

Family and Community Partnerships

Reflection Tool for Family-Facing Professionals

presented in partnership by



Introduction

In the spring of 2022, The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) released its groundbreaking report, [The Family Engagement Core Competencies: A Body of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Family-Facing Professionals](#) (FE Core Competencies). The document represents the nationally agreed-upon and unifying set of professional competencies for the family engagement field. Developed across six main phases over a three-year period, the FE Core Competencies were created in collaboration with parents, educators, state leaders, and faculty in the family engagement field to highlight what effective family-facing professionals know, do, and believe. The FE Core Competencies align with a range of professional organizational standards and were vetted through a national field survey of over 500 family-facing professionals.

To bring the ideas in the FE Core Competencies to life, the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center partnered with NAFSCE to develop the Family and Community Partnerships Reflection Tool for Family-Facing Professionals. From the outset, the goal of this tool has been to serve as a springboard for self-reflection and a catalyst for ongoing conversation around family and community engagement practice. The items in the tool were inspired by multiple conversations with family-facing professionals throughout Ohio including parent leaders, family-facing professionals, and a national representative group of subject matter experts.

Definitions to Know

Family-Facing Professional: By family-facing professionals, we refer to anyone who works with families including early childhood, elementary, and secondary educators, school counselors, family liaisons, principals, district administrators, state-level staff, as well as educators within community settings such as librarians and afterschool staff.

Families: We use the term “family” in its broadest sense, defined as parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and any other caregivers who support children’s growth and development.

Who the Tool is For

We envision that this can be used by a range of family-facing professionals in a variety of contexts:

- *Educators, family liaisons, and other staff in schools to assess their practice and engage in dialogue with others around family engagement topics*
- *Principals, professional development providers, and coaches to structure the scope and sequence of professional and continuing learning opportunities*
- *Faculty in educator preparation programs to incorporate into coursework*
- *Afterschool, library, and museum staff and others in community organizations who provide families with opportunities to learn and acquire skills through their services*
- *Parent leaders to advocate for high-quality education in their communities and nationally*

How to Use the Tool

The tool can be used in a variety of ways.

- *To promote self-reflection*
- *To support family-facing professionals in understanding the expectations and competencies of their roles*
- *To guide family-facing professionals in becoming more aware of their learning, growth, and progress*
- *To improve the work of family-facing professionals*

To complete the reflection, either individually or in a group setting: (1) read each item, (2) consider the degree of performance, and (3) note down evidence, examples, and anecdotes to support this rating.

Please note, this tool is not designed or intended for evaluation of professionals.

Also, please note that although the items within the reflection tool align with the domains and competencies within the FE Core Competencies, it is not an exact one-to-one correspondence. Many of the items in this tool were edited, combined, condensed, and reworded based on recommendations from subject matter experts to be more specific to the actions of the family-facing professional role and easy to complete.

For examples of promising practices of the FE Core Competencies please visit www.nafsce.org/edprep.

Domains

The self-reflection tool is organized around the four main domains representing what family-facing professionals do: reflect, connect, collaborate and lead alongside families. Each domain is summarized here. To learn more, refer to the Core Competencies full document.

Reflect: Family-facing professionals actively reflect. They examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities and explore and honor with families how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood. They also embrace equity throughout family engagement. They look inward to consider their own beliefs and biases as well as reflect on how history and social contexts impact systems that influence family and community engagement.

Connect: Family-facing professionals connect with families and communities. They build trusting relationships with families based on mutual respect and understanding. Family-facing professionals also actively connect to the wider community in which families live in order to better understand and know the community and its resources. They facilitate connections to these resources and support the growth of social networks.

Collaborate: Family-facing professionals collaborate with families around student learning and development. They leverage the connections and relationships they've developed to co-construct and develop curriculum, programs, services, and policies with families, as well as partner with families around individual children's social and academic learning goals and curiosities.

Lead: Family-facing professionals lead alongside families. They take part in the broader family engagement field, constantly working to improve their practice, as well as advocate for systems change to champion equity in partnership with families and communities.

The Degrees of Self-Reflection on the Competency Areas

The degrees of performance that make up the continuum are as follows:

Beginning: The family-facing professional is just beginning in this area. They have limited understanding, knowledge, skills or ability in the core competency described. They tend to think of family engagement as a one-way street, oftentimes adopting deficit-based attitudes, focusing on family engagement as compliance and random events that are school-centric.

Developing: The family-facing professional is learning and considering the importance of this area. They have basic understanding, knowledge, skills or ability in the core competency described. The family-facing professional acknowledges the critical role that parents and caregivers play in their communities and the systems they interact with. They are beginning their exploration to understand how family and community engagement is reciprocal in nature, moving away from deficit-based attitudes and seeking to find strengths in all families, seeing family engagement as an instructional practice and not as random one-off events. They are beginning to situate their work beyond school mandates and processes.

Skilled: The family-facing professional is testing and considering new ideas in this area. They have good understanding, knowledge, skills or ability in the competency described. They utilize a reciprocal model of family engagement, where families are seen as partners who actively contribute to the success of their children. They recognize the strengths and assets that families bring to the table, and build on those strengths to support children's success. They are making efforts to test different approaches and are developing parent and family engagement and family leadership as strategic priorities.

Accomplished: The family-facing professional has fully embodied this competency and puts it into common practice. They have deep understanding, knowledge, skills or ability in the competency described. They utilize a deeply reciprocal model of family engagement, where families are seen as collaborators who actively contribute to the success of their children. They utilize the strengths and assets that families bring to the table to promote children's success, in ongoing and continuous ways. They have built and cultivated authentic relationships with families and communities and have created multiple opportunities for family and community engagement alongside families. They embed equitable family engagement practices into their everyday work, including having parents in decision-making roles.

REFLECT

Family Engagement Core Competency 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b

Family-facing professionals respect, honor, and value families. They examine, respect, and value the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and communities and explore and understand, and honor with families how children develop, grow, and change from birth through adulthood across settings, and how these changes affect families.

Family-facing professionals embrace equity throughout family engagement. They look inward to consider their own beliefs, values, and biases. As well, they reflect on how history and social contexts impact systems and influence family and community engagement.

1	Is conversant in the history and current research of the family and community engagement field.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
2	Describes and supports the multiple roles that families play in their children's lives.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
3	Matches family engagement strategies with children's age.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
4	Puts themselves in families' shoes to take different perspectives.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
5	Considers demographic and cultural characteristics (age, ability, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, language, race, gender, religion, geography, community, and culture) when engaging families in services, programs, and learning experiences.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
6	Considers demographic and cultural characteristics (age, ability, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, language, race, gender, religion, geography, community, and culture) when engaging families in services, programs, and learning experiences.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

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REFLECT (continued)

7	Consistently implements effective methods to reach out to and engage families with unique circumstances and needs			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
8	Encourages consistent engagement across transitions to new grades and schools.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
9	Utilizes problem-solving skills, rather than a one-size-fits all approach, to promote partnerships and resolve conflicts involving families.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
10	Rejects initial deficit beliefs and stereotypes and adopts a strengths-based approach to interactions with families.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

Questions for Reflection: Reflect Domain

What were some of your areas of strength? Why? What are some of your biggest challenge areas? Why are these areas challenging?

What are two or three of your priority areas for growth over the next six months?

CONNECT

Family Engagement Core Competency 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c

Family-facing professionals build trusting, reciprocal relationships with families. They cultivate mutual trust, communicate effectively, create welcoming environments, and reach out actively to families, especially those who might be most underserved.

Family-facing professionals foster community partnerships for learning and family well-being. They build community partnerships to support children and families, establish systems to expand how families link to community resources, and cultivate social support networks and connections among families.

1	Keeps their word and honors commitments.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
2	Listens actively to families' ideas with an open mind and without judgment.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
3	Persists with engagement in difficult circumstances.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
4	Communicates in honest and jargon-free ways.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
5	Utilizes different modes of communication that are regular, personalized, proactive, and responsive to circumstances of all families			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
6	Negotiates differences with humility and an openness to change and learn.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

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CONNECT (continued)

7	Supports communication with families whose languages they do not share using interpreters, electronic language translation, and other tools.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
8	Creates environments in-person and virtually that are welcoming and foster and embrace diverse cultures of families			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
9	Becomes aware of and develops relationships with community and cultural organizations (e.g., religious institutions, afterschool programs, libraries, community-based organizations) to connect families to learning and community resources.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
10	Takes time to expand families' peer-to-peer connections to one another to build social networks.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

Questions for Reflection: Connect Domain

What were some of your areas of strength? Why? What are some of your biggest challenge areas? Why are these areas challenging?

What are two or three of your priority areas for growth over the next six months?

COLLABORATE

Family Engagement Core Competency 5a, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6c

Family-facing professionals co-construct learning opportunities with families. They build upon family knowledge as resources for learning and join together with families in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning opportunities and services.

Family-facing professionals link family and community engagement to learning and development. They develop data systems that are accessible to families, create conversations around developmental and academic progress, and expand on family learning in the home and community.

1	Utilizes a variety of methods to know and understand families' strengths, everyday community practices, and routines.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
2	Embeds knowledge of family strengths and practices into teaching and learning.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
3	Actively includes a diverse representation of families in curriculum and program planning showing each family that their input is needed and appreciated.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
4	Creates systems for families to regularly share their reflections on their child's growth.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
5	Talk with families about developmental progressions in language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, and other learning domains.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
6	Ensures that individualized student data (e.g., work samples, portfolios, assignments, grades, standardized scores) are accessible to families, with frequent and real-time updates on how children and youth are growing and progressing.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

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COLLABORATE (continued)

7	Helps families understand in clear and visual ways how their child is progressing over time, in relation to standards, and in relation to other children in their cohort.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
8	Shares with families learning strategies that can be used in the home and community that are aligned with family strengths and practices.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
9	Creates systems for families to regularly share feedback on their experiences in school and the community.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
10	Uses books, resources, and digital and paper learning materials which reflect the languages and cultures of families.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

Questions for Reflection: Connect Domain

What were some of your areas of strength? Why? What are some of your biggest challenge areas? Why are these areas challenging?

What are two or three of your priority areas for growth over the next six months?

LEAD

Family Engagement Core Competency 7a, 7b, 7c, 8a, 8b, 8c

Family-facing professionals take part in lifelong learning. They identify and participate as a member of the family engagement profession and they engage in professional learning to grow family engagement knowledge, dispositions, and skills. They use data to assess, evaluate, and improve family and community engagement.

Family-facing professionals advocate for systems change. They identify and examine new and existing policies and practices to further family and community engagement. They champion equity as an essential element of family and community engagement and stand with families for equitable educational systems and outcomes and reframe the conversation around family and community engagement to expand public understanding.

1	Works collaboratively with families and colleagues to create community-wide family engagement visions and initiatives.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
2	Participates in associations and other peer and professional networks.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
3	Attends professional learning about engaging families to stay up to date.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
4	Uses data to adapt and adjust their family engagement practice and to make improvements both at the individual and program-wide level.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
5	Advocates alongside families for funding and resources to support families and communities.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
6	Attends leadership meetings (e.g., board meetings, parent leadership meetings) to understand issues and support efforts to create policies for family engagement.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

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LEAD (continued)

7	Analyzes organizational, school, district, and federal educational and family policies to remove barriers and rebuild policies that are just and equitable.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
8	Cultivates families' knowledge and skills to participate fully and equitably in decision-making processes.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
9	Creates systems for families to regularly share feedback on their experiences in school and the community.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			
10	Uses books, resources, and digital and paper learning materials which reflect the languages and cultures of families.			
	Beginning <input type="checkbox"/>	Developing <input type="checkbox"/>	Skilled <input type="checkbox"/>	Accomplished <input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence:			

Questions for Reflection: Lead Domain

What were some of your areas of strength? Why? What are some of your biggest challenge areas? Why are these areas challenging?

What are two or three of your priority areas for growth over the next six months?

Overall

Given your self-assessment responses, what would it take to get those practices into place (e.g., time, resources, buy-in, capacity)? Who needs to be involved?

What specific action steps can you begin taking immediately?

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