Family-School Partnerships: Evidence-based Foundations and an Exemplar for Practice

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Overview

• Family-School Partnerships
  – Background
  – Support
• Framework for partnering with families
• Targeted Family-School Partnership Supports
• Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP)
• TAPP opportunities
Why Family-School Partnerships?

• Children’s learning and development is the product of influences from many systems and settings (in and out of school).
  – Students spend 91% of their time from birth-18 outside of school (Clarke, 1990).

• Helping children achieve to their fullest potential is a shared responsibility between educators and families.
What are Family-School Partnerships?

A child-focused *approach* wherein families and professionals *cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate* to enhance opportunities and success for children and adolescents across *social, emotional, behavioral, and academic domains* (Sheridan, Clarke, & Christenson, 2014, p. 440).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Families as Separate from School</th>
<th>Families Involved with School</th>
<th>Teachers and Parents as Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is the responsibility of the teachers to educate children and make decisions</td>
<td>Emphasis on what teachers do to promote learning &amp; how parents can support it</td>
<td>There are co-roles and mutual decision making regarding what is best for the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication occurs rarely; efforts to communicate are unreciprocated</td>
<td>Communication is infrequent, problem-focused, one-directional</td>
<td>Communication is frequent, positive, and bi-directional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/language differences are insurmountable</td>
<td>Cultural/language differences are perceived as barriers to overcome</td>
<td>Cultural/language differences are respected, appreciated, and reinforced</td>
</tr>
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<td>There are no attempts to suggest roles for parents</td>
<td>“One-size fits all” approach and practices</td>
<td>Unique child, family, and school characteristics determine how responsibilities are shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers and parents do “their own thing” without concern about the other</td>
<td>Parents are given activities and tasks to encourage their child in learning</td>
<td>There is a commitment to working together on behalf of the child’s learning</td>
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Family-School Partnerships
The Science Behind It

After decades of research it is abundantly clear:

To maximize children’s success, families and schools must work together.
What Does the Research Say?

For students:
• Improved academic skills, social skills, engagement, behaviors
• School completion and long-term academic success

For teachers:
• Improved classroom management, instructional skills for all students
• Better relationships with students and parents
• More effective problem solving skills

For parents:
• Better communication with teachers
• Better parenting skills
• More learning opportunities at home
Laying the Foundation:

An Ecological Framework for Family-School Partnerships
Ecological-Systems Theory
Strengthening Family-School Partnerships in Schools

Family-school partnerships are essential at every tier of multi-tiered systems of support
Tier I: Universal “Core Components” of Family-School Partnerships

- Relationships
- Intentional and structured strategies for engagement
- Communication and information sharing
- Opportunities for promoting learning and behavior at home
Tiers II/III: Teachers and Parents as Partners (aka Conjoint Behavioral Consultation)

An indirect, strength-based, cross-system problem-solving intervention wherein parents, teachers, and other caregivers work as partners and share responsibility for promoting positive and consistent outcomes related to a child’s academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development.

(Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 25)
TAPP Goals

• Promote positive outcomes for students with behavioral and academic problems

• Promote parent engagement through meaningful participation

• Build teacher and parent skills and capacities

• Establish and strengthen home-school partnerships
Research Findings: Academic Outcomes

Relative to comparison groups, students who received TAPP have shown significantly greater gains over time in:

- Teacher-rated academic productivity and academic skills (Murray, Rabiner, Schulte, & Newitt, 2008)
- Parent-rated homework performance (Power et al., 2012)
- Math performance and accuracy (Galloway & Sheridan, 1994; Weiner, Sheridan, & Jenson, 1998)
- Teacher-reported school learning behaviors (Sheridan et al., in press)
- Observations of on-task behavior (Sheridan et al., in press)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
Research Findings:
Behavioral & Social-Emotional Functioning

Compared to “business as usual” practices, students whose parents and teachers participated in TAPP demonstrated significantly greater rates of improvement in:

• Observations of appropriate social behavior and decreases in inappropriate motor activity, off-task behavior (Sheridan et al., in press)

• Reports of adaptive skills, social skills, and social interactions with peers or adults (Sheridan et al., 2012; in press)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
Research Findings: Home Outcomes

Relative to controls, students whose parents and teachers received TAPP have shown significantly greater benefits at home, over time in:

• Parent report of adaptive skills and social skills (Sheridan et al., 2013; in press)
• Decreases in aggressive behavior, noncompliance, yelling, and temper tantrums (Sheridan et al., 2013; in press)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
Research Findings: Parent Outcomes

Parents who participated in TAPP reported greater improvements over time relative to control group parents in:

- Problem-solving abilities (Sheridan et al., in press)
- Efficacy to help their child to succeed (Sheridan et al., in press)
- Home-school communication (Sheridan et al., 2013)
- Parent-teacher relationship (Sheridan et al., 2013; in press)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
Research Findings: Teacher Outcomes

Compared to “business as usual” comparison groups, teachers participating in TAPP demonstrated significantly greater improvements over time in:

• Observed positive attention and provision of positive consequences (Sheridan et al., 2017)
• Self-reported use of appropriate behavioral strategies, problem solving abilities, teacher-parent relationship and interaction quality with parents (Sheridan et al., 2017)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
Research Findings: Diverse Populations

TAPP has been shown to be effective for:

- **Head Start students** (Kratochwill et al., 2003; Sheridan, Clarke, Knoche, & Edwards, 2006)
- **Children with pediatric/medical needs** (Lasecki et al., 2008; Sheridan et al., 2009)
- **Culturally diverse students** (Sheridan, Eagle, & Doll, 2006)
- **Children with developmental disabilities** (Ray, Skinner & Watson, 1999; Wilkinson 2005)

See Research Archive: http://cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP/research-archives
What Makes TAPP Work?
What is the “Active Ingredient?”

TAPP’s effect on children’s adaptive and social skills is mediated by the teacher-parent relationship (Sheridan et al., 2012; in press).

CBC/TAPP → Parent-Teacher Relationship → Social & Adaptive Skills
TAPP Structure

• Parents & teachers come together with the help of a TAPP specialist
• A series of approximately 3-4 constructive, action-oriented meetings to discuss, brainstorm, and problem solve
• Mutually supportive and consistent, research-based strategies are put into place at home and in the classroom
Overview of TAPP Stages

TAPP Problem Solving: A Recursive Process

1. **Stage 1**
   - A. Determine Student's Strengths and Challenges
   - B. Prioritize and Define Target Behavior
   - C. Collect Baseline Data

2. **Stage 2**
   - D. Set Behavioral Goal
   - E. Determine Behavioral Function
   - F. Develop Home-School Plan to Meet Goal

3. **Stage 3**
   - G. Implement Plan and Collect Data
   - H. Evaluate Effectiveness of Plan and Progress Toward Goal
   - I. Continue/Change Plan (return to G) or Select New Behavior (return to B or D)
Stages in the TAPP Process

Problem Identification
*(Building on Strengths)*

Problem Analysis
*(Planning for Success)*

Plan Implementation

Plan Evaluation
*(Checking and Reconnecting)*
Building on Strengths

Action Steps:
1. Discuss the student’s strengths
2. Discuss the needs (problems) of the student
3. Select and define a target behavior
4. Select a focus and/or setting for addressing the target behavior
5. Discuss what has already been tried
6. Discuss how and why to collect information on the target behavior
7. Determine a time to meet again
Stage 1 – Building on Strengths

Meeting Agenda

Parent(s): ___________________________  Student: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Parent phone number: ___________________________  Parent Email: ___________________________

During this meeting with the parent(s), you will:
• Discuss the student’s strengths.
• Discuss needs (problems) of the student.
• Select and define a target behavior.
• Select a focus and/or setting for addressing the target behavior.
• Discuss what has already been tried (what works/what doesn’t).
• Discuss how and why to collect information on the target.
• Determine a time to meet again.

aggienda Discussion With Parents

1. Welcome!
   • Create a friendly, supportive environment so parents feel welcome.
   • Communicate your belief that parents are experts when it comes to their child.
   • Emphasize that everyone’s information is important.
   • Use language that suggests a team orientation, such as we and us instead of I or me.
   • Let parents know that they will play a key role in providing information and helping to develop and carry out a plan to help the child be more successful at home and school.
   • Discuss each step of the meeting. Give parents a copy of the meeting agenda to write on and keep.

2. What does the student do well? What does the student like?
   • Discuss things that are going well.
   • Discuss the student’s likes and dislikes.
   • Emphasize the importance of building on the student’s strengths when addressing concerns and needs.

Notes taken during meeting:
Planning for Success

Action Steps:

• Examine the baseline data collected at home and in the classroom
• Set a realistic behavioral goal for the students
• Identify what is happening across settings that may be influencing the target behavior
• Develop an intervention plan to implement across home and school
• Implement the plan and collect behavioral data
Plan Development

• Discuss general strategies and specific plans to be included in a treatment package across home and school settings
  – The closer the congruity and coordination of plans across settings, the better!
  – Home programs may involve home-school notes, procedures for enhancing learning environments and opportunities outside of school, etc.

• Brainstorm to generate ideas
Stage 2 – Planning for Success

Meeting Agenda

Planning for Success: Meeting 2 Interview

Parent(s): ___________________________  Student: ___________________________  Date: _________________

Parent phone number: ___________________________  Parent Email: ___________________________

During this meeting with the parent(s), you will:

• Discuss the baseline information collected.
• Set realistic goals for the student.
• Determine what may be contributing to the behavior and why the behavior is happening.
• Use all information available to develop agreed-upon strategies to implement at home and school.
• Determine how to continue collecting information to monitor the student’s progress toward the goal.
• Determine a time to meet again to evaluate progress.

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Agenda Discussion With Parents

1. Welcome!
   • Create a friendly, supportive environment so the family feels welcome.
   • Show interest in the parents/family (e.g., ask about past events), and reemphasize that everyone’s input is important.
   • Continue to use inclusive language, such as we and us.
   • Discuss steps of the meeting. Give parents a copy of the meeting agenda to write on and keep.

2. Review and discuss information collected since the last meeting.
   • Review the definition of the target behavior and target time/setting.
   • Summarize and discuss the baseline information collected on the behavior.

3. What should our goal be?
   • Set goals based on information collected.
   • Make sure the goal is attainable, measurable, and observable.

Home goal:
Plan Implementation

Action Steps:
• Explain the plan to the student
• Check in after the first day
• Use home-school notes
• Collect data and keep notes
Checking and Reconnecting

Action Steps:

• Examine data collected during plan implementation

• Determine whether the goal was met across home and school settings

• Discuss strategies to continue, modify, or end the intervention plan

• Express willingness to continue working together & discuss ways to continue partnering
**Stage 3 – Checking and Reconnecting**

**Meeting Agenda**

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**Checking and Reconnecting: Meeting 3 Interview**

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<td>Parent phone number:</td>
<td>Parent Email:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

During this meeting with the parent(s), you will:

- Review the plan and discuss what happened.
- Discuss satisfaction with the plan—were the goals met?
- Discuss what did and didn't work with the plan.
- Determine whether to continue or change the plan.
- Discuss the need for future meetings.
- Identify ways to keep in touch.

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**Agenda Discussion With Parents**

1. **Welcome!**

- Create a friendly, supportive environment so the family feels welcome.
- Show interest in the parents/family (e.g., ask about past events).
- Reemphasize that everyone’s input is important.
- Continue to use inclusive language, such as we and us.
- Discuss steps of the meeting. Give parents a copy of the meeting agenda to write on and keep.

2. **How did our plan work?**

- Review the target behavior, plans, and goals.
- Discuss what happened during implementation of the intervention.

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NCYFS
“Teachers and Parents as Partners” (TAPP): Resources


TAPP Opportunities

To learn more about TAPP and potential training opportunities, visit the TAPP website:

cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP
Questions?

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cyfs.unl.edu/TAPP
Select Publications


Select Publications


