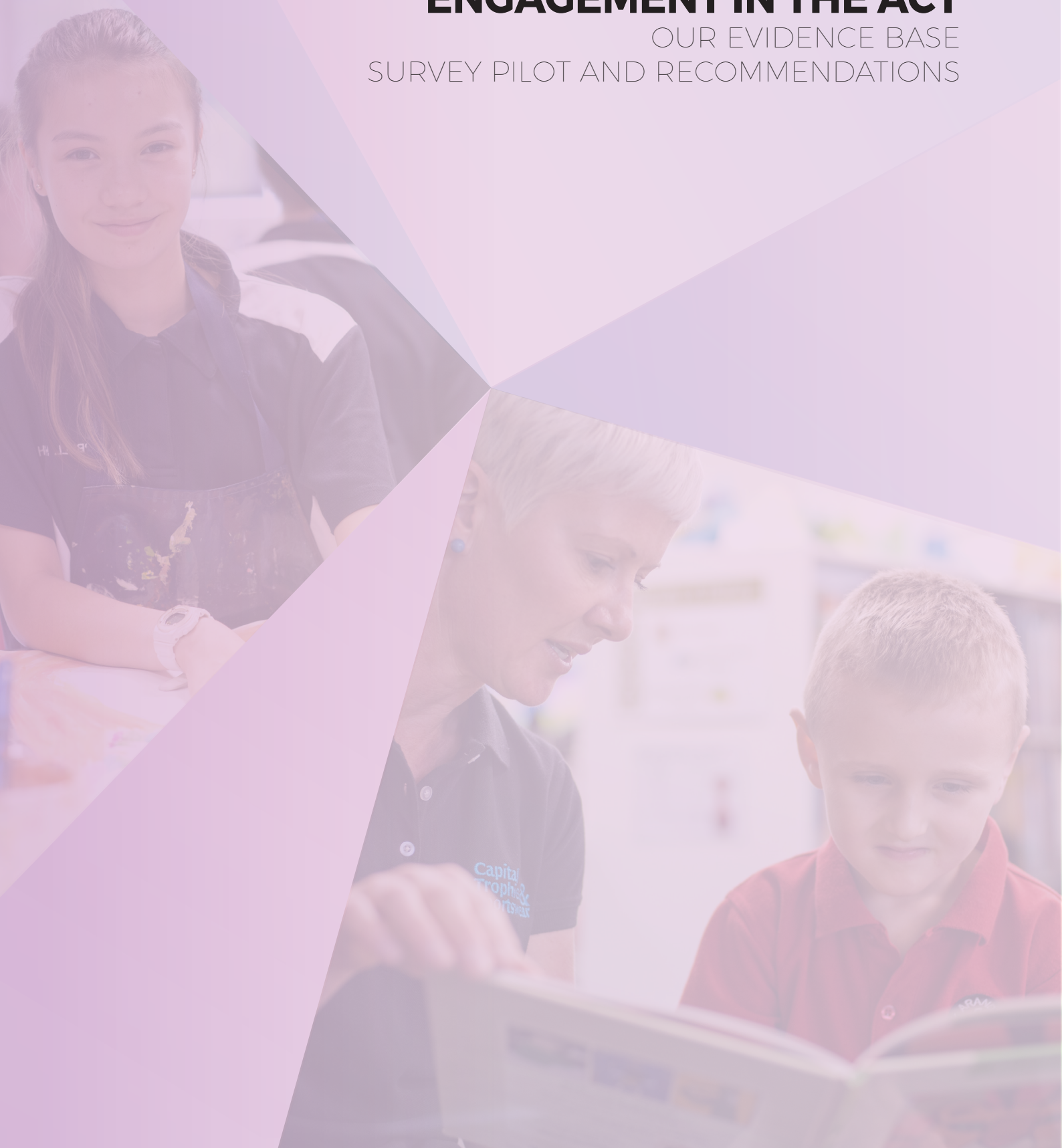


# PROGRESSING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACT

OUR EVIDENCE BASE  
SURVEY PILOT AND RECOMMENDATIONS



**Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT  
Our Evidence Base  
Survey Pilot and Recommendations**

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# MINISTER'S MESSAGE



The ACT is leading the nation in parental engagement research.

I am pleased to provide the third and final technical report in the Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT series, *Our Evidence Base: Survey Pilot and Recommendations*.

This report brings together the positive work undertaken by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to develop an evidence based understanding of parental engagement – what it is, why it matters, and how best to foster it.

It builds on the second technical report, *Our Evidence Base: Measuring Parental Engagement*, which provided a survey instrument that was trialed in four ACT schools in 2015.

The final report brings together the results of this trial and presents a set of survey questions that can be used to effectively measure and monitor parental engagement across ACT schools.

The data collected through the parental engagement survey, along with the resources already provided through the project, will support schools to implement evidence-based strategies for successful partnerships with families.

As Minister for Education, I acknowledge the valuable role of parents and carers as children's first and most influential teachers. It is essential that schools continue to enhance these relationships and provide safe and supportive environments for students, as well as their parents and carers.

## **Shane Rattenbury MLA**

Minister for Education



# INTRODUCTION

*Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT* is a two year project (2014-2015) undertaken by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for the ACT Education Directorate and in partnership with the Association for Independent Schools, Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, the ACT Council of Parents and ACT Citizens Associations, Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools and Catholic School Parents Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn.

This project's objective is to provide a strong, evidence-informed foundation for parental engagement in ACT primary schools. Project activities involve:

- producing a definition of parental engagement that is evidence-informed and that reflects the priorities and perspectives of ACT parents;
- fostering the development of a shared understanding between families, schools and administrators about what parental engagement is, and why it matters;
- developing a framework for measuring parental engagement, including a survey schools can use to measure current levels of engagement in their community and track progress over time that can be used across government, Catholic and independent schools; and
- producing evidence-informed resources for families and schools to equip them to strengthen their parental engagement practice.

This work will help ensure that future policy and practice in parental engagement in the ACT is grounded in evidence and based on a shared understanding of what parental engagement is, why it matters, how it works, how to do it well and the learning and wellbeing outcomes it supports.

An earlier paper, [Our Evidence Base: Defining Parental Engagement](#), outlined the approach and rationale for the technical definition of parental engagement as well as the evidence and theory of change underpinning it. It presented the first iteration of a conceptual model encapsulating the key components of parental engagement, the processes or mechanisms through which parental engagement is thought to influence children's learning and its impact on learning and wellbeing outcomes.

The previous paper, [Our Evidence Base: Measuring Parental Engagement](#) presented the Parental Engagement in the ACT Conceptual Model, which identified a set of evidence-informed constructs that provide a technical definition and core elements of parental engagement to guide consistent measurement.

That paper also provided a rationale for measuring parental engagement, key considerations for developing and using measurement systems, a review of existing approaches to measuring parental engagement and an examination of a range of measurement tools in use in Australia and internationally. Finally, it canvassed a range of potential indicators and measures, and presented a measure of parental engagement to be tested in a pilot survey within a small number of ACT schools.

This final report reviews the survey administration, impact, feasibility and provides results from the data analysis of a small pilot survey conducted amongst parents and teachers at four ACT schools. The primary purpose of this report is to assess the usefulness of the survey questions in measuring parental engagement in the ACT. The report presents recommendations for a reduced set of questions that could be used by schools to set a baseline measure of parental engagement values, attitudes and practices within their school community and monitor change for both parents and teachers.





# 1. BACKGROUND

The definition and Conceptual Model developed in the previous reports lay the groundwork for the development of a measurement approach that could be used by schools to track progress on parental engagement and set priorities for action.

The measurement had to be accessible, cost effective and above all practical for schools to use for continuous quality improvement and to identify what works in an Australian context. Given the current state of development of parent engagement measures in Australia, it was decided to use questions from already tested and validated international instruments that targeted the most important attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that enable parent engagement for both parents and teachers.

## 1.1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The Parental Engagement in the ACT Conceptual Model ('Final Conceptual Model', Table 1 on page 10) synthesises the evidence about parental engagement and provides a range of indicators of the short and long-term outcomes of parental engagement using an ecological theory of change.

A theory of change: "articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving the desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur" (Harris, 2005, p. 12).

The theory of change articulated in the Conceptual Model is that if:

- schools use evidence-informed strategies to develop a school culture that enables parental engagement,
- parents are equipped and supported to provide family-led learning activities, and
- parental engagement activities are focused on building children's orientation towards learning and sense of academic confidence and competence, then

parents' beliefs, confidence and family-led learning practices will be strengthened resulting in improved learning and wellbeing outcomes for children.

Although the Conceptual Model represents these factors in separate columns as per Table 1 on page 10 there are significant interactions between them. Importantly, the Conceptual Model depicted in Table 1 does not capture all the elements of parenting or engagement in learning that may have influence on children's learning nor does it reflect the broad array of complex factors that determine children's academic achievement. The Conceptual Model reflects the available evidence on parental engagement in learning coupled with the findings of qualitative research conducted with parents from the ACT, although not all elements have been rigorously, empirically tested and validated. Rather, the Conceptual Model provides a coherent and evidence-informed narrative about the 'how, why and what' of parental engagement creating a basis for informing practice, directing consistent measurement and strengthening the empirical evidence.

Table 1: Final Conceptual Model

Aspects of family engagement that matter most for children's outcomes		Engaging families effectively	Short term outcomes for the family	Shorter term outcomes for the child	Longer term outcomes for the child
Family-led learning		<p><b>Enabling factors</b></p> <p>School culture supportive of engagement</p> <p>Welcoming environment</p> <p>Positive parent/teacher relationships</p> <p>Parental engagement policies and leadership</p> <p><b>Key actions</b></p> <p>Regular communication about progress and wellbeing</p> <p>Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction</p> <p>Individual invitation to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community</p> <p>Information about practical strategies to support learning</p> <p>Partnerships with community agencies and the ability to refer families to extra support when needed</p>	<p><b>Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)</b></p> <p><b>Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self-efficacy)</b></p> <p><b>Sense of welcome/belonging at the school</b></p> <p><b>Frequency and quality of communication with the school</b></p> <p><b>Quality of the relationship with the teacher</b></p> <p><b>Attendance at school events</b></p> <p><b>Knowledge about what children are learning</b></p> <p><b>Frequency of family-led learning activities</b></p>	<p>Belief in the importance of education</p> <p>Self-efficacy</p> <p>Academic competence/confidence</p> <p>Motivation and engagement in learning</p> <p>Persistence</p> <p>Skills for learning</p> <p>Social and emotional wellbeing</p>	<p>Academic achievement</p> <p>Mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Mitigating the impact of disadvantage on educational outcomes</p>
Family-school partnership		<p>High expectations</p> <p>Shared reading</p> <p>Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories</p> <p>Homework support that provides an appropriate environment, rules that are consistent with school expectations, encourages autonomous learning and fosters positive parent-child interactions</p> <p>Cognitively stimulating environment</p> <p>Support for social and emotional wellbeing, peer relationships and teacher relationships</p> <p>Communication about children's wellbeing and progress</p> <p>Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help</p> <p>Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school</p>			

## 1.2. QUALITY OF THE EVIDENCE

The enabling conditions and effective strategies synthesised in the Conceptual Model were identified through an extensive literature review. This literature review included parental engagement programs that have been evaluated using experimental, quasi-experimental or pre-post study designs, along with the broader research literature on parental engagement.

As noted in the *Defining Parental Engagement* report, the parental engagement literature is of variable quality. There are a number of robust longitudinal studies and meta-analyses that show a clear connection between parental engagement attitudes and behaviours and improved academic outcomes (Jeynes, 2003, 2012). The evidence base around programs, strategies and initiatives designed to improve engagement is less strong however, largely due to inconsistent approaches to conceptualising and measuring parent engagement, a lack of Australian specific research and study designs' limitations.

Much of the research on parental engagement programs and strategies (in Australia especially but also internationally) has not been robust enough to indicate causal relationships between specific strategies and changes in beliefs, attitudes or practices. 'Grey literature' on parental engagement is extensive; it includes numerous practice guides, project reports and case studies. To the greatest extent practicable the programs, strategies and approaches identified in the Conceptual Model are grounded in, and informed by peer reviewed journal evidence. Several of the elements can be considered to be supported by the highest evidence standards<sup>1</sup>; however, some are supported by specific, reasonable quality evidence. As such, this model should be understood as a solid basis for policy and practice that will necessarily develop, change and strengthen over time, as the model is tested in ACT schools and elsewhere and more robust evidence is developed.

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1. i.e. supported by multiple randomised controlled trials with long-term follow up, tested in diverse contexts, strong and statistically significant effect sizes, and proven through systematic reviews.



## 2. MEASURING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACT

### 2.1. DEVELOPMENT OF A SURVEY INSTRUMENT

In the context of parental engagement, the development and systematic use of parent engagement data is designed to assist schools and governance bodies to invest resources in engagement strategies and approaches that are effective in the context of their school community. The use of consistent measures of parental engagement across schools and systems can contribute significantly to the development of an Australian evidence base about the types of engagement strategies that have the greatest impact.

*Data-driven decision making can support schools ... to facilitate more informed decision making, enhance overall school performance, and improve student achievement. Furthermore, it can help to engage family and community in the process of addressing achievement gaps, improving teaching and learning, and motivating students. Data-driven decision making can also help districts maximize the use of limited funds for the greatest impact on student achievement (SEDL, 2012).*

A key deliverable of the *Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT* project is the development of surveys to measure parental engagement beliefs and practice within school communities.

The previous paper, *Our Evidence Base: Measuring Parental Engagement*, presented the process implemented by ARACY to develop survey instruments for use by parents and teachers that align with the Conceptual Model. A timeline of the process is at [Appendix C](#).

#### 2.1.1. QUESTION MAPPING

Using the Conceptual Model in Table 1 on page 10, the first step in the development of the survey instruments was to identify existing parent engagement questions that mapped onto the key enablers and short term outcomes.

A range of international instruments were selected for the mapping process.<sup>2</sup> These surveys were chosen because they were from established, credible, evidence-based research programs, had reasonably strong theoretical and conceptual foundations and multiple administrations that were indicative of robust reliability, required minimal alteration to fit with the project requirements for language and response format, and were able to be used for both the parent and teacher surveys.

The following considerations informed decisions about which questions to use:

- The questions had to be robust and sensitive enough to measure change over time.
- They had to be relevant, and, where possible, able to be included in both parent and teacher surveys to ensure consistency between the two surveys and to allow comparative analysis.

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2. See Technical Report Part 2 Appendix A.

- The questions had to be able to be utilised within existing administrative data collection processes if necessary.
- Given low response rates for school-based surveys, the selected questions had to be able to be completed in less than 15 minutes.
- The phrasing of the questions had to be modifiable to be appropriate and relevant in an Australian context.

Where an appropriate question could not be identified in existing survey instruments that corresponded to enablers or dimensions in the Conceptual Framework, new questions were developed and then tested for construct validity during the pilot phase.

The primary focus of the mapping was the short term indicators of change for the family, with a particular focus on the Conceptual Model's underlying dimensions of parent engagement, especially in relation to parent expectations, self-efficacy and role construction. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the constructs synthesised in the Conceptual Model, there are fundamental linkages and posited causal relationships between different constructs and levels of the Model. Figure 3 and Tables 2 and 3 of Technical Report Part 2: Measuring Parental Engagement highlight these linkages and are reproduced at [Appendix E](#).

The final PDF versions of the surveys are provided in this report at [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

## 3. SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### 3.1. PILOT SCHOOL SELECTION AND CONSULTATION

Primary schools were selected to ensure that all school sectors in the ACT were represented; Government, Independent and Catholic. The process of selection varied by sector with nomination, self-selection and identification methods all being used. In total, four schools were identified. The selected primary schools included two Government schools – Miles Franklin Primary School and Monash Primary School; one Independent school – Orana Steiner School; and one Catholic school – St Francis of Assisi Primary School. Schools were advised that the planned timeline was to run the survey between weeks three and eight of Term 3, 2015. While there were some minor variations around the implementation process there was general agreement to perform the survey collection for parents and teachers via both online and paper-based methodologies.

### 3.2. COGNITIVE TESTING OF THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Cognitive testing is an essential element of survey development, to ensure the questions are appropriate, comprehensible, understood consistently by the target audience, and clearly linked to the underlying constructs they aim to measure.

During the last week of July 2015, semi-structured interviews were held at each pilot school with the principal, a teacher and a parent (12 participants in total), and these interviews were conducted with the aim of refining the draft survey instruments. The cognitive feedback sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes per participant. Each participant was given a relevant paper version of the survey instrument to complete (i.e. parent or teacher).

Upon completion of the survey (which was completed in approximately 7 minutes, on average), each participant was led through the questionnaire and probed about their thoughts and feelings toward individual questions. Specific questions were directed around a number of items flagged by the Directorate. Principals were directed to review both surveys as there were questions pertaining to their leadership and commitment to parent engagement. ARACY was interested to determine principals' comfort with being assessed by both audiences.

All test respondents, including each pilot school principal, were satisfied with the length and purpose of the survey. Again, each agreed that it was clear and easy to understand, with logical flow to draw respondents along.

Feedback from the cognitive testing was used to refine the survey instruments.

### 3.3. SURVEY PROVISION

An independent survey research agency was selected to administer the survey. Through its impartiality, independent survey administration can help benefit response rates rather than a survey being managed by the sponsoring party (i.e. the Directorate or ARACY).

In most cases (73%) survey responses were completed online, with respondents following an anonymous web link to the survey that was provided through an invitation letter from the school principal. Where required, the paper/PDF version of the survey, completed by 27% of the sample, was distributed to respondents with a reply-paid address back to Australian Survey Research who keyed in the completed surveys. This process ensured anonymity to all respondents. See [Appendix D](#) for a copy of the invitation letters.

Due to competing survey requirements during the fieldwork period (e.g. 2015 School Satisfaction Survey for Parents and Carers surveys) and late changes to the paper survey format, the survey fieldwork period ran from 10 August to 24 September 2015 in an effort to boost response rates. In addition, although both technical and survey helpdesks were set up for the duration of the fieldwork period, they were not accessed by respondents which indicates the survey was accessible and easy to answer, as indicated by the results of the cognitive testing. The extension of the survey period had little impact on the parent response rate which was 23%.



## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results were analysed by Australian Survey Research (ASR). Prior to conducting analyses, the data were subjected to cleaning and validation. There were no cleaning or data validation issues except for the following.

There were seven parent cases where less than 80% of scale items were completed. Some cases were as low as 41% complete. The decision to remove these cases was made due to the extent of missing data. The remaining cases were over 80% complete.

The 80% threshold was used based on analysis of completed cases where 80% was a 'drop off' point in the frequency of completions.

All teacher cases were retained as the vast majority of cases were complete or well over 80% complete.

Negatively worded questions had their scales reversed.

Data transformations were performed on scale variables to allow analysis by mean scores and proportionality.

### 4.1. STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Statistical significance in this report (where indicated) is calculated at the 95% confidence level (accuracy) and a  $\pm 5\%$  confidence interval (precision).

Representativeness of a sample is usually assessed at a 95% confidence level (accuracy) and a  $\pm 5\%$  confidence interval (precision).

The **confidence interval** (also called margin of error) is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in newspaper or television opinion poll results. For example, if you use a confidence interval of 4 and 47% percent of your sample picks an answer you can be "sure" that if you had asked the question of the entire relevant population between 43% ( $47-4$ ) and 51% ( $47+4$ ) would have picked that answer.

The **confidence level** tells you how sure you can be. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the true percentage of the population who would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 95% confidence level means you can be 95% certain; the 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain. Most researchers use the 95% confidence level.

When you put the confidence level and the confidence interval together, you can say that you are 95% sure that the true percentage of the population is between 43% and 51%. The wider the confidence interval you are willing to accept, the more certain you can be that the whole population answers would be within that range.

For example, if you asked a sample of 1000 people in a city which brand of cola they preferred, and 60% said Brand A, you can be very certain that between 40 and 80% of all the people in the city actually do prefer that brand, but you cannot be so sure that between 59 and 61% of the people in the city prefer the brand.

Retrieved from: [www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm](http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm)

## 4.2. RESPONSE RATES

Based on school enrolments across the selected pilot schools, there was a total parent/carer population of 1,941, and teacher population of 131. As a census approach was applied to this survey, these numbers represent the total base from which response rates can be determined.

The Parent survey had 445 usable records for an overall response rate of 22.9%. The parent response rates by each school ranged from 21% to 25%. This is in line with general survey response rates for education surveys across Australia and a good result given that parents could not be followed up directly. The response rates by grade and school are in Table 2 below.

The Teacher survey had 117 usable records for an overall response rate of 89.3%. The teacher response rate by each school ranged from 86% to 96%, and figures are included in Table 3 below.

Table 2: Parent response rate by school and grade

School	Grade	N	Responses	Resp Rate	School	Grade	N	Responses	Resp Rate
Monash	Preschool	64	4	6%	Orana	Preschool	76	7	9%
	Kindergarten	57	14	25%		Kindergarten	47	8	17%
	Year 1	69	10	14%		Year 1	53	16	30%
	Year 2	41	13	32%		Year 2	53	13	25%
	Year 3	63	15	24%		Year 3	51	8	16%
	Year 4	53	14	26%		Year 4	56	8	14%
	Year 5	36	11	31%		Year 5	57	20	35%
	Year 6	63	16	25%		Year 6	60	24	40%
	LSU	25	2	8%		Year 7	53	23	43%
Sub total		471	99	21%	Sub total		506	127	25%
Miles Franklin	Preschool	74	5	7%	St Francis of Assisi	Preschool	0	0	N/A
	Kindergarten	70	17	24%		Kindergarten	63	15	24%
	Year 1	72	17	24%		Year 1	63	12	19%
	Year 2	69	17	25%		Year 2	87	13	15%
	Year 3	55	14	25%		Year 3	65	19	29%
	Year 4	53	11	21%		Year 4	57	12	21%
	Year 5	51	9	18%		Year 5	63	18	29%
	Year 6	51	12	24%		Year 6	71	20	28%
Sub total		495	102	21%	Sub total		469	109	23%

Table 3: Teacher response rate by school

School	Teachers	Responses	Resp Rate
Miles Franklin	26	25	96%
Monash	36	32	89%
Orana	41	36	88%
St Francis	28	24	86%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>89%</b>

As the main purpose of this report is to see how effectively the survey questions align with the conceptual model and therefore provide a useful measure of parental engagement, there is no analysis presented of the differences between schools for either parent or teacher responses. The overarching aim of this report is to reduce the questions piloted to those that map to the eight conceptual dimensions identified in Table 1 on page 10 under the short term outcomes highlighted in red. It should be noted that although the survey data is analysed as a whole and not for individual schools, the schools have been provided with their own data that is compared with responses from schools overall.

In the analyses that follow, the parent responses are considered first, then the teacher responses and finally a comparison between parents and teachers responses.

Following response analyses, tests of the conceptual model are performed to see if the hypothesised dimensions are produced from the data through a data reduction technique called factor analysis.

## 4.3. PARENT SURVEY

There are a number of key findings from the parent survey that are described in detail in the following sections. Firstly, almost half of all parents indicated that teachers paid attention to the parent's suggestions about their child's learning only "somewhat of the time", "a little of the time" or "not at all". This result seems out of place when looked at in the context of other responses and may indicate that teachers do not act as consistently in this regard as parents expect. This may be a communication style issue or it may represent a deeper issue worthy of further investigation.

Secondly, the vast majority (94%) of parents believed that they did have an impact on their child's academic success. A larger proportion (65.3%) of parents from a household where English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) "strongly believed" compared to parents from non EAL/D households (52.2%). The difference is not statistically significant due to the small EAL/D response rate.

Thirdly, almost all parents (98%) talked to their child about what they were learning at school every day or most days (93%) or on a weekly basis (5%).

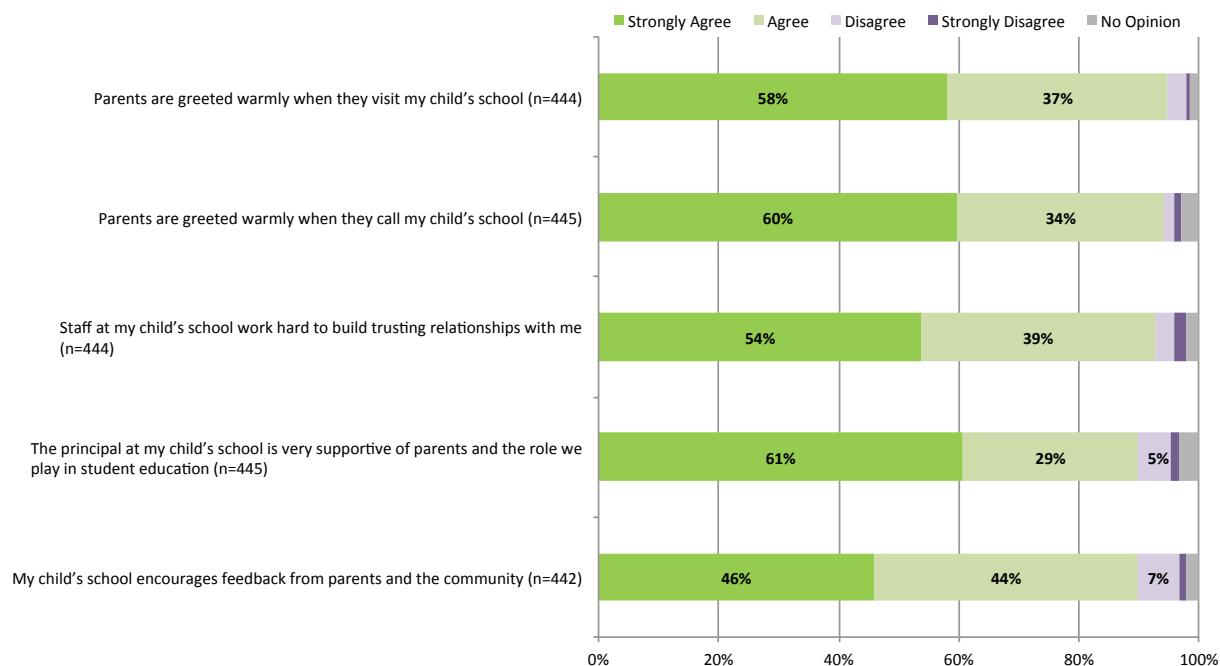
Fourthly, and most importantly, twelve percent (12%) of parents/carers reported reading with their child less than once a week, and a further 10% rarely or never read with their child. Given the strong evidence base supporting the importance of home based reading as an important tool for parental engagement and improved academic and social outcomes, this is a significant finding of this project.

### 4.3.1. WELCOMING/BUILDING TRUST AND ENGAGING PARENTS

As per Figure 1 below, combining the "strongly agree" and "agree" responses shows that the vast majority of parents (95%) felt welcomed when they visited their child's school and when greeted on the phone (94%).

Similarly, parents recognise the principals' efforts to encourage them in their supporting role in their child's education (90%) and also agree that staff work hard to build parents' trust (93%). Parents and the community are widely encouraged to provide feedback to the schools their children attend (90%).

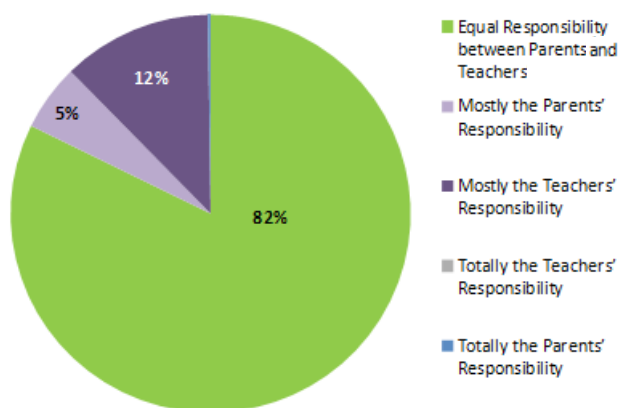
Figure 1: Parent level of agreement with school welcoming/building trust and engaging parents



The majority (82%) of parents as per Figure 2 believed that education is the equal responsibility of parents and the teachers.

Figure 2: Parent response to responsibility for a child's education

**A child's education is - Parent survey (n=445)**



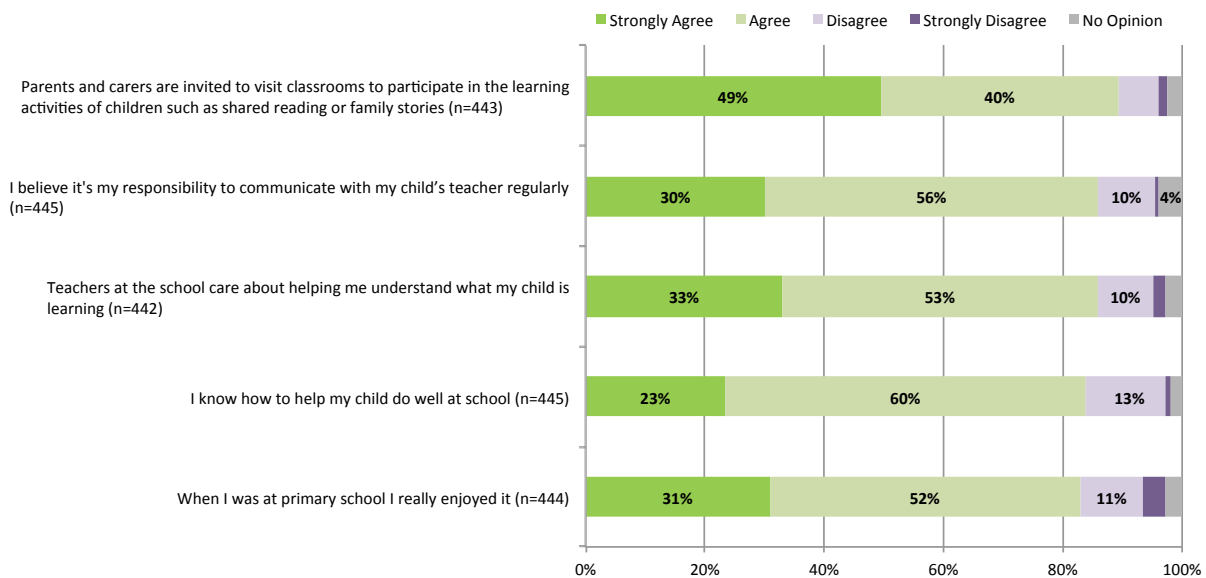
Only 5% of parents believed education was mostly their responsibility, while 12% thought education was mostly a teacher's responsibility. This difference did not translate into a difference in behaviour. There was no significant difference between these two groups in the frequency with which parents talked with their child about what they were learning, helping them with homework or reading with their child. The fact that the groups did not differ in behaviour is most likely due to the small sample sizes in a pilot.

Parents also agree that they are actively encouraged to participate in their child's education including class participation (89%) as per Figure 3 below. In addition, most parents enjoyed their own experience in primary school (83%) and see communication with their child's teacher as part of their responsibility (86%).

Notably 14% of parents did not enjoy their own experience at primary school. However, again, there was no significant difference between these groups in the frequency with which those parents talked with their child about what they were learning, helping them with homework or reading with their child compared to those parents who enjoyed primary school.

As Figure 3 shows, parents reported that teachers were equally interested in helping parents understand what their child is learning (86%) which perhaps assists parents in knowing how to help their child do well at school (83%).

**Figure 3: Parent responses to relationships with teachers, understanding learning requirements and own enjoyment at school**



Overall, positive feedback between teachers and parents appears to be well established, as 82% of parents say they receive clear information about how their child is 'getting on' (progressing) as seen in Figure 4.

From the same Figure 4, just under three quarters of parents (74%) say teachers work closely with them to meet their child's learning needs as well as provide practical information about how to help their child learn at home (77%).

**Figure 4: Parent responses to information provision**

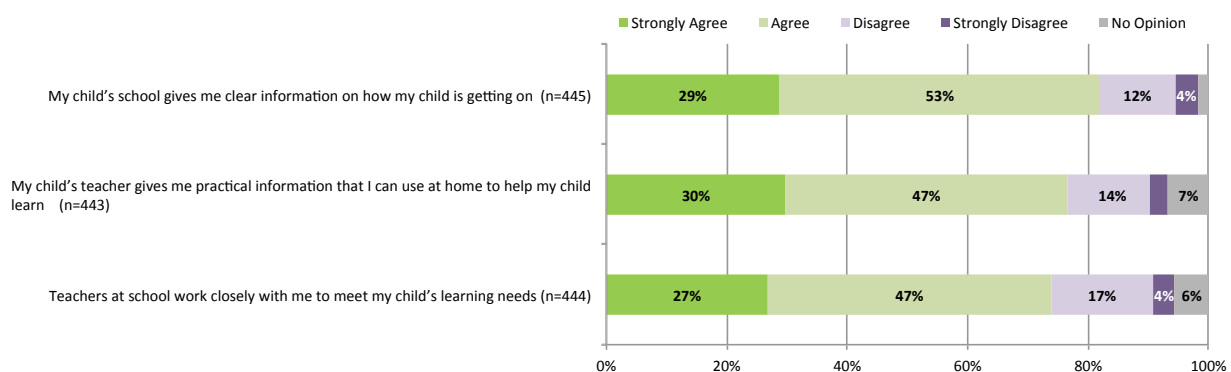


Figure 5 shows 90% of parents received positive communication feedback from their child's teacher while Figure 6 shows that just over half of all parents (51%) indicated that their child's teacher paid a great deal (10%) or a lot (41%) of attention to their suggestions about their child's learning. The fact that almost half of the parents said that teachers only paid somewhat, a little or no attention to their suggestions may indicate a communication problem or a deeper issue that deserves further attention.

Figure 5: Parent response to teacher communication style

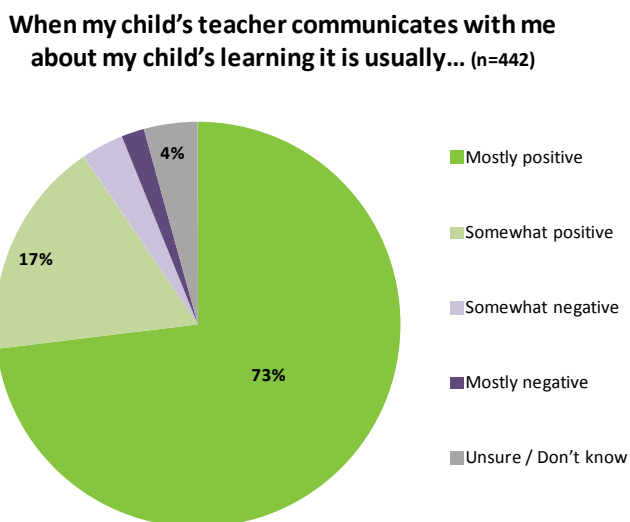
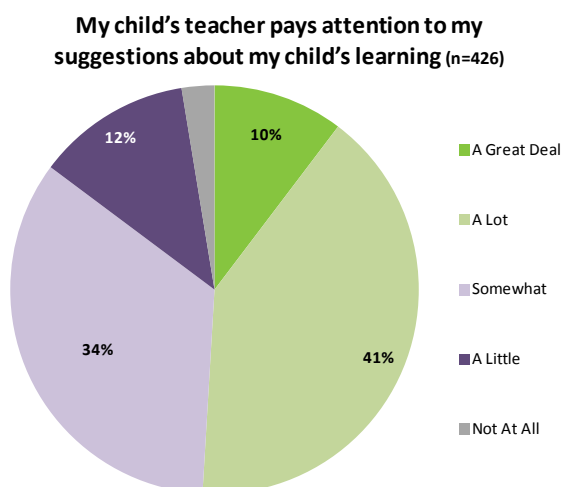


Figure 6: Parent response to teacher paying attention to them about their child's learning

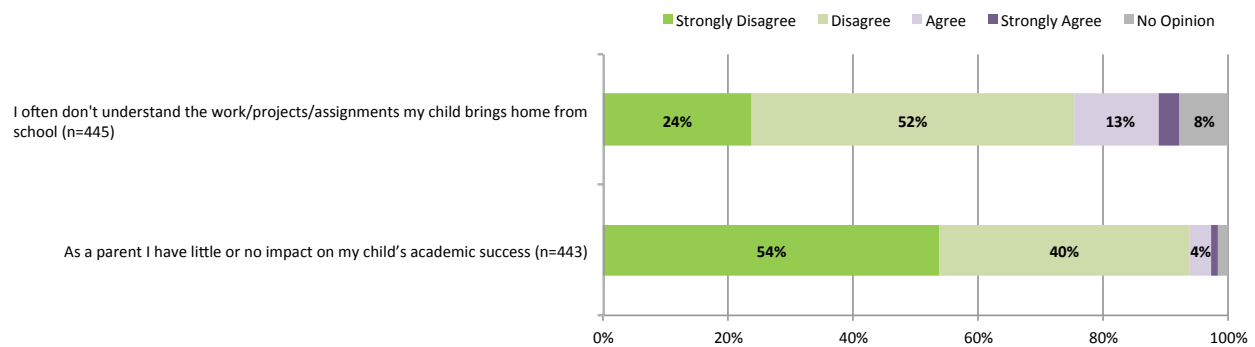


### 4.3.2. PARENT UNDERSTANDING AND IMPACT ON CHILD LEARNING

The questions in this section were worded negatively, meaning that disagreement in this case was a positive result.

As shown in Figure 7 below, just over three quarters of parents (76%) understood the work/projects / assignments their child brings home. The vast majority (94%) of parents believed that they did have an impact on their child's academic success. A larger proportion (65.3%) of parents from an EAL/D household "strongly believed" compared to parents from non EAL/D households (52.2%).

Figure 7: Parent impact and understanding of child's learning



### 4.3.3. PARENT ENGAGEMENT AT HOME

Almost all parents (98%) talked to their child about what they were learning at school every day or most days (93%) or on a weekly basis (5%) as per Figure 8.

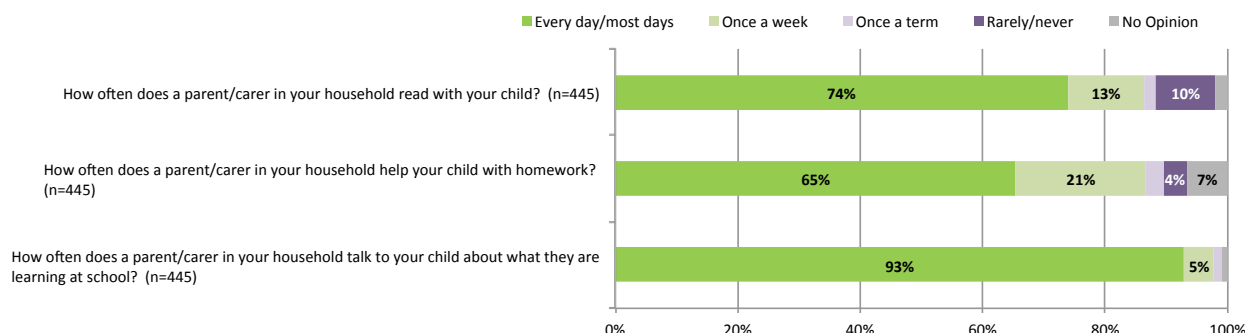
Additionally, in Figure 8, the majority (86%) also helped their child with homework or read with them on a regular basis (87%). However reading frequency reduced to less than weekly as children progressed through school from Year 3 (7%) and steadily rising to 57% by Year 7 as per Table 4.

Table 4: Parent-child shared reading frequency by child grade

Grade	Rarely/Never	Once a Term	Once a Week	Every day/most days
P	0%	0%	12.5%	87.5%
K	0	0%	5.7%	94.3%
1	0	0%	3.7%	96.3%
2	0	0%	1.8%	98.2%
3	5.5%	1.8%	20.0%	72.7%
4	2.3%	2.3%	13.6%	81.8%
5	14.3%	3.6%	12.5%	69.6%
6	25.7%	2.9%	22.9%	48.6%
7	47.8%	8.7%	26.1%	17.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>75.9%</b>

Importantly, 14% of parents/carers reported reading with their child between once a week and once a month, and a further 10% rarely or never read with their child.

Figure 8: Parent responses to helping their child

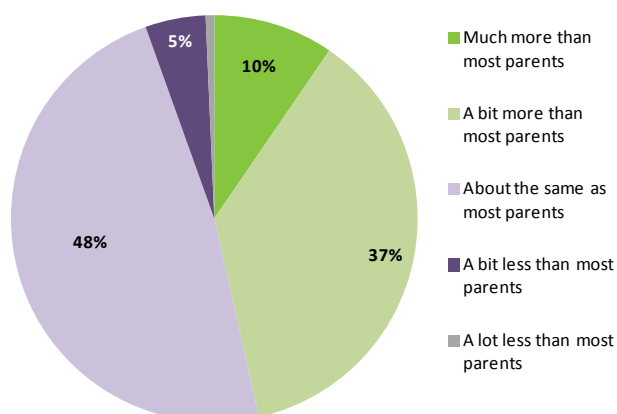


#### 4.3.4. OVERALL PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION WITH SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

Figure 9 shows parents' self-assessment of their level of involvement with their child's education was split equally between those saying that they were involved more than other parents (combining 'much more' and 'a bit more', 47%) and those saying their involvement was about the same as most parents (48%).

Figure 9: Parent response to overall involvement in child's education

**Overall, my involvement with my child's education is (n=439)**



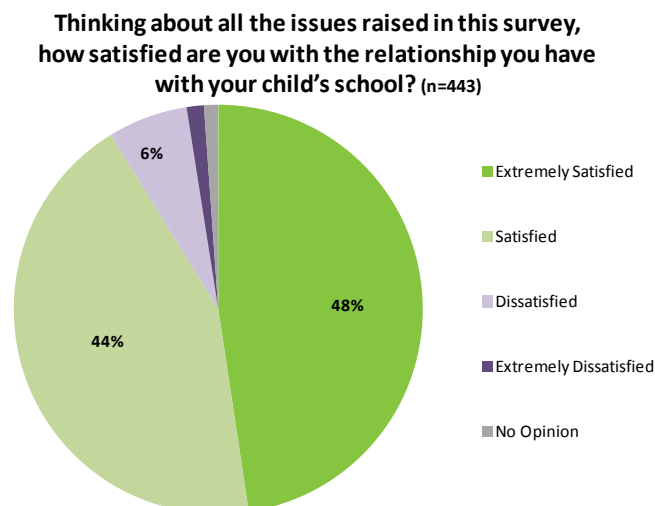
Overall, this indicates that almost all parent/carer respondents believe their involvement aligns with the average (the same as other parents) or above (more than other parents).

Ninety two percent (92%) of parents were extremely satisfied (48%) or satisfied (44%) with the relationship they had with their child's school as seen in Figure 10.

A higher percentage of mothers (49%) were extremely satisfied with the relationship with their school than were fathers (35%). This difference, although not statistically significant, may be due to mothers having more direct involvement and contact with the school. This may also imply that engagement strategies for fathers may need to be different to mothers, taking into account that tailoring to different audiences is required.



Figure 10: Parent overall satisfaction with school relationship



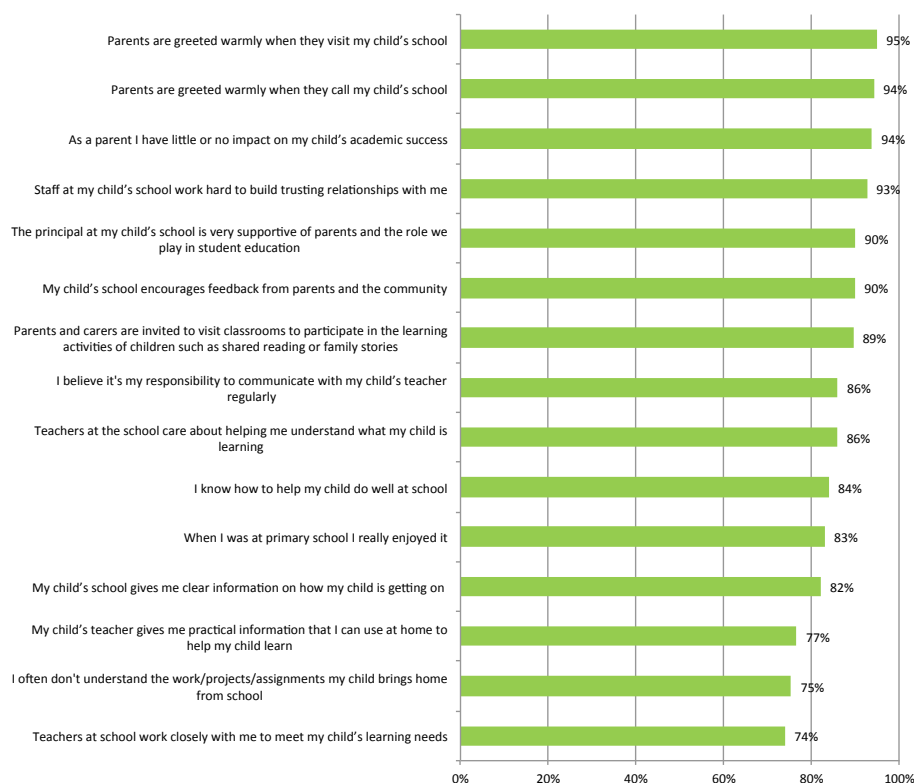
The final question was a free text response for parents to suggest things the school could do to engage parents better. Nearly half of all parents (47%) said they would welcome more communication between parents and the school. They preferred more frequent email contact.

#### 4.3.5. COMPARING PARENT RESPONSES ACROSS QUESTIONS

A simple way to compare responses across questions is to look at the summed agreement scores for each question. These are derived by adding the combined positive response percentages (e.g. agree percentage plus strongly agree percentage).

As per Figure 11 on all questions the net positive scores are fairly high (at least above 70%).

Figure 11: Parent proportion of positive response by question



The response pattern in Figure 11 indicates that overall parents are strongly engaged with their school and child's learning. Schools are seen as warm and inviting, parents help their children, feel they have an impact and the relationship between parent and teacher and parent and school is strong and supported by the principal. It should however be noted that the very nature of the pilot survey suggests that by and large, engaged parents would be the ones to respond.

## 4.4. TEACHER SURVEY

Again, the key issue for the survey was: do the teachers' responses map to the eight conceptual dimensions in Table 1. Teachers were more positive than parents on many of the questions. However, many of the teachers also filled out the questionnaire in staff meetings which may have created a social desirability element to the responses. A comparison of teacher and parent responses follows in Section 4.5 on page 30.

All teachers believed that staff worked hard to build trusting relationships with parents. In a similar fashion, 99% of teachers agreed that parents were greeted warmly either when visiting the school or calling the school by phone.

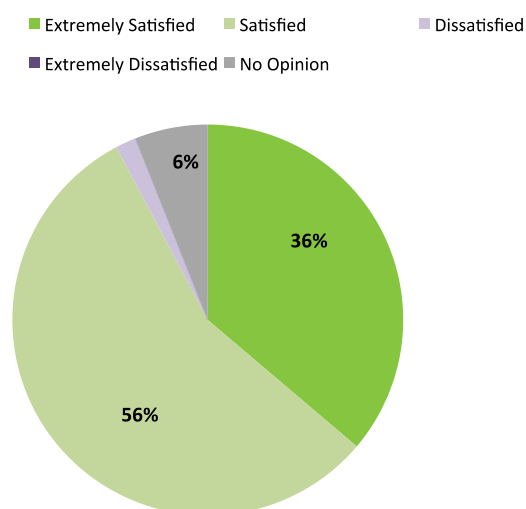
The majority of teachers had a good understanding about their school's parental engagement policy (91%). However, only 61% of teachers agreed that the school gave them sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents. Overall, 19% disagreed (17%) or strongly disagreed (2%) with the statement.

Over one quarter (27%) of teachers disagreed that parents of the children they teach reinforced what their child learns by reading or support with homework and 61% agreed this was the case. Notably 12% have no opinion on the issue. Similarly, 23% of teachers did not agree that their school discusses the parental engagement requirements of the school with staff, whereas 71% agree this is the case. Further investigation through focus groups may be warranted to see if this is related to school autonomy, leadership training or professional development issues.

### 4.4.1. TEACHER/PARENT RELATIONSHIPS AND BUILDING TRUST

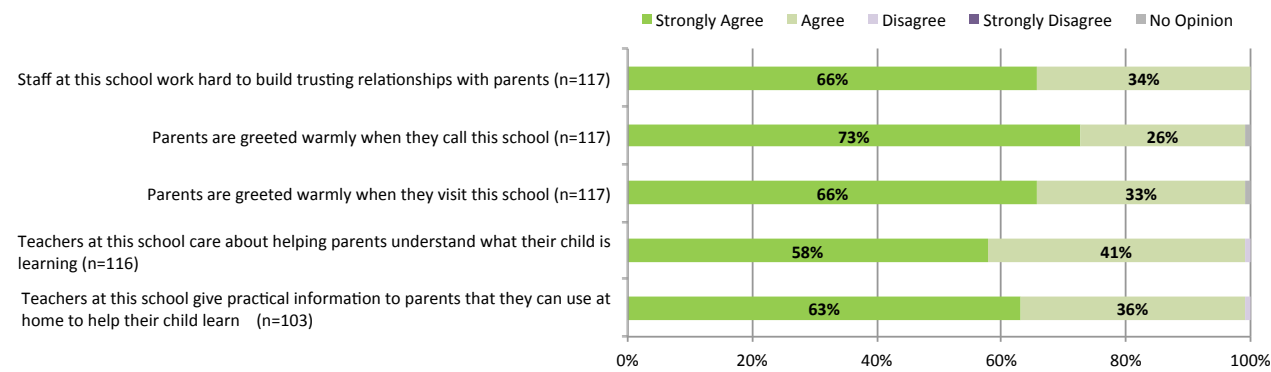
Teachers were very positive about the relationships they had with the parents of the students they teach, with 92% being *extremely satisfied* (36%) or *satisfied* (56%) with their relationship as seen in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: How satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the students you teach?



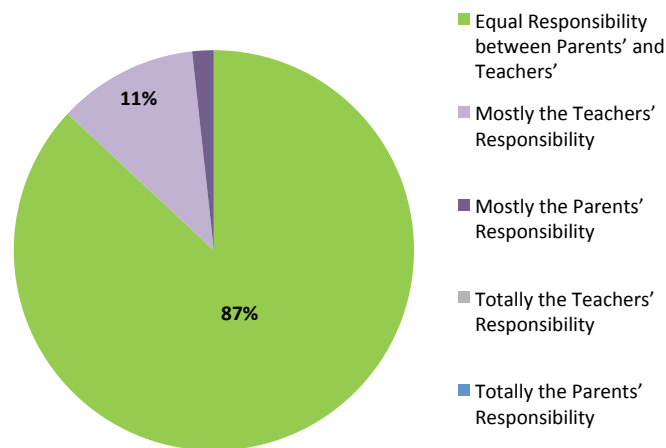
As per Figure 13, all teachers (100%) responding to the survey believed that staff at their school worked hard to build trusting relationships with parents. Similarly, almost all (99%) teachers agreed that parents were greeted warmly whether visiting or calling by phone. The same proportion also believed that teachers at the school cared about helping parents understand what they were learning and provided them with practical information that parents could use to help their children learn at home.

Figure 13: Teacher response to warmth, trust and care



Nearly nine out of ten (87%) teachers believed that a child’s education was a shared responsibility between parents and teachers as per Figure 14.

Figure 14: Teacher response to education responsibility



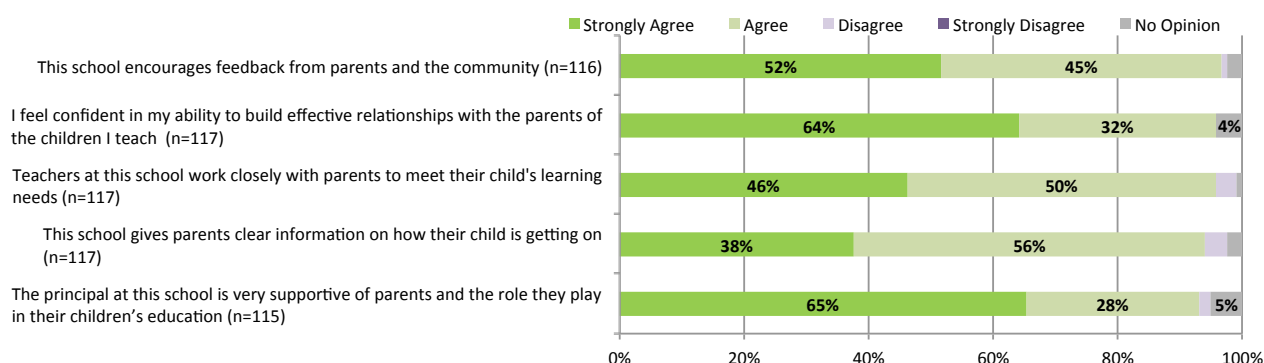
#### 4.4.2. SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

As shown in Figure 15, the vast majority (96%) of teachers felt confident in their ability to build effective relationships with parents and their children.

Also from Figure 15, the school environment appears supportive with most teachers responding that principals encouraged parents to play a role in their children's education (93%) and schools overall encouraging feedback from parents and the community (97%).

This links closely with 96% of teachers indicating that they worked closely with parents to meet their children's learning needs and their school provided information to parents about how their child was getting on (progressing) (93%) as per Figure 15.

Figure 15: Teacher response to school support



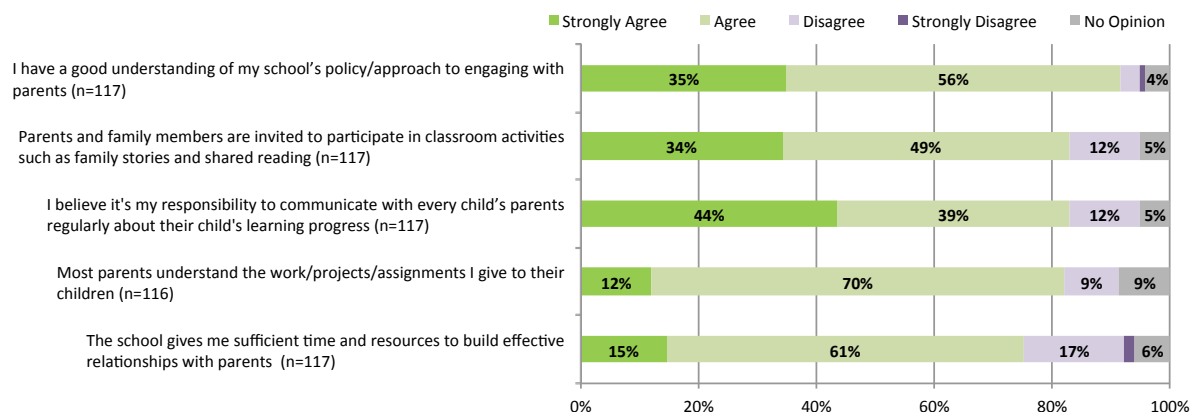
#### 4.4.3. RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

The majority of teachers had a good understanding about their school's engagement policy (91%). However, under two thirds (61%) agreed that the school gave them sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents, whilst 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed as per Figure 16. Also, as per Figure 16, though 82% of teachers agreed that most parents understood the work they gave to their children, only 12% strongly agree, and 9% disagree.

A large proportion (83%) of teachers reported that parents were invited to participate in the classroom where instruction would take place compared to 12% of teachers who disagreed that parents were invited to participate in class. This shows that teachers want parents to understand the process of learning applied in the classroom.

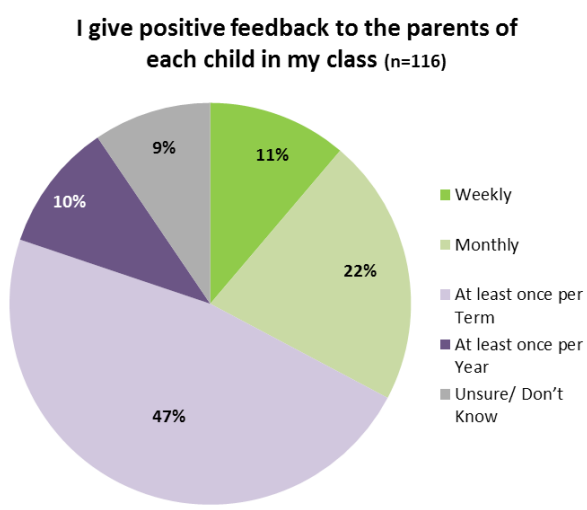
Though 83% of teachers agreed that it is their responsibility to communicate with every child's parent regularly about learning progress, this contrasts with the previous finding in Figure 15, where 94% of teachers agreed that the school provided parents with information about how their child was getting on (progressing) and also that teachers worked closely with parents to meet their children's learning needs (96%).

Figure 16: Teacher response to relationships and communication



In Figure 17, only 33% of teachers reported providing positive feedback to parents of each child in their class on a weekly (22%) or monthly (11%) basis. This may be an issue warranting further investigation.

Figure 17: Teacher response to positive feedback frequency



#### 4.4.4. KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT

As shown in Figure 18, half (48%) of teachers reported feeling uncomfortable talking about difficult topics with parents whilst half (48%) did not. On a positive note, difficulty levels appear to decrease as teaching experience increases (though this is not statistically significant), from 60% for under one years experience to 69% for one to three years experience, 55% for six years and more than six years (38%) as per Figure 18.

Figure 18: Teacher response to knowledge and support

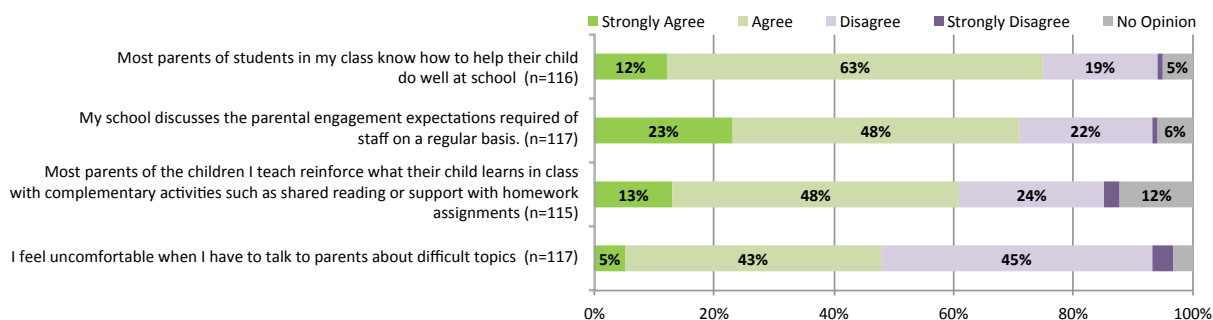
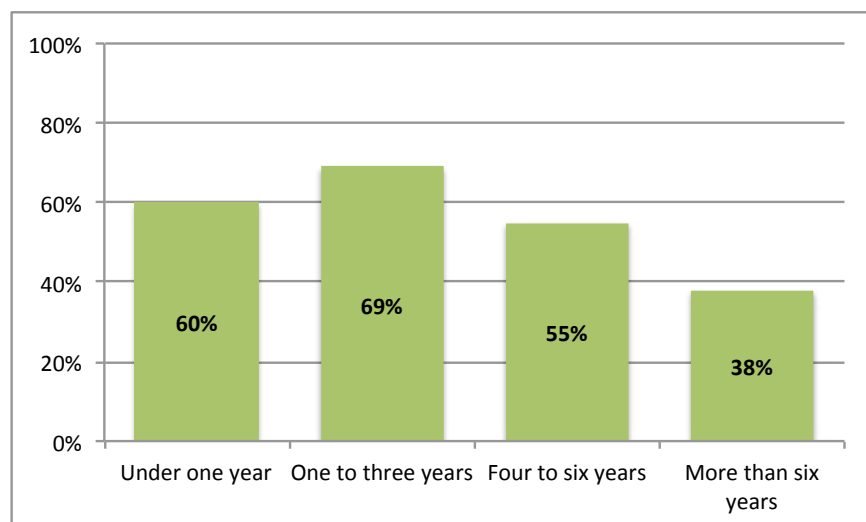


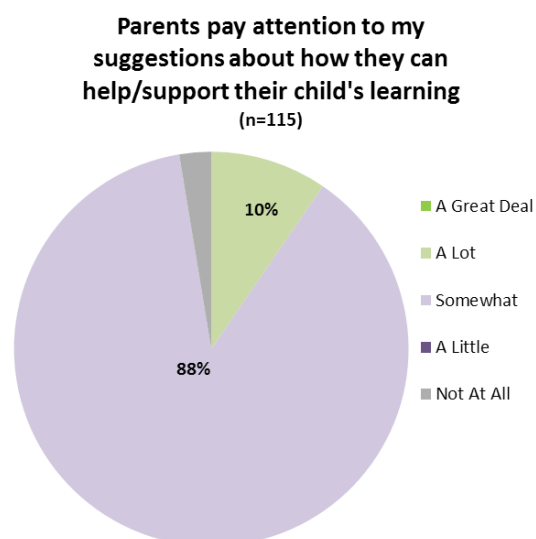
Figure 19: Teacher response in talking about difficult topics with parents by years of experience



Finally, as per Figure 18, one fifth (20%) of teachers disagree that the parents of their students know how to help their child do well at school.

This is consistent with 88% of teachers saying that parents only ‘somewhat’ pay attention to their suggestions about how they can help and support their child’s learning as per Figure 20.

Figure 20: Teacher response to parents paying attention to their learning suggestions

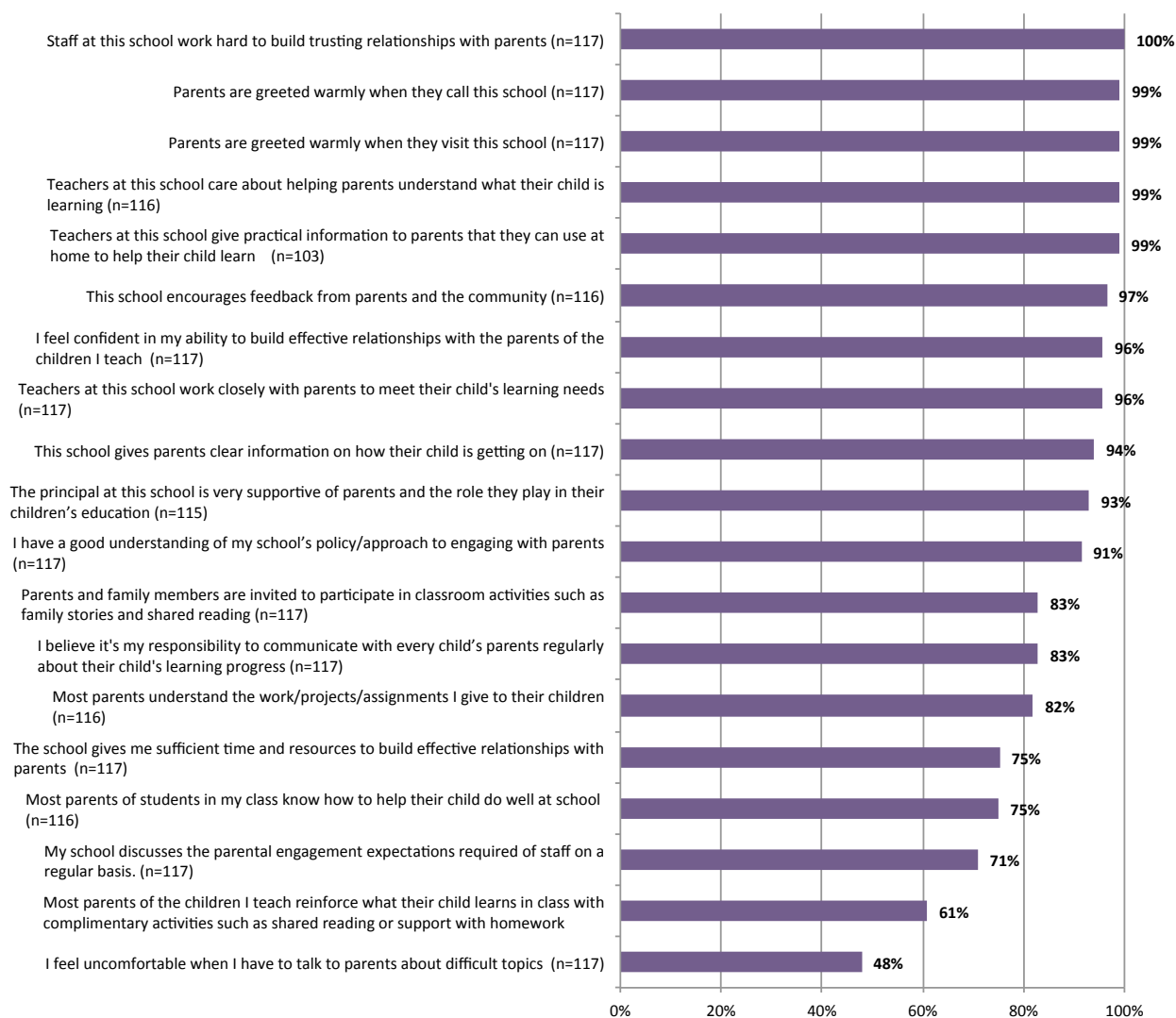


## 4.4.5.COMPARING TEACHER RESPONSES ACROSS QUESTIONS

As with the parent questions a simple question comparison can be derived from the net positive scores.

On most measures in Figure 21 below, the net positive scores were fairly high (at least above 70% and half over 90%) with the notable exception that almost half the teachers do not feel comfortable discussing difficult topics which indicates a potential for professional development in this area. Similarly, with almost 30% of teachers saying that parent engagement is not regularly discussed may provide an opportunity for how to integrate engagement into the school improvement agenda.

Figure 21: Teacher proportion of positive response by question



## 4.5. COMPARISON BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS

### 4.5.1. PARENT/TEACHER RESULTS COMPARISON

There were 15 questions that were similar across the parent and teacher surveys. The table below compares results using the combined agreement scores. There were a handful of measures on which parent and teacher responses were the same or similar such as:

- Satisfaction with the overall relationship (both 91%).
- A principal that is supporting of the role parents play in student education (parents, 90%, teachers 91%).
- Equally responsible for a child's education (parents, 82%, teachers 85%).

However there were also 12 differences in question responses between parents and teachers (all statistically significant) as shown in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Parent and teacher comparison of positive score significant differences

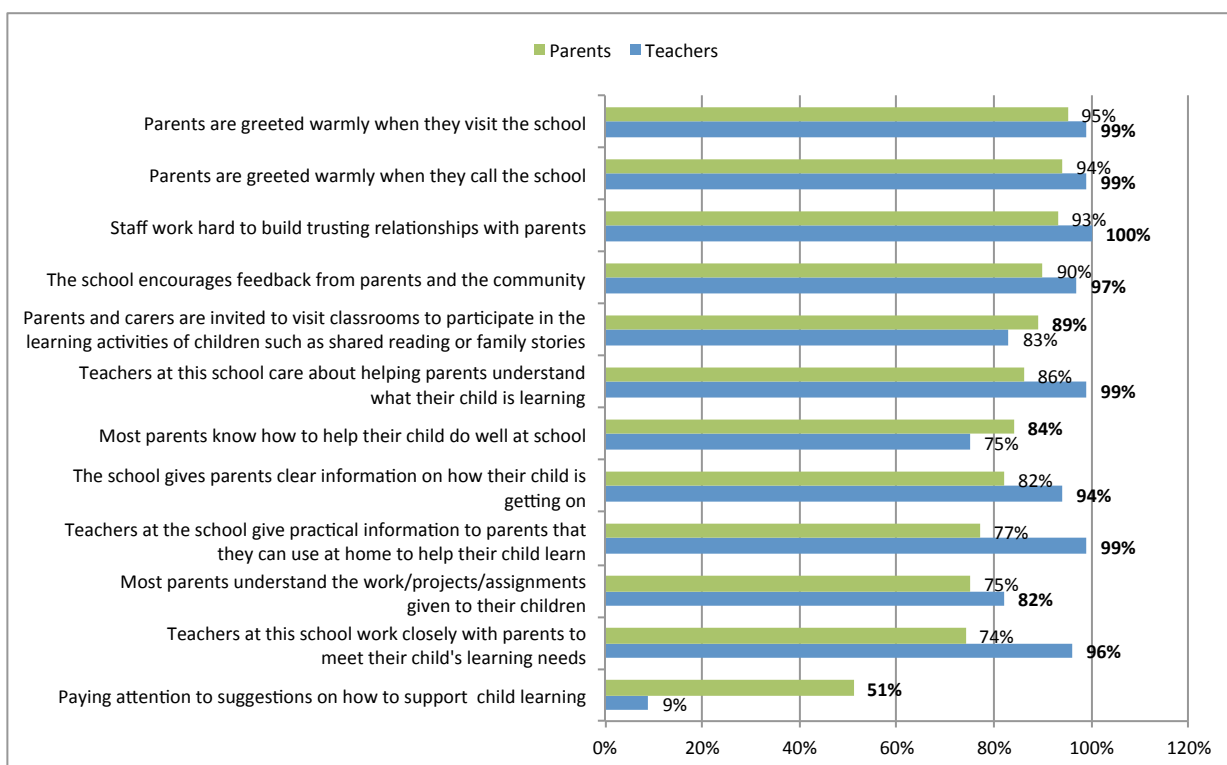


Figure 22 shows that parents had more positive responses on only three questions. Firstly, just over half (51%) of parents said that their child's teacher pays attention to their suggestions on how to support their child's learning a great deal (10%) or a lot (41%). This contrasts with only 9% of teachers believing parents pay attention to their suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning a lot (a 42 point difference); although 86% of teachers said parents '*somewhat*' pay attention to the teachers' suggestions. This finding may indicate that teachers have a strong sense of being the educational expert and viewing parents as not fully engaging with that aspect of the relationship between them. Alternatively, the language used in the question could be interpreted differently between parents and teachers and having more difficult children in the class could bias the teachers' response to a less positive one such as '*somewhat*' rather than '*a lot*'.



Secondly, 84% of parents compared to 75% of teachers agreed that most parents know how to help their child do well at school. Again, this response pattern may be indicative of a teacher as expert perspective.

Thirdly, 89% of parents compared to 83% of teachers agreed that parents were invited into the classroom. The visit may be more salient for the parent as a special occasion.

Teachers agreed to a greater extent than parents on nine questions. Almost all (96%) teachers agreed that they work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs, whereas only 74% of parents agree (a 22 point gap). This may reflect a disconnection between what some parents perceive they require and what teachers provide. For example, parents could want explicit instruction on how to help their child to be more successful and if this does not occur then parents may construe the teacher involvement as not as close as expected.

There was also a 22 point difference between teachers (99%) and parents (77%) on whether teachers provided practical information to assist parents to help learning at home. The issue here may be one of communication styles where the teacher may use language and concepts that are not understood by all parents. Alternatively, teachers may not be providing information in a way that is viewed as practical by some parents.

Also, as per Figure 22, whilst 99% of teachers said they cared about helping parents understand what their child is learning, 86% of parents agreed (a 13 point difference). This difference may be the result of teachers having a more holistic view than parents about the nature of care. For example, some parents may look at this from an outcome perspective rather than a process perspective.

There was also a 12 point difference between parents (82%) and teachers (94%) on whether the school gives parents clear information on how their child is 'getting on' which indicates that some parents may not get the information in a format or way that they understand.

All of the differences identified between parents and teachers in Figure 22 suggest the need for professional development to include engagement strategies around communication that can improve the teacher-parent connection and foster greater communication between parents and teachers.

## 5. TESTING THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

One of the main aims of the survey was to see if the questions used mapped back to the eight conceptual dimensions of parent engagement identified in Table 1: Final Conceptual Model as a test of the underlying theory of change.

Below is a table of all the parent survey questions with question numbers grouped by the conceptual dimensions.

**Table 5: Parent questions mapped to Conceptual Model dimensions**

Conceptual dimension	Qnum	Question
Frequency and quality of communication with the school	Q21	My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning
	Q5	My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community
Knowledge about what children are learning	Q18	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on
	Q19	Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning
Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	Q2	Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school
	Q24	Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child's school?
	Q4	The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education
	Q7	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school
Quality of relationship with the teacher	Q20	Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs
	Q22	My child's teacher gives me practical information that I can use at home to help my child learn
	Q23	When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually...
	Q3	Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me
Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	Q12	A child's education is (whose responsibility)
	Q16	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly
	Q17	Overall, my involvement with my child's education is...
Attendance at school events	Q6	Parents and carers are invited to visit classrooms to participate in the learning activities of children such as shared reading or family stories

Conceptual dimension	Qnum	Question
Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)	Q11	When I was at primary school I really enjoyed it
	Q13	I know how to help my child do well at school
	Q14	As a parent I have little or no impact on my child's academic success
	Q15	I often don't understand the work/projects/assignments my child brings homes from school
Frequency of family-led learning activities	Q10	How often does a parent/carer in your household read with your child?
	Q8	How often does a parent/carer in your household talk to your child about what they are learning at school?
	Q9	How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?

Similarly, the following table lists the teacher survey questions grouped by conceptual dimension.

**Table 6: Teacher questions mapped to Conceptual Model dimensions**

Conceptual dimension	Qnum	Question
Frequency and quality of communication with the school	Q7	I feel uncomfortable when I have to talk to parents about difficult topics
	Q10	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress
	Q14	This school encourages feedback from parents and the community
	Q23	I give positive feedback to the parents of each child in my class
Knowledge about what children are learning	Q6	Most parents understand the work/projects/assignments I give to their children
	Q17	This school gives parents clear information on how their child is getting on
	Q18	Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning
	Q21	Teachers at this school give practical information to parents that they can use at home to help their child learn

Conceptual dimension	Qnum	Question
Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	Q2	Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school
	Q8	I have a good understanding of my school's policy/approach to engaging with parents
	Q11	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school
	Q24	To what extent does this school help connect families to appropriate community resources, such as counselling or child and family centres, when they need help?
	Q25	Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the children you teach?
Quality of relationship with the teacher	Q9	This school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents
	Q12	Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents
	Q15	My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis
	Q19	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs
Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	Q4	A child's education is (whose responsibility)
	Q13	The principal at this school is very supportive of parents and the role they play in their children's education
	Q20	Parents pay attention to my suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning
Attendance at school events	Q16	Parents and family members are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading
Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)	Q3	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach
	Q5	Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school
Frequency of family-led learning activities	Q22	Most parents of the children I teach reinforce what their child learns in class with complimentary activities such as shared reading or support with homework assignments

## 5.1. PARENT SURVEY CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION ANALYSIS

The 23 questions relating to the eight conceptual dimensions of the parent survey were subjected to data reduction analysis to see if the eight dimensions were represented by the data. The analysis yielded only 10 questions and three dimensions that met the statistical requirement of robustness as per Table 7. Overall this 10 question model explained 55% of the variance in parent engagement.

Table 7: Parent initial data reduction results

Question	Loadings	Conceptual dimensions	Eigen
Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs	.902	Quality of relationship with the teacher	6.074
Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning	.892	Knowledge about what children are learning	
My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on	.874	Knowledge about what children are learning	
My child's teacher gives me practical information that I can use at home to help my child learn	.758	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning	.726	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	
Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me	.417	Quality of relationship with the teacher	1.516
The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education	.909	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community	.771	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	1.363
How often does a parent/carer in your household read with your child?	.879	Frequency of family-led learning activities	
How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?	.766	Frequency of family-led learning activities	

As the confirmatory analysis failed to support the eight-dimension model but did support a three dimension model, exploratory analysis was used to find the optimum three dimension model represented by the results.

The table below shows the dimensions that were derived from exploratory dimension analysis that resulted in the dimensions A, B and C, their corresponding questions and matching original conceptual dimensions.

Table 8: Parent final data reduction results

Dimension	Parent survey questions	Loading	Conceptual dimensions	Eigen
A	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on	.828	Knowledge about what children are learning	3.913
	Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning	.732	Knowledge about what children are learning	
	My child's teacher gives me practical information that I can use at home to help my child learn	.808	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
	When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually (positive/negative)	.654	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
B	Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school	.786	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	1.179
	The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education	.715	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school	.699	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
	Parents and carers are invited to visit classrooms to participate in the learning activities of children such as shared reading or family stories	.535	Attendance at school events	
C	How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?	.834	Frequency of family-led learning activities	1.086
	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly	.637	Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Four questions from two of the original conceptual dimensions *Knowledge about what children are learning*, and *Quality of relationship with the teacher* formed **Dimension A**. This dimension relates to parents being informed about their child's progress and learning as well as information about how parents can help with home learning. This dimension is called "**Keeping track of children's learning**".

**Dimension B** also had four questions in its grouping: three from the original dimension *Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school* and one from *Attendance at school events*. Traits within this dimension relate to welcoming and communication between the school and the parents. This dimension is called "**Belonging to the school community**".

**Dimension C** was formed by two questions formerly belonging to original dimensions *Frequency of family-led learning activities* and *Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)*. Traits within this dimension relate to the level to which parents engage with their child's learning and regular communication with the teacher. This dimension is called "**Relationships and communication**".

Together these dimensions account for 62% of the variance in the data which was a seven point improvement on the original model performance of 55%. The increase in the variance explained indicates we have a more robust model of question relationships.

## 5.2. TEACHER SURVEY CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION ANALYSIS

The 24 items relating to the eight conceptual dimensions of the teacher survey were subjected to data reduction analysis. The analysis yielded six dimensions that met the statistical requirement for robustness as per Table 9. Overall the model explained 70% of the overall variance in parent engagement.

However, as the items within dimensions were challenging to meaningfully categorise, it was decided to continue with exploratory analysis to see if a three factor solution similar to that which emerged for parents could be obtained. Having teacher and parent models that were consistent was also desirable from a comparative analysis perspective.

Table 9: Teacher initial data reduction results

Dimension	Teacher survey questions	Loading	Conceptual dimensions	Eigen
A	Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school	.896	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	3.419
	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school	.887	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
	Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents	.576	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
B	Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the children you teach?	.999	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	2.126
	Most parents understand the work/ projects/assignments I give to their children	.999	Knowledge about what children are learning	
C	This school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents	.553	Quality of relationship with the teacher	1.917
	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs	.850	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress	.724	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	
D	Most parents of the children I teach reinforce what their child learns in class with complimentary activities such as shared reading or support with homework assignments	.916	Frequency of family-led learning activities	1.751
	To what extent does this school help connect families to appropriate community resources, such as counselling or child and family centres, when they need help?	.900	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
E	Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning	.931	Knowledge about what children are learning	1.549
	The principal at this school is very supportive of parents and the role they play in their children's education	.913	Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	
F	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach	.871	Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)	1.146
	I have a good understanding of my school's policy/approach to engaging with parents	.599	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	



Question 22 from the survey: *Most parents of the children I teach reinforce what their child learns in class with complementary activities such as shared reading or support with homework assignments*, actually met specification but was removed on the basis that it did not fit within the factor logically and its removal actually improved the structure.

The table below shows new dimensions that were derived from further analysis - A, B and C their corresponding questions and matching original conceptual dimensions. In total 10 questions remained in the final analysis.

**Table 10: Teacher final data reduction results**

Factors	Teacher survey questions	Loadings	Conceptual dimensions	Eigen
B	Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school	.891	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	3.916
	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school	.794	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
	Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents	.632	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
	My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis	.577	Quality of relationship with the teacher	
A	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs	.826	Quality of relationship with the teacher	1.526
	Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning	.812	Knowledge about what children are learning	
	This school gives parents clear information on how their child is getting on	.678	Knowledge about what children are learning	
C	Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the students you teach?	.855	Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school	
	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach	.718	Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self-efficacy)	1.035
	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress	.508	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Five questions from three of the original conceptual dimensions *Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school*, *Quality of relationship with the teacher* and *Frequency and quality of communication with the school* formed **Dimension B**. This dimension relates to welcoming parents, relationship building by the school and expectations as well as openness and encouraging parental/community feedback. This dimension is called “**Belonging to the school community**”.

**Dimension A** had three questions in its grouping: two from the original dimension *Knowledge about what children are learning* and one from *Quality of relationship with the teacher*. This dimension relates to parental engagement in their child’s learning activities via teacher/parent communication. This dimension is called “**Keeping track of children’s learning**”.

**Dimension C** was formed by four questions formerly belonging to four original dimensions *Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school*, *Confidence in their ability to support children’s learning (self-efficacy)*, *Frequency and quality of communication with the school* and *Quality of relationship with the teacher*. This factor relates to the teachers self-assessed ability to engage with parents and maintain a good relationship related to their child’s learning progress. This dimension is called “**Relationships and communication**”.

Together these factors account for 65% of the variability in the dataset compared to 70% for the six-dimension solution from the confirmatory analysis.

Though the variance explained in the exploratory dimension analysis was less than the confirmatory analysis, this model reduced the number of questions required for a solution and the new dimensions were more easily defined and made better sense conceptually.

## 5.3. SUMMARY OF DIMENSION RESULTS

There were five questions that appeared in both parent and teacher factors as indicated in Table 11 below by blue shading of the text. As can be seen in Table 11 each of the three dimensions has at least one common question between parents and teachers. Due to this level of shared experience we believe that this three-dimension model of “Belonging to the school community”, “Keeping track of children’s learning” and “Relationships and communication” best represents the survey data and includes both similar and different aspects of parent engagement that are important for both parents and teachers. Although only three distinct dimensions were extrapolated from the data they represent six of the original conceptual dimensions for parents and five for teachers as per Tables 9 and 11. Having reduced the number of questions to ten for both parents and teachers this is a strong result of confidence in the underlying dimensions of the conceptual model.

Table 11: Dimension reduction alignment between parents and teachers

Theme	Parents	Teachers	Scale*
Belonging to the school community	Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school	Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school	SD D A SA NO
	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school	SD D A SA NO
	Parents and carers are invited to visit classrooms to participate in the learning activities of children such as shared reading or family stories	Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents	SD D A SA NO
	The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education	My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis	SD D A SA NO
Keeping track of children's learning	My child's teacher gives me practical information that I can use at home to help my child learn	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs	SD D A SA NO
	Teachers at my child's school care about helping me understand what my child is learning	Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning	SD D A SA NO
	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on	This school gives parents clear information on how their child is getting on	SD D A SA NO
	When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually positive (original question was mostly negative to mostly positive so scale needs revision)		SD D A SA NO scale changed to suit
Relationships and communication	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress	SD D A SA NO
	How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?		N/R OAT OAW EDMD NO
		How satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the students you teach	ED D S ES NO
		I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach	SD D A SA NO

\* SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree; NO = No Opinion; N/R = Never/Rarely; OAT = Once a Term; OAW = Once a Week; EDMD = Everyday/Most days; ED = Extremely Dissatisfied; D = Dissatisfied; S = Satisfied; ES = Extremely Satisfied.

## 5.4. PARENT DIMENSION DIFFERENCES BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC

Scores on the three dimensions range from one to four with four indicating the highest level of **“Belonging to the school community”**, **“Keeping track of children’s learning”** and **“Relationships and communication”**. Overall average scores for the dimensions are in the table below. Cross tabulation of these average scores by demographic variables showed no statistical differences between different demographic groups of parents except in the following cases:

- Parents with a Post School Certificate or Diploma had a significantly lower average score score of 3.4 for **“Belonging to the school community”** compared to parents with a Graduate degree who averaged a score of 3.5.
- Parent average scores for **“Relationships and communication”** drop gradually from 3.6 parents of preschool to 3.1 (year 5), 3.0 (year 6) 2.6 (year 7). The difference between parents of preschool children and parents of year 7 children was significant
- Parent average scores for **“Relationships and communication”** drop gradually from 3.5 for parents of children just starting at the school to 3.2 for parents of children who have been more than three years at the school.
- Parent average scores for **“Relationships and communication”** also drop the longer the parent is associated with the school: 3.4 for less than one year to 3.2 for more than three years.

The differences observed for **“Relationships and communication”** would indicate that over time there is a move away from directive parent engagement to more of a support and influencing approach as the child develops greater self identity.

Table 12: Parent overall mean scores by dimension

Dimension	Mean out of 4
Belonging to the school community	3.5
Keeping track of children’s learning	3.2
Relationships and communication	3.3

## 5.5. TEACHER DIMENSION DIFFERENCES BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC

Overall average scores for Teacher dimensions are in the table below. Cross tabulation of these average scores by demographic variables showed no statistical differences between different demographic groups of teachers except in the following cases:

- Teachers that have had any professional development in the last 12 months specifically related to engaging with families and communities had a greater average score for **“Keeping track of children’s learning”** (3.6) compared to 3.4 for those teachers that have not had professional development particularly in that area.
- For **“Belonging to the school community”**, teachers that had professional development in the last 12 months had greater mean scores (3.5) than those with no professional development (3.2).

Table 13: Teachers overall mean scores by dimension

Factor	Mean out of 4
Belonging to the school community	3.4
Keeping track of children's learning	3.5
Relationships and communication	3.3

Demographic differences seem to have very little impact on parent engagement as represented by the three dimensions of “**Belonging to the school community**”, “**Keeping track of children's learning**” and “**Relationships and communication**”. This may be due to a rather homogenous set of respondents as shown by the lack of Indigenous or cultural diversity in the data.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The high degree of positive scores in the results of both parent and teacher surveys suggests that the respondents were highly engaged in their school communities. Although the original conceptual dimensions did not eventuate in a confirmatory dimension analysis, a three-dimension model was identified that interleaved some of the original dimensions between parents and teachers. These dimensions utilised 10 questions from the parent survey and accounted for 62% of the variance in parent engagement. A further 10 questions were utilised in the dimensional model identified in the teacher survey that accounted for 65% of the variance in parent engagement. Importantly, the surveys shared five questions that allow teacher and parent responses to be compared.

### 6.1. THE PILOT - SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

Despite finding a coherent representation of the data the pilot survey did not support the original conceptual model. The very nature of a pilot study may account for this.

#### **Sample size**

Despite best practice efforts to improve the completion rate the parents responses did not get above 25%. The teacher response rate was about 90% which is an excellent result.

#### **School respondent profile**

The pilot survey was not intended to produce results for sub population analyses on Indigenous, disability or EAL/D groups. While there is no indication that these groups are less engaged in the sample schools, the pilot did not seek to test this hypothesis.

### 6.2. CONCLUSION

There are three key conceptual dimensions that are reflected in both parent and teacher responses that can be utilised to measure change both within, and between, these groups. The results of the data analysis have highlighted the importance of a relationship built on trust between school and family in the establishment and maintenance of parent engagement. Framing questions to allow direct comparisons between teachers and parents is also something that has not frequently occurred in past research. In combination with the development of a shared understanding and definition of parent engagement, the ability to measure parent engagement consistently across cohorts is a significant contribution to the research area and especially so in an Australian context.

The suite of work contained within the three technical reports has established a shared, evidence-informed understanding of what parent engagement is, developed a strong link between the key conceptual elements and enabled a consistent approach to measuring parent engagement in the ACT. This provides a strong foundation for future policy and practice that emphasises continuities and relationships between the home and school environments, reflecting the most recent theoretical and empirical research on parent engagement (Kim & Sheridan, 2015).

# REFERENCES

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# APPENDIX A – PARENT SURVEY

## FAMILY AND SCHOOL SURVEY

This short questionnaire will take less than 15 minutes to complete. It is an important part of the school review and development process.

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The responses of parents and carers will help schools to understand areas where they are performing well and areas for further development.

Please complete the survey for your **eldest child** who is attending the school.

The survey is completely confidential. You do not need to provide your name and we will not be able to identify you individually.

Should you have any problems filling out the survey please contact the survey administrator on 1800 068 489 or email [SchoolSurvey@aussurveys.com](mailto:SchoolSurvey@aussurveys.com).

If you have any questions or concerns that you would like to discuss please contact the Survey Manager on 6248 2407 or email [surveymanager@aracy.org.au](mailto:surveymanager@aracy.org.au).

Please note that this survey:

- Is voluntary. We hope that you answer every question, but you may skip any questions you feel are too personal.
- Is confidential. Please do not write your name anywhere on the survey.
- Has no right or wrong answers.
- Is not part of your child's schoolwork.
- Will not influence your child's learning or grades in any way.

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee- Protocol No: 2014/515; and by the ACT Department of Education and Training - Protocol No: 2013/0082-1.

Your school will be providing an analysis of the results at the completion of the survey.

**Thank you very much for your participation.**



Sincerely,  
Penny Dakin, National Program Director  
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth



## INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer by marking your chosen response clearly, like this:

Option 1      Option 2      Option 3

Please use a BLUE or BLACK pen ONLY.

Write clearly with BLOCK LETTERS for open-response questions, like this:

### **BLOCK LETTERS ONLY**

**There are no right or wrong answers. Thinking of your child as a student, please select the most appropriate response for you to each question below.**

Firstly, we would like to ask you about your relationship with the school.

---

**1. Which primary school does your child go to?**

Miles Franklin      Monash      Orana Steiner      St Francis of Assisi

---

**2. Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**3. Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**4. The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**5. My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**6. Parents and carers are invited to visit classrooms to participate in the learning activities of children such as shared reading or family stories.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**7. Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**8. How often does a parent/carer in your household talk to your child about what they are learning at school?**

Rarely/never

Once a term

Once a week

Every day/most days

No Opinion

---

**9. How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?**

Rarely/never

Once a term

Once a week

Every day/most days

No Opinion

---

**10. How often does a parent/carer in your household read with your child?**

Rarely/never

Once a term

Once a week

Every day/most days

No Opinion

**The following questions are a series of statements about education and learning. Please select the most appropriate response for you.**

---

**11. When I was at primary school I really enjoyed it.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**12. A child's education is:**

Totally the Parents' Responsibility

Mostly the Parents' Responsibility

Equal Responsibility between Parents and Teachers

Mostly the Teacher's Responsibility

Totally the Teacher's Responsibility

---

**13. I know how to help my child do well at school.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**14. As a parent I have little or no impact on my child's academic success.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**15. I don't often understand the work/projects/assignments my child brings home from school.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**16. I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

**Again, thinking of your child as a student, please select the most appropriate response for you to each question below.**

---

**17. Overall, my involvement with my child's education is:**

Much more than most parents

A bit more than most parents

About the same as most parents

A bit less than most parents

---

**18. My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**19. Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**20. Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**21. My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning.**

Not at all

A Little

Somewhat

A Lot

A Great Deal

---

**22. My child's teacher gives me practical information that I can use at home to help my child learn.**

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

No Opinion

---

**23. When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually...**

Mostly negative

Somewhat negative

Somewhat positive

Mostly positive

Unsure/ Don't know

---

**24. Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child's school?**

Extremely Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Satisfied Extremely satisfied  
No Opinion

---

**25. Do you have any feedback or suggestions for the school about what works for you or does not work for you when interacting with the school? Please write your comments in the text box below.**

Now we would like to ask some questions so that we can understand the family background and experiences of the people responding to the survey. Again, please select the most appropriate response to each question.

---

**1. What is your eldest child's year level at the primary school?**

P K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

**2. When did your eldest child at this primary school first start at this school?**

During the last 12 months 1 – 3 years ago More than 3 years ago Don't know

---

**3. How many years have you been associated with this primary school as a parent or carer?**

During the last 12 months 1 – 3 years ago More than 3 years ago Don't know

---

**4. Who is completing this questionnaire?**

Father Mother Carer Other

---

**5. Does your family speak a language other than English at home?**

No Yes What is the language?.....

---

**6. Do either of the parents or the child identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

**PLEASE MARK ALL THAT APPLY**

No                      Yes, Mother                      Yes, Father                      Yes, Child

---

**7. Does your eldest child at this primary school have a physical disability?**

No              Yes – Slight              Yes – Moderate              Yes – Severe              Prefer not to Answer

---

**8. Does your eldest child at this primary school have an intellectual disability?**

No              Yes – Slight              Yes – Moderate              Yes – Severe              Prefer not to Answer

---

**9. What is the highest level of education obtained by any parent/carer of the eldest child at this primary school including yourself?**

Did not complete Year 12              Completed Year 12              Post School Certificate or Diploma  
Graduate Degree Post      Graduate Degree      Prefer not to Answer

Thank you for completing this survey. Please remind other parents you know at the school, especially dads to have their say. Please return this survey in the reply paid envelope provided, or if you have misplaced the envelope, address an envelope to:

ARACY Family and School Survey  
c/- Australian Survey Research  
Reply Paid 88941  
AYSWATER VIC 3153

# APPENDIX B – TEACHER SURVEY

## FAMILY AND SCHOOL SURVEY

This short questionnaire, will take less than 15 minutes to complete. It is an important part of the school review and development process. The aggregated responses of teachers from selected schools will help schools to understand areas where they are doing a good job and areas that foster an environment of continuous improvement.

---

The answers you provide are completely confidential and you cannot be individually identified. Should you have any problems filling out the survey please contact the survey administrator on

1800 068 489 or email to [ARACYSurvey@aussurveys.com](mailto:ARACYSurvey@aussurveys.com).

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey content that you would like to discuss please contact the Survey Manager on 6248 2407 or email [surveymanager@aracy.org.au](mailto:surveymanager@aracy.org.au).

Please note that this survey:

- Is voluntary. We hope that you answer every question, but you may skip any questions you feel are too personal.
- Is confidential. Please do not write your name anywhere on the survey.
- Has no right or wrong answers.

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee- Protocol No 2014/515; and the ACT Department of Education and Training - Protocol No 2013/0082-1.

**Thank you very much for your participation.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Dakin', enclosed within a large, stylized oval loop.

Penny Dakin, National Program Director  
Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

## INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer by marking your chosen response clearly, like this:

Option 1      Option 2      Option 3

Please use a BLUE or BLACK pen ONLY.

Write clearly with BLOCK LETTERS for open-response questions, like this:

### BLOCK LETTERS ONLY

**There are no right or wrong answers. Please select the most appropriate response for you to each question below.**

---

**1. At which primary school are you a teacher?**

Miles Franklin      Monash      Orana Steiner      St Francis of Assisi

---

**2. Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**3. I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**4. A child's education is:**

Totally the Parents' Responsibility	Mostly the Parents' Responsibility
Equal Responsibility between Parents and Teachers	Mostly the Teacher's Responsibility
Totally the Teacher's Responsibility	

---

**5. Most parents of students in my class know how to help their child to do well at school.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**6. Most parents understand the work/projects/assignments I give to their children.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**7. I feel uncomfortable when I have to talk to parents about difficult topics.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**8. I have a good understanding of my school's policy/approach to engaging with parents**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**9. The school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**10. I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**11. Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**12. Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**13. The principal at this school is very supportive of parents and the role they play in their children's education.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**14. This school encourages feedback from parents and the community.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**15. My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**16. Parents and family members are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**17. This school gives parents clear information on how their child is getting on.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---



---

**18. Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**19. Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**20. Parents pay attention to my suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning.**

Not At All      A Little      Somewhat      A Lot      A Great Deal

---

**21. Teachers at this school give practical information to parents that they can use at home to help their child learn.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**22. Most parents of the children I teach reinforce what their child learns in class with complementary activities such as shared reading or support with homework assignments.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Agree      Strongly Agree      No Opinion

---

**23. I give positive feedback to the parents of each child in my class...**

Weekly      Monthly      At least once per Term  
At least once per Year      Unsure/Don't know

---

**24. To what extent does this school help connect families to appropriate community resources, such as counselling or child and family centres, when they need help?**

Not at all      A little      Somewhat      A great extent      No Opinion

---

**25. Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the students you teach?**

Extremely Dissatisfied      Dissatisfied      Satisfied      Extremely Satisfied      No Opinion

---

---

**26. Do you have any feedback or suggestions for the school about what works for you or what does not work for you when engaging with parents? Please write your comments in the text box below.**

**Now we would like to ask some questions about you. Again, please select the most appropriate response to each question.**

---

**1. What year do you primarily teach?**

P	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Composite Teaching			Specialist Teacher			LSU/Disability Teacher		

---

**2. When did you first start teaching at this school?**

During the last 12 months	1 – 3 years ago	More than 3 years ago	Don't know
---------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------	------------

---

**3. How many years in total have you been teaching?**

Under one year	1 – 3 years	4 – 6 years	More than 6 years
----------------	-------------	-------------	-------------------

---

**4. Have you done any professional development in the last 12 months specifically related to engaging with families and communities?**

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

---

**5. Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

No	Yes, Aboriginal only	Yes, Torres Strait Islander only
Yes – Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander		

Thank you for participating. Please return this survey in the reply paid envelope provided, or if you have misplaced the envelope, address an envelope to:

ARACY Family and School Survey  
c/- Australian Survey Research  
Reply Paid 88941  
BAYSWATER VIC 3153

# APPENDIX C – SURVEY TIMELINE

## PROGRESSING PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACT – PROJECT TIMELINE FOR SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY PILOT 2015

Objective	Description	Timeline	Commitment from pilot school
Stakeholder participation and feedback	As the project representative from your school ARACY would like to invite you to join the Stakeholder Committee. The pilot schools play a pivotal role in the project and we value your input. The project Stakeholder Committee meets for one hour, approximately four times per year. You will be notified of upcoming meetings.	Jan-Dec 2015	Attendance at project stakeholder meetings.
Pre-piloting of survey	<p>Two Parent Engagement Surveys (one for parents and one for teachers) are being designed to enable schools to benchmark current levels of engagement in your school community, identify appropriate strategies for strengthening engagement, and, in the future, measure the effectiveness of related interventions or programs. In order to check the survey questions before the pilot roll-out ARACY will be performing cognitive testing with a few volunteers. Cognitive testing is used to ensure that the survey questions are appropriate, comprehensible, understood consistently and clearly linked to the underlying constructs they aim to measure. A small number of parents and teachers will be interviewed in order to cognitively test the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of the survey instrument</li> <li>• Local relevance of the questions</li> <li>• Familiarity of constructs</li> <li>• Ease of instrument layout</li> </ul> <p>Feedback from the cognitive testing will be used to refine the survey instrument</p>	Jun-Jul 2015	Assist ARACY in identifying approximately 3 parents of primary school aged children and 3 primary school teachers from your school or community to test the draft survey.
Preparation for the pilot survey roll-out	In order ensure the successful roll-out of the survey in your school ARACY will be meeting with relevant school staff and community members about an education and distribution plan. In addition to encouraging parents to participate in the survey we'd like to inform them as to why it is an important project and exciting opportunity for the school. The survey tool is being developed for online availability (links can, for example, be distributed via school communication systems - text messages, email, facebook, newsletter). It may be possible for paper copies of the survey to be distributed.	Jun-Jul 2015	Assist ARACY in developing a distribution plan for optimal response at your school.
Survey pilot	Pilot schools will, with the help of ARACY, advertise and distribute the survey, encouraging parents and teachers to respond. Surveys can be made available to parents and teachers for up-to two months.	Aug-Sep 2015	Advertise and distribute the survey among parents and teachers at your school.
Report	Short reports will be prepared by ARACY for each pilot school analysing the survey data collected from their school population.	Dec 2015	n/a

# APPENDIX D – SURVEY INVITATION LETTERS

## Parent version [do not send until survey is live]

Dear Parent or Carer

As part of the ACT Government school review and development process our school has been selected to take part in a pilot survey on family and school, and as a parent/carer of a child at the school you are invited to participate. The findings from this survey will help our school to understand areas where we are doing a good job and areas for further development. Your participation is very important as the higher the number of parents and carers completing the survey, the more robust the results will be.

Your decision to participate will help us a great deal and will not negatively influence your child's learning or grades in any way.

Your participation is completely voluntary. To access the online survey you will need to enter the link below into an internet browser or click on the link directly. The survey link does not identify you but ensures that only parents or carers of children at the school can participate in the survey.

**[www.parent-survey.com.au](http://www.parent-survey.com.au)**

The survey link will be valid until close of business Friday 4 September. Until you submit the completed survey you can logoff and logon at any time and continue your responses from the last question completed.

You can complete the online survey on a smartphone, tablet or computer. However, should you prefer a paper version please request one from the school front office. Once completed please mail the paper survey to the address on the reply paid envelope provided.

I would be most grateful if you would take the opportunity to contribute to this important initiative.

Kind regards

Principal

**Teacher version [do not send until survey is live]**

Dear Staff

As part of the school review and development process our primary school has been selected to take part in a pilot survey on family and school, and as a teacher in the school you are requested to participate. The findings will help the school to understand areas where we are performing well and areas for further development. Your participation is important as the higher the number of teachers completing the survey, the more robust the results will be.

While I strongly encourage you to complete the survey due to the small population of teachers involved, your participation is completely voluntary. To access the online survey you will need to enter the following link into an internet browser or click on the link directly. The survey link does not identify you but ensures that only teachers at the school can participate in the survey.

**[www.teacher-survey.com.au](http://www.teacher-survey.com.au)**

The survey link will be valid until close of business Friday 4 September. Until you submit the completed survey you can logoff and logon and continue completing the survey from the last question completed.

You can complete the online survey on a smartphone, tablet or computer.

I would be most grateful if you would take the opportunity to contribute to this important initiative.

Kind regards

Principal

# APPENDIX E – CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Figure 23: Operationalising the conceptual model

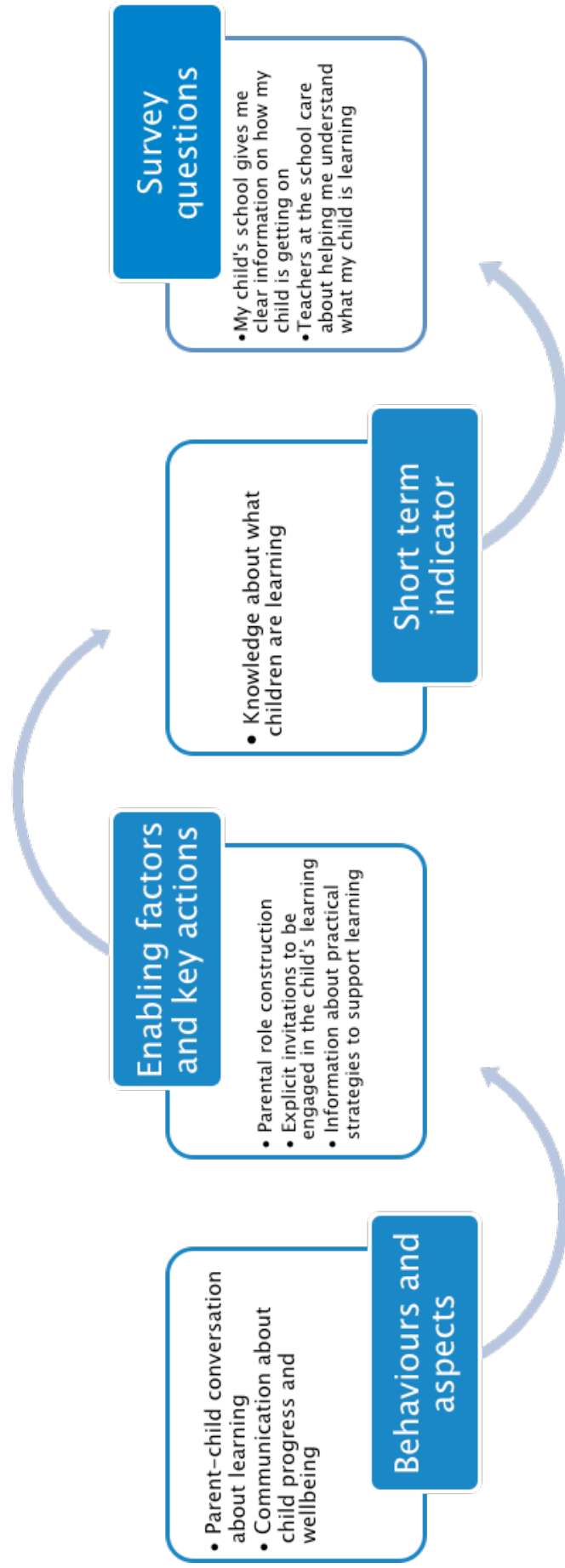


Table 14: Mapping questions to the conceptual model: parent survey

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
Specific information about what families can do to help learning	Parent-teacher relationships	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community
Genuine partnership			My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school		Knowledge about what children are learning	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on
Parent-child conversation about learning	Parental role construction		Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning
Communication about child progress and wellbeing	Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning Information about practical strategies to support learning	Sense of welcome/belonging at the school	Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school
Genuine partnership between parents and schools	School culture supportive of engagement		Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school
Communication about children's wellbeing and progress	Welcoming environment		Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child's school?
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Positive parent/teacher relationships Parental engagement policies and leadership		The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education
Parent/child conversation, around learning	Positive parent/teacher relationships	Quality of the relationship with the teacher	Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me
Support for social and emotional wellbeing	Communication about children's wellbeing and progress		Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction		When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually ...

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
High expectations Shared reading Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community	Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	A child's education is [whose responsibility]
			I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly
			Overall, my involvement with my child's education is ...
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help Parent/child conversation, especially around learning	Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community Regular communication about progress and wellbeing	Attendance at school events	Parents and carers are invited to visit classrooms to participate in the learning activities of children such as shared reading or family stories
Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community Cognitively stimulating environment	School culture supportive of engagement Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community	Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)	When I was at primary school I really enjoyed it
			I know how to help my child do well at school
			As a parent I have little or no impact on my child's academic success
			I often don't understand the work/projects/assignments my child brings home from school
Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories Homework support Shared reading	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Information about practical strategies to support learning	Frequency of family led learning activities	How often does a parent/carer in your household talk to your child about what they are learning at school?
			How often does a parent/carer in your household help your child with homework?
			How often does a parent/carer in your household read with your child?



Table 15: Mapping questions to the conceptual model: Teacher survey

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
Specific information about what families can do to help learning	Parent-teacher relationships	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	This school encourages feedback from parents and the community
Genuine partnership			I feel uncomfortable when I have to talk to parents about difficult topics
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school			I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with every child's parents regularly about their child's learning progress
			I give positive feedback to the parents of each child in my class [frequency]
Parent-child conversation about learning	Parental role construction Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning Information about practical strategies to support learning	Knowledge about what children are learning	Most parents understand the work/projects/ assignments given to their children
Communication about child progress and wellbeing			Teachers at this school care about helping parents understand what their child is learning
			This school gives parents clear information on how their child is getting on
			Teachers at this school give practical information to parents that they can use at home to help their child learn
Genuine partnership between parents and schools	School culture supportive of engagement Welcoming environment Positive parent/teacher relationships Parental engagement policies and leadership Partnerships with community agencies and the ability to refer families to extra support when needed	Sense of welcome/belonging at the school	Parents are greeted warmly when they call this school
Communication about children's wellbeing and progress			To what extent does this school help connect families to appropriate community resources, such as counselling or child and family centres when they need help?
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school			Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school
Support for social and emotional wellbeing			I have a good understanding of my school's policy/ approach to engaging with parents
			Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with the parents of the children you teach?

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
Parent/child conversation, around learning	Positive parent/teacher relationships	Quality of the relationship with the teacher	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs
Support for social and emotional wellbeing	Communication about children's wellbeing and progress		The school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction		Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents
			My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis
High expectations	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community	Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	A child's education is [whose responsibility]
Shared reading			Parents pay attention to my suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning
Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories			The principal at this school is very supportive of parents and the role they play in their children's education
			This school involves parents in improving students academic outcomes to the following extent
Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community	Attendance at school events	Parents and family members are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.
Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help	Regular communication about progress and wellbeing		Parents are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.
Parent/child conversation, especially around learning	School culture supportive of engagement Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community	Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach
Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community			Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school
Cognitively stimulating environment			Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
	<p>Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction</p> <p>Information about practical strategies to support learning</p>	Frequency of family-led learning activities	Most parents of the children I teach reinforce what their child learns in class with complimentary activities such as shared reading or support with homework assignments

