

Equitable Family Engagement Fidelity Tool (EFE-FT)

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the EFE-FT is to provide a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of the extent to which schools are implementing effective family engagement practices. The EFE-FT is comprised of four subscales, which are intended to be used in combination to guide schools as they assess and strengthen their approach.

The EFE-FT is based on a prominent theoretical approach which conceptualizes actions to increase family engagement into four core dimensions: access to information, leadership or governance, active participation, and home-based application (adapted from Barger et al., 2019). Additionally, the tool has been developed to promote the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) Family Engagement Core Competencies (2022).

The practices included in this tool are school-based actions intended to (a) increase opportunities for family engagement and leadership and (b) strengthen home-school partnerships. Schools and families both bring important skills to a shared mission by promoting culturally responsive practices linked to the local context.

The EFE-FT has been designed to be used in tandem with the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI 3.0)¹ to increase the breadth of some items (e.g., 1.1 Team Composition, 2.11 Family and Community Engagement, 3.11 Family and Community Engagement). While still purposeful for use as a stand-alone tool, it is important to note that the depth of some EFE-FT items may be reduced if used in isolation.

Guidelines for Use

The EFE-FT is designed to be completed by a school leadership team, composed of at least 3-6 individuals who are familiar with school operations, have access to school-level data, and contribute to the school's professional learning plan. The school leadership team may be known as a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS), Systems Planning, or other similarly focused team.

The tool should be completed at least annually as a group, with consensus reached for each item. Criteria for scoring are based on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 0 = no actions toward implementation have begun and 4 = the practice is fully in place and has been operational for at least 12 months.

Readiness Activities

To strengthen the usefulness of the tool and increase the potential for sustainability, we recommend that school teams consider the following readiness activities:

- Identify equitable family engagement as a priority (e.g., include in school mission statement; link to school/district goals; include in communications about PBIS).
- Garner support from building administration (if an administrator is not currently a member of the school-based team) and allocate resources (i.e., personnel, time) to ensure sustainability.
- Gather and disaggregate data to have a clear picture of local context and identify historically underserved student and family subgroups (e.g., disability status, military connectedness, race/ethnicity).
- Add completion of the EFE-FT to the annual data collection calendar to assess progress towards implementation and guide implementation efforts.

¹ Center on PBIS. (February 2025). Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) Manual. University of Oregon. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/tfi-3>

*Note: This tool is in the process of being validated. Please check the [Project Website](#) for additional information

Glossary of Terms

Family: a student’s out-of-school support system which may include individuals related by birth, marriage, adoption, or cohabitation.

Family/Student subgroups: groups of students that are present in the school’s population data or groups of families that are representative of the specific school community (e.g., grade, race/ethnicity, disability, military connected families, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+, foster care status).

Representation: the explicit voice, presence, or contribution from an individual who is a member of an identified subgroup.

Equitable: describes an approach where each and every individual has an equal opportunity to access, co-develop, and benefit from the interaction with materials, environments, and/or experiences despite systemic or individual barriers.

Training: opportunities to increase knowledge and/or leadership capacity that use high quality instructional features including modeling, access to examples, authentic application, and differentiation.

Priority item: based on scores and team discussion, effort towards this action will be prioritized in the next data collection phase.

Directions

Self-assess the degree to which each action has been implemented using the following score criteria. Calculate the score for each subscale and use these totals to calculate a total implementation fidelity percentage.

0	1	2	3	4
Implementation actions have not yet been taken.	Some initial steps towards implementation have begun (e.g., needs assessment, information gathering, review of models, identification of required resources).	The action item is somewhat implemented, either: a. Some criteria are in place, -or- b. Most criteria are in place and have been for 1-4 months.	The action item is mostly implemented, either: a. Most criteria are in place for at least 4 months, -or- b. All criteria are in place and have been for 1-4 months.	The action is fully implemented and has been for a period of at least 12 months.

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Domain 1 Governance

The equitable opportunity to be involved in school-based decision making.

Action Item	Criteria for Full Implementation	Score	Priority Item?
<p>G.1 The team gathers information from families.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More than one method is used to gather information from families (e.g., surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings); and <input type="checkbox"/> the type of information includes perspectives, preferences, and needs; and <input type="checkbox"/> content includes home-school communication, resource allocation, climate, barriers to engagement; and <input type="checkbox"/> information is analyzed and disseminated to the school community and relevant partners. 		
<p>G.2 The team includes family members. *</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school leadership team (e.g., PBIS/MTSS Tier 1 team) includes at least two family members; and <input type="checkbox"/> the members are representative of the school community, including historically underserved and/or under-represented groups; and <input type="checkbox"/> all parties receive explicit training about the improvement framework (e.g., PBIS/MTSS) and their contributions to the team. 		
<p>G.3 Schools involve families in schoolwide (e.g., tier 1) planning. **</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School leadership teams provide families structured opportunities to share perspectives and feedback on specific school-wide programming and policies (e.g., school-wide expectations, acknowledgement); and <input type="checkbox"/> feedback is gathered during initial development and ongoing implementation; (i.e., at least annually); and <input type="checkbox"/> co-development opportunities and family input shape decision-making. 		
<p>G.4 Classroom educators collaborate effectively with families. ***</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Educators offer on-going opportunities for families to engage in two-way dialogue (using the expressed preferences of families) to share information particular to their child; and <input type="checkbox"/> develop a shared vision for student success; and <input type="checkbox"/> co-develop an initial response plan to academic or behavioral concerns (when necessary); and <input type="checkbox"/> a review of sample response plans and fidelity data indicate that methods are used consistently (i.e., in 4 out of 5 samples, or in at least 80% of instances reviewed). 		

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<p>G.5 School teams use data to action plan and write family engagement goals annually.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teams assess the school's use of family engagement practices (i.e., fidelity); and <input type="checkbox"/> collect and review data from multiple sources related to perception, engagement, and impact of family engagement practices (e.g., climate, feedback and input surveys, focus groups, attendance at school-based events, participation on leadership teams and advisory boards); and <input type="checkbox"/> identify priority items to establish goals; and <input type="checkbox"/> share this information with families in accessible formats aligned with expressed preference(s). 		
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*Expands on TFI 3.0 Item 1.1 Team Composition to highlight representation and explicit training.
 **Expands TFI 3.0 item 1.16 Family and Community Engagement to include co-development during initial development and ongoing implementation.
 ***Expands on TFI 3.0 item 2.3 Screening to include co-development of response actions.

Access to Information

Equitable opportunities to engage with school-based information including asking questions.

Action Item	Criteria for Full Implementation	Score	Priority Item?
<p>I.1 Schools communicate effectively with families.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication is in a format that matches the expressed preferences of families (e.g., email, text, communication app.); and <input type="checkbox"/> is accessible (i.e., includes translation services or is available in multiple languages; includes accommodations for individuals with disabilities; written at an appropriate reading level); and <input type="checkbox"/> allows and encourages two-way dialogue (e.g., email or phone number for questions); and <input type="checkbox"/> a review of a sample indicates that methods are used consistently (e.g., in 4 out of 5 samples or in at least 80% of instances). 		
<p>I.2 The school provides training opportunities for families.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school provides various opportunities for families (e.g., training presentations, pamphlets, website, booth at a school event) to increase understanding of the school's support framework (e.g., PBIS/MTSS); and <input type="checkbox"/> tier 2 programming (e.g., academic or behavioral interventions; MTSS; RTI) for families of students participating in tier 2; and <input type="checkbox"/> tier 3 programming (e.g., functional behavior analysis, wrap-around services, special education) for families of students participating in tier 3; and <input type="checkbox"/> provides training to build leadership capacity, empowerment, and advocacy. 		

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<p>I.3 The school provides training opportunities for educators.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The school provides training opportunities (at least 2 each academic year) for educators to strengthen their understanding of family engagement practices; and <input type="checkbox"/> strengthen their implementation of practices; and <input type="checkbox"/> provides an opportunity to give feedback and shape family engagement practices and priority items. 		
<p>I.4 An onboarding system is in place for new families and educators.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A system exists for welcoming/acclimating families who are new to the school within 1 month of enrollment; and <input type="checkbox"/> includes access to previously shared information, opportunities to complete surveys, access to training content, and access to resources; and <input type="checkbox"/> a system exists for sharing family engagement plan and practices with educators who are new to the school within 1 month of hiring. 		

Active Participation

Equitable opportunities to contribute to school-based functions and responsiveness to school efforts.

Action Item	Criteria for Full Implementation	Score	Priority Item?
<p>P.1 Familial voice is representative of the school community.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schools examine responsiveness data when family perspective and feedback is solicited to determine response rate and representation across family groups (e.g., grade, race/ethnicity, disability, military connected families, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+, foster care status); and <input type="checkbox"/> document and take strategic action to increase response rate and representation for underrepresented groups; and <input type="checkbox"/> the team regularly engages in information sharing with other school-based groups where families serve (e.g., advisory boards, parent-teacher organizations, curriculum committees). 		
<p>P.2 Events and opportunities to engage are inclusive and accessible.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School-based events are specifically designed to be inclusive of all family groups (e.g., grade, race/ethnicity, disability, military connected families, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+, foster care status); and <input type="checkbox"/> schools examine attendance data to determine representation across family groups; and <input type="checkbox"/> document and take strategic action to increase attendance rate for underrepresented groups; and 		

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	<input type="checkbox"/> families have a variety of options for participating in school operations along a continuum of resource contribution (e.g., volunteering time, expertise, services, contributing funds or items).		
<p>P.3 School teams proactively support and efficiently respond when families need additional supports.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> A system exists to identify specific needs expressed by a demographic subgroup or individual family requiring more intensive support (e.g., housing or food insecurity, special education due process, transition for military families, access to mental health and crisis support); and <input type="checkbox"/> proactively provide targeted and/or intensive support to identified families; and <input type="checkbox"/> efficiently respond to ongoing needs; and <input type="checkbox"/> actively and regularly collaboration with parent resource centers and community partners.		

Home-Based Application

Equitable opportunities to transfer school-based practices outside of the school setting.

Action Item	Criteria for Full Implementation	Score	Priority Item?
<p>H.1 The school provides training for families about supporting students at home. *</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> The school provides families with accessible training and resources to support the implementation of schoolwide SEB initiatives at home (e.g., PBIS at home matrix, skill practice “homework”); and <input type="checkbox"/> academic skill practice and enrichment activities; and <input type="checkbox"/> home-based application of tier 2 and 3 initiatives (e.g., Check-In/Check-Out for out of school time; academic resources; functional-based support for student behavior), where appropriate.		
<p>H.2 School teams are proactive and responsive to help families support students at home.</p> <p><i>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> A system is in place for gathering information and feedback about the equitable distribution of resources related to supporting students at home (e.g., knowledge, technology); and <input type="checkbox"/> schools assess, proactively support, and efficiently respond to these needs; and <input type="checkbox"/> schools connect families to out-of-school resources (e.g., Parent Centers, community organizations, state or local resources) when needed.		

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<p>H.3 School teams foster relationship building.</p> <p>Scoring Notes/Action Planning:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The school actively facilitates opportunities for families to connect and build relationships with one another (within and across student subgroups); and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> these actions are dictated by the expressed needs of families (e.g., creation of affinity groups; logistics); and</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a system is in place for gathering information and feedback about the impact of these efforts.</p>		
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*Expands on TFI 3.0 item 2.8 Orientation and Training and 3.11 Family and Community Engagement to include home-based application.

Overall Fidelity of Implementation			
Completed by:			Completion Date:
Governance Score	Access to Information Score	Active Participation Score	Home-based Application Score
_____/20	_____/16	_____/12	_____/12
Total Score: _____/60		Percentage: _____ (Total Score x 100 /60)	

Summary/Notes: Consider areas of strength and opportunities for growth; identify resources and other discussion highlights.

Next Steps: Consider how this information will be shared, who will add priority items to the team’s action plan and establish the next administration date (if not already planned).