

Fresno Pacific University Syllabus

Course Title: [Family Engagement for Educators \(via ZOOM\) | HBM-1767](#)

Instructor's Name

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Workshop Title

Family Engagement for Educators

Units: 3

Cost: \$510

Format: Live Online via Zoom

Length: 10 Weeks (Beginning January 7 - March 11, 2027)

Meeting Day: Thursdays

Time: 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Workshop Location: Online via Zoom

Contact Person for Registration Information: Dee Dee Harrison

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Workshop Description

Strong family-school relationships are essential to student success. This practical, interactive course is designed for educators seeking effective strategies to build authentic, trusting, and productive partnerships with students' families.

Using *The Family-School Engagement Advantage: Building Strategies That Work* by Dee Dee Harrison and *Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success* by Dr. Karen L. Mapp and colleagues, participants will explore the purpose and

benefits of meaningful family engagement and learn practical approaches for building trust, strengthening two-way communication, recognizing family strengths, and creating meaningful partnership opportunities.

Participants will develop a personalized **Family Engagement Toolkit** with communication templates, relationship-building strategies, scripts, feedback tools, and an engagement plan. They will also collaborate with colleagues, share best practices, and apply at least one family engagement strategy in their own professional setting. The course aligns with the **Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships** and professional standards supporting effective collaboration with families and communities.

Primary Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. **Analyze** the purpose and benefits of effective family-school engagement and its relationship to student learning, achievement, attendance, behavior, and overall student success.
2. **Identify and describe** the core conditions and practices necessary to establish trusting, respectful, and reciprocal relationships between educators and families.
3. **Apply** research-based family engagement principles, including relationship-building, two-way communication, asset-based practice, and shared responsibility for student success, to their professional setting.
4. **Evaluate** current family engagement practices within their classroom, school, or program and **identify** opportunities for improvement.
5. **Develop** practical communication tools, including family welcome messages, positive phone call scripts, meeting templates, email or messaging templates, and strategies for responding to challenging conversations.
6. **Design** strategies that create meaningful opportunities for families to share their perspectives, strengths, concerns, goals, and knowledge about their children.
7. **Create** a personalized Family Engagement Toolkit containing practical templates, scripts, resources, and strategies that can be implemented in the participant's educational setting.
8. **Implement** at least one family engagement strategy during the course and **analyze** the results through reflection, feedback, or evidence of practice.
9. **Collaborate and share** effective family engagement practices with colleagues by participating in professional dialogue, peer feedback, and the exchange of practical strategies.
10. **Develop and present** a Family Engagement Action Plan that identifies specific, measurable strategies for strengthening relationships and partnerships with students' families

Required Workshop Materials

Required Textbooks

Note: Required books must be acquired separately.

Books:

- **Harrison, Dee Dee.**
The Family-School Engagement Advantage: Building Strategies That Work.
- **Mapp, Karen L., and colleagues.**
Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success

Additional Materials

Participants will also receive or develop:

- Family Engagement Toolkit templates
- Family communication planning tools
- Positive phone call and outreach scripts
- Family meeting planning templates
- Two-way communication and feedback tools
- Family strengths and relationship-building activities
- Reflection guides
- Family Engagement Action Plan template
- Instructor-provided articles, handouts, research summaries, and supplemental resources
- Access to Zoom and the course learning platform or shared digital workspace
- Presentation software or equivalent digital tool for the final presentation

Workshop Requirements

Participants must complete all required workshop assignments and actively participate in live class sessions to earn credit.

1. Attendance and Active Participation – 20 Points

Participants are expected to attend and actively participate in all 10 live Zoom sessions. Participation includes:

- Engaging in whole-group and small-group discussions

- Participating in collaborative activities
- Sharing experiences and best practices
- Providing constructive feedback to colleagues
- Completing in-class reflection and application activities
- Contributing to the development and refinement of practical family engagement strategies

Format: Live participation through Zoom and submission of designated in-class activities.

Point Value: 20 points

2. Weekly Reflection and Application Activities – 20 Points

Participants will complete short weekly reflections and/or application activities connecting course concepts to their own professional practice.

Reflections may include:

- Analysis of current family engagement practices
- Identification of strengths and areas for growth
- Reflection on communication practices
- Application of course strategies
- Responses to assigned readings
- Documentation of strategies attempted with families
- Reflection on successes, challenges, and next steps

Format: Submitted electronically through the designated course platform.

Point Value: 20 points

3. Family Engagement Toolkit – 25 Points

Throughout the 10-week course, participants will create a personalized **Family Engagement Toolkit** containing practical resources they can use beyond the workshop.

The toolkit must include, at a minimum:

1. A personal or classroom/school Family Engagement Philosophy or Commitment Statement
2. A family welcome communication
3. A positive outreach or phone call script
4. A two-way communication template
5. A family meeting or conference planning tool

6. A script or strategy for navigating a challenging conversation
7. A family feedback or listening tool
8. A strategy for learning about family strengths, goals, and perspectives
9. At least two additional tools or templates developed during the course
10. A brief explanation of how each resource will be used in practice

Format: Digital portfolio organized into clearly labeled sections. Participants may submit the toolkit as a Google Drive folder, PDF portfolio, PowerPoint, or another instructor-approved digital format. All components must be clearly titled and organized for practical future use.

Point Value: 25 points

4. Family Engagement in Practice Assignment – 20 Points

Participants will select and implement at least one new family engagement strategy during the course.

Examples may include:

- Conducting positive outreach to families
- Using a new family welcome strategy
- Implementing a two-way communication practice
- Using a family survey or feedback tool
- Holding a relationship-building conversation or meeting
- Creating a meaningful opportunity for families to share information about their child
- Testing a new communication strategy
- Implementing another instructor-approved family engagement practice

Participants will document the implementation through a **Practice Reflection** that includes:

- The strategy selected
- The purpose of the strategy
- How the strategy was implemented
- Evidence of implementation, when appropriate and permitted
- Family response or feedback, when available
- What the participant learned
- What worked well
- Challenges encountered
- Changes or next steps for future implementation

Format: 2–3 page written reflection or equivalent digital presentation submitted electronically. Participants must protect student and family confidentiality and may not include personally identifiable information.

Point Value: 20 points

5. Family Engagement Action Plan and Final Presentation – 15 Points

Participants will develop a practical **Family Engagement Action Plan** for their classroom, school, grade level, department, or program.

The Action Plan must include:

- A brief analysis of a current family engagement need or opportunity
- At least one measurable family engagement goal
- Strategies to build relationships and trust
- Communication strategies
- Opportunities for family voice and feedback
- Resources and tools needed
- A timeline for implementation
- Indicators or evidence that will be used to evaluate progress
- Next steps for sustaining or improving the work

Participants will present their Action Plan and selected components of their Family Engagement Toolkit during the final class session.

Format: A 5–10 minute presentation using PowerPoint, Google Slides, or another instructor-approved presentation format. The written Action Plan must also be submitted electronically.

Point Value: 15 points

Final Grade Calculation Process

Requirement	Points
Attendance and Active Participation	20
Weekly Reflection and Application Activities	20
Family Engagement Toolkit	25
Family Engagement in Practice Assignment	20
Family Engagement Action Plan and Final Presentation	15
Total	100 Points

Evaluation Criteria for Credit

Participants will be evaluated based on:

- Attendance and active class participation
- Completion of assigned readings and learning activities
- Demonstration of application of family engagement principles
- Quality and completeness of the Family Engagement Toolkit
- Implementation and reflection on a family engagement strategy in practice
- Instructor appraisal of participant performance
- Completion and presentation of the Family Engagement Action Plan

Grading Policy

Fresno Pacific University Continuing Professional Development workshops are graded on a **Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)** basis.

A score of **80%–100%** is required to earn **Credit (CR)**. Credit is equivalent to a grade of **B or above**.

A score below **80%** will result in **No Credit (NC)**.

Letter grades are not issued.

Policy on Plagiarism

All participants in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week 1 – Why Family Engagement Matters: Establishing the Foundation

Topics

- Course overview and expectations
- Defining family engagement
- Family involvement versus meaningful family engagement
- Why relationships with families matter
- The connection between family engagement and student success
- Exploring beliefs, assumptions, and experiences related to families
- Introduction to an asset-based approach to families

In-Class Activities

- Introductions and professional context sharing
- Family engagement self-assessment
- Discussion: “What does meaningful partnership look like?”
- Analysis of common family engagement scenarios
- Introduction to the Family Engagement Toolkit

Reading/Preparation

- *The Family-School Engagement Advantage*: Introduction and assigned opening chapter(s)
- *Everyone Wins!*: Assigned introductory reading

Assignment

Family Engagement Reflection and Self-Assessment

Participants will analyze their current approach to family engagement by identifying:

- Current strengths
- Existing practices
- Challenges or barriers
- One area they would like to improve during the course

Toolkit Artifact: Personal Family Engagement Philosophy or Commitment Statement

Week 2 – Building Trust: The Foundation of Meaningful Relationships

Topics

- Trust as the foundation for family-school partnerships
- Creating welcoming and respectful interactions
- The impact of first impressions
- Relationship-building before problems arise
- Consistency, empathy, respect, and follow-through
- Recognizing family strengths and expertise

In-Class Activities

- Case study: When trust is strong and when trust is broken
- Small-group discussion of trust-building practices
- Role-play: The first conversation with a family
- Developing welcoming language

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned chapter(s) on relationship-building and trust from both required texts

Assignment

Welcome Families Strategy

Participants will create a practical strategy for establishing positive relationships early, including:

- A welcome letter, message, or video script
- A relationship-building activity or question
- A plan for making initial contact with families

Toolkit Artifact: Family Welcome Communication Template

Week 3 – Moving Beyond One-Way Communication

Topics

- Communication versus engagement
- Creating two-way communication
- Listening as an engagement strategy
- Choosing effective communication methods

- Clear, respectful, and accessible communication
- Reducing barriers related to language, schedules, and access

In-Class Activities

- Communication audit
- Reviewing examples of one-way versus two-way communication
- Practice writing family-centered messages
- Small-group strategy exchange

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned readings on communication and reciprocal partnerships

Assignment

Two-Way Communication Plan

Participants will identify one communication practice they currently use and revise it to create a more reciprocal process.

Toolkit Artifact: Two-Way Family Communication Template or Feedback Tool

Week 4 – The Power of Positive Outreach

Topics

- Why educators should communicate before there is a problem
- Positive outreach as a relationship-building strategy
- Effective phone calls, messages, and personal communication
- Making outreach authentic and specific
- Avoiding “only bad news” communication patterns
- Developing confidence in communicating with families

In-Class Activities

- Review of effective positive outreach examples
- Practice developing specific positive messages
- Positive phone call role-play
- Peer feedback and refinement

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned readings on communication, relationships, and strengths-based engagement

Assignment

Positive Family Outreach in Practice

Participants will complete at least one positive outreach interaction with a student's family, when professionally appropriate, and reflect on the experience.

Toolkit Artifact: Positive Phone Call/Family Outreach Script

Week 5 – Listening to Families: Family Voice, Strengths, and Expertise

Topics

- Families as partners and experts on their children
- Creating opportunities for family voice
- Asking meaningful questions
- Learning about family goals, hopes, concerns, and strengths
- Moving from asking families to participate toward inviting them to partner
- Using family feedback to improve practice

In-Class Activities

- Examining questions that invite meaningful conversation
- Practice: Asking versus listening
- Family voice scenario analysis
- Developing a family listening strategy

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned readings on family voice and partnership

Assignment

Family Listening Tool

Participants will develop and use, when appropriate, a strategy for learning from families.

Examples include:

- A family questionnaire
- A beginning-of-year survey
- Conversation prompts
- A family interview protocol

- A student/family strengths inventory

Toolkit Artifact: Family Voice and Listening Tool

Week 6 – Having Courageous and Challenging Conversations

Topics

- Why challenging conversations are part of partnership
- Preparing for difficult conversations
- Responding rather than reacting
- Maintaining respect during disagreement
- Active listening and empathy
- Focusing on the student and shared goals
- Repairing relationships when trust has been damaged

In-Class Activities

- Challenging conversation scenarios
- Communication role-play
- Identifying language that escalates or de-escalates conversations
- Developing response strategies

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned readings related to trust, communication, and relationship-building

Assignment

Challenging Conversation Reflection and Response Plan

Participants will select a common challenging family communication scenario and develop a relationship-centered approach for addressing it.

Toolkit Artifact: Challenging Conversation Preparation Guide and Script

Week 7 – Creating Meaningful Opportunities for Family Partnership

Topics

- Moving beyond traditional family engagement events
- Purposeful opportunities for partnership
- Connecting engagement activities to student learning
- Avoiding “one-size-fits-all” engagement
- Considering family interests, needs, schedules, and strengths
- Creating opportunities for shared responsibility

In-Class Activities

- Review and redesign of a traditional family engagement activity
- Best-practice sharing
- Collaborative planning
- Identifying barriers and solutions

Reading/Preparation

- Assigned readings on high-impact family engagement practices

Assignment

Engagement Activity Redesign

Participants will identify an existing classroom, school, or program family activity and redesign it to increase:

- Relationship-building
- Family voice
- Connection to student learning
- Accessibility
- Opportunities for partnership

Toolkit Artifact: Family Partnership Activity Planning Template

Week 8 – From Learning to Practice: Implementing a Family Engagement Strategy

Topics

- Turning ideas into consistent practice
- Selecting realistic strategies
- Planning for implementation
- Gathering evidence of impact
- Responding to challenges and adapting strategies

- Sharing and learning from practice

In-Class Activities

- Implementation planning workshop
- Peer consultation
- Troubleshooting barriers
- Practice evidence discussion

Assignment

Family Engagement in Practice Assignment

Participants will implement at least one family engagement strategy in their own professional setting and document the process.

Participants will submit a reflection describing:

- What they implemented
- Why they selected the strategy
- How families responded, when feedback is available
- What they learned
- What they would continue, change, or improve

Toolkit Artifact: Practice Implementation and Reflection Template

Week 9 – Sharing Best Practices and Developing a Sustainable Plan

Topics

- What effective family engagement looks like in practice
- Learning from colleagues
- Identifying practices worth continuing
- Creating sustainable routines rather than isolated activities
- Measuring progress
- Developing personal and professional commitments to family engagement

In-Class Activities

- Best Practices Exchange
- Participant strategy showcase
- Peer feedback on Family Engagement Toolkits
- Action Plan development workshop

Assignment

Family Engagement Action Plan Draft

Participants will begin developing a plan for strengthening family engagement in their professional setting.

The plan must include:

- A measurable goal
- Strategies
- Timeline
- Tools and resources
- Family voice opportunities
- Indicators of progress

Toolkit Artifact: Draft Family Engagement Action Plan

Week 10 – Putting It All Together: Demonstrating Learning and Commitment

Topics

- Reflection on growth and learning
- What changed in my thinking and practice?
- Sharing successful strategies
- Sustaining relationship-centered family engagement
- Next steps and professional commitments

In-Class Activities

- Final Family Engagement Toolkit Showcase
- Participant Action Plan Presentations
- Peer feedback and celebration of learning
- Final course reflection

Final Assignment

Family Engagement Action Plan and Final Presentation

Participants will present their completed Action Plan and selected Family Engagement Toolkit resources.

Presentations should demonstrate:

- Understanding of the purpose and benefits of meaningful family engagement
- Application of relationship-building principles
- Practical strategies ready for implementation
- Evidence of learning from the course
- Reflection on implementation in practice
- Clear next steps for continued growth

Final Submission

Participants will electronically submit:

1. Completed Family Engagement Toolkit
2. Family Engagement in Practice Reflection
3. Final Family Engagement Action Plan
4. Final Presentation

Demonstration of Learning

The culminating evidence of learning in this workshop is designed to move beyond discussion and theory. Participants will demonstrate their learning through a combination of:

- **Creation:** Developing practical templates, scripts, and resources
- **Application:** Implementing a family engagement strategy in practice
- **Reflection:** Analyzing what occurred and identifying next steps
- **Collaboration:** Sharing best practices and learning from colleagues
- **Planning:** Developing a sustainable Family Engagement Action Plan
- **Presentation:** Communicating how course learning will influence future professional practice

By the end of the course, participants will have both **demonstrated their ability to apply family engagement principles in a real educational setting** and developed a practical collection of tools they can continue using to build stronger relationships with the families they serve.