

## Who should read this publication?

This publication is designed for school administrators, teachers, nurses, support staff, parents, and others interested in promoting parent engagement. Each of these audiences has different but important roles and responsibilities to play in engaging parents in school health activities.

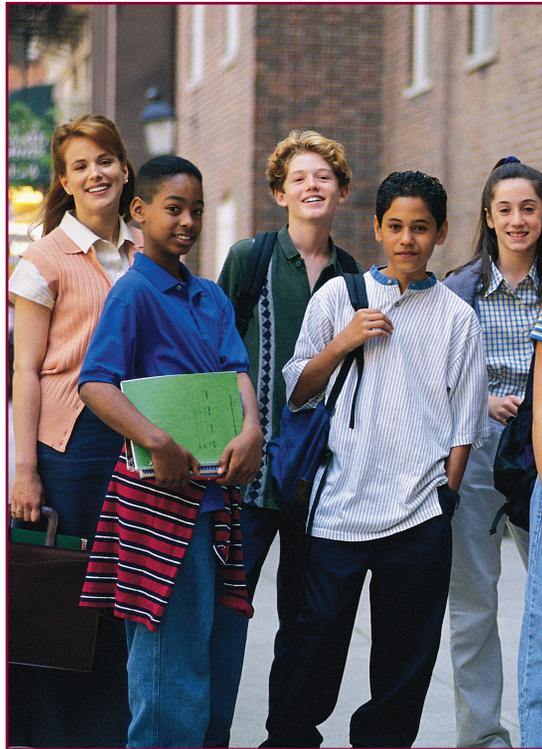
## Supplemental CDC resources on parent engagement:

- Fact sheets on promoting parent engagement for —
  - District and school administrators
  - Teachers and other school staff
  - Parents
- PowerPoint® slides for promoting parent engagement in school health
- Facilitator's guide for staff development on promoting parent engagement in school health



## Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health is available at

[www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/parent\\_engagement.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/parent_engagement.htm)



### For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis,  
STD, and TB Prevention  
Division of Adolescent and School Health  
[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth)

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# PARENT ENGAGEMENT:

## Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Disease  
Control and Prevention

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's health and learning at school.

When parents are engaged in their children's school activities, their children get better grades, choose healthier behaviors, and have better social skills. Parent engagement also makes it more likely that children and adolescents will avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as sexual risk behaviors and tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use.

Research shows that school health activities are more successful when parents are involved. For example, when parents volunteer at their children's school, their children are less likely to start smoking and more likely to get enough physical activity.

Drawing from research and best practices from schools across the country, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created a strategies document to give schools concrete ways for engaging parents in school health.

The document gives tips for all three aspects of parent engagement: 1) **connecting** with parents, 2) **engaging** parents in school health activities, and 3) **sustaining** parent engagement in school health.

## ■ Connect

This section describes what schools can do to establish a good foundation for engaging parents in school health, such as

- Creating a vision for parent engagement,
- Preparing school staff to work with parents,
- Assessing and improving the school's strategies for involving parents, and
- Assessing what parents and families need to be more involved in school health.

## ■ Engage

This section offers ideas for getting parents actively engaged in school health activities, such as

- Providing parents with information and skills they need to support healthy attitudes, behaviors, and environments,
- Encouraging parents to be part of decision making at school,
- Ensuring regular and effective two-way communication,
- Offering a wide variety of volunteer opportunities,
- Creating health education activities that parents and students can do together at home, and
- Collaborating with community groups that can benefit students and families.

*Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents.*

## ■ Sustain

This section identifies solutions for common challenges in keeping parents involved, such as

- Finding meaningful ways that busy parents can be involved,
- Training staff to work well with parents,
- Solving conflicts in scheduling and transportation,
- Overcoming language and cultural barriers, and
- Ensuring administrative and financial support.

