

VOICES

from the field

----- 2018-2019

*A Snapshot of Ohio's Regional Supports
for Family-School Partnerships*



Ohio Statewide
**Family
Engagement
Center**

A Letter from the Authors



Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center at The Ohio State University is a proud partner of the Ohio Department of Education's State Support Teams, working to enhance and expand family and community engagement in Ohio. Together, Ohio State and the Department have established the Family and Community Engagement Network—a Community of Practice dedicated to advancing and supporting collaboration. This report provides a snapshot of the efforts in Ohio to bring schools, families, and communities together to create the supports all students need to succeed in life. Families of students with disabilities are at the center of this effort. The Network includes not only the State Support Teams, but partners from the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) too. The work of Ohio's regional offices extends far beyond what we were able to present in this report. We hope you enjoy and learn from this report representing some of the great work going on in Ohio! We love our work supporting Ohio's sixteen regions, and wanted to share with you some highlights and new features in the report this year:

- 1 This year, each region selected a focus area for their snapshot in this report. The focus areas for this year were 1) Social Emotional Supports, 2) Early Literacy, and 3) Special Education Trainings for Families of Students with Disabilities.
- 2 New features of this year's report include: a section to say hello to new faces and a fond farewell to those who have retired or moved roles, and a page to feature our community and state partners.
- 3 The Family and Community Engagement Network developed numerous work products throughout the year. This year's report includes highlights of these products with information on where to find them!

Sincerely,

Barbara Boone and Meredith Wellman



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EARLY LITERACY

A Training for Families

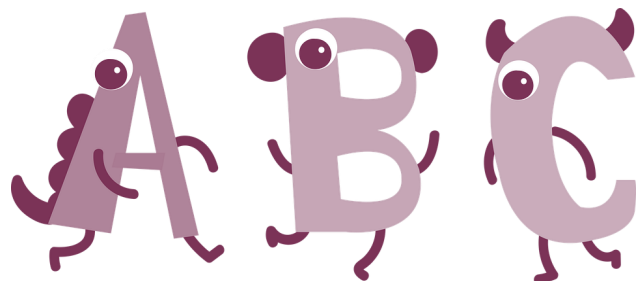
“Helpful Tips for Preparing Your Preschooler for Kindergarten”

Action

Region 1 developed a training for families throughout Northwest Ohio on understanding the expectations for students from Preschool to Kindergarten. The training walks families through topics including: (1) Understanding developmental milestones and Kindergarten standards; (2) Understanding how to build literacy skills in daily life with or without books; and (3) Transitioning from Preschool to Kindergarten for students with disabilities. With this training, families gain confidence as they come to realize that they already have many tools to support their child’s early literacy development.

Impact

Informal feedback was gathered from families who attended the training. This feedback indicated that families enjoyed coming together to learn and share. They enjoyed the friendly and comfortable environment to freely ask questions and share with the group. Through this training, Region 1 wants to ensure families have the tools they need to support their children. Thus far, three consultants are trained to provide the content. Region 1 wants to share their training resources with other counties and consultants.



Voices from the field

SST 2

www.sstr2.org

IMPLEMENTING



Partnerships for Literacy

WITH PERKINS LOCAL



Action

Region 2 collaborated with Furry Elementary and Meadowlawn Intermediate Schools in the Perkins Local School District to implement *Partnerships for Literacy*, a research-based school improvement strategy developed by Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center.

Regional consultants worked with groups of educators and families to facilitate a discussion of the current supports for family engagement in early literacy in the district and how family engagement could be improved in early literacy practices. Coached by regional consultants, the district submitted a plan for the upcoming school year with a goal of building a two-way communication feedback loop between each school and the families they serve.

Impact

As a part of implementing *Partnerships for Literacy*, Meadowlawn Intermediate School works to ensure that each child has access to books, writing supplies, and other resources at home to support the child's practice of literacy-building activities in their daily family lives.

At Furry Elementary School, the Partnerships for Literacy strategy led to new literacy-building activities being provided to families for their use at home with their children.

Voices from the field

SST 3

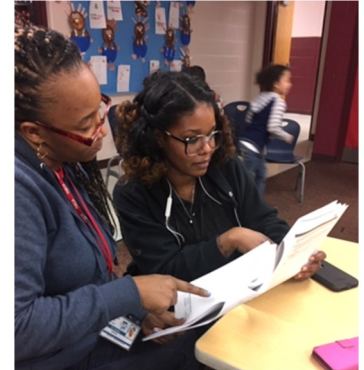
www.sst-3.org

IMPLEMENTING



Partnerships for Literacy

WITH GARFIELD HEIGHTS SCHOOLS



Action

Region 3 collaborated with Maple Leaf Elementary School in Garfield Heights to strengthen home-school partnerships. Beginning with focused conversations with their Building Leadership Team and providing technical assistance and coaching, a team of families and teachers was developed to evaluate current practices and make decisions on a few building goals that will enhance their engagement with families in a system-wide manner. This year the team included 7 teachers, 7 family members and 2 administrators. The initial meeting provided feedback for increased attendance for the building-wide Family Literacy Night. Since this is a grant-supported initiative, there is some financial support from ODE, which will help in consistent team attendance and needed resources.

Impact

Partnerships for Literacy is a three-year commitment. Progress towards three areas of practices (Communication, Supporting Early Language and Literacy at Home, and Strategic Community Partnerships) will be measured by the annual completion of the Family and Community Engagement for Early Literacy Inventory. A baseline was collected at the initial meeting and feedback was very positive regarding the work this team will do to support families and literacy. A schedule has been developed for next school year for this team to work on building-level goals. One of the most important non-negotiables for this team is that there is a solid feedback loop between the *Partnerships for Literacy* Team and the Building Leadership Team.

Voices from the field

SST 4

www.sst4.org

EARLY LITERACY

Cradle to Kindergarten

Home visits and books to families in Painesville, OH



The Cradle to Kindergarten Program is for new babies born at Lake Health whose families reside in Painesville, Ohio. The program provides families with free books, materials, and support to empower and engage parents in their child's literacy development. Books and materials are offered in both English and Spanish. Families receive a free welcome kit and are contacted by a volunteer from the nearby community who has had training on the importance of early language development. Once matched with a volunteer, families schedule their first home visit. As long as the family continues to reside in Painesville, these visits occur approximately every three months until the child enters kindergarten.

Action

Region 4 supported early literacy by training twelve volunteer home visitors for the Cradle to Kindergarten program. The Family Resource Center Coordinator at Painesville City Local Schools and Region 4's Early Literacy Specialist, Pam Kennedy, provided the trainings for home visitors. The region has materials to continue the program for 2-3 years.

Impact

Region 4 is measuring their impact by the number of volunteer home visitors they train, and the number of families enrolled in the program. The impact of the program itself is measured using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Children of families enrolled in the Cradle to Kindergarten program will take the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment upon Kindergarten enrollment. Their scores will be compared with those who did not participate in the Cradle to Kindergarten program.

EARLY LITERACY **Sit Together and Read** at Niles Head Start



Action

Region 5 partnered with The Crane Center at The Ohio State University to implement Sit Together and Read (STAR) and Sit Together And Read at Home (STAR@Home) with Niles Head Start. The SST Literacy Consultant facilitated training of the teachers by modeling how to read-aloud and the STAR differentiation lessons as well as providing feedback to the teachers on their STAR lessons. The SST Literacy consultant also reviewed student journals with the teachers to help develop next steps.

Impact

The STAR and STAR@Home program received positive feedback from teachers, families and administrators, who commented on the impact that it has had on their students and children. Currently, 250 children and families are involved with this initiative enriching the literacy experiences of young children and preparing them to become future readers by utilizing STAR and STAR@Home. Region 5 plans to continue and expand the STAR and STAR@Home program in the 2019-2020 school year by reaching out to all preschools and libraries in their neighborhood.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

Action

Region 6 designed and facilitated a professional development series for districts and Educational Service Centers to improve the special education system in the region. There was a particular focus on Evaluation Team Reports (ETRs) and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) within the system of supports for students with disabilities. This three-day series included assisting special education teams to build their own internal monitoring team and processes to be proactive in meeting Federal (IDEA) compliance guidelines. The SST 6 Special Education Team provided district and Educational Service Center teams training and resources to build an organizational tool and to become stronger in areas identified by The Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children as non-compliant. During this process, the SST Family Engagement Consultant, Kim Moritz, provided content on communication between families and schools. She made sure to include time to share a family perspective on the topic and reflective questions to consider to engage families of students with disabilities in the process. She also provided this training as part of the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Test Administration Training.

Impact

District and ESC special education teams that participated were required to submit an Organizational Tool that outlined their plan to improve policies and procedures at the end of the series. A measure of success is an indication of a specific action tied to families of students with disabilities in this organizational tool. SST 6 plans to continue providing training of this type, and will continue to build capacity in the region so that all consultants can support school districts in their work with families.

Voices from the field

SST 7

www.sst7.org



Ohio Statewide

Family Engagement Center

—at The Ohio State University

EARLY LITERACY

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY – A COURSE FOR TEACHERS

Action

Region 7 partnered with Dr. Barbara Boone at the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center to provide a four-part professional development series for teachers of pre-K—third grade. The main goals of the series were:

- ◇ Learn family-friendly communication skills.
- ◇ Use Growth Mindset/habits of mind skills to increase family engagement and draw upon families assets and interests.
- ◇ Improve language and literacy opportunities at home and at school.
- ◇ Examine language and literacy resources for everyday family activities to support early literacy and promote family engagement.

Each teacher taking the course partnered with two families to test new practices that they learned in class. Teachers reflected on those experiences in journals and class assignments.

This training will be available in an online format in January 2020.

Impact

Participation in the course immediately impacted teachers' practices and relationships with families and students.

- In the final project presentations, each teacher shared how they used strategies they learned in the class to improve language and literacy outcomes for their partner families' children and increase family engagement.
- Each teacher left the class with a better understanding of evidence based strategies and a personalized list of activities using an A to Z graphic organizer.
- The use of Universal Design for Learning Framework to re-design a family engagement night was very powerful to the participants.
- Teachers are working on re-designing their family engagement nights to provide more flexibility for families to access the content.
- Some teachers changed their parent-teacher conferences to become student-led and family-led conferences.

Voices from the field

SST 8

www.sst8.org

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSITION ACADEMY FOR FAMILIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Upcoming Parent Engagement Opportunities

2018-19 Parent Transition Academy

When:
October 25
November 29
January 24
February 21
5:30-8:30 pm
Doors open at 5:30 pm
Session begin at 6:00 pm

Who:
Parents/ Guardians of Middle & High School students identified with a disability

Where:
* Nov 29 & Jan 24—Summit ESC—420 Washington Ave. Cuyahoga Falls or Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities Achievement Center, 4691 Windfall Rd. Medina, 44256
* Oct 25 & Feb 21—Norton High School

Cost:
FREE

Register Online:
<http://SummitESC.org/Events>

October 25—
Norton High School
◦ Transition Law
◦ Evidence Based Predictors & Practices

November 29—
◦ Transition Pathways and Planning Part I & Financial/Special Needs Planning @ Summit ESC
or
◦ Transition Pathways & Planning Part I & Guardianship @ Medina DD

January 24—
◦ Transition Pathways & Planning Part II & Guardianship @ Summit ESC
or
◦ Transition Pathways and Planning Part II & Financial/Special Needs Planning @ Medina DD

February 21—
Norton High School
◦ Parent Panel & Transition Fair
Transition Fair begins at 4:30

State Support Team    
    
Questions? Contact Brenda Palinkas at 330-945-5600 ext. 311224
www.summitesc.org

Action

Region 8 offered a Transition Academy for Families of Middle/High School Students with Disabilities during the 2018-19 school year. The Academy consisted of monthly 2.5 hour learning sessions in October, November, January, and February. Families learned about a variety of topics, including Transition Law, Evidence-based Predictors and Practices, and Transition Pathways and Planning.

This Transition Academy has been offered for the past 2 years in partnership with the Summit County Educational Service Center and the Medina Educational Service Center, along with various other agencies. Region 8's Transition Specialist and Family Engagement Consultant took the lead to provide this academy with regional partners.

The Academy provides valuable information and strategies for families, along with connections to community agencies with transition resources.

Impact

Approximately 25-30 families and students have attended the academy each year. Feedback from families has been very positive—they want to see the Transition Academy continue.

SST 8 collaborated with Akron Children's Hospital, which was a win/win situation for all involved. They were able to discuss the often-difficult situations of guardianship and hospital policies for patients that have reached the age of emancipation.

SST 8 cross trained two counties in the region and blended a transition fair for their final Academy session. Therefore, families in the two counties were able to make connections with Agencies specific to their counties. SST 8 plans to continue this event in the future, given the local need for the event and the positive reviews they have received.

Voices from the field

SST 9

www.sst9.org

EARLY LITERACY

TALK FIRST STARK: BUILDING BRAINS BEFORE BIRTH AND BEYOND

Action

Region 9 collaborated with members of the **Great Start for Great Futures** team to create **Talk First Stark**, an initiative geared toward families with children Prenatal - age three, to encourage “language nutrition” as the foundation of healthy growth and brain development. This initiative engages families during the critical before birth—infant/toddler years.

Language Nutrition means feeding young children’s brains with loving words through responsive interactions.

Talk First Stark supports Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement by providing training and resources to home visitors for Family Partnerships, Community Collaboration, and Teacher Capacity as a way to develop practices in oral language, phonological awareness, vocabulary and shared reading experiences that can be embedded in daily routines.



Consultants in Region 9 explored brain research, community data, and national initiatives to build the capacity of the Pre-3 Team in the area of language and literacy development.

Impact

Through Talk First Stark, families, caregivers, educators and community members will understand that:

- Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher.
- The brain is the only organ not fully developed at birth.
- Babies and young children need lots of loving words to grow healthy brains.
- The language shared in the early years of a child’s life provides a strong foundation for both academic and social-emotional growth and learning.

In Spring of 2019, the **Talk First Stark** team launched Advocate Trainings to educate community partners, who support our families every day, on the importance and impact of language nutrition and strategies for helping families and caregivers intentionally build language into their day to day interactions with their children. A [public service announcement](https://tinyurl.com/yxk63ffe) (<https://tinyurl.com/yxk63ffe>) was also produced in partnership with the North Canton Storytellers to create awareness and educate the community about Talk First Stark, as we all have a role to play in helping children have a great start for a great future.

EARLY LITERACY

Sit Together and Read at Home

Action

Region 10 supported implementation of “Sit Together and Read at Home” (STAR) this year, a family engagement strategy to actively involve the families of young readers in literacy instruction.

A Regional Early Literacy Specialist from Region 10 provided training to teachers in (1) STAR at school and (2) STAR at home.

The training included presenting and modeling “print referencing strategies” during a meeting with families. Following this meeting, a book bag went home with families. Families and teachers communicated back and forth with a journal throughout the process.

The Regional Early Literacy Specialist observed and provided feedback to teachers as they implemented STAR in the classroom. She also helped plan and implement the STAR family event.

Impact

Region 10 measured impact by the families’ participation and knowledge gained from the program.

“Something new my child learned while reading was that there are more letters than words and you can put the letters together to make words.”

Region 10 and the district literacy coach will continue to provide coaching support in 2019-20. Any new PreK teacher could be trained by Region 10 or through an online version of the training.

For the book Growing Vegetable Soup, parents and children planted seeds and labeled their plants with a popsicle stick.



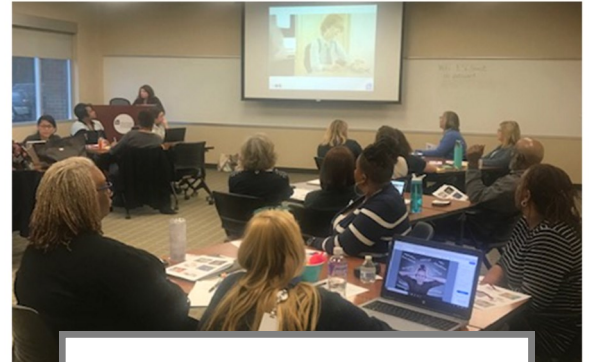
Voices from the field

SST 11

www.sst11.org

EARLY LITERACY

Cultivating Early Literacy through Family Engagement



Families learn about the Sit Together and Read program.

Action

Region 11 strengthened their Family Engagement supports by gathering information on current Family Engagement practices within districts through a survey distributed to districts, buildings, parent mentors, and early childhood education programs. The information was used to create a framework for a network of supports and services for districts and families. SST 11 increased awareness of literacy and language development among consultants, districts, and families through sessions around the region. The SST's Family Learning Series was broadened to include a focus on literacy and language development, including numerous Sit Together and Read (STAR) sessions. SST consultants also participated in a variety of literacy events sponsored by ODE, to increase their knowledge and support literacy work with districts in the region.

Impact

A major indicator of success was the integration of language and literacy development across initiatives and groups in the region, including social emotional learning, vulnerable youth, students with disabilities, English Learners, foster children, P.B.I.S., Striving Readers Consortium/grantees, Parent learning series, Parent Mentors, and communication efforts. This allowed for an increased awareness and inclusion of family engagement practices within the school improvement framework. SST 11 will continue to promote literacy within the region through services/supports to districts and families.

Family Learning Series events (STAR sessions and family curriculum nights) reached over 150 individuals. Feedback indicated positive experiences with practical resources, a positive passion for literacy, and request for additional district support.

EARLY LITERACY &
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS



FAMILY NIGHTS WITH HEAD START

Action

Region 12 partnered with two Head Start centers to offer family nights about successful transitions to Kindergarten. Families learned about how social and emotional development is closely linked to success in Kindergarten, and about the importance of reading and other activities with their children. Families practiced what it looks and sounds like to read to their child.

Impact

The impact of this work was the knowledge gained by families about how they can help their children become successful in school through play, emotional vocabulary, and reading together. Region 12 hopes to increase attendance and access to this information in the coming years, and will continue seeking new Head Start partnerships.



Voices from the field

SST 13

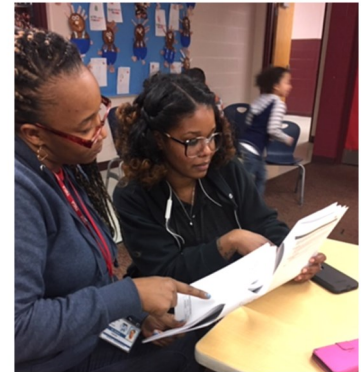
www.sst13.org

IMPLEMENTING



Partnerships for Literacy

WITH CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

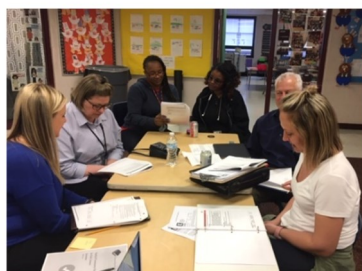


Action

Region 13 partnered with Cincinnati Public Schools to implement *Partnerships for Literacy*, a research-based school improvement strategy developed by Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center.

Regional consultants provided meeting facilitation and coaching throughout the process of implementation.

Partnerships for Literacy involves a group of educators and families coming together to discuss their current supports for family engagement in early literacy, and how they could improve. These questions got participants thinking about opportunities and barriers to partnerships, and how to improve two-way communication between families and staff in the building. A team was formed which included family members, teachers, an intervention specialist, the community resource coordinator, the SST regional early literacy specialist, and the SST family and community engagement consultant.



The team quickly got to work on completing the Early Literacy Inventory which garnered deep conversations about what works well and what needs improving. The group was very honest in their ratings of their current practices, which will lead to setting realistic priorities as they construct their literacy improvement plan for next year.

Impact

As a result of implementing *Partnerships for Literacy*, the school now has a team with family voice making informed decisions about family engagement in the school for early literacy supports.

During the 2019-2020 school year, Region 13 consultants will continue to coach the school towards successful implementation of their plans and will help them to reassess their progress next Spring.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

FAMILIES HELP THEIR CHILDREN BUILD STRONG SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN RURAL SOUTHERN OHIO

Action

Region 14 hosted a conference for families in October 2019. The main session, “Building Social Relationships,” provided resources and supports for families of children with disabilities to help their children build strong social relationships.

The Regional Parent Advisory Council, in collaboration with the SST Consultant, decided on the topics and information to be provided at the conference. The SST Consultant secured an outside presenter for the session, and provided details to the presenter about the concerns families have when thinking about helping their children build healthy relationships while living in this rural area.

Impact

The participants at the Parent Conference shared positive feedback about the session, including the ways they would use the information to help their children build social relationships.

The Parent Advisory Council will begin planning for the 2019 – 2020 school year soon. Some of the information from the Building Social Relationships can be shared in the Parent Packets that will be delivered to families of children with disabilities in Region 14 this fall.



Voices from the field

SST 15

www.sst15.org

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS

Ross County Early Childhood Summit

Action

In August, a local district identified a need to expand community collaboration within Ross County, specifically for the benefit of preschool children and their families. This led to a collaboration between Ross Pike ESC Consultants and the SST 15 Early Learning and School Readiness Consultant in planning a Ross County Early Childhood Summit. Representatives from schools, community agencies, local hospital and mental health providers, initially met in Fall of 2018 with the stated goal "to establish connections between local schools, early childhood programs, community organizations, providers, families to ensure that all children have access to early childhood programs and services."



Impact

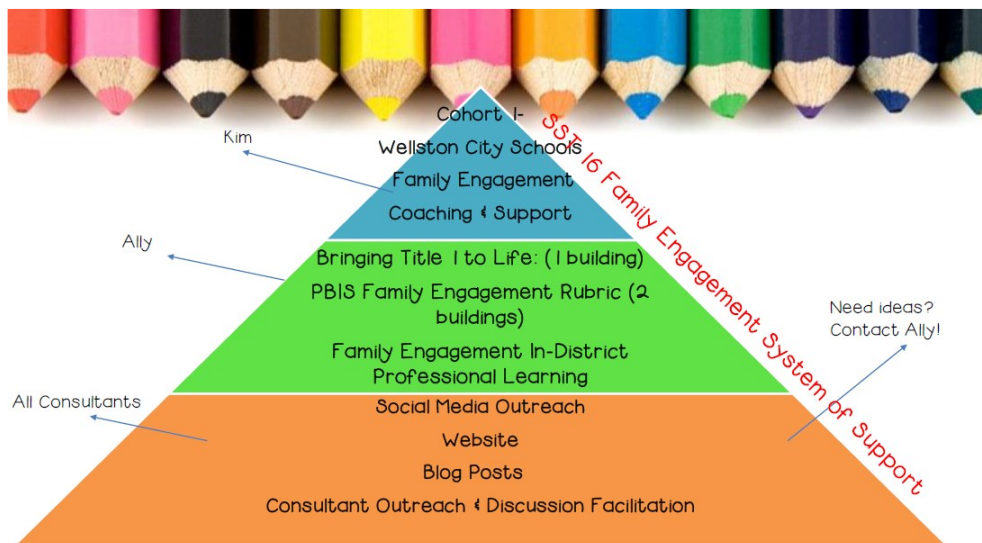
As a result of the Summit, the districts and other members at the meeting are exploring the possibility of School Based Health Services in the county. Representatives visited Alexander Local Schools to learn more about their current school-based health care program's processes and successes. The team invited Dr. Barbara Boone and Thomas Capretta, two family engagement specialists working at the state-level in Ohio, to join in furthering conversations about family and community engagement in Ross County.

In addition, the team hosted a family engagement event March 14th, which included training for families on adult resiliency, activities and games for children, booths with community agencies giving out brochures and other important materials. The team also partnered with community businesses that provided food and door prizes for families.

Region 15's goals are to have a uniform system that can be shared across agencies, a quick reference sheet, community resources guide, and training for all agencies in Trauma-Informed Care and Handle with Care by Fall 2019.

EARLY LITERACY

A TIERED MODEL OF REGIONAL SUPPORT



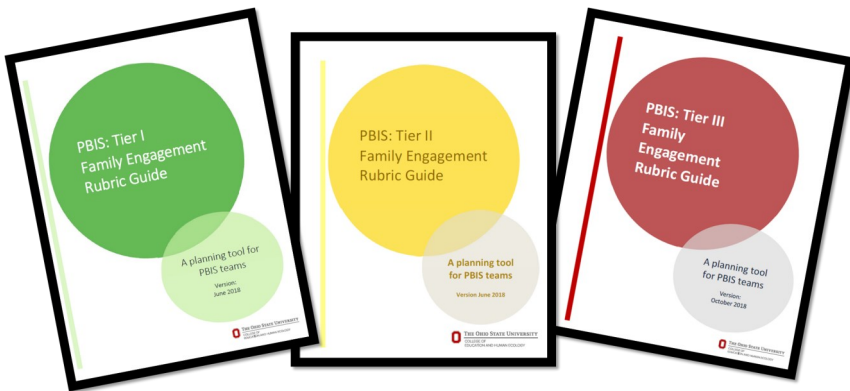
Action

Region 16 decided to organize regional family engagement supports and services through a tiered system of support. SST 16 approached their work this way for two reasons: 1) the rural communities in which they serve and 2) the drive time across their large region. SST 16 wanted to be able to serve as many as possible with the capacity of their staff. Although SST 16 focused on serving as many as possible, the focus was also on the quality of services schools received. At the Tier 3 level, Family Engagement Lead, Kim Miller, provided intensive family engagement support to Wellston City Schools as part of an initiative called *Partnerships for Literacy*. At the Tier 2 level, Family Engagement Consultant, Ally Trew, provided intensive support to Marietta City Schools. At the Tier 1 level, all consultants embedded family engagement within their professional learning series and in-district professional development as well as conversations with districts.

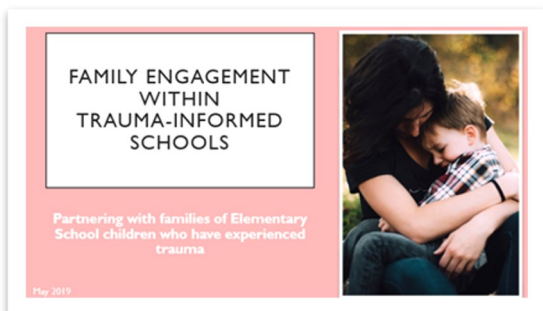
Products Developed by the Ohio FCE Network 2018-2019



The FCE Network Early Literacy Work Group developed a Family Engagement in Early Literacy Rubric and Guide, available at <http://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/earlyliteracy/>



The FCE Network PBIS Work Group completed the Tier III PBIS Family Engagement Rubric and Guide, so there are now rubrics for each tier of PBIS! Available at <http://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/pbis/>



The FCE Network PBIS Work Group partnered with Ryan Max at Ohio's Statewide Family Engagement Center to develop "Family Engagement within Trauma-Informed Schools" Toolkits for Elementary and Middle/High Schools. Electronic copies are available upon request from OhSFEC@osu.edu

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We have some new faces in the Network this year from Regions 2, 9, 12, and 15. Of course, this also means that we had 4 members retire or switch roles. We wish you well Darren Conley, Mary Lynne Offredo, Traci Pavlik Mitchell, and Lynn Counts!

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE NETWORK



Ohio Coalition for the Education
of Children with Disabilities

Lau Resource Center
for English Learners

Ohio's Head Start
Collaboration Office

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