomplishment.
- Children and adults the world over explore their surroundings and
- converse about the seeming causes and consequences of the phenomena
- they observe, but they are raised in environments with varied exposure to
- activities (e.g., fishing, farming, computing) that relate to different science
- and engineering domains. What counts as learning and what types of
- knowledge are seen as important are closely tied to a community’s values
- and what is useful in that community context [22-25].”

National Research Council, 2012, p. 284

# Key Conceptual Shifts in Educational Practice

## Toward Culturally Thriving Family and Community Engagement Paradigms

Cultural thriving is understanding that each learner, family, and community deserves dignity and educational opportunities for cultivating their communities ways of knowing, being, and doing. This kind of thinking repositions education within a broader drive to support healthy families and communities - as best defined by those communities. Families play an agentic and central role in co-creating culturally thriving learning environments in formal and informal learning environments.

## From Institutional Compliance Family Engagement Paradigms

Schools have, historically, engaged families to support school-based agendas and demands, including but not limited to attendance policies, behavior and discipline management, and supporting students' academics. Many informal learning environments mirror this problematic paradigm, by setting the agenda and learning objectives that position families as in need of their services. To note, there is a complex set of systemic pressures (e.g. funding) that make this the normative approach. Increasingly, families are expected to perform school-like behaviors and activities at home, such as helping with homework and setting academic goals or to participate in academically-focused informal learning such as visiting museums, putting children in out-of-school programs, etc.. These practices mirror Western-centric (i.e., heteronormative, White, single-family household) practices and behaviors, further marginalizing nondominant families.

## Toward Dignified Family Engagement Perspectives

Educational dignity is the assumption that learning is a process of individual and social transformation that all people engage in throughout their lives, in all communities and contexts, and as undergirded by values, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and the like. Dignified family engagement looks like respectful, reciprocal, and meaningful ways for families to shape school or organization-wide and classroom-specific learning opportunities.

## From Deficit Family Engagement Perspectives

Deficit thinking is the assumption—often erroneous—that families and community members are unable to provide rich learning opportunities or that they struggle to make decisions that best benefit learners, particularly with respect to academic success. Deficit thinking, unfortunately, is pervasive in schools and many institutions and organizations that function to fill in “gaps” in family or caregiver knowledge or resources. This may look like a family night where families learn more about specific practices they can do at home to support their child’s learning.

### **Toward Transformational Family Engagement Relationships**

Transformational relationships seek collaboration in ways that co-create something new or alter the status quo. All participants bring their unique expertise, experiences, and identities as equal and valued. At times, however, this may mean that power capital between individuals or groups of individuals must be addressed and therefore some expertise, experience, or identities may perceive a loss of power or status in transformative relationships.

### **From Transactional Family Engagement Relationships**

In transactional relationships, schools and other education-related organizations provide services to learners and their families in exchange for familial support and participation in activities. Families are then considered passive receivers of knowledge and tools to support their learner at home. This type of transaction puts educational organizations and their actors in the driver's seat, deciding what families need and how they can be involved in learners education. In some cases, for example, schools have suggested that children whose parents do not support the school in sanctioned ways do not then need or deserve high quality education (Nakagawa, 2000).

### **Toward Cultivating Heterogeneous Family and Community Engagement Practices**

Practices are cultivated that seek to build with and expand opportunities for deep learning in ways that connect to the heterogeneous knowledges and practices of learners, learned in family and community contexts. Educators and families build dignified learning environments that support the cultural identity and disciplinary development of learners, while also recognizing and working to change the deep inequities in education that have privileged singular expertise and knowledge.

### **From Assimilation and Acculturation Family Engagement Practices**

Issues of equality are often framed as individuals not having access to or knowing how to perform dominant knowledge, practices and values. In order to address this issue, some suggest that learners and families assimilate or acculturate to dominant, education-based ways of knowing and being. For example, "parent academies" often serve to help parents navigate institutional systems as they are (i.e., as inequitable). Assimilation is the process of replacing learners' and families' heterogeneous knowledge, practices, and values with dominant ones. In acculturation, diverse families learn and participate in *both* dominant and diverse practices.

# Appendices

The following appendices provide examples and other supports to help educators reflect on and expand their models of family engagement. Appendix A is a vignette that showcases one example of how a teacher used this framework in a Kindergarten class. Appendix B provides an example of a family member's reflection on engaging in field-based practices with her son. Appendix C provides a landscape of family engagement paradigms that support educators in shifting towards culturally thriving family engagement from institutionally-driven compliance. Appendix D is a self-assessment that educators can use to reflect on the state of their practices around different models of family engagement.

## APPENDIX A

### Vignette A: How Ms. Dinah Used the Family Engagement Framework to Plan Instruction and Learning Activities with Families

Ms. Dinah, a 2nd grade teacher, is planning a set of lessons about the history of the region to inform a larger place-based investigation. As learners have begun their walks around the school-yard, most have noticed major features of the lands including the boggy area filled with water, mud, deciduous trees, and plants growing in the water. Adjacent, the playground has areas that seem to be always dry and nothing seems to grow on them. Learners have begun to ask questions about why these two areas might be so different, how they came to be this way, and if they were always this way. Tied to these learner wonderings are deeper questions related to the histories of this place that include geologic time, Indigenous peoples time, and ethical possibilities and responsibilities! Ms. Dinah uses the six histories of place dimensions to inform her lesson planning and is curious what her learners already know about the history of this place and how their families' histories might inform her lesson plans. As a dual language immersion teacher, she knows that many of her families are immigrants to this place, some of them very recently, and they have different relationships with this place as well as their homelands. She uses her own curiosity and genuine interests to plan for eliciting family stories about this place. She hopes to cultivate transformational relationships, but also knows that she and her classroom families more often engage in transactional relationships and it will take time to shift her relationship and trust with families.

#### ELICITING FAMILY KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SHARING - Multiple Approaches

Two weeks ago, Ms. Dinah sent home a tool to learn more about a place that was important to each family and to learn what they already know about this place in relation to the histories of places dimensions. She wanted families to see their own knowledges and practices represented in the learning environment (family engagement model d). By the end of the first week, however, she had only a small handful of tools back from families and worried that families might consider this too much homework. She was also worried that building her lesson plans from only a few family responses might make the rest of her learners feel marginalized or excluded. After two more rounds of sending homework home with little response, she tried two different approaches.

First, she invited the families in her classroom on a short walk around the school yard and neighborhood on a Saturday afternoon. During the walk she planned to ask each family one question about an important place in their lives and she would take notes to incorporate to her lesson planning. This would give her the opportunity to learn from families without using the homework. By walking in the neighborhood, Ms. Dinah hoped to position families as experts and engage more in their everyday community lives (family engagement model e).

Secondly, she planned to create an online space for families to “see” how she was incorporating family knowledges and practices - that she viewed these homework as a way to communicate with families, not evaluate their knowledge. Ms. Dinah used the [Histories of Places Framework](#) to help build this practice. She created a Google Map with pins to show where each family indicated their important place. She printed two versions of the map and sent them home to families encouraging them to draw and write on the maps, and have conversations about what they noticed. The first version showed a Nation-State view of the important places listed, the second map showed a Geologic View. She also printed the maps and had learners draw and write on them (family engagement model d). This became a routine form of communication between home and school and built over time.



#### REFLECTIONS ON POWER AND HISTORICITY AND REVISIONS

After the walk, Ms. Dinah reflected that she had made connections with families who do not typically “show up” to school events, such as parent-teacher conferences or curriculum night. She reflected that going into the community places of her families gave her a chance to build relationships different than institutionally-driven compliance. However, she also reflected that language barriers with non-English speaking families meant she relied on her learners to translate and some families felt pressure to communicate in English. Some of her learners seemed uncomfortable in this “brokering” role and it felt like the expectation was families assimilate to English. She decided that in the future she would ask for a translator to accompany her on walks or other events. She wanted families to use their home languages to think about and share the complexity of their ideas, the translator would be for her to learn more about what and how families are thinking.

Ms. Dinah also made routine classroom engagement with the maps, asking students to share about their family conversations and questions that came up. Sometimes this was part of their morning routine and several students would share a story, question, or observation from their family conversation over the past week. During these times, Ms. Dinah was particularly interested in building students’ speaking and listening skills (a literacy and language standard for her grade). At other times, Ms. Dinah would pose a related question and post it outside the room for students (and their families) to leave a sticky note comment on before they came into the classroom. For example, one week she wrote “We are studying plant, animal, and soil relationships to the season. For today, pick a place that you know well and think about a plant and what it usually does in this season. On a sticky note write down - or draw - the plant and what it does in this season. Ms. Dinah’s example - “I used to live in Michigan. There are tall trees that have flowers that look like tulips that usually begin to bloom in this season.”

In this vignette, Ms. Dinah sought to build transformational relationships with families and utilized three different models of engagement. She also encountered the effects of accumulated institutional-driven compliance as she met with resistance from some families to return homework or felt pressure to use English to communicate and share complex ideas. Additionally, she found that her instruction and learners' sensemaking was richer when it meaningfully connected to their lives and important places. She realized she was also better able to assess areas for learning and plan opportunities for learners, their families, and herself and other teachers to conduct field-based investigations, community research, and research with other media.

## APPENDIX B

### Vignette B: Example of Family Thinking

In the following excerpt, Cecilia shares her perspectives on engaging her son in field-based science practices in their home life. This excerpt comes from a planning event with three schools, families, and community-based organizations with expertise in outdoor education and gardening. This event was part of a series of "co-design" events to create a model for field-based science in K-2, instructional materials and practices, an outdoor learning garden, and family programming. This was the first event. Cecilia is a white, single, working mother of an elementary aged son. She described herself as deeply passionate about her son's learning and development, but not engaged in typical institutionally-driven activities like volunteering in the classroom or helping her son with homework. When asked how she does engage with her son's science learning she responded,

Cecilia: "How do I engage with this [field-based science] stuff... I usually ask [my son] how his day was... [but] it's not 'here's what we did in this subject and here's what I learned here'. But I know it's in there and that he's learning it. But the times that I have engaged with him on this stuff is when we are in these [outdoor] places. We are lucky enough to be living right next to [Ravine Park] right now, so we go to [the park], and when we see these things then he's like 'oh I remember this' and he talks about it. And I get this sense of what he's learning in his classroom because it's triggered because he's also learning about it in these places. And I guess if nothing else, just to say as a parent, I'm encouraged by this [field-based science learning] because the more learning that there is in places like [Ravine Park], I feel like the more easily he and I will be able to share those moments. And I will know what questions to ask him, and he will guide me in his learning, and stuff like that. Whereas when he's in his classroom there is going to be more of a disconnect there.

In this excerpt, Cecilia recognizes that many family engagement models ask families to reinforce school-based norms and practices in their home life by asking learners about their school-based learning in different subject areas - that is they are asked to engage in institutional driven compliance or transactional relationships. Cecilia resists this imposition and instead shares how she does engage her son, by walking in places that matter to them (Ravine Park). Additionally, Cecilia talks about routine outdoor walking activities that research has shown supports field-based science learning. Ravine Park is situated next to her son's elementary school and his classroom sometimes takes walks here. As Cecilia and her son walk in Ravine Park, he often shares what he has learned in his classroom walks - his learning is sparked by being outdoors and their relationship is re-kindled by walking together in important places.

There are important implications for family engagement. Cecilia narrates a desire for learning more about the places that matter to her and her son as well as learning that builds on what she is already doing to support her son's learning. Creating dignified family engagement means recognizing and honor what families already do to engage their children in learning, especially if these forms of learning do not look like "school." This goes beyond stereotypical or generalized conceptions about families, but requires developing the everyday practices and activities that families engage in. Additionally, this means engagement beyond the classroom or school building. Engagement here means strengthening relationships with Ravine Park through field-based science learning that spans outdoor classroom learning and family learning.

## APPENDIX C

### Shifting Paradigms to Culturally Thriving Family Engagement from Institutionally-Driven Compliance

Whether we consciously recognize it or not, interactions between educators and families are shaped by our roles, histories, and relationships within institutional settings. We often rely on predetermined “scripts” to help us navigate relationships and interactions within these settings. Some of these scripts are predetermined by things like educational status, race/ethnicity, languages spoken, gender, sexuality, marital status, living situation, and more (Ishimaru & Takahashi, 2018). For example, a curriculum night in a classroom may look like “school” with families learning about how best to support their learners academically and educators teaching about what content and learning objects drive the school year (family engagement models a & b). Even a simple interaction such as this sets into motion particular family-school relationships that may support or hinder transformational relations. While this interaction may seem quite normal, it reflects powered dynamics that position the teacher as expert and families as only learners. Underlying these scripts are a set of conceptions about families that frame how we interpret their engagement (in schools and in homes) and agency to shape learning opportunities.

The following table contains a few conceptions about families that emerge when we center cultural-thriving or institutional compliance. Importantly, any learning environment will likely see both types of conceptions emerge when building relationships with families and communities. Use this table to reflect on the kinds of conceptions about families that you see reflected in your learning environment. How do these conceptions reflect powered and historicized dynamics?

Family Engagement Model Type	Conceptions that often emerge	Power and historicity
a Institutionally-Driven Compliance	<p>Bad- Some families are apathetic or abusive to their child(ren), and/or are barriers to their child's academic and life success</p> <p>Beneficiaries - Some families benefit from school and the resources (academic, social, etc. that schools and other educational institutions provide</p>	As you reflect, which families are most often conceptualized as apathetic or as benefiting from academic-based programs? How does this reflect power and historicity?
b Educator-Initiated Communication and Partnership	<p>Learners - Some families are learning more about navigating educational systems or changemaking processes</p> <p>Partners in Schooling - Some families are partners with educators, school admin, etc. in the education of their child(ren)</p>	Think about which communities have historically been seen as partners in education—and how is your organization set up to privilege partnering with some communities of families over others?
c Family Representatives or Brokers	<p>Hard-to-reach - Some families are difficult to bring into schools or other educational institutions</p> <p>Intimidated/Excluded - Some families are purposefully marginalized from educational institutions as a form of oppression</p>	Think about your organization that has historically engaged in oppression of some communities of families in order to protect the interests of white families. Under what/whose terms are you asking families to engage with the organization/institution?

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Family Engagement Model Type	Conceptions that often emerge	Power and historicity
d Families and Familial Knowledges & Practices in Learning Environments	<p><b>Caring/high expectations</b> - Some families have high educational expectations and care about the academic achievement and educational opportunities of their child(ren)</p> <p><b>Socializers/educators</b> - Some families educate and socialize their child(ren) into cultural/communal life</p> <p><b>Partners in teaching</b> - Some families are partners with educators, school admin, etc. in the education of their child(ren)</p>	Take a look at your learning environment, the materials and their arrangement in the space - whose norms, values, and knowledges are privileged or marginalized? How might you use a range of partnering practices to expand the familial and community representations (physical and conceptual) in your learning environment?
e Engagement in Community Life	<p><b>Dreamers</b> - Some families envision alternative forms of education than current dominant or mainstream forms</p> <p><b>Socializers/educators</b> - Some families educate and socialize their child(ren) into cultural/communal life</p>	Family and community spaces are not neutral or apolitical, nor is your presence in these places. What do you need to learn prior to entering community space and how might you go about learning?
f Familial and Communal Decision-Making and Advocacy	<p><b>Advocates</b> - Some families fight for the educational rights of their child(ren), recognizing that education is not equal or equitable</p> <p><b>Decision-makers</b> - Some families are in positions to make decisions that impact their child and other children in educational systems</p> <p><b>Bad-</b> Some families are apathetic or abusive to their child(ren), and/or are barriers to their child's academic and life success</p>	Think about the who in your organization/institution is perceived as positively or negatively advocating for their children? Who gets positioned as expert? Who gets positioned as problematic?
g-h Communal Partnerships for Learning and Sustainability	<p><b>Choosers</b> - Some families navigate educational systems, including extracurricular programs to select the best opportunities for their child(ren)</p> <p><b>Knowledgeable of the issues</b> - Some families are intimately aware of and critical of the issues impacting educational justice or community wellbeing and work with their community to address these broader issues</p> <p><b>Resistant/protective</b> - Some families resist institutional pressures and protect their child(ren) from institutional harm</p>	What kinds of partnerships currently, or have historically, existed between your organization/institution and communities? Are these long-term partnerships? Or ad hoc visits? How do these reflect the cultural communities in your learning environment?



## APPENDIX D

### Reflection Guide

#### Family Engagement Assessment: Paradigms, Positions, and Practices

The self-assessment below incorporated a range of family engagement paradigms and positions. There are two sections to the self-assessment. The first asks you to rate your own practice or your schools practice. There are 4 options including: 1) I **often** do this, 2) I **sometimes** do this, 3) I haven't done this **yet**, and 4) I don't do this in my classroom but I see this at my **school**. You will note that in each section there are practices that position families, educators, and schools in different ways – some through deficit perspectives, some through strength based perspectives. Many educators and schools engage in both. These questions are intended to help surface these variations and to support more intentional decisions if needed. The second section is intended to help educators reflect across the practices and consider how they can expand their family and community engagement practices. As you consider these shifts refer to the framework and think about how they can align with the different types of engagement practices in the framework.

Forms of Engagement	Practices or Interactions	My Personal Practice			My School/ Organization
		Yes!	Some!	Not yet!	Yes/No
Institutionally-driven Compliance	Families are informed of the expectations for learner attendance, behavior, and learning				
	Information regarding expectations, policies, and consequences are shared in families' home language				
	Opportunities for family feedback on these institutional policies are available				
Educator-Initiated Communication and Partnership	I reach out to families about the behavior of their child including when their child is				
	• Showing leadership or taking initiative				
	• Being kind, compassionate, or respectful				
	• Misbehaving or disrupting				
	• Withdrawing, or showing signs of prolonged sadness, apathy, or depression				
	• Showing signs of fear, bullying, or avoidance				
	I reach out to families about the academic performance of their child including when their child is				
	• Exceeding academic expectations				
	• Meeting academic expectations				
	• Not meeting academic expectations				
• Showing creativity or problem solving					
• Driving their own, or inspiring the learning of others					

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Forms of Engagement	Practices or Interactions	My Personal Practice			My School/ Organization
		Yes!	Some!	Not yet!	Yes/No
<b>Educator-Initiated Communication and Partnership (continued...)</b>	I reach out to families with resources they can use to support their child's learning in				
	• Mathematics				
	• Science				
	• Social studies				
	• Language and literacy				
	• Home language learning				
	• Technology and tool use				
	• Social emotional development				
	I know the preferred home language of the learners in my classroom				
	• Materials sent home are translated in these preferred languages				
	• A translator is present during in-person communications				
	I recognize the role of my own power and position in my decision-making and interactions with children and their families				
	I create intentional spaces for families to bring questions, concerns, and ideas				
<b>Family Representatives or Brokers</b>	There are formal roles for families to represent or broker relations (i.e., liaisons, instructional aides, etc)				
	I know who the brokers/representatives are for the different cultural communities in my learning environment				
	I collaborate with brokers/representatives to learn more about the families, communities, and issues/possibilities in my learners' lives				
<b>Families and Familial Knowledges &amp; Practices in Learning Environments</b>	I know the areas of expertise of the families in my program/classroom and understand how they can/want to be engaged with me in our learning setting.				
	My learning space is a collaborative space where families' ideas, questions, and concerns are heard.				
	Learners can see their own families' knowledges and practices visible in the learning environments' materials				
	I reference and build with families' knowledges and practices in my pedagogy				
	I invite families into the classroom to support learning in ways that include				
	• Working 1-1 with a learner or group of learners on subject-specific activities				
	• Chaperoning learners on field trips or walks around the school yard				
• Sorting, filing, and copying (etc.) learning materials					
• Corresponding with other families, coordinating family volunteers, etc.					
• Share stories and experiences					
	I partner with families during out-of-school time to design activities, lessons, or instructional materials				

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Forms of Engagement	Practices or Interactions	My Personal Practice			My School/ Organization
		Yes!	Some!	Not yet!	Yes/No
<b>Families and Familial Knowledges &amp; Practices in Learning Environments (continued...)</b>	I elicit family knowledges and practices through a variety of media, including				
	• Homework designed to learn more about families knowledges/practices				
	• Meeting families outside of school times				
	• Email communications				
	• Phone/text communications				
<b>Engagement in Community Life</b>	• Learning apps (Class Dojo, See Saw, etc.)				
	I know the places my families routinely visit that are important to them, including				
	• Where they go to learn				
	• Where they recreate, play, and relax				
	• Where they worship				
	• Where they visit extended family and friends				
	• Where they do not/cannot go, but would want to go				
	I know about, or am learning about, the customs and protocols of these places before I visit				
	I visit the important places of my families (see above list)				
	I learn more about these various important places				
• Across the 6 temporal dimensions using the histories of place framework					
• Engaging in field-based research of the local lands and waters of these places					
• Engaging in community research by talking with local community experts, families, etc.					
• Engaging in media research online, with books, etc.					
My pedagogy and practice is informed by my learnings and relationships in these places					
<b>Familial and Communal Decision-Making and Advocacy</b>	There is a decision-making body in the learning environment where families hold formal roles				
	Decision-making spaces represent the diversity of cultures, languages, and perspectives in the learning environment				
	I know the family advocates in the learning environment				
	I know the issues and concerns of family advocates				
	Families ideas and concerns are taken seriously and addressed in a timely manner				
	I have evidence that families feel agency and power to make educational decisions and changes				
<b>Communal Partnerships for Learning and Sustainability</b> <small>Partnerships with Cultural Organizations &amp; Community Leaders</small>	I know the community organizations that support cultural thriving and learning for the diverse communities in my learning environment				
	I invite members of these communities into my learning environment				
	I have a long-term partnership with one or more of these organizations				
	I engage in professional development with these organizations				

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Forms of Engagement	Practices or Interactions	My Personal Practice			My School/ Organization
		Yes!	Some!	Not yet!	Yes/No
<b>Communal Partnerships for Learning and Sustainability</b> Partnerships with Science, Outdoor, or Garden Organizations & Community Leaders	I know the community organizations that support science learning in the community, including				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science, or STEM</li> </ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor learning or field based learning</li> </ul>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardening, garden education</li> </ul>				
	I invite members of these communities into my learning environment				
	I have a long-term partnership with one or more of these organizations				
	I engage in professional development with these organizations				

### Reflection and Design Questions

Now that you've taken the self-assessment, take a minute to reflect on what you do well and set some new improvement goals for yourself.

What models of partnership do you do already? Are your existing practices clustered within one of the sections, or spread throughout? What specific practices do you do well and how do you know?

What are 2 models of partnership that you might try this year? What specific practices could you do?

Review a current unit you are teaching (or one that is coming up). What kinds of family engagement practices are currently present in the unit? How does the unit incorporate learners' family and community based ways of knowing?

After you have assessed your current units, consider what is missing or could be adapted. Then take time to brainstorm entirely new practices, tools, or possibilities that you could engage your learners' families in for the unit.



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## Suggested Citation

Learning in Places Collaborative. (2021). *Family and Community Framework for Engagement and Collaboration*. Bothell, Seattle, WA & Evanston, IL: Learning in Places.