Inclusive Practices & Family Engagement

How can we make families feel included, welcome, & valued in the special education process?

Language Accessibility

- Use accessible language: When contacting families or creating content, keeping language at a third-grade reading level helps ensure everyone can understand the message.

- When possible, use an audio and/or visual communication method to support families with low reading literacy in English or their home language.

- Listen. Foster empathy & respect through active listening and understanding.

Welcoming Images

- Use models or photographs representative of your school's population.

- Showcase success stories or moments of celebration that highlight inclusion or collaboration across people of all abilities and backgrounds.

- Share images of actual families and students participating in school events on an accessible wall such as a front office wall.

School Culture

- Promote the use of strength-based or positive language as opposed to deficit or corrective language.

- Use inclusive language such as, We walk in the hallway versus you need to walk in the hallway.

- Promote a culture of curiosity: if something is new to you, learn more about it and ask a question!

- Provide ongoing learning opportunities for staff, students, and families to engage with each other.

Intentional Partnerships

- When planning events or setting goals, invite students and families to provide input on what would be most helpful to them.

- Identify community organizations in your area that your families are using or who could bridge a gap for your school community. Establish a partnership based on goal alignment and shared vision.

- Establish partnerships that are representative of your school community and interest.

For More Information

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