

What's the Difference?

This question often comes up: What is the difference between parent education, parent/family engagement, and parent leadership?

All three are important, but they have different goals, functions and outcomes. Ideally a community would offer all three. Many programs and initiatives do some of each.

Type of Initiative	Goals	Examples of Strategies	Desired Outcomes
Parent Education	Parents informed about how to support children's learning and development at home .	Home visiting or center-based programs, staffed by people from the same community as the families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten readiness and reading proficiency • ID and treatment of learning delays • Strengthened home learning environment • Improved parenting
Parent/Family and Community Engagement	Parents/families as partners with schools in improving student outcomes at the school . Community resources to offer additional resources and learning time for students and families.	Home visiting to build teacher-parent collaboration; Class meetings and observation to share teaching-learning strategies; Community walks to connect school staff to neighborhood; School governance council with power over hiring and budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student achievement (grades, scores, higher-level classes, graduation rates) • Increased teacher cultural competence • Higher teacher morale and retention • Improved school climate and safety • Increased resources and services for students and families
Parent Leadership Development	Parents equipped with knowledge, skills and contacts to interact with purpose in civil society to improve child and community outcomes.	Professional development through training or structured experiences; projects designed and undertaken to make change; meetings with public officials and policy makers; children observe and learn skills, too.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents as civic leaders and change agents • Bridging of social and cultural divisions • Recognition of parents as valuable contributors to community • More equitable distribution of resources • More access and quality in programs for children