

Engaging Parents

Ideas for Teachers



Building Knowledge

What is parent* engagement?

Engaging parents is an active process designed to bring parents and their child's learning and wellbeing closer together.

What can I do to encourage parent engagement?

1. Articulate clearly and early to parents what engaging in their child's learning and wellbeing means. (see 'Engaging Parents: What we Know' snapshot for more information)
2. Share from research the benefits of parent engagement for children's school and life success. (see *Engaging Parents: What We Know* snapshot for more information)
3. Establish regular times and spaces to dialogue cogeneratively with colleagues about engaging parents in the curriculum
4. Network with parents to find out more about them, what they know and can do, and use this knowledge as inspiration for inquiry projects
5. Lead by example, sharing your personal stories so parents come to appreciate the power of personal connections in their child's learning
6. Build knowledge about curriculum inquiry projects and their associated pedagogies so there is a genuine opportunity for student agency and parent engagement.

Inquiring with Parents

What does that mean?

Recognise the power and value of inquiry curriculum approaches for not only engaging students in their learning, but also engaging parents in their child's learning.

How do I do that?

1. Understand the potential of each phase of an inquiry process (planning, teaching, reflecting) for new and different opportunities to engage parents, which may require new pedagogies and practices

2. Recognise teachers as facilitators of knowledge (rather than the fount of knowledge) and allow parents to play new and different roles such as co-teachers in the classroom
3. Choose topics that will interest parents and allow them to contribute authentically. Appreciate that parents will gravitate to topics where they can value-add, and as their other commitments allow.
4. Invite parents into classrooms or virtual spaces to expand the audience with whom students connect about their learning.

Connecting and Communicating

Is there an ideal way to connect with parents?

Consider ways to engage parents that are short in duration, sharp in focus, offered regularly, always optional, and personal to them and their child's learning.

What are some suggestions?

1. Communicate with parents and families in ways they use and value, e.g., a vlog created by students for parents
2. Let parents know what their child is learning at the beginning of each week and *close the loop* by letting them know at the end of the week about their child's learning successes and next steps
3. Create virtual spaces for engaging parents in classroom topics and phases of inquiry curriculum at times that suit them
4. Harness the power of student agency for engaging parents, e.g., have students create a video about their learning, and email it to parents
5. Respond quickly and directly to requests from parents for clarity and/or explanation about aspects of their child's learning and wellbeing.

These initial snapshots of ideas for schools come from the research project, *Engaging parents in student learning and wellbeing: Using inquiry curriculum and online technologies during COVID-19* (EPIC, 2021) conducted by Linda-Dianne Willis, Beryl Exley, and Narelle Daffurn from Griffith University in collaboration with ISQ and QIS Parents Network.

*We describe *parents* generally to include carers and families and broadly to include communities with the responsibility and care for a student's learning and wellbeing.

REFERENCE

Willis, L.-D., Exley, B., & Daffurn, N. with Independent Schools Queensland and Queensland Independent Schools Parents Network. (2021). *Engaging parents in student learning and wellbeing: Using inquiry curriculum and online technologies during COVID-19*. Griffith University, ISQ, & QIS Parents Network, Brisbane, Australia.