



# School Connections

A quarterly publication from FACTS, a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center

**Families and Communities Together with Schools (FACTS)** is a New York State Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC). The FACTS program is funded by the US Department of Education and provides information and support to parents and schools with a focus on parental involvement. If you have any questions regarding parental involvement, please call the FACTS School Coordinator at (315) 779-7071, email [dlothrop@mail.boces.com](mailto:dlothrop@mail.boces.com), or visit our website at [www.nyspirc.org](http://www.nyspirc.org).



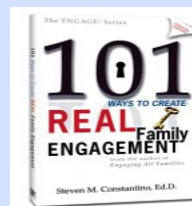
*"Be the change you wish to see in the world."  
Mahatma Ghandi*

*"The child pulls parents and teachers together, but without the help of one another, parents and teachers pull the child apart."  
Debora Tinnin*

*"If a child is not learning, then someone is not teaching."  
Dr. Karen Mapp*



## Professional Resource Review



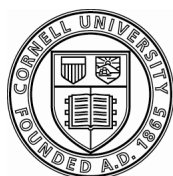
### 101 Ways to Create REAL Family Engagement

Author: Steven M. Constantino

Research has shown that when schools engage families in their child's education, student achievement increases. This resource provides tips on ways schools can further increase student achievement through effective family engagement. This book also provides advice and suggestions for strategies on improving partnerships between families and school.

This resource will help schools build a new cultural foundation and will motivate staff to involve families in the education of their children. Don't miss the "things to do list" in each section and include Mr. Constantino's book as one of your books in a school literacy circle. The book contains more than 100 tested ways to create REAL family engagement. It will be an invaluable resource for superintendents, principals, teachers, and all school personnel.

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## What is Family Engagement?

Historically, we have used the term “parental involvement” when referring to parents being involved in their child’s education. In order to be more sensitive to the needs of **all** families in our schools, the term “family engagement” is now a more widely accepted term in the educational field. Family engagement focuses on the multiple contexts in which children grow and learn, from birth through adulthood. It also focuses on how families are involved throughout the child’s education and the various ways schools can create a true partnership with all families in the school. Family engagement must always be linked to learning with the goal of increasing student achievement.



### Tips for Creating REAL Family Engagement

In this month’s professional resource review, “101 Ways to Create REAL Family Engagement,” Steven Constantino provides over 100 useful strategies and tips on ways your school can create REAL family engagement. The following are just a few of the useful ideas shared to help make a difference in your school and community:

- Provide a greeter to welcome students and guests to your school. Create a button, vest or special name tag to identify them as a greeter.
- Provide “Out Standing” Staff. Ensure an administrator or staff member is available in the parking lot to greet and assist families dropping off students each day.
- Utilize your school’s marquee sign for character education or SAT “word of the day.” Also, write messages to families, such as “Our staff wishes you and your family a happy holiday season.”
- To be more sensitive to all families, start all school correspondence with the salutation: Dear Families, rather than To the Parents of...
- Add a personal touch by making a personal phone call to families to confirm they are aware of and planning to attend any special events.
- Repeatedly publish and post the school’s office hours.
- Create a school bookmark with important information that can be provided to all guests (use the word guest rather than visitor). These bookmarks can be changed monthly to include upcoming school events and activities.
- Create a “Kiss and Learn” area where parents can drop off their children each morning. This will help ease congestion and will promote the importance of learning.
- Video tape meetings and school events to share with those families who are unable to attend.
- Invite Fabulous Family Feedback by including feedback cards for all guests visiting the school to seek their feedback regarding their visit. Ensure these cards are in all languages representing those families served.
- Provide training for **all** school staff on family engagement.

**Order your own copy of this resource to learn more tips for creating effective family engagement in your school.**



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