

Best Practices in Family-School-Community Partnerships

The TA Tidbit is an online publication of the TA Network highlighting resources developed or provided in response to requests from SAMHSA SOC grantees on various topics.

This edition focuses on **best practices in family-school-community partnerships to support the behavioral health needs of children, youth and young adults in schools** and was prepared by the Center for School Mental Health in partnership with the TA Network.

One aspect of operating a high quality, comprehensive school mental health system is establishing and maintaining strong partnerships among the school, the students and their families, and surrounding community organizations.

Schools are a critical access point for children's behavioral health prevention, early intervention and treatment. Up to 75% of children who receive behavioral health services do so in schools. But effective, collaborative partnerships in school behavioral health can be a challenge. One way to **organize effective partnerships** and ensure multi-stakeholder voice in school behavioral health is to **register your school or district with The SHAPE System**. SHAPE is a free, web-based platform that offers strategic team planning, free custom reports and free resources to support high quality, comprehensive school behavioral health for teams.

The School Mental Health Profile enables your team to assess your operations and the Quality Assessment and Sustainability Assessment help your team identify needs and gaps in your system with free custom reports and resources for strategic planning.





Here are some answers to common questions we hear from the field around effective family-school-community partnerships:

Our school is at the very beginning – how do we know where to start?

- Start with a [needs assessment and resource mapping process](#) to identify services/supports and community organizations that match the exact needs of your student body and their families
- Be sure to involve students and families in this process as they can help trusted, reputable organizations that are respected in the community
- Identify your stage of development in school mental health using this [online module](#) developed by the National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention to get a sense of next steps for your school
- Completing the School Mental Health Profile and Quality and Sustainability Assessments on The SHAPE System is a great way to get started, too!

How to support family partnerships in school behavioral health?

- **Student and family partnership must be a priority** in developing, implementing, evaluating and sustaining school behavioral health
- Talk with your PTA about the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and identify targets for improvement.

But what about HIPAA and FERPA?

- **Neither HIPAA nor FERPA should be seen as an insurmountable obstacle for your program**
- Be clear about what information can and cannot be shared with whom
- Work with families, the school district and community organization leadership to develop a policy for information sharing and releases of information

Ready to learn more about a community-partnered approach to supporting youth social, emotional, behavioral and academic progress in school? Check out the resources below.

- SAMHSA & HHS Resources:
 - [Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education \(AWARE\)](#)
 - [School and Campus Health](#)
 - [Safe Schools / Healthy Students](#)
 - [Understanding the Intersection Between HIPAA and FERPA](#)



- **General Resources**

- [SHAPE System Website](#)
- [Guide to Resource Mapping in Schools](#)
- [Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships](#)
- [Community-Partnered School Behavioral Health Implementation Modules](#)
- [Family and Youth Engagement to Keep Kids in School Podcast Series](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Assessment Tool for Schools](#)
- [School Mental Health Sustainability Assessment Tool for Schools](#)
- [School Mental Health Quality Assessment Tool for School Districts](#)
- [School Mental Health Sustainability Assessment Tool for School Districts](#)

- **Resources for Parents & Guardians**

- [National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#)
- [National PTA Standards Implementation Guide](#)
- [The Power of Partnerships](#)
- [Report: The Positive Relationship Between Family Involvement and Student Success](#)