



**Allen ISD**

Where Eagles Soar

# Early Childhood

Family Engagement

2021-2022



**Partnership Focused: Bound for Student Success**

## Overview and Purpose : Early Childhood Family Engagement

Family engagement is defined as the mutual responsibility of families, schools, and communities to build relationships to support student learning and achievement and to support family wellbeing and the continuous learning and development of children, families, and educators. Family engagement is fully integrated in the child's educational experience and supports the whole child and is both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate. Texas Administrative Code §102.1003

The importance of family engagement in the context of education is a topic that experts and practitioners agree upon. Family engagement has taken-on a non-negotiable role in the world of education. However, it is important to note that family engagement is no longer just a suggestion, but rather a mandate, in Texas, with the passage of HB 4 in 2015. Texas Education Code §29.168, created by HB 4, 84th Texas Legislature, 2015, which requires a school district to develop and implement a Family Engagement Plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. The local Family Engagement Plan follows the family engagement strategies established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in collaboration with other state agencies.

According to TEA, the goal of Texas Education Code §102.1003, High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program, is to “provide districts with an opportunity to expand or enhance high-quality prekindergarten programs for qualifying students.” This ruling also outlines school district and charter school eligibility for grant funding and qualifications for students eligible to receive instruction under the grant program. The new High-Quality Prekindergarten Grant Program requires school districts and charter schools to meet the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines.

The High Quality Prekindergarten Grant program outlines family engagement strategies that districts must implement in their Family Engagement Plan in order to be eligible to receive grant funding under this program. TEA has identified six family engagement strategies which must be incorporated and implemented into the local Family Engagement Plan.

Allen Independent School District's Prekindergarten program will implement the following family engagement plan in conjunction with the current Title I family engagement plans in accordance with the

Texas Education Code 102.1003(f) to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. Allen ISD Early Childhood family engagement plan includes the following six components as outlined in House Bill 4 High Quality Prekindergarten grant established under Subsection (b). The district will work in collaboration with Region 10, to ensure alignment between the district's early childhood program.

### Allen ISD Early Childhood Family Engagement Plan

#### **Allen ISD will be governed by the following definition of family involvement for their Early Childhood programs.**

- Family involvement means the participation of family members in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that:
  - Families play an integral role in assisting in their child's learning.
  - Families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school.
  - Families are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making to assist in the education of their child.

#### **Allen ISD will implement the following statutory requirements:**

- Develop programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of families in our Early Childhood programs. These programs, activities, and procedures will be planned and operated through meaningful consultation with the child's family members.
- Work with the school that houses the Early Childhood programs to ensure that the required school-level parental involvement policies meet the requirements of the High-Quality Prekindergarten Program.
- Provide full opportunities for the participation of families with children with limited English Proficiency, families whose children have disabilities, and families of migratory children.
- Involve the family members of the children served in an Early Childhood program.

#### **Allen Independent School District will take the following actions to involve families in the joint development of its Early Childhood Family Engagement Plan:**

- Seek family members to participate in developing and revising the Early Childhood Family Engagement Plan.
- Schedule meetings at convenient times and locations so that family members may participate.
- Offer a flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and provide childcare when possible.

## Family /Staff Communication

**Allen ISD will take the following actions to ensure that information that pertains to the district's Early Childhood programs is sent to the family members of the participating children in an understandable format, and to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.**

- Translators provided at the campus level for Spanish-speaking family members.
- Skyward Messenger system communicates in English and Spanish.

In carrying out parental involvement communication, the district will provide opportunities for the participation of the family members with children with limited English proficiency.

## Six Domains of Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework

### **Facilitate Family-to-Family Support:**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will create a safe and respectful environment where families can learn from each other as individuals and in groups.
  - Strategies include:
    - Orientation during the initial days of each school year creates a welcoming space for parents to gather and talk informally with one another before and/or after the event.
    - "Meet the Teacher" night facilitating family to family interactions.
    - Providing practical parenting learning opportunities.
    - Providing learning sessions for families to continue their student's learning during extended breaks ( such as Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring breaks) and Summer.

### **Establish A Network Of Community Resources:**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will establish a network of community resources.
  - Strategies include:
    - Resources will be used to expand parent education offerings so that all families of PreK children will have opportunities to participate and become engaged in their child's education.
    - Allen ISD will provide summer learning resources to PreK parents to help lessen summer learning loss.
    - Campus Care Coordinator/Counselor will support families with community resources to assist with short term family guidance and needs.
    - Providing and facilitating referrals to family support or educational groups based on family interests and needs.
    - Identifying partners to provide translators and culturally relevant resources reflective of home language.

### **Increase Family Participation In Decision Making:**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will use appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather family feedback on the family engagement plan and overall events that were hosted.

- Strategies include:
  - Campus Improvement Teams composed of campus staff, parents, community members, and business representatives that focus on continued improvement.
  - Parent/Teacher Conferences.
  - Progress monitoring information is shared with parents encouraging their feedback, questions, and ideas regarding future learning experiences.
  - Utilize appropriate tools such as surveys or focus groups to gather family feedback on the family engagement plan.

### **Equip Families With Tools To Enhance & Extend Learning:**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will provide families with information and/or training on creating a home learning environment connected to formal learning opportunities. The district will also focus on equipping families with resources and skills to support their children through the transition to school. The district will also focus on providing families with information, best practices, and training related to age-appropriate developmental expectations.
  - Strategies include:
    - Family Engagement events that provide activities that can extend learning in the home environment.
    - Newsletters that include information and resources to support learning at home while strengthening the family/school partnership.
    - Equipping families with resources to support their children through the transition to school by providing a Meet the Teacher event.
    - Providing families with updates that specify student progress in Health and Wellness, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy Reading, Emergent Literacy Writing, and Mathematics.

### **Develop Staff Skills in Evidence-Based Practices**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will develop staff skills to support and use culturally diverse, culturally relevant, and culturally responsive family engagement strategies.
  - Strategies will include:
    - Coaching conversations and modeling with staff that focus on soft-skills with a diverse audience.
    - Support the internal awareness and development of soft skills for a diverse audience among staff members.
    - Continuous professional development achieved through Early Childhood training opportunities.
    - Utilization of resources available in CLI Engage and Circle Progress Monitoring platforms.
    - Continuing membership in the Region 10 Early Childhood Coop as a means of professional learning, program effectiveness, and practices associated with HQPK implementation.
    - Gain an understanding of early intervention services to support family inquiries and needs.

### **Evaluation Of Family Engagement Plan**

- The Allen ISD Early Childhood program will ensure that an evaluation plan is an initial component that guides our future early childhood program action plan and implementation goals. In addition, the district will evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement.
  - Strategies include:
    - Ensuring that an evaluation plan is an initial component that guides all future actions and goals.
    - Using a cyclical process to ensure evaluation results are used for continuous improvement and adjustment.
    - Ensuring that teachers play a role in the family engagement evaluation process through the avenues of surveys and focus groups.
    - Make the results of the evaluation available to parents and adjust the program based on the feedback.