

What's in it for Me?

A School District's Perspective

The research is clear - when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more. This sounds like such a simple concept, but it can often be difficult to make a reality. Why should people work together? People need to know *what's in it for ME?* Ultimately, family-school partnerships in special education are about what's in it for **all of us!**

Parent input - Partnerships with families help keep things real and relevant, which results in more practical and identifiable outcomes.

Ability - Partnerships provide the ability for a school district to develop the leadership and communication skills of its parents.

Relationships - Partnerships provide a vehicle to strengthen relationships between parents, staff and the school district.

Team - Partnerships encourage communication and the development of a team.

New Ideas - Partnerships allow for discussions and feedback about school initiatives and activities in a safe and constructive way.

Engagement - Partnerships encourage parents to be more active in their school/school district and better prepared to support school initiatives.

Respect - Partnerships foster respect and shared responsibilities among parents, community members, teachers and school leaders.

Staff Development - Partnerships provide staff and parents the opportunity to gain knowledge and resources beyond their own area of expertise.

Heard - Partnerships allow for parents and school personnel to gain more accurate and positive views about each other's attitudes, intentions and abilities and to feel heard.

Increased Effectiveness - Partnerships allow for discussion from a variety of perspectives. School staff can gain a better understanding of the concerns of families and learn ways to address them, increasing their effectiveness in working with families and other staff.

Provides Two-way Communication - Partnerships provide an opportunity to communicate with families that school staff do not have to manage!



What's in it for Me?

A Parent's Perspective

The research is clear - when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more. This sounds like such a simple concept, but it can often be difficult to make a reality. Why should people work together? People need to know *what's in it for ME?* Ultimately, family-school partnerships in special education are about what's in it for **all of us!**

Personal Connection - Partnerships allow for parents to connect with school personnel outside of the special education/IEP process.

Ability - Partnerships provide the ability and opportunity for parents to develop their leadership and communication skills.

Relationships - Partnerships provide a vehicle to strengthen relationships between parents, staff and the school district.

Team - Partnerships encourage communication and the development of a team.

New Ideas - Partnerships allow for discussions and feedback about parent concerns and school initiatives in a safe and constructive way.

Engagement - Partnerships provide opportunities for parents to be more active in their school/school district and better prepared to support their child's learning.

Respect - Partnerships foster respect and shared responsibilities among parents, community members, teachers and school leaders.

Staff Development - Partnerships provide staff and parents the opportunity to gain knowledge and resources beyond their own area of expertise.

Heard - Partnerships allow for parents and school personnel to gain more accurate and positive views about each other's attitudes, intentions and abilities and to feel heard.

Increased Effectiveness - Partnerships allow for discussion from a variety of perspectives. Parents can gain a better understanding of the concerns of school district personnel and learn ways to address them, increasing their effectiveness working with their child's IEP team.

Provides Two-way Communication - Partnerships provide an opportunity for families and school staff to have open, two-way communication.

