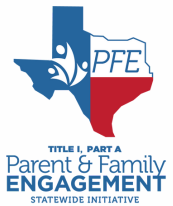




The Family Learning Connection

Uniting Families,
Educators, & the
Community



Local Family Traditions

In our recent [family survey](#), Yadira shared fun activities her family of four enjoys. One daily tradition is to discuss how each family member's day was as well as plans for the next day while they all gather around the dinner table.

Furthermore, their weekends are filled with more bonding through experiences such as:

- visiting friends
- playing Loteria or other games
- watching and discussing sporting events on television (They are big Spurs and Astros fans.)
- travel to a local small town for fun activities or new places to eat
- attend local concerts or events.

The Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative would like to thank you for sharing your family traditions with us and our readers, Yadira. If anyone else would like to share, we would love to hear from you. You can fill out our family survey on our website at: www.r16.us/pfenewsletter.



BENEFITS OF PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parent and family engagement in schools has a lot of benefits. Some are mentioned on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. A few mentioned are:

- Better student behavior
- Higher academic achievement
- Enhanced social skills
- Avoidance of unhealthy behaviors (such as sexual risk behaviors and substance abuse)

For more information, visit <https://shorturl.at/jF458>.



BENEFITS

TEEN BREAKUPS

As summer arrives, the sting of teen breakups becomes all too common. Adults often forget just how much the sting of these early breakups cause. Teens facing the aftermath of a breakup are at heightened risks of depression and even thoughts of self-harm. Unfortunately, many choose to suffer in silence, confiding in peers and social media rather than the adults in their lives. Yet, as a parent or guardian, you have the power to offer support. Here are some invaluable tips:

- **Listen with Empathy:** Resist the urge to offer solutions or give advice based on your experiences. Instead, focus entirely on your teen's feelings. Validate their pain and reassure them that it's natural to hurt. Above all, convey that they are not alone in their struggle.
- **Facilitate Time with Friends:** Understand that friends play a unique role in providing comfort you cannot. Encourage your teen to spend time with supportive peers who can lift their spirits and offer companionship during this difficult period.
- **Promote Engagement in Enjoyable Activities:** Offer distractions from thoughts of their ex by engaging in enjoyable activities together. Whether it's playing sports, visiting a local amusement park, or trying out an escape room, the key is to redirect their focus and provide opportunities for joy.
- **Monitor for Signs of Depression:** Watch closely for potential signs of depression, such as social withdrawal or changes in eating and sleeping patterns. If you notice concerning behaviors, don't hesitate to reach out to a healthcare professional for guidance and support.
- **Address Concerns of Self-Harm Directly:** If you suspect your teen may be experiencing thoughts of self-harm, address the topic openly and without judgment. Simply asking, "Are you having thoughts of harming yourself?" can open the door for communication and reassure them of your complete support.

By offering compassionate understanding and practical support, you can help your teen navigate the rough waters of a breakup with resilience and strength.

HOW TO ENHANCE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Enhancing family relationships involves communication, understanding, empathy, and quality time together. Here are several strategies to help strengthen family bonds:

- **Effective Communication:** Create a safe space where each member feels comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns openly and honestly.
- **Quality Time Together:** Spend time together as a family regularly. This can include shared meals, family outings, game nights, or other activities everyone enjoys. Also, create traditions and rituals.
- **Active Listening:** Show genuine interest in what family members have to say and validate their feelings.
- **Empathy and Understanding:** Foster empathy and understanding among family members by putting yourself in each other's shoes and considering their perspectives and emotions.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Respect each other's boundaries and personal space. Understand that everyone needs alone time and privacy.
- **Resolve Conflicts Constructively:** Conflict is natural in any relationship. Teach family members conflict resolution skills, such as staying calm, actively listening, finding common ground, and seeking solutions together.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Foster a positive and supportive family environment by acknowledging and celebrating each other's achievements, milestones, and successes.
- **Support Each Other:** Always offer support to family members.
- **Forgiveness and Letting Go:** Practice forgiveness and let go of past grievances.
- **Express Love and Gratitude:** Express love and gratitude toward each other regularly. Simple gestures like saying, "I love you," giving hugs, or writing notes of appreciation can strengthen family bonds.
- **Work on Individual Growth:** Encourage individual growth and development within the family. Support each other's goals and aspirations, and provide encouragement during times of challenge or self-improvement.

By implementing these strategies consistently, families can cultivate stronger relationships, deepen connections, and create a supportive and loving environment for everyone involved.

SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS HELP TEXAS CHILDREN STAY HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

When school cafeterias close for summer, Texas families still have access to no-cost meals. Children 18 and younger and enrolled students with disabilities up to age 21 in low-income areas can eat healthy meals funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer Meal Programs. The Texas Department of Agriculture partners with food banks, schools, and other nonprofits to make these meals available at sites across Texas.

“We are working to ensure Texas children can get healthy meals even during the summer,” said Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller. “I encourage Texas families to use the available tools to find a meal site. When children have an active summer complete with good nutrition, they return to school in the fall ready to learn and succeed in the classroom.”

Sites serving summer meals start opening around June 1. To find the nearest site, families have the following three options:

- Dial 211 to speak to a live operator
- Visit www.SummerFood.org for an interactive site locator map
- Text FOOD to 304-304

In addition to finding a site, it is important for families to use these tools frequently to confirm dates and times and get more information about how meals will be served. Families are encouraged to call, text, or go online to connect with meal sites from **June 1-August 30** to access healthy meals for young Texans.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

PREVENT SUMMER SLIDE

As summer approaches, it's essential for parents of school-age children to implement strategies to prevent the "summer slide," the decline in academic skills that can occur during the break.

Encouraging regular reading habits through visits to the library, engaging in educational activities such as puzzles or educational games, and enrolling children in summer programs or camps that emphasize learning can all help maintain skills gained during the school year. Additionally, incorporating educational outings to museums, historical sites, or nature preserves can keep young minds stimulated and engaged. By fostering a balance of structured learning and fun activities, parents can ensure their children remain academically sharp throughout the summer months, setting them up for success when they return to school in the fall.



EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS

When kids move from one school building to another, like going from elementary to middle school, parents are super important when it comes to getting their kids used to the changes and do well. Here's how:

1. Elementary to Intermediate School: Parents can help by teaching their kids to organize their stuff and manage their time. They can also encourage them to try new things like joining clubs or activities.
2. Intermediate School to Junior High: Parents should talk with their kids about any worries they have and give them lots of support. Getting involved in clubs or sports can help them make friends and feel more confident.
3. Junior High to High School: Parents can help their kids pick the right classes and talk about what they want to achieve in school. They should also encourage their kids to speak up for themselves.

By talking openly and giving advice, parents can help their kids go through these changes feeling strong and ready.



2024 PFE STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

MAKE YOUR MARK

Each year, the Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative hosts a conference for parents as well as educators. Speak with your district about how Title I, Part A and/or ESSER III funds can be used to send parents. The 2024 PFE Statewide Conference will be held in Houston, Texas on October 16-18, 2024.

The Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative is collecting data to help improve our newsletter. We would greatly appreciate your feedback. Please scan the QR code to take a 30 second survey.



https://esc16.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8w7Wmq83oaFVYdU

**HELP US IMPROVE
OUR NEWSLETTER**

Complete the survey to be entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift card!

Gift card not purchased with Federal Funds.

The Family Learning Connection is posted on our website four times a year for parents and educators of Texas. This newsletter is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, German, Tagalog, and Korean as well as other languages via our SMORE account, PFE Texas.



TITLE I, PART A
Parent & Family
ENGAGEMENT
STATEWIDE INITIATIVE

Title I, Part A Statewide Parent and Family Engagement Initiative
1601 S. Cleveland Street
Amarillo, Tx 79102
Telephone: (806)677-5188
tlpfe@esc16.net

The bibliography for this newsletter can be found on the PFE Texas Smore account.
<https://www.smores.com/u/texaspfe>

The views expressed are not necessarily those of Region 16 Education Service Center, the Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative, or the Texas Education Agency. All individual or corporate views are solely those of the individual or corporation.