

Preparing Colorado Educators to Partner with Families in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

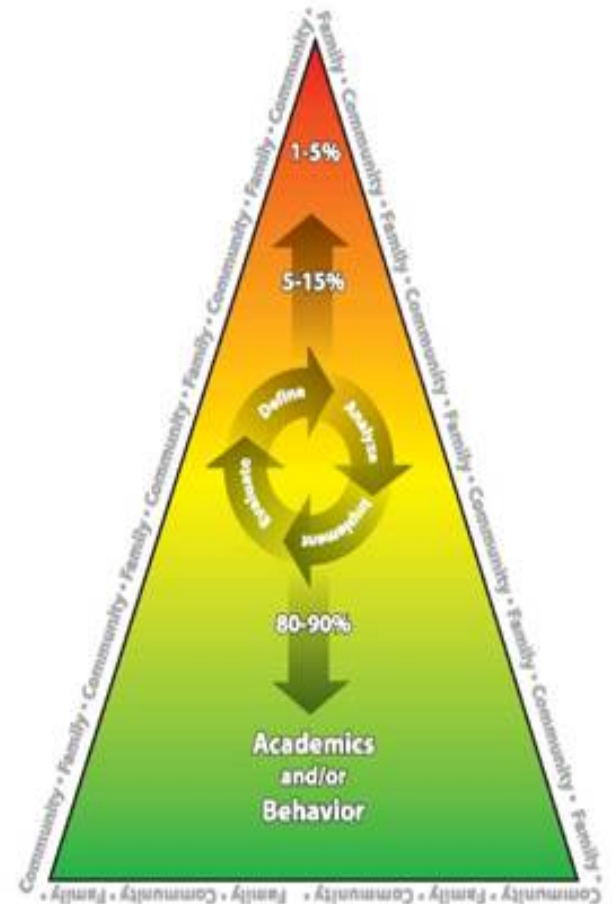
16th International Roundtable on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
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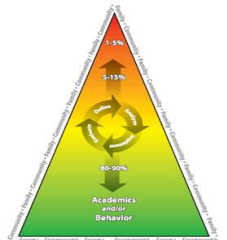
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Study Rationale and Context

- Critical paradigm shift from a traditional focus on family involvement to intentional, strategic family-school partnering focused on student learning.
- Limited information about the preparation of future educators to effectively partner with families in improving student achievement.
- Many “belief to practice”, “research to practice”, and “law to practice” gaps identified.
- Tiered educational reform initiatives (i.e., RtI + PBIS = MTSS) highlight the importance of family participation throughout all tiers, with specific roles and responsibilities for each partner.

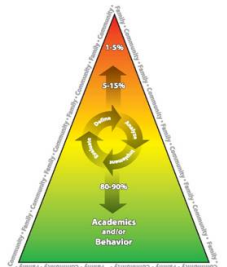
(Christenson & Reschly, 2010; Colorado Department of Education, 2009; Epstein, Sanders, & Clark, 1999; Lines, Miler, & Arthur-Stanley, 2011)



Study Description

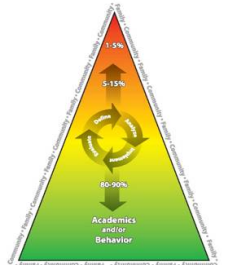
- Focused on one component of a Colorado State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), Objective 5.5: *Train future professionals on the importance of involving families in MTSS implementation.*
- In Phase 1, a literature review and an online appraisal was conducted of current CO educator licensing requirements, resources on family partnering, and pre-service college course offerings.
- In Phase 2, a survey was developed to assess current educator preparation practices and preferences related to family-school partnering at CO Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs).
- The survey was electronically distributed to identified IHE program leaders who were asked to respond and distribute to respective faculty.
- Follow-up occurred after one month by email and phone.

(Colorado Department of Education, 2011)



Colorado MTSS Family and Community Partnering Definition

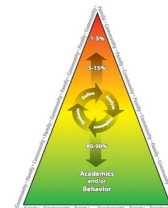
- *Family and Community Partnering* is the collaboration of families, schools, and communities as equal partners in improving learner, classroom, school, and district outcomes.
- In effective partnering, each stakeholder shares responsibility for learners' success by:
 - (a) establishing and sustaining trusting relationships;
 - (b) understanding and integrating family and school culture;
 - (c) maintaining reciprocal communication;
 - (d) engaging in collaborative problem-solving;
 - (e) coordinating learning at home, school, and in the community;
 - (g) acknowledging and celebrating progress.



Survey Results: Objective #1

To determine the current status and identified course offerings designed to prepare future educators to partner with families.

- The vast majority of respondents indicated that family-school partnering topics were infused (70%) versus taught as a standalone course (17%), with one person reporting both (3%), and 10% reporting not teaching the topic.
- The three most frequently cited topics (79-93%) were broad-based, general aspects of family-school partnering: *building relationships*, *creating welcoming environments*, and *working with culturally and linguistically diverse families*.
- The three least frequently cited topics (14-28%) were those most related to specific academic and social, emotional, and behavioral coordinated learning between home and school: *designing effective and interactive homework*, *home-school academic strategies*, and *home-school behavior strategies*.



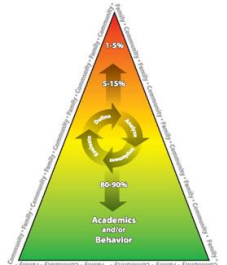
Reported CO IHE Course Content Offerings

Most Frequent	Least Frequent
1. Building relationships with families (93%)	1. Designing effective and interactive homework with families (14%)
2. Creating welcoming environments for families (80%)	2. Home-school academic strategies (reading, math, writing) (28%)
3. Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families (79%)	3. Home-school behavior strategies (organization, work completion, school attendance) (28%)
4. Research supporting the impact on academic outcomes (66%)	4. Including families in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) (28%)
5. Research supporting the impact on social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes (66%)	5. Effective homework and home-school strategies (38%)

Survey Results: Objective #2

To assess higher education faculty views, professional interests, and perceived information needs regarding educator preparation in family-school partnering.

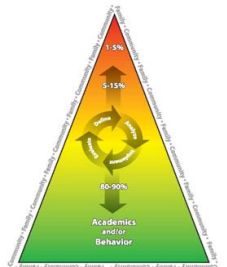
- Most faculty (over 80%) reported familiarity with current research and believed their students would feel “somewhat” or “very” prepared.
- Slightly over a third of the respondents (38%) reported having training in their own graduate work; more special education and related service faculty indicated this than general educators or administrators.
- There was an almost even division between those who thought a standalone course was “very” or “somewhat important” (49%) and those who indicated that it was “a little” or “not at all important” (51%).



Survey Results: Objective #3

To identify preferred content and venues to deliver family-school partnering resources that can be used to guide future CDE professional development efforts.

- Over 40% of the respondents indicated they would like more information on all 20 of the listed research-based family-school partnering topics.
- The three types of venues identified as most helpful for developing future FSP courses were:
 - Websites (80%)
 - Webinars (69%)
 - Information at Meetings or Conferences (62%)



Most Requested Topics by CO IHE Faculty

Topic	Percentage of Faculty
• Research supporting impact on academic outcomes	80%
• Research supporting the impact of on social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes	68%
• Including families in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	64%
• Home-school behavioral strategies (organization, work completion, school attendance)	60%
• Home-school academic strategies (reading, math, writing)	56%
• Including families in Response to Intervention (RtI)	56%
• Effective homework and home-school support strategies	56%
• Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families	56%

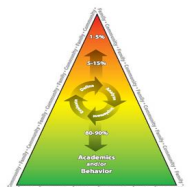
Overall Recommendations

Short-Term

- Provide every Colorado IHE educator preparation program with results and a brief annotated resource list.
- Create an easily accessed website with sample syllabi & organized and annotated resources related to most requested topics.
- Invite IHE faculty to participate in state professional development opportunities on family-school partnering tied to current state educational reforms.

Long-Term

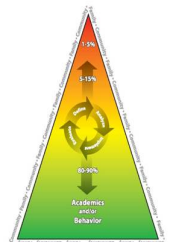
- Create a state-wide interest group or community of practice of IHE faculty to explore sustainable practices for institutions such as linking coursework, developing feedback loops.
- Develop a webinar (or series) focused on family-school partnering.
- Share results and a standard set of resources with various existing councils, legislative bodies, and professional organizations.



Future Implications

- It is important to identify an essential family-school partnering curriculum that can be infused into existing IHEs' coursework to ensure every future educator has appropriate exposure and practice.
- It is important to encourage cross discipline course content integration and faculty collaboration.
- It is necessary to align IHE programmatic content and coursework with education reform initiatives and legal requirements to train effective, partnering future educators.
- It is essential to create a strategic, intentional information network between Colorado educator preparation programs and to more purposefully share resources and current research with a focus on improving student outcomes.

(Caspe, Lopez, Chu, & Weiss, 2011)



References

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