*\*\*Note: This is an example redesign generated by a literacy coach in Ohio in 2022.*

**Redesign for Family Engagement**

**Family engagement is not one-size-fits-all. Rather, with more choices, supports and flexibility, more families will be able to support their school-age child’s learning at home.**

Here are the **BIG universal design ideas** to consider:

1. Highlight the relevance for families. How will this be enjoyable? Interesting? Important for the child or family?
2. Present information and opportunities to families in different ways that address challenges.
3. Provide multiple ways that families can choose to be engaged in a way that fits their family.

**Choose a current school strategy/activity for engaging families. Describe it.**

**Name of the activity: \_\_\_Dr. Seuss Literacy Night \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**When:** March 5, 2022, 5:00 - 7:00 PM

**Where:** School cafeteria/auditorium

**How:** Flyers were sent home in English and posted outside of school. All-call phone reminder the week of the event.

**Who:** Students and families, teachers and staff, local librarian - preschool through 3rd grades invited

**What:** Short hands-on activities that relate to specific Dr. Seuss books were set up around the room. Children completed activities while parents observed. Teachers and staff members were stationed at tables to support students doing the activities. Activities included gluing, coloring, and making various crafts that students took home. Dr. Seuss characters in costume mingled in the crowd. Each family received a book. Items were raffled off and each family received a ticket.

**Questions:**

1. **What is the ideal goal of the activity for the student?**
* Improved Phonological Awareness skills
	+ Measure of student skill development
* Enjoyment and love for reading at school and home
	+ Students and families report on a simple survey about how much they enjoy reading, what they enjoy reading, and/or what they do not enjoy about reading.
1. **What is the ideal goal of the activity for the family?**
* Understand Phonological Awareness in ordinary terms, and importance of Phonological Awareness skills for their child’s reading skill development.
* Empowered and equipped to support Phonological Awareness activities in the home.
* Families will feel comfortable with ways of talking with their child or interacting with them to encourage their child’s Phonological Awareness.
1. **Who would not have access to the current activity? What barriers exist?**
* Families may have other commitments that evening that are higher in priority than the Dr. Seuss night.
* Families that speak languages other than English may not understand the invitation, or may not be interested in attending because in the past there was no interpretation.
* Some parents might not be able to attend due to work commitments
* Others might live far from the school, have other family members to care for, or other commitments.
* Negative interactions with the school, or times when the events seemed unimportant for their child, may make attending the event seem of low importance.
* Some families may feel unsure about what the school is doing to help their child learn to read, or what supports their child needs.
* This time of evening might be the “riskiest” in terms of their child’s behavior in public.

**Redesign it!**

**Thinking creatively, how can we revive this activity for engaging the families of all students?**

1. **What different options do we have to eliminate the barriers for families?**
	* Ensure that the activities of the event will directly impact the goal for students and families.
	* Instead of or in addition to the literacy night, create videos of teachers talking in common terms about phonological awareness and demonstrating what families can do. Make videos available on school websites and promote on social media. Make videos in the home languages of families.
	* Ensure cultural brokers and Family Liaisons invite and connect with families at the event.
	* Build in intentional actions that will welcome families and set them at ease. How will families be active and speaking and connecting vs. quiet, isolated audiences?
	* Ensure invitations to families are shared in multiple ways and times, and convey the benefit for children and families.
	* Tap into the pride that families have for their children – talk to them informally at the event whenever possible!
	* Given a number of families reaching out with concerns about dyslexia, advertise that there will be a specific table with ideas for supporting students with dyslexia. Invite a community dyslexia expert if needed.
	* Have teachers call and/or text specific families with invitations to come.
	* Invite families to send photos or comments on a social media or communication platform about how they read with their child at home, or how they used the ideas in the videos.
	* Offer the event on two different times of day or days of the week - or a different location than the school (like the library or a local place of worship, where you will be likely to reach families with young children not even in the K-12 system yet).
	* Livestream the event.
	* Summarize the main points made during the event and share in print with families in their home languages.
2. **What are some other opportunities we can provide to get to the same goal? What are other ways we can communicate about this goal with families?**
	* Tell families early in the school year about phonological awareness (in ordinary terms), what it looks like, why it’s important, and what you will be doing at school. Share an example of a home-based activity.
	* Take the same number of hours you would have spent planning and executing this big event and instead reallocate all of that staff time to improving communications with families about how children learn to read, how the school is working with their child, and what they can do at home that is fun and easy and can become part of a family routine.
	* Give families an easy way to understand how their child is progressing compared to the grade level benchmarks, compared to classmates, and compared to their own skills. Give them praise about their child and a specific idea about where their child needs support.
	* Have regular communication with families about how their child is progressing. More often with families of children who need extra or different instructional supports.
	* Create a calendar of family-friendly activities that promote phonological awareness. Encourage families to complete as many as they can.
	* Create excitement with fun challenges or encouragement for children and families to practice together in family-friendly ways.
	* Celebrate with families when their children make progress.
	* Use Growth Mindset language when talking with families about when their child is struggling.
3. Why should this matter to families? How can we communicate the relevance with them?
	* Provide a clear, positive message about learning to read and the importance of phonological awareness.
	* Let families know that many children struggle with learning to read and that you will be checking each child’s progress and providing them with the supports they need.
	* Ensure families that every child can learn to read with the right instruction.
	* Give families an easy, welcoming way to ask questions, ask for help, or to check with you when they are concerned. Follow through.
4. How many different ways are there for families to respond in support of this goal?
	* Families can:
		1. Attend event
		2. Watch videos
		3. Watch live stream
		4. Engage in any literacy-building activities with child at home in their home language (singing, reading, telling stories, playing anything with child, talking during mealtimes, talking positively about school and learning, make sure child is prepared for learning each day)
		5. Do suggested activities with child at home
		6. Post photos and comments to the social media/shared platform
		7. Text, call or write to teacher with questions/concerns
		8. Read summary of event
		9. etc…