

August 14, 2024

Increasing Family Engagement Within Schools

To Support Refugee Students

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts





Today's Speaker



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Training Officer,
Youth & Education

Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

EXPLAIN

how the Dual Capacity-Building Framework supports the development of family engagement strategies, policies, and programs in school communities

2

DESCRIBE

culturally responsive strategies to enhance family involvement for working with newcomer students and their families

3

APPLY

practical tools and techniques to establish and maintain effective partnerships between schools and refugee families



Dual Capacity-Building Framework

Shaping Family Engagement Within Schools

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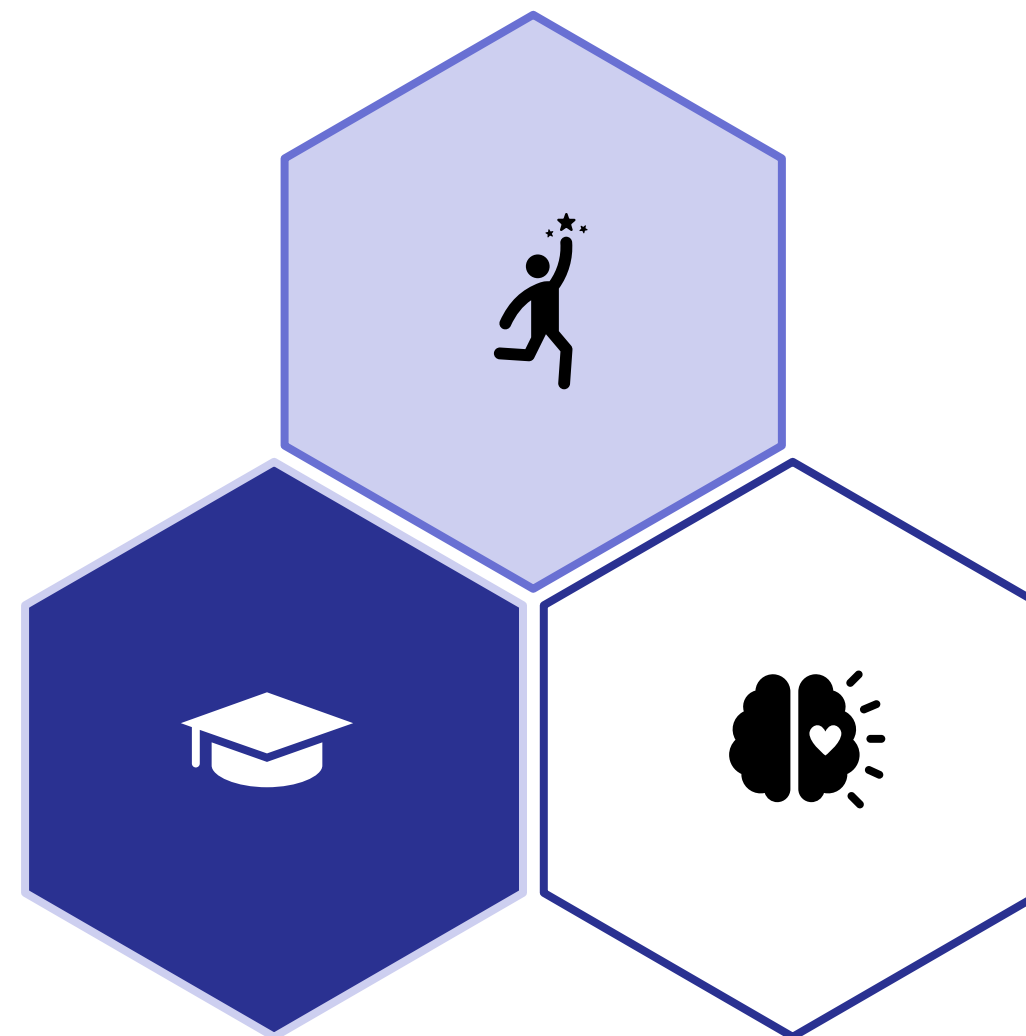
What is your definition of “family engagement”?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Guiding Beliefs of Family Engagement



Families want the best for their child



Families can help their child succeed

Families are the experts on their own child



Family's Role in Accelerated Learning

- Communicate high expectations
- Monitor their child's performance
- Support learning at home
- Guide their child's education
- Advocate for their child



Benefits of Family Engagement for Refugee Youth

- ✓ Higher literacy rates among students
- ✓ Higher test scores and academic achievement
- ✓ Higher attendance rates
- ✓ Fewer behavior problems
- ✓ Stronger social skills
- ✓ Higher likelihood of pursuing higher education
- ✓ Supportive of acculturation and integration

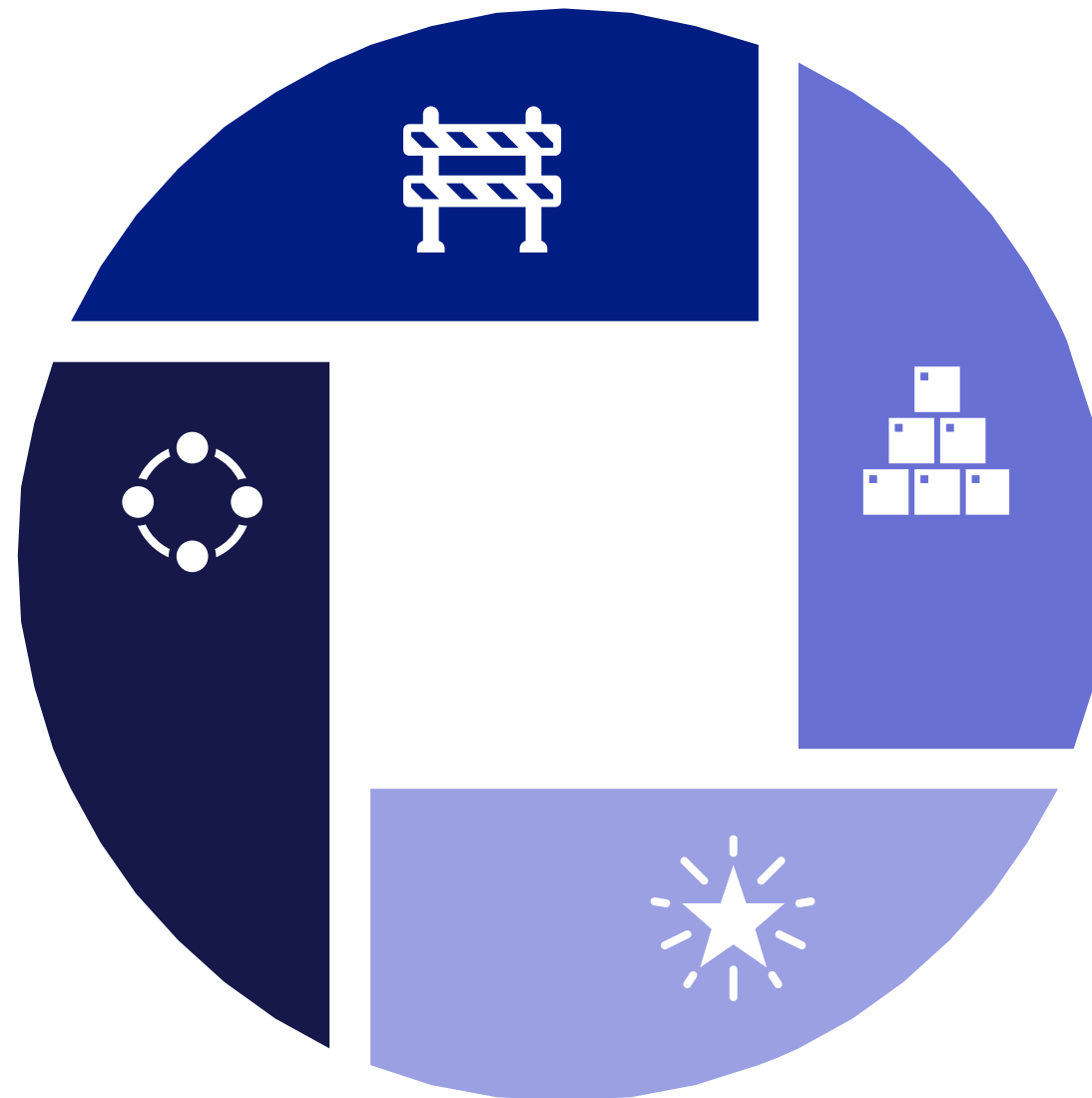


Dual Capacity Framework Model



Capacity Challenges

Addressing Barriers to Family Engagement



Essential Conditions

Process and Outcomes

Policy/Program Goals

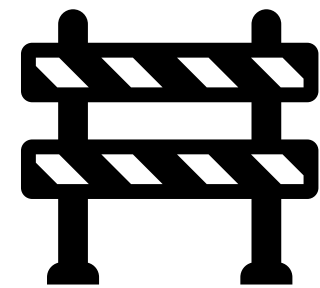
Capabilities, Connections, Confidence, and Cognition

Capacity Outcomes

Results of Effective Family Engagement



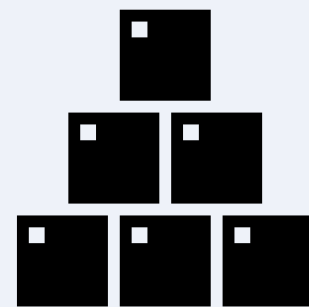
Capacity Challenges in Family Engagement



- School staff and families don't have opportunities to build the capacity for partnerships
- Educators may have minimal training on working effectively with newcomer families
- Families may not understand their role in engagement or may lack proper communication and connection with the school



Essential Conditions



Process

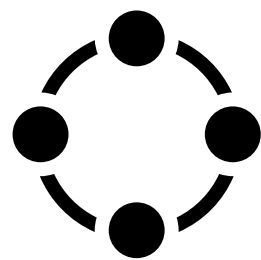
- Relational and built on trust
- Connect to student learning and development
- Asset based
- Culturally responsive
- Collaborative and interactive

Outcomes

- Systemic
- Integrated
- Sustained



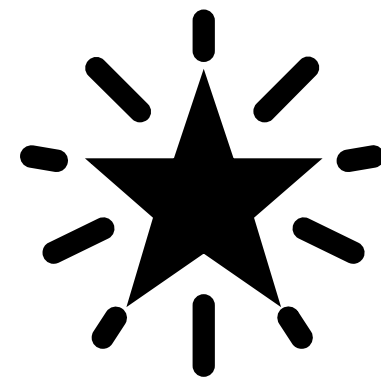
Policy and Program Goals of Family Engagement



- **Capabilities:** skills and knowledge needed for engagement
- **Connections:** building strong networks and relationships
- **Confidence:** empowering families and educators
- **Cognition:** understanding the value of family engagement



Capacity Outcomes



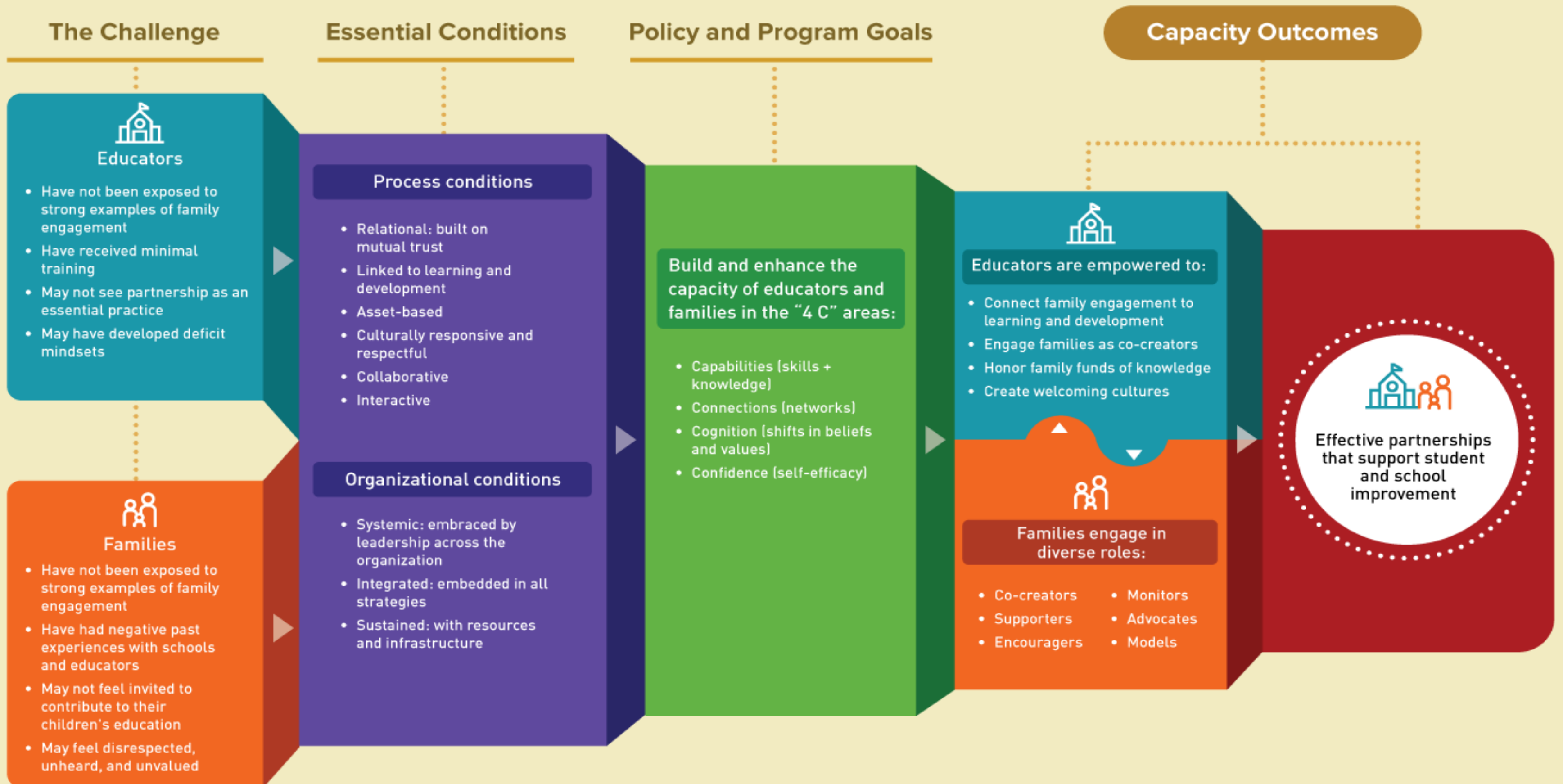
Educators will be able to

- Connect family engagement to learning and development
- Engage families as co-creators
- Honor family funds of knowledge
- Create welcoming cultures

Families will be able to engage in diverse roles as

- Co-creators
- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates
- Models

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)





2

Building Bridges with Newcomer Families

Understanding Newcomer Experiences and Cultural Humility

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In your opinion why are family engagement initiatives increasingly important when working with refugee and newcomer populations?

Core Stressors of Newcomer Students and Families



Trauma

Impact of exposure to potentially traumatic events



Resettlement

Navigating language barriers, new systems, financial stressors, etc.

Acculturative Stress

Adjustment to new cultural norms, family stressors, etc.

Isolation

Coping with loneliness, loss of social support, discrimination, etc.



Practice Cultural Humility



- Focus on the **individual**
- **Avoid making assumptions:** ask when uncertain
- Practice **active listening** and try not to come across as intimidating
- Prioritize learning and **keep an open mind**
- Establish a **personal connection** and find things in common, no matter how small
- Respect **cultural parenting practices**, unless harmful



Essentials When Working with Refugee Youth and Families

- Use **professional interpreters**
- Respect different **communication practices**
- Understand the role of **collectivism**
- **Partner** with community organizations, cultural brokers, and refugee agencies

Creating Culturally Inclusive Schools



Classroom Level

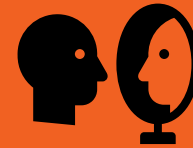
School Level

Lessons that align with student interest



Accommodate for religious and cultural traditions

Bridge between American and newcomer culture



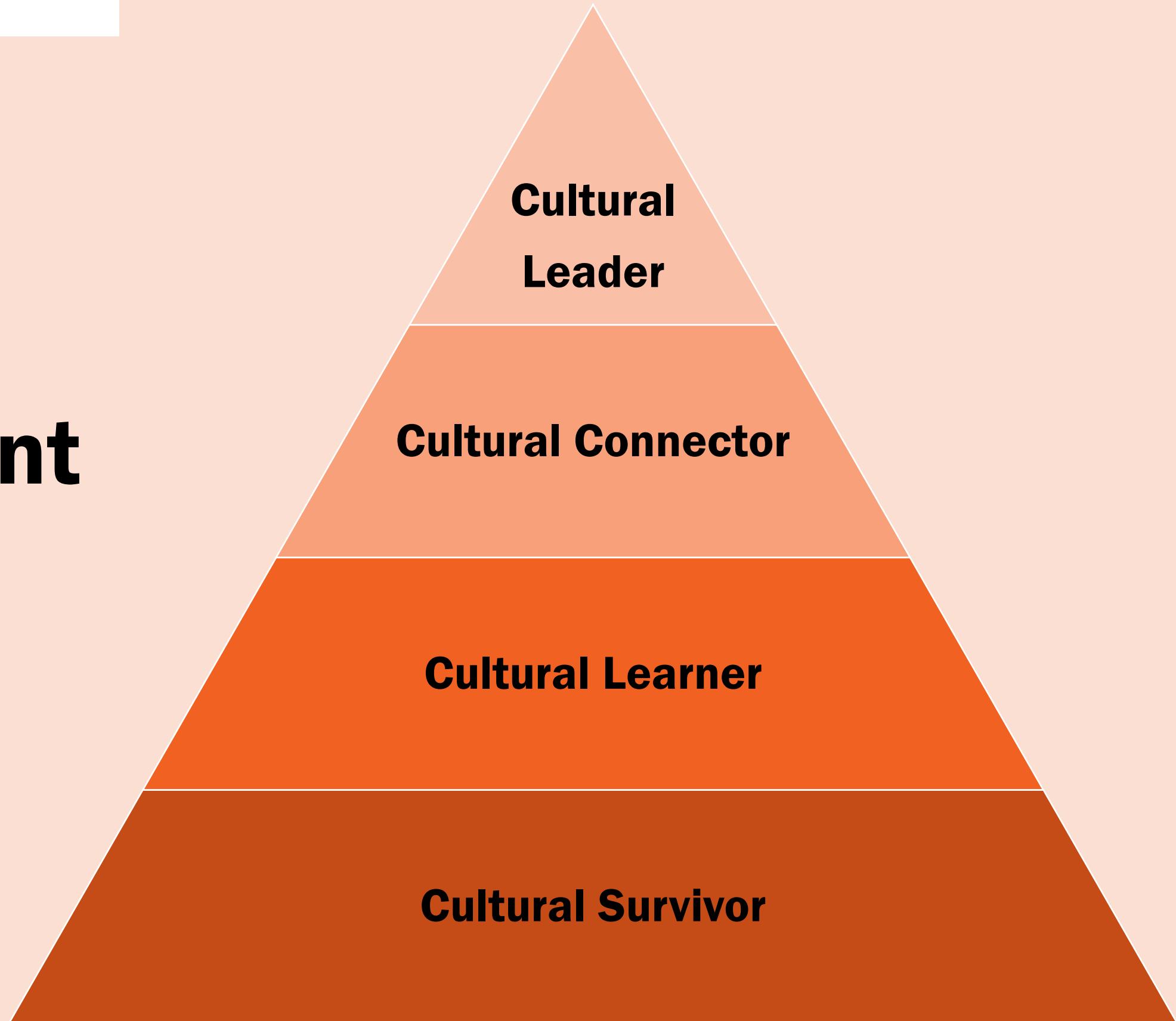
Hire diverse staff and train staff in cultural awareness

Explain school routines, like after school events



Avoid using school jargon

Stages of Newcomer Parent Involvement in Schools



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What are some ways that schools can support and encourage families to become "cultural leaders"?



3

Strengthening Partnerships Between Schools and Newcomer Families

Tools for Successful Engagement

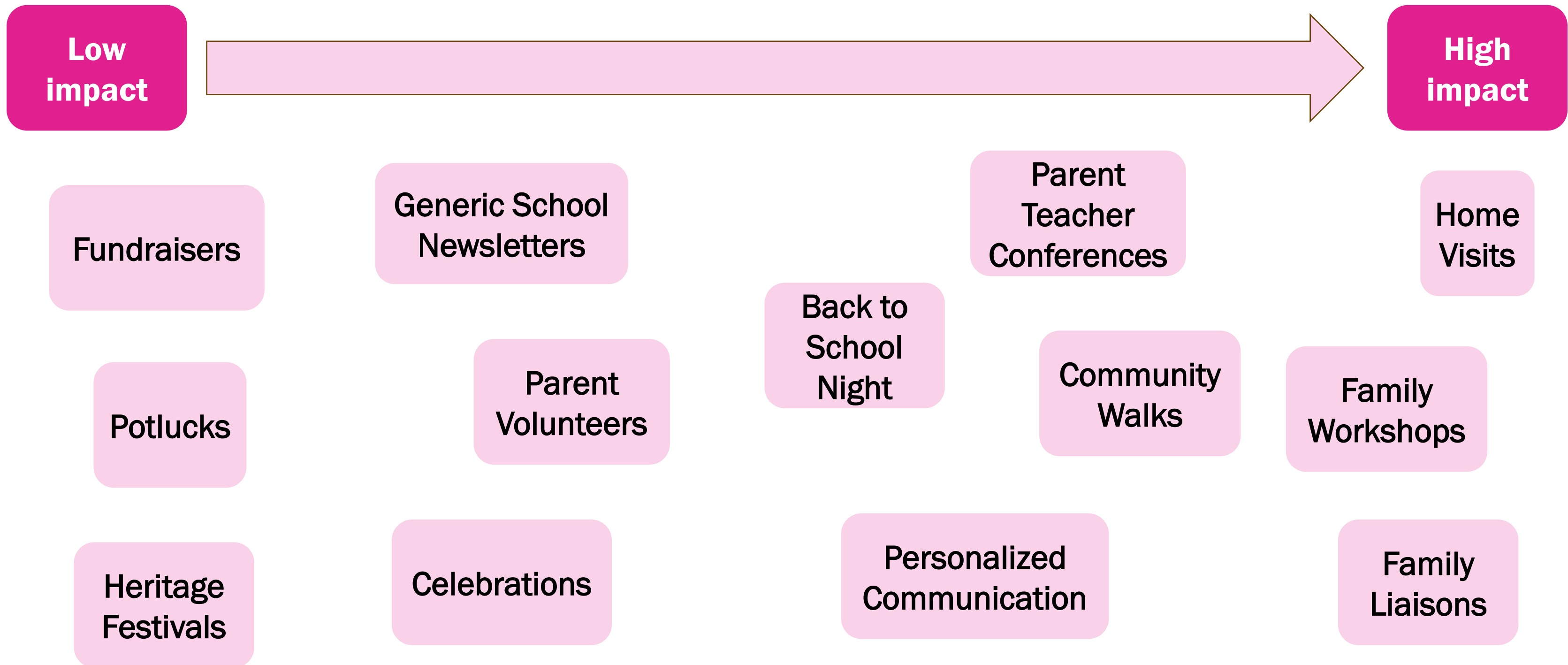
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Share an example of a family engagement initiative that you believe creates a high impact?

Impact of Family Engagement Strategies

on Student Learning



Family Engagement Tools and Strategies





Home Visits



- Built-in professional development time for teachers to learn about other cultures
- Excellent opportunity to build trust
- Teachers ask families their “hopes and dreams” for their students
- Direct correlation to better attendance and higher literacy rates

Family Liaisons

- Build relationships with families
- Bridge cultural gaps between home and school
- Foster engagement so families can understand academic achievement, social-emotional challenges, and school-wide initiatives
- Helpful if they share background with the families (speak same language or understand culture)





Family Workshops



- Help families become familiar with school structure and practices
- Families become more engaged in their child's education
- Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) bridge gaps between families and teachers
- Examples of workshops:
 - Social-emotional
 - Math and literacy
 - Adult English
 - Parenting skill-building

Additional Engagement Tools

- Family engagement toolkits
- Family resource centers
- Family reunification programs
- Parenting classes
- Monthly activity calendar
- Family events hosted at schools



Increasing Family Attendance

at School Events



**Let parents lead
topic choices**

**Provide
transportation**

Make it kid friendly



**Provide
interpretation and
translation**

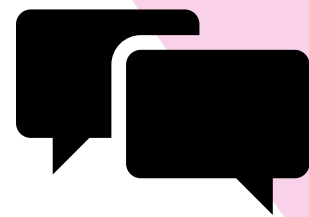
Involve food

Involve community



Language Access

Interpretation and
Translation



- Federal laws ensure access to language services to facilitate full participation in educational programs and services
- Schools must communicate with families in a language they can understand
- Resource attached on making sense of mobile apps

Case Scenario: The Azad Family

The Azad family are Afghan newcomers who recently moved to the United States. Their son, Ahmad (9), and daughter, Amina (6), are attending your school. They seem shy and appear to be struggling to make friends due to their limited English proficiency and cultural differences. The Azad parents are eager to support their children but feel overwhelmed by the new educational system and are unsure how to effectively engage with the school. They have noticed that their children are becoming increasingly withdrawn and anxious about attending school.

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What culturally responsive strategies or tools would you implement to foster effective family engagement for the Azad family?



Questions?

Type your questions in the **Q&A** 

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Recommended Resources

Webinar: [Partnering with Schools to Provide Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments for Refugee Students](#)

Guide: [Welcoming Refugee Students – Guides for Classroom Teachers, School Nurses, School Administrators, School Counselors, Peer Mentors, and Parents](#)

Blog: [Reflections from an Afghan American School Counselor: Building Bridges with Migrant Students](#)

Blog: [How Schools Can Support Newcomer Youth: Ten Innovative Practices](#)

Blog: [Fostering Resilience for Refugee Students](#)

Blog: [Making Sense of Mobile Apps for Interpretation, Translation, and Integration](#)



How Schools Can Support Newcomer Youth: Ten Innovative Practices

September 30, 2022 • Rob Callus

This is the second part of a series on school integration for refugee youth and their families.



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