CREATIVITY CONNECTS SCHOOLS WITH FAMILIES
Champion Creatively Alive Children Series

The 4 Cs: 21st Century Skills
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

Creativity Connects Us

Creativity Connects Schools with Families
Leveraging creative experiences to engage parents and caregivers

Creativity Connects the World

PLUS

Arts-Infused Education Advocacy
Objectives for Creative Family Engagement Workshop

What we will be doing together…

Participant expectations…
CREATIVITY CONNECTS SCHOOLS WITH FAMILIES

4 Cs of Creative Family Engagement

- Champion
- Conducive
- Co-Educate
- Commitment
Champion Creatively Alive Children®

CREATIVITY CONNECTS SCHOOLS WITH FAMILIES

Champion Educators and parents:

- Share goals and responsibilities for helping children succeed
- Serve as champions of children and advocates of arts programs
- Work together to expand opportunities for all children to reach their potential
The arts are a powerful strategy educators can use to create:

- An inspiring environment that fosters creative expression
- A school culture that welcomes family engagement
CREATIVITY CONNECTS SCHOOLS WITH FAMILIES

Co-Educate

Educators and parents are partners in educating children.

Educators help families make home–school connections.

The arts can help strengthen school–family partnerships and connections.
Commitment

A strong educator commitment to engage families

A school plan to sustain family engagement all year long, in many ways

Use of the arts to engage families
Personal and Program Champions We Remember

**Introductions & Warm-Up Exercise**

**Personal Champions**
- Who helped you discover your creative capacity?
- Who made you feel as if nothing was beyond your reach?
- Who had high expectations of you and celebrated your originality?

**Program Champions**
- Who advocated for a program that fosters students’ creativity to make sure the program survived or thrived?
Creativity Connects Schools with Families Video

http://www.crayola.com/creativelyalive
Hands-On Exercise

Conducive

Memory Sketches

- Remember a personal creative experience.
- Create a visual representation.
- Share your sketches and stories with a partner.

Sketch courtesy of North Carolina A+ Schools, Raleigh, NC
Conducive Memory Sketches - What makes a school or a classroom a conducive or not-so-conducive place for creative expression?

Thinking about your own personal experience…

• What in the environment was conducive or stifling?
• Was student work and artwork displayed and were children’s ideas celebrated?
• Were there comfortable gathering spaces?
• How did the leaders of the school set a welcome tone?
• How might the memories that family members still carry with them affect how comfortable they are in joining your programs today?
• How can educators help parents overcome negative memories and feel your supportive openness to creative expression in your school today?

Sketch courtesy of North Carolina A+ Schools, Raleigh, NC
Dispelling Myths

Myth: Parents today are just too busy to get involved in schools.
Reality: Parent–school relations have improved and parent involvement has increased over the past 25 years—but they remain a challenge for many schools.

Myth: Supporting parent involvement is extra work for teachers.
Reality: Teachers in schools with high parent engagement have the highest job satisfaction.

Myth: Parent involvement is nice to have, but it doesn’t make a real difference in student success.
Reality: Parents in schools with high parent engagement are more optimistic that student achievement will get better in five years.

“I dream about what I want to do in my art, my life and what I want to become... I think of endless possibilities.”

— Sophia A., a student

Hands-On Exercise

Co-Educate

Visualizing a Child’s Success in a Crystal Ball

Dream
Create
Share
Hands-On Exercise

Co-Educate

Visualizing a Child’s Success in a Crystal Ball

Dream

• What are your hopes and aspirations for this child?
• What do you want this child to achieve? How will creativity help this child be successful?
• What would happiness and success look like?
  A performer on stage?
  An author writing a book?
  A scientist making a great discovery?
  An engineer designing an innovative technology?
  An entrepreneur running a business?
  A sports star?
  An environmentalist finding new water sources?
  A doctor helping others?
Hands-On Exercise

Co-Educate

Visualizing a Child’s Success in a Crystal Ball

Create

• Use colorful and tactile art supplies to bring your dreams to life!

Share

• What are your hopes and aspirations for this child?
  Why?

• What do the visual elements of your crystal ball represent?

• What common beliefs, aspirations and goals do teachers and parents share for children?
Extending the Crystal Ball Exercise

- Share the crystal ball exercise with the child you focused on.

- Enjoy making crystal balls as a classroom activity with students.

- Adapt this exercise to help students see how art impacts school success.

- Additional ideas from participants…
CREATIVITY CONNECTS SCHOOLS WITH FAMILIES

Hands-On Exercise

Co-Educate

“Help Me…Help You”
“Help Me ... Help You ...” Thinking About Parents

Parents Say to Teachers ...  

Help Me...  

• Understand how my child is doing  
• Support my child’s academic and social growth  
• Understand your expectations & school expectations  
• Feel involved in my child’s education  
• Feel inspired and welcome  
• Develop my child to full potential  
• Discover my child’s strengths  
• Be creative with my child  
• Understand what my child is expected to learn  

Teachers Say to Parents...  

Help You...  

• Always feel welcome in my class  
• Turn routine family tasks into teachable moments  
• Make out-of-school learning and homework fun  
• Share updates on how your child is doing in school  
• Understand your child’s strengths & challenges  
• Know when your child is frustrated or appropriately challenged  
• See how much your child has grown  
• Understand what a day in my class is like  

_________________________________________
“Help Me … Help You …” Thinking About **Teachers**

**Teachers Say to Parents …**

**Help Me…**

• Support what I do in the classroom
• Get to know your child, what motivates + engages her
• Understand struggles your family is facing
• Realize that your child should dream big
• Believe that we both have your child’s best interests at heart
• Understand your family background and values
• Co-teach in my classroom—read to children, share your family culture, your unique talents, skills, and know-how

**Parents Say to Teachers...**

**Help You…**

• Understand what is going on at home
• Work with my child on homework
• Get the supplies your room needs (talk with principal, PTO and community)
• Assist in your classroom
• Organize other parents to help
• Let you know where my child needs help
• Understand our family and heritage
• Share our culture and stories

__________________________________________
Group Exercise

Commitment

Outside and Inside the Box—Expanding the School Family Engagement Plan

• What is your school’s family engagement plan today?

• How could you deepen the partnership with parents by using the arts as a strategy for engagement?
Commitment

Four Types of Family Engagement

Communicating
• School to home
• Home to school
• Policies, programs, practices, progress

Volunteering
• Many opportunities, respect diversity
• Welcome families to share time, talents
• Build team of parents who champion school

Parenting and learning at home
• Child development
• Creative experiences
• Sharing of parent insights, knowledge, culture

Decision making
• Involving parents in policies, programs, child’s education plan
Group Exercise

Commitment

Outside and Inside the Box

Family Engagement Plan

What Would Increased Creative Family Engagement Look Like in Your School?
Committing to Creative Family Engagement

Ideas from Other Schools

**Communicating**

- Hold monthly or weekly “I’m curious …” discussions with the principal for parents to ask questions or observe any areas of the school they’re curious about.

- Rely less on written communication and provide more face-to-face opportunities to share information. Or make more of the class/school communications visual. Sketch the messages.

- Enlist students to share information via videos and websites, since parents get most of their information about school from their children.

- Build a “cheerleading team” of parents who can speak on behalf of the school’s creative experiences at school board meetings or in media interviews. Train and prep these champions to know their audience, communicate messages that resonate and share memorable stories about the school that support your arts-infused program.
Committing to Creative Family Engagement

Ideas from Other Schools

Volunteering

• Expand the pool of active parents. Establish a Family Engagement Outreach Team where each active parent brings a “benchwarmer,” or less involved parent, to the next meeting or volunteer opportunity.

• Create a committee within the school’s PTO or Parents’ Group which focuses volunteer efforts on creative experiences. Generate a fun name for this “Creativity Family Volunteer Team.” Don’t limit your search to Mom or Dad. Reach out to grandparents, aunts and uncles, and siblings.

• Make volunteering fun and colorful! Use arts activities to get families into schools.

• Build a team of Advocate Volunteers who articulate the role of creativity at School Board Meetings.
Committing to Creative Family Engagement

Ideas from Other Schools

**Parenting & Learning at Home**

- Provide families with fun creative activities they can do on weekends or school holidays. Make it easy and point out what skills they will be learning.

- If many parents don’t show up for parent–teacher conferences, probe better ways to make personal home–school connections. Offer home visits to discuss student progress. Set up regular phone conversations with parents.

- Invite students to participate in parent–teacher conferences. Break the ice by having students share their artwork with their parents.

- Identify family talents (Music? Art? Storytelling? Dance?) and ask family members to contribute their talents or their heritage to the school in some way.

- Hold monthly “parent parties.” Draw people in with student–family art activities—and then use this time to communicate with parents and model effective interactions with students.
Committing to Creative Family Engagement

Ideas from Other Schools

Decision Making

• Have parent representatives participate on the school’s policy council or as advisors to the principal or School Improvement Team.

• Enable and encourage parents to join your school’s Creative Leadership Team.

• Survey parents about school programs and activities to find out which they see as most valuable. Offer some new possibilities that would stretch your creative programs and ask parents to choose which should start first.

• Consider the areas in which the school needs more input from parents. Ask parents which decision areas they feel parents’ input is most needed—then come up with ways to make shared decision making happen.
Family Engagement Plan Template: Outside and Inside the Box

- Outside the Box
  - LEARNING AT HOME AND PARENTING
  - INSIDE THE BOX
    - COMMUNICATING
  - VOLUNTEERING
  - DECISION MAKING

- Outside the Box
Key Points

- The 4 Cs of family engagement—Champion, Conducive, Co-Educate and Commitment—provide a structure for thinking about the roles and responsibilities of educators and parents in schools.

- Creative experiences can help break down real or perceived barriers, and inspire communication and collaboration, between educators and parents.

- The arts offer powerful ways for schools to connect with families and support student success.
Next Steps

Expanded Family Engagement Plan

- Outline objectives and tactics
- Enrich with creative experiences that support Arts-Infused Education
- Assign tasks and deadlines
- Consider how to measure success
Thank you for your work as you Champion Creatively Alive Children

For additional resources including arts-infused lesson plans visit: Crayola.com/educators