



Group for Optimizing Leadership in Delivering Services

# Family Involvement



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## DEFINITION

Parents and family/caregivers' involvement as active team members alongside various service providers

Entails family taking a coordinator or facilitator role in their child's health and development

This principle is one of the 10 evidence-based principles, identified in a scoping review, that can guide the organization and delivery of services for students with disabilities in integrated classrooms.

## Examples

HealthyCHILD model: Working with parents as integral members of the team and as central collaborators to provide at-home services for children with developmental delays, chronic conditions or challenging behaviours (Bagnato et al., 2004)

Head Smart Trauma Start: Mentoring parents of children who experience trauma in disadvantaged areas to create a trauma-informed culture in the pre-school setting and to promote family involvement in a child's development (Holmes et al., 2015)

LEAP preschool model: Extensive skills training for family members of preschool children with autism to facilitate parents' management and involvement in their child's behaviours (Strain et al., 2011)

Transdisciplinary approach: Allowing the needs of the child and family to dictate the team's goals and having parents take case-manager roles to facilitate educational programs of students with complex disabilities (Koskie & Freeze, 2000)

## Evidence & Outcome

In combination with other principles, involving families:

Improved students' attention and behaviour as rated by teachers and parents; as well as promoted positive classroom relationships as perceived by parents (Holmes et al., 2015)

Was associated with a significant improvement on measures of cognitive, language, social, and problem behavior, and autism symptoms among pre-schoolers (Strain et al., 2011)

Ongoing communication between parents and the health and school systems facilitated return to school for students following a traumatic brain injury (Gioia, 2014)

Intensive family support to parents of pre-school to third grade students is recommended to support successful transition for students in disadvantaged areas (Reynolds et al., 2009)

## Application Ideas

Empowering parents through skills training and information sessions

Encouraging parents to take an active role in decision-making

Family overseeing service provision and providing feedback to teachers or other professionals working with students

Parents/caregivers taking part in team meetings to consult and discuss intervention plans with teachers and professionals