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Major Factors of Parental Engagement:

- Parents' beliefs about their role in their children's life.
- Parents' beliefs about their positive influence on their children's education.
- Parents' beliefs about how much their children and school want them to be involved.



Successful Parental Involvement of Culturally Diverse Families Include:

- Communicating with parents in L1 and/or English.
- Using parents' backgrounds and insights as resources for instruction and students' evaluation.
- Treating parents as partners in students' educational experiences.

ESOL Insights

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Connecting with Families of English Language Learners (ELLs)

Schools' strong and meaningful relationships with parents advance academic performance and social skills for all students, including ELLs. Successful parental involvement includes these major elements: communication with families, families' backgrounds and insights as a resource, and families as partners in students' education. School administrators and teachers can use many resources and strategies to improve their communication with linguistically and culturally diverse families even when they don't speak the families' home languages. Here are some ways that educators can empower ELLs' parents and facilitate effective and mutually enhancing communication:

- Learn about and value the families' native cultures (visit www.culturegrams.com).
- Invite family members as volunteers and use families' specialized skills and cultural backgrounds as a resource.
- Seek assistance within the school community when parents don't speak English (for ex., PGCPs Office of Interpreting) to maintain communication in families' native languages.
- Work as partners to set students' goals.
- Explain to parents the school culture:

routines, rules, homework, report cards, and testing.

- Inform parents about their child's accomplishments and challenges.
- Seek information from families about students' abilities, strengths, interests, and social skills.
- Conduct parent-friendly interviews and/or surveys.
- Honor parents by considering their input and advice.
- Assist families in finding necessary resources outside school to meet their needs in a new country (for ex., English language tutoring, health services, or day care).
- Provide parents with resources on how to structure meaningful activities at home and assist them with ideas on improving parenting skills.
- Begin communication with a positive note or card preferably in their L1.
- Maintain a positive attitude and hold high but realistic expectations.

Alone we can do so little,
Together we can do so much.
~~~ Helen Keller

For more information on how to build connectedness with parents visit the following Web site resources:

[www.everythingsl.net](http://www.everythingsl.net)  
[www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com)  
[www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)