

Are We Too Schoolcentric? Dissecting the Parental Involvement Language

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Power of Language



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Georgia's School Superintendent
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- *How does the language and communication we use assign parents a role in their child's education?*
- *How do policies and compacts predetermine parents' value and contributions?*
- *Do these policies and compacts encourage family-school partnerships?*



A Look Back at the Growth of Family Engagement

Growth of Family Engagement



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The Seed

Families represent the first essential system and support for children's learning



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Growth of Family Engagement



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The Seedling

Research shows parental involvement in children's learning is associated with increased achievement and academic performance, stronger homework and study habits, and higher educational aspirations



Growth of Family Engagement



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The Sprout

Parental Involvement Models focus on what parents and schools are doing in isolation as well as the structure of activities



Growth of Family Engagement



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The Bloom

Family-School Partnerships emphasize the bidirectional relationship between families and schools, and enhance student outcomes through the development of supports across settings

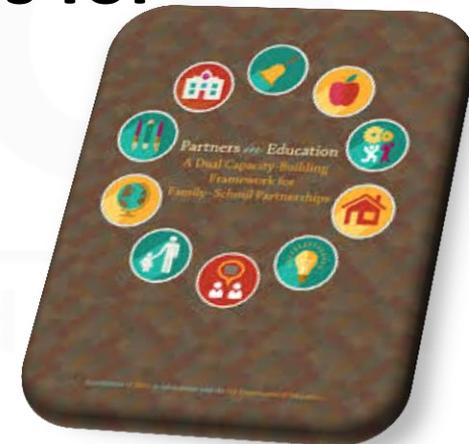


What are *Family-School Partnerships*?



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Approaches that are focused on the child where families and educators cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to enhance opportunities and successes for children and adolescents

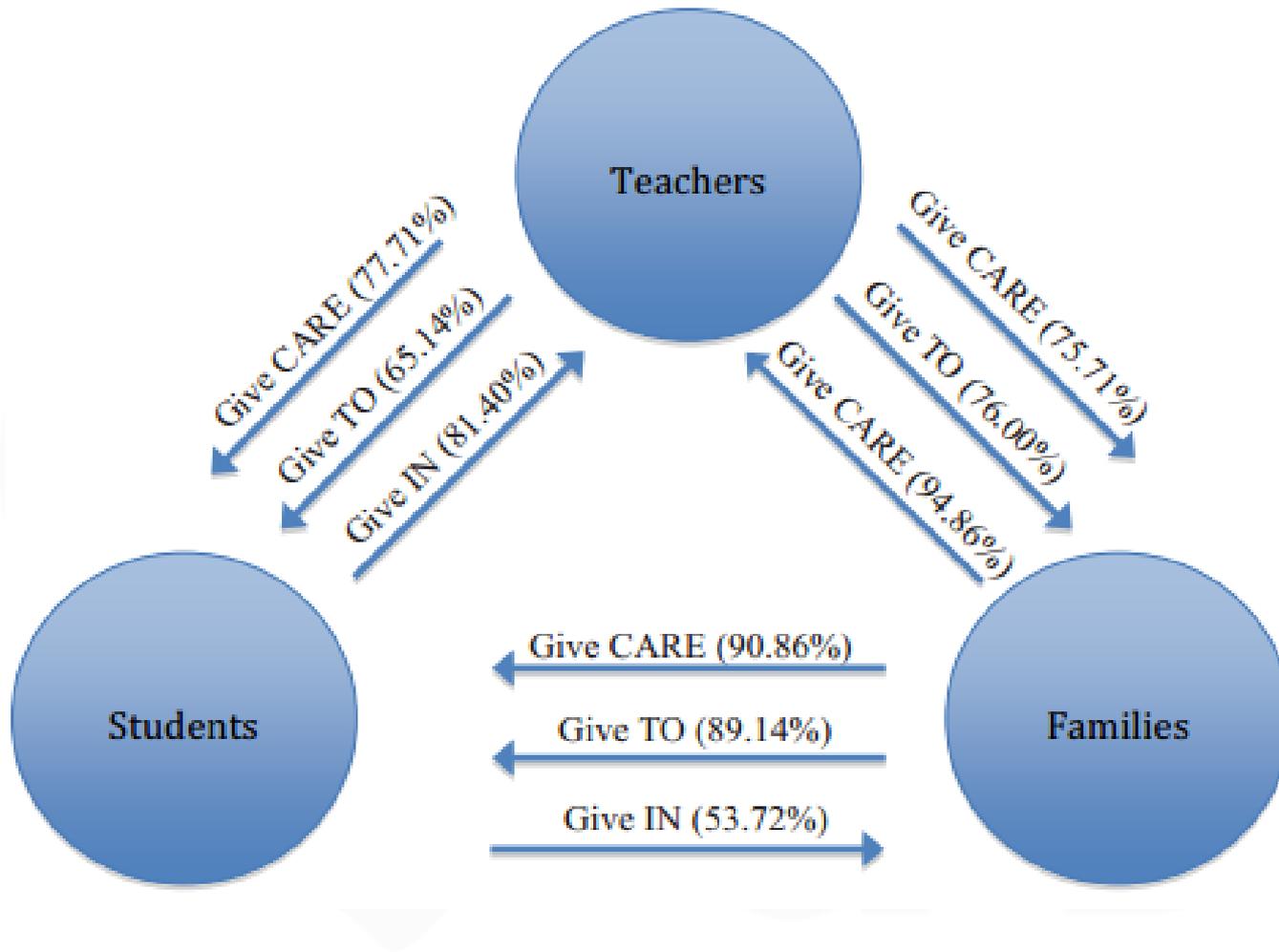




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Critical Analysis of *School-Parent Compact*

Examined school-parent compacts to better understand how the language in these documents contributes to the **framing of family, school and community partnerships** and potential implications for the support of authentic family engagement activities



Directionality of Roles



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Primary Roles

Teachers

- **Give To** – to provide, inform, allow
Primary role of power and authority based on capacity to instruct and support families with little recognition towards the potential knowledge and expertise of families and students



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Primary Roles

Parents

- **Give Care** – to help, support or assist (95%)

Less than 2% of compacts asked parents to provide educational knowledge to teachers

Students

- **Give In** – to submit, obey or follow (Over 50%)

Primary student responsibility is facilitation of communication

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Consequences



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Schoolcentric Model of Parent Involvement

- Teachers see families as obstacles that must be overcome instead of partners with the capacity to help improve the quality of education for all students
- The inherent funds of knowledge that each family can offer to create authentic partnerships remain untapped resources in most schools

Practical Implications

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the "4 C" areas:

- **Capabilities** (skills and knowledge)
- **Connections** (networks)
- **Cognition** (beliefs, values)
- **Confidence** (self-efficacy)

Policy and Program Goals

Building Staff and Family Capacities



Capabilities



Cognition



Connections



Confidence

Group Activity

Family Engagement Teaching Case



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*"Defining 'Fine' – Communicating Academic
Progress to Parents"*

- 1. Review*
- 2. Discuss*
- 3. Share*



Harvard Family
Research Project

Department of Education



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In Summary...

...How does the language we use contribute to the framing of family, school, and community partnerships and potential implications for the support of authentic family engagement activities?

References



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