



## Indicator Explanation



DOMAIN	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Culture	Engage students and families in pursuing education goals	4C.1 Teachers meet with family members (parents or guardians) formally at least two times a year to engage in two-way communication regarding students' cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development outside the classroom.

All areas of children's development must be supported through collaboration between the school and families. Parents naturally have knowledge of their children's development outside of classroom in a variety of areas, including cognitive, social emotional and physical development. Two-way communication between teachers and parents supports strong school-home partnerships, and teachers must regularly gather parent voices on their children's development through conferences at least twice a year. Professional development can help teachers enhance their capacity for two-way communication so that they can gather information in conferences that will help them support students' developmental needs.

Successfully turning around schools requires members of the school community to be intensely focused on student learning, work together to shift the school's culture to incorporate higher academic expectations for all students, and make significant and concerted efforts to fulfill these expectations (The Center on School Turnaround, 2017; 2018; Herman et al., 2008; Louis et al., 2010). The entire school must embrace these high expectations, which in turn contribute to creating a positive school climate that embraces improvement and academic success (The Center on School Turnaround, 2017; 2018). Culture impacts all aspects of a school, and focuses attention on what is important and valued (Deal & Peterson, 2016). While every school is unique, they each seek to prepare students for future success in college, career, and in life generally (Garza, 2017). Schools must engage parents or guardians in this endeavor, in part by having teachers actively take the lead to build in regular conversations that include parent input on their children's cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development outside the classroom.

According to Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron and Osher (2019), all aspects of children's educational environment must support their development. They write:

This calls for a deeply integrated approach to practice that supports the whole child in schools and classrooms that function coherently and consistently to build strong relationships and learning communities; support social, emotional, and cognitive development; and provide a system of supports as needed for healthy development, productive relationships, and academic progress. This holistic approach must necessarily connect with family and community context: developing strong, respectful partnerships to understand and build on children's experiences and, as needed, to strengthen any aspects of the developmental system where there are challenges to children's health and well-being. (pp. 2–3)

When staff and parents are armed with information on child development, they can work together within a developmentally informed framework to foster healthy development and learning (Darling-Hammond et



al., 2018). For example, the evidence-based School Development Program addresses 6 developmental pathways—social-interactive, psycho-emotional, ethical, cognitive, linguistic and physical—by building collaborative working relationships among educators, parents, community leaders, and health-care workers to address the whole child (Darling-Hammond, Cook-Harvey, Flook, Gardner, & Melnick, 2018). The program teaches all parties about child development within a shared framework for multi-tiered supports, and has been shown to improve attendance and behavior, improve school climate, and increase achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2018; Lunenberg, 2011).

Teachers can also establish these collaborative relationships with parents around child development through regular two-way communication. Two-way communication is a component of successful school-family partnerships, which have been shown to enhance students' learning and achievement (Barnard, 2004; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005), cognitive and socio-emotional functioning, behavior, self-esteem, and attitudes about school (Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005). Communication channels that are open and dynamic “invite and encourage parents to share questions, comments, and feedback with teachers, and ensures that families inform educators in addition to being informed by them” (Albright, Weissberg, & Dusenbury, 2011, p. 6). Positive two-way communication between home and school, which involves listening as well as informing, sets the stage for developing a relationship built on trust and respect (Byrk & Schneider, 2003; Hiatt-Michael, 2010).

For example, developing social/emotional skills such as taking responsibility for one's actions and showing respect for others cannot be accomplished in isolation, either at home or at school. These skills must be modeled, practiced, and reinforced across multiple contexts (Mart, Dusenbury, & Weissburg, 2011). Teachers and other educators should regularly share information and create opportunities for families to communicate their insights, concerns, and hopes for their children; such attention to affective as well as academic concerns can build trust between the school and home. Communication should be child-centered, constructive, clear and concrete (avoid educational lingo and acronyms), and continuous (Mart et al., 2011).

The parent-teacher conference provides an opportunity for parents to tell the teacher about their children outside of school in addition to gaining information on their progress, by discussing topics such as evidence of their development in various areas and contexts, interests, and how they enjoy spending free time (Flanagan, 2012). At a minimum, teachers should hold two meetings with parents during the school year to discuss students' progress and behavior in the classroom and to gather input on how they are developing outside of the regular school day. Listening closely to the “parent voice” creates opportunities for parents to share success stories and other insights into their child's development; in fact, conferences should strive for 50 percent teacher/50 percent parent talk time (Garcia, Frunzi, Dean, Flores, & Miller, 2016).

Two-way communication, which involves the importance of listening as well as informing, has been successfully targeted within professional development programs that involved training teachers to use active listening and other communication skills used by counselors (e.g., Symeou, Roussounidou, & Michaelides, 2012). Professional development is enhanced by opportunities for teacher practice and reflection; giving teachers time to consider way they can connect their teaching to what they learn from their students' families, can maximize the benefits of the training (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2005). Hands-on, interactive professional development should be followed by brief refresher trainings throughout the school year and focus group discussions on implementation (Cavey, 1998).

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