

FAMILY MATTERS: MAKING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT A CORNERSTONE OF LITERACY EDUCATION BY KELLY BOTHUM

Continuous engagement efforts of schools to engage families in literacy campaigns have proven effective for districts across the United States.

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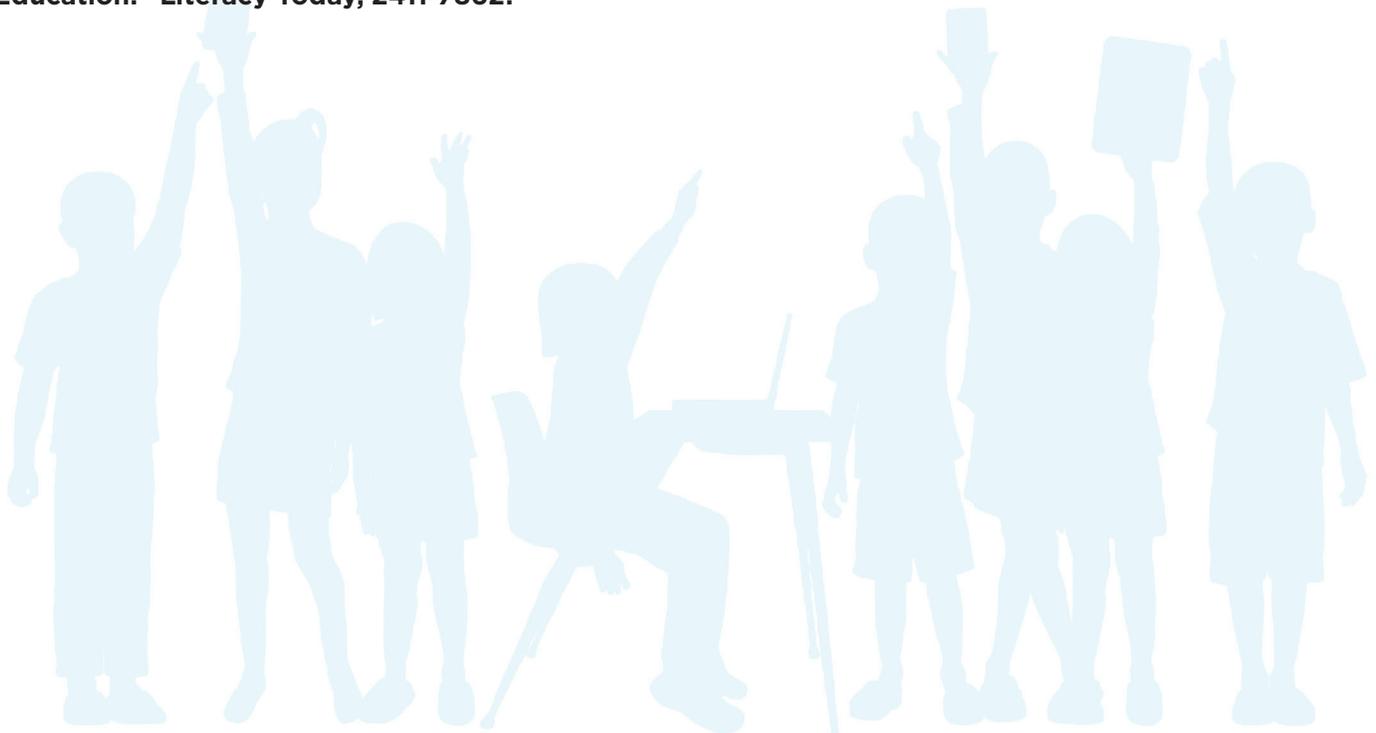
This article highlights the experiences of a number of school districts in the United States who have increased family engagement in literacy programs and seen a marked improvement in literacy rates and academic performance. These efforts have also resulted in increased literacy for parents who face their own reading challenges.

The author highlights several issues for parents: lack of knowledge of the best ways to encourage their children's literacy success, feelings that as children begin reading on their own that parents have nothing more to do, lifestyle issues such as busy schedules, as well as whether parents feel welcome in their children's school.

Some school districts utilize Literacy Nights to engage a dozen or two families together for interactive sessions showing trends in reading and strategies for parents to be more involved. To really work, these are not one-time events; continuing efforts are vital. This usually requires training teachers in optimal ways to interact with the parents. It is vital that the parents feel their presence, input, and engagement matter.

Minority communities can present cultural difficulties and working in these environments require understanding the community pulse. One way to deal with this is through two-generational learning, which allows parents who are struggling with their own literacy to attend school with their children. Parents also can access adult education services and career-building opportunities. The results have included higher student attendance rates and literacy scores. She cites Lincoln, Nebraska, which has become home to thousands of refugees, as a community really using this model effectively.

Bothum, K. (August 2019). "Family Matters: Making Family Engagement a Cornerstone of Literacy Education." *Literacy Today*, 2411-7862.



Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.