



Mt. Pleasant Independent School District Child Development Center

1602 West Ferguson Road
Mount Pleasant, Texas 75456-1117
903.575.2092
www.mpisd.net

Family Engagement Plan for High Quality Pre- Kindergarten

Introduction:

The Mt Pleasant Independent School District Child Development Center welcomes families as their child's first and most important teacher. With this belief, it is imperative that we work with our children and families to build a positive foundation for their child's education that will support them through graduation and beyond. To effectively engage families and foster positive attitudes towards education, we work to support our families, connect them with community resources, recruit them to become active in the school process, as well as equip them with skills and tools to support their child's learning. The following plan describes our approach.

A) Family to Family Support:

The Child Development Center strives to create a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all families. From welcome signs to smiles and greetings from staff, and assistance available in both English and Spanish, families are invited into the building with a customer service approach.

Prior to the first day of school, families are welcomed to our campus during an *Open House* event, where they can meet the teacher, become acquainted with the facility, and learn about programs and services available to our children and families. Parents are invited into the building during all operational hours of our program, and parents are encouraged to participate in the volunteer program to become an active part of their child's school day. Parents are also recruited and regularly invited to participate in the CDC Parent Committee. This committee plays an active role in participation and guidance of family events. Though all families complete a Parent Interest Survey during registration to ensure parent input on topics and trainings provided throughout the year, the Parent Committee reviews, provides suggestions and agrees upon the opportunities provided in the upcoming Parent Involvement Calendar. These calendars are sent home monthly to inform parents of upcoming group events, trainings and opportunities to become active and support their child's education. Teachers and CDC Staff encourage parents to participate in a variety of program activities to foster confidence and independence in their abilities to plan and deliver appropriate learning experiences for their children. Parenting Class and training on Child Advocacy allow parents to become more knowledgeable and gain parenting skills.

All training and school activities provided are respectful of each culture and language, and allow for parents to share personal experiences that may enhance the skills of others. Both current and former parents are encouraged to serve on committees to develop leadership skills while working with other parents to achieve common goals.

B) Network of Community Resources:

An in-depth, comprehensive, *bilingual* Community Resource Guide has been assembled by CDC staff and is distributed to each enrolled CDC family at the beginning of the school year. The resource guide is updated annually and provides names, addresses, and phone numbers for service agencies and organizations in the local community. A parent training workshop is provided annually to inform parents further of available community resources, as well as provide them an opportunity to discuss and share their needs and experiences. All training workshops are provided in bilingual formats.

The MPISD CDC program has established service and cooperative agreements with a variety of service providers and organizations in the community. These agencies and organizations offer services and resources necessary to support CDC children and families.

HS/EHS collaborative agreements involve the Pediatric Clinic, Titus Regional Medical Center (TRMC), the local hospital system, local pediatric dentists and other community agencies that provide needed medical services for children and families.

CDC staff refers families to Ark-Tex Council of Government-Farmers Home Administration, Mt. Pleasant Housing Authority, Hope Ministries and Habitat for Humanity for housing needs. Referrals are made to the SAFE-T Women's Shelter for victims of domestic violence who need temporary housing and counseling. In addition, Titus County has a special local organization that offers multiple services within one organization, Titus County Cares. Titus County Cares is a non-profit organization funded by local churches, civic groups and individuals. Titus County Cares offers assistance to families needing help paying bills, food pantry, weekly backpack and *Food 4 Kids* program for children. Northeast Texas Community College Adult Education program and Local Faith based agencies also provide free ESL classes to families on a weekly basis.

Agreements are also established with IDEA part C providers who offer and provide qualifying services to children with disabilities. These agreements ensure children receive and maintain services during transitions into Pre-Kindergarten and on to Kindergarten. The agreements are reviewed and signed annually.

Representatives of community agencies are invited to become presenters/members of the Head Start Policy Council, Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC), School Readiness Team, Parent Committee and/or Parent Events. Members of the CDC staff serve as members of various community organizations, District Site Based Committee, and faith-based organizations. MPISD CDC has developed written agreements with many community agencies that provide a strong collaboration to support families.

The overall collaborations between all available services, including local community resources, MPISD, and Head Start will continue to ensure high quality facilities, materials,

instruction and parent support training and opportunities are in place to create school ready children and families as they enter local Kindergarten programs.

C) Participate in decision making:

MPISD CDC involves parents in program decision making to support all areas of their child's development. Parents are encouraged to serve on a variety of committees, such as Health Services Advisory Committee, Policy Council, Parent Committee and the School Readiness Committee. Committee members are asked to participate in the program's self-assessment, help develop the annual program improvement plan, and provide input to develop the Parent Involvement Calendar. Parents are also encouraged to become volunteers in many capacities throughout the program. To sustain engagement, former parents are asked to continue to serve as volunteers, as well as committee and policy council members.

Parents are invited to support and participate in the educational goals for their child within the classroom. Ongoing communication occurs as teachers have daily conversations with parents during pick-up and drop-off times, through daily home to school communication folders, Weekly Progress Reports and Parent Teacher Conferences. The goal of all parent communication is to involve families in the planning and support of individualized goals for their child.

Parents are invited to bi-weekly planning meetings and are asked to review and sign weekly lesson plans. Parents are encouraged to participate in Parent Committee, Policy Council, and School Readiness Committee to let their voice provide input into their child's curriculum and school readiness goals. Training is offered to families on child advocacy.

Parent input is also utilized to guide materials, training and parent events by using parent feedback, event and interest surveys. This data gathered assists CDC staff in planning and implementing training and events which are responsive to family interest and needs.

D) Equip families with tools to enhance learning:

The approach to fostering family engagement at the CDC is the belief that families are their child's first and most important teacher. This message is delivered to our families throughout the school year, from open house to ongoing parent trainings. Families are welcomed in the CDC to observe, meet with teachers and staff, and to volunteer.

During parent conferences, teachers share assessment results with parents along with an individualized plan to support their child in all areas of learning to ensure School Readiness. The value of reading with their child is discussed, parents are encouraged to read to their children, and are invited to use the CDC library to check out books, as well as the Mt Pleasant Public Library. Multiple parent events throughout the year provide free books to families, assisting them in building a home library.

Opportunities are made available for parents to enhance their skills and knowledge on age appropriate techniques through ongoing conversations, parent break activities, meetings and training. A Parent Involvement Calendar is sent home monthly containing

parent activities, events and trainings. Reminders of each event are sent home prior to the event as well. Monthly afternoon and evening events include Fatherhood, Parents-As-Teachers-at-Home and Fun and Learn, designed to provide hands-on learning that families can continue at home. During these events, all materials demonstrated during the training are provided to the families to support learning in their home. Once a month, to assist our working parents, including books and educational games to use in their home, is provided to families at Pilgrim's (our largest local employer), during their lunch break.

Conscious Discipline and other parenting techniques, designed to equip parents with skills to appropriately respond to children's behaviors, are presented during parenting classes. Topics are based on family's needs as gathered by surveys and parent feedback. For families with children who have special needs, a parent support group is offered monthly.

Effectively preparing families for a successful transition into Kindergarten begins with a focus on school readiness. To support this, teachers regularly share with families School Readiness goals and each child's developmental progress in becoming ready for Kindergarten. The communication of necessary skills and child progress is discussed with families during each conference. During these visits, transition activities are shared with families, including an invitation to the planned transition visit to their child's kindergarten campus. The seamless transition of files and enrollment in elementary is provided for all CDC children. CDC Staff invite families and participate in Elementary Kindergarten Round-up events to increase the comfort of our families in this process.

E) Evidence Based Practices:

CDC Staff are trained annually in effective practices for building relationships with families, as well as recognizing and respecting diversity. All staff implement Conscious Discipline and receive ongoing support through trainings throughout the year. Staff trainings are coordinated with CDC family's demographics in mind. In order to support the needs of our families, CDC staff receive ongoing training. Such trainings provided to CDC Staff may include: Domestic Violence Awareness, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness, Toxic Stress, Trauma-informed Care and Mental Health topics.

F) Evaluate Family Engagement:

All families who attend parent engagement events sign in, so that we can document and track attendance. Participation in these events, as well as completion of home to school activities are tracked for each classroom on a monthly basis. Teachers analyze this data when completing reflections using Child Outcomes Data, as compiled three times yearly.

Following events, parents are asked to complete a survey to evaluate the training to gain parent feedback. In addition, parents that participate in Parents As Teacher at Home (PATH) and Fun and Learn events are given a pre and post-test to assess their growth in the skills acquired as a result of attendance.

All data gathered is used to track family involvement and determine trends in involvement as it relates to student levels of school readiness, and guide planning for future events.

Conclusion:

By welcoming and building strong relationships with children and families, we are able to engage and foster growth through family engagement. Our approach enables them to become an active role in their child's education. Consistent support and encouragement ensure that our children and families arrive to Kindergarten school ready.