



Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT

Our Evidence Base
Measuring Parental Engagement

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Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
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Suggested citation: Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. (2015). Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT. Our Evidence Base. Measuring Parental Engagement. Canberra, ACT.

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Publishing Services Job no: 150900



Minister's Message

Parental Engagement in the ACT

The Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT project underpins the ACT Government's commitment to delivering the best schools and the best education for children and young people. The project sees learning as a partnership in which all parents are valued and respected as children's first and most influential teachers.

In 2014, the ACT Government commissioned the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to research an evidence based understanding of parental engagement - what it is, why it matters, and how best to foster it.

I am now pleased to provide *Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT Our Evidence Base: Measuring Parental Engagement*. This report is all about the 'how' of parental engagement – how to do it and how to do it effectively. It complements ARACY's first technical report for this project *Our Evidence Base: Defining Parental Engagement* released in November 2014.

Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT Our Evidence Base: Measuring Parental Engagement provides a survey instrument that schools can use to measure levels of parental engagement. The information gained through the survey will enable schools to develop targeted strategies to build and strengthen partnerships with families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Burch'.

Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Education and Training

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Introduction

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

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;
- producing evidence-informed resources for families and schools to equip them to strengthen their parental engagement practice; and
- developing a cross-sectoral model and measurement approach that can be used across government, Catholic and independent schools.

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 it 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.

This report builds on the technical definition and outlines the process for developing an approach to measuring parental engagement in the ACT. It provides a review of existing approaches to measuring parental engagement in use in Australia and internationally and canvasses a range of potential indicators and measures. Additionally, this report reviews the methodological, conceptual and logistical issues relating to producing a measure of parental engagement that can be used by schools to set a baseline measure of parental engagement within their school community and monitor change.

Extending the parental engagement conceptual model

The conceptual model presented in *Defining Parental Engagement* (Figure 1) synthesised the evidence in relation to:

- aspects of parental engagement that matter most for children's outcomes;
- short-term changes in children's beliefs and capabilities around learning; and
- long-term outcomes for children that parental engagement can contribute toward.
- This report further develops the conceptual model by outlining:
 - The 'how' of parental engagement; the enabling conditions and specific strategies and approaches that are most effective in influencing parental engagement.
 - The elements of parents' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that are considered predictors and enablers of parental engagement in learning and that can be utilised as indicators of change.

The final version of the conceptual model (Figure 2) synthesises the evidence about parental engagement, articulates the underpinning theory of change and provides a range of indicators of the short and long-term outcomes of parental engagement.

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).

Figure 1: Conceptual model from Defining Parental Engagement

	Aspects of family engagement that matter most for children’s outcomes	Shorter term outcomes for the child	Longer term outcomes for the child
Family-led learning	High expectations	Belief in the importance of education Self-efficacy Academic competence / confidence Motivation and engagement in learning Persistence Skills for learning Social and emotional wellbeing	Academic achievement Mental health and wellbeing Mitigating the impact of disadvantage on educational outcomes
	Shared reading		
	Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories		
	Homework support that provides an appropriate environment, rules that are consistent with school expectations, encourages autonomous learning and fosters positive parent-child interactions		
	Cognitively stimulating environment		
	Support for social and emotional wellbeing, peer relationships and teacher relationships		
Family-school partnership	Communication about children’s wellbeing and progress		
	Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help		
	Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school		

Figure 2: 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	High expectations	<p>Enabling factors</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>Key actions</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>Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)</p> <p>Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self-efficacy)</p> <p>Sense of welcome/belonging at the school</p> <p>Frequency and quality of communication with the school</p> <p>Quality of the relationship with the teacher</p> <p>Attendance at school events</p> <p>Knowledge about what children are learning</p> <p>Frequency of family-led learning activities</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>
	Shared reading				
	Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories				
	Homework support that provides an appropriate environment, rules that are consistent with school expectations, encourages autonomous learning and fosters positive parent-child interactions				
	Cognitively stimulating environment				
	Support for social and emotional wellbeing, peer relationships and teacher relationships				
	Communication about children's wellbeing and progress				
	Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help				
	Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school				
	Family-school partnership				

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, there are significant interactions between them.

Importantly, the conceptual model 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.

Quality of the evidence

The enabling conditions and effective strategies synthesised in the conceptual model were identified through an extensive literature review. Parental engagement programs that have been evaluated using experimental, quasi-experimental or pre-post study designs were examined 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 consistent however, largely due to inconsistent approaches to conceptualising and measuring parent engagement, 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, values or practices. 'Grey literature' on parental engagement is extensive; it includes numerous practice guides, project reports and case studies. Notably this review focuses on the research literature and where possible, privileging peer-reviewed articles in academic journals.

To the greatest extent practicable the programs, strategies and approaches identified in the conceptual model are grounded in, and informed by, evidence. Several of the elements can be considered to be supported by the highest evidence standards¹; 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 more robust evidence is developed.

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.

What works to improve parental engagement

One of the key findings of research on effective parental engagement is that isolated, one-off initiatives are insufficient, ineffective and reflect an inefficient use of resources. Additionally, initiatives that are not co-designed and co-created with families (i.e. engagement opportunities that happen on the school's terms) are less effective. Weiss, Lopez and Rosenberg (2010) assert that effective family engagement requires a systemic, integrated and sustained approach, not an add-on or a random act (Henderson et al, 2007; HFRP, 2014). There is consensus among experts and leading practitioners that 'best practice' in parental engagement requires engagement policies and practices that reflect the needs and priorities of the whole school community with inbuilt mechanisms for ongoing exploration and engagement with those needs (Educational Transformations, 2007; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Kendall, Straw, Jones, Springate, & Grayson, 2008).

Systemic means family engagement that is purposefully designed as a core component of educational goals such as school readiness or student achievement.

Integrated engagement will be embedded into structures and processes including training and professional development, teaching and learning, community collaboration and the use of data for continuous improvement and accountability.

Sustainable engagement will have adequate resources to ensure effective strategies with the power to impact on student learning and achievement (Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders, 2014).

Specific elements identified in the conceptual model are all interrelated and mutually reinforcing; separated out primarily for clarity and measurement purposes. Divided into 'enabling factors' and 'key actions', they are broad, evidence-informed categories of effort. Research suggests that the specific form of these enablers and actions should reflect the context and priorities of school communities and should be co-designed with families.

Family engagement as a shared responsibility also consists of mutually agreed upon, or co-constructed, roles. Families and schools should actively engage in dialogue about their complementary responsibilities and strive to reach agreement on family roles as consumers of education, partners in student learning, and advocates for high performance (HFRP, 2010, p. 3)

It is also important to emphasise that the actions that schools can take primarily relate to the 'family school partnership' elements of the conceptual model and should not be considered as ends in themselves. Strategies that engage parents in school and build strong reciprocal relationships between families and schools impact most on children's learning outcomes when they are also focused on strengthening and enabling family-led learning. Actions such as ensuring parents feel welcome at the school, encouraging them to attend school events and build relationships with teachers can make a significant difference, especially when these relationships are used to:

- help establish a climate that enables parents to engage with their children's learning;
- influence parental role construction;
- build parental self-efficacy, knowledge and skills; and
- facilitate participation in more intensive learning-focused programs as well as referral to other services that may assist the family.

Enabling factors

The following section outlines the evidence and core components of the enabling factors that support improved parental engagement in learning:

- A school culture supportive of engagement.
- A welcoming environment.
- Positive parent-teacher relationships.
- Parental engagement policies and leadership.

School culture supportive of engagement and welcoming environments

A school's culture is about everyday norms, shared beliefs and agreed roles. Embedding parental engagement in school culture is important because it shifts practice 'beyond random acts' of engagement (Weiss, Lopez and Rosenberg, 2010). It makes engagement a core part of the school's everyday routines, links it to strategic planning and performance monitoring, embeds it in teaching practice, considers it in the design of physical spaces, therefore shaping everyday interactions between families and schools.

Family and community engagement is siloed into disparate programs that are disconnected from instructional practice and school [improvement] strategies. This state of 'random acts of family involvement' has to give way to systemic and sustained approaches (Weiss, Lopez and Rosenberg, 2010).

Research shows that parental perception of how welcoming the school is directly impacts on their engagement at school and in family-led learning (Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo, & Wood, 2008; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005). Factors that influence a welcoming climate include the implicit and explicit messaging in the design of school entrance spaces, personal contact with school staff, accessible and frequent communication and invitations and opportunities for parents' involvement in school decision-making and activities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; K.V. Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Kendall et al., 2008).

A school culture that supports engagement also proactively responds to potential barriers to engagement. A perception that schools value the role of parents in their children's learning is especially important for parents who feel uncomfortable or intimidated coming to school or talking to teachers and school staff – whether this is because they had poor experiences at school themselves, feel out of place, experience language barriers, or fear negative communication about their child. Parents across the socio-economic spectrum face challenges to engaging with their children's schools. These include:

- families with two working parents;
- non-standard work hours;
- fly-in, fly-out arrangements;
- inflexible workplaces; and
- parents with multiple children, potentially in different schools.

Regardless of socio-economic status, parents may hold role construction beliefs that discourage engagement with school or do not prioritise engagement in their children's learning.

Qualities of the school environment, including school structure and management practices, may enhance several aspects of parent-school relationships, including parents' knowledge that they are welcome in the school, that they are well informed about student learning and progress, and that school personnel respect them, their concerns, and their suggestions (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005, p. 110).

Proactively responding to these barriers involves developing accessible pathways into the school, as well as outreach with parents outside of school settings to build relationships (Huat See & Gorard, 2013). For example:

- Focusing on family strengths, emphasising what parents can do and the unique contribution that they can bring.
- Early relationship-building with parents in early childhood or community settings prior to the transition to school (Dockett and Perry, 2014).
- Providing information, including orientations for parents (open days, welcome evenings etcetera), information about the school curriculum and the education system, the impact parents can have on children's learning and specific strategies families can use to promote learning.
- Inviting parents into school environments for enjoyable and informal interactions that are welcoming, comfortable and culturally appropriate.
- Home visits, drop-ins, and meetings with parents in neutral settings.
- Facilitating access to 'extended services' (e.g. child care, healthcare, playgroups, and family support services) within a school setting.
- Ongoing communication with parents that provides 'positive news' about their children's achievements.
- Developing activities and approaches that cater to the needs/interests of specific groups (i.e. fathers, EALD families or defence families).
- Providing explicit recognition of the cultural backgrounds of families in the school community.

Positive parent-teacher relationships

Relationships between parents and teachers are crucial for enabling partnerships between the family and the school, and for helping parents to provide strong family-led learning (Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders, 2014). Parents need to understand how their children are progressing, what they can do to support children's learning at home (by encouraging the things children enjoy and assisting with areas they are struggling), and if there are any wellbeing issues that are impacting their children. Conversely, parents have a depth of knowledge about their child that can be a significant resource for teachers – including about how they learn best, how to manage their behaviour, topics they are excited about and interested in, and any contextual factors that may be impacting their time at school (Bull et al., 2008; Kendall et al., 2008).

Parents appear more likely to respond to invitations to be involved in their children's learning at school and home when trusting relationships have been established (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Trusting and respectful relationships between families and teachers requires time, effort and skills. Barriers to effective relationships can emerge both parent and teacher attitudes, beliefs, and experiences (Ferguson et al., 2008; Kendall et al., 2008).

Investing in training and professional development for teachers is a key strategy for shaping teachers' beliefs about the role of parents in children's learning. Moreover, it enhances teachers' skills, knowledge and confidence to engage with families successfully (Education Review Office, 2008; Educational Transformations, 2007; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Naturally, creating opportunities for communication and relationship building were identified in the literature as a key strategy for improving relationships, including:

- Opportunities for parents and teachers to talk about children's strengths, parents' aspirations for their children, family circumstances that may impact children's wellbeing, strategies for ongoing communication, shared planning and jointly developing strategies to address challenges.
- Providing initial or ongoing outreach to families.
- Dedicated parent liaison workers, particularly where the school community includes families from different cultural groups.
- Engagement of teachers and parents together in courses or workshops on supporting children's learning.

- Parents and teachers collaborating around a common goal or cause (e.g. drug awareness, building a school garden).

Parent engagement policies and leadership

Qualitative research conducted for the *Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT* project identified leadership as a crucial factor in determining a school's commitment to parental engagement and the effectiveness of strategies to improve engagement. This is borne out in the research literature.

Overall, school climate sets a strong contextual foundation for involvement, and school principals have a critical role in creating and maintaining a positive, welcoming climate. These practices appear especially important in schools serving families of children at higher risk for poor educational outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005).

Analysis of the relationship between principal behavioural styles and parent engagement carried out by Griffith (2001) found a connection between leadership style and parental perception of the school. In particular, principals identified as 'administrators' were associated with negative parent perceptions of the school environment and lack of empowerment, while principals who were identified as more community focussed were perceived to foster more positive perceptions of the school environment and more empowerment among parents. Leadership practices contributing to a positive school climate were unambiguous: principal efforts to meet the needs of all school members (students, staff, and parents), regular visits to classrooms, and consistent public advocacy for school improvements (Griffith, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Leadership teams in schools strongly influence the culture of parental engagement in their school communities, highlighting the value of clear, co-designed parental engagement policies, particularly given their enabling effect. The literature suggests that if the development of school-based policies or 'family school agreements' is considered a top-down administrative or reporting requirement, they have very little impact (Coldwell, Stephenson, Fathallah-Caillau, & Coldron, 2003). However, if policies are co-designed with parents, foster a shared understanding of parental engagement in learning and mutual roles and responsibilities, linked to data, evaluation and performance monitoring, they can have a substantial impact (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011; Redding, Langdon, Meyer, & Sheley, 2004).

Whole-of-school engagement policies and practices also require time to develop and a long-term commitment to implementation. Bull et al suggest most schools needed at least three years to implement high quality, comprehensive policies and approaches (Bull, Brooking, and Campbell, 2008).

To demonstrate the value and importance of building family engagement, administrators must establish clear expectations, policies, accountability standards, and processes for staff. Such activities include writing and regularly updating family engagement policies, tying family engagement efforts to school improvement plans, hiring administrators and school-level staff focused on family engagement, and including family outreach and engagement opportunities in assessment rubrics for principals (HFRP, 2010, p. 4).

Key actions

The enabling factors outlined above contribute to the development of a culture that supports, facilitates and makes possible the kinds of conversations and connections. This culture can strengthen family-led learning and build the capacity of the school community to support children's learning.

The key actions in the conceptual model are specific activities and initiatives schools can employ. They are:

- Regular communication about progress and wellbeing, including communication about children's successes.
- Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction.
- Explicit, individual invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community.
- Information about practical strategies to support learning.
- Partnerships with community agencies and the ability to refer families to extra support when needed.

Regular communication about progress and wellbeing, including communication about children's successes

Communication between parents and schools has been identified in the literature as a factor that can enhance or impede parental engagement, linked closely to parent-teacher relationships (Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999; Saulwick Muller Social Research, 2006).

Research with parents indicates that they can feel alienated as a result of poor communication with schools. This can be exacerbated by:

- formal or authoritative language and tone;
- uni-directional communication;
- the absence of a clear contact person;
- the presence of 'gatekeepers' blocking communication; and
- communication that undermines parents' self efficacy and ability to express confidence in their children's ability to succeed (Davies, Ryan, & Tarr, 2011).

Key considerations for fostering positive communication include:

- **Two-way communication:** formal and informal two-way communication that can be initiated and directed by both parents and school staff may be more beneficial than one-way, school directed forms.
- **Face-to-face communication:** opportunities for parents to engage in open, face-to-face communication with school staff.
- **Regular and sustained:** communication that is regular, timely and sustained is important to maintain connection and contributes to parents' perception of feeling valued by the school and sense that they can influence their child's learning.
- **Appropriate language:** there are suggestions in the literature about the value of communication that takes into account the families' context and needs and does not assume a level of knowledge that parents may not have. This involves adapting as needed for language and cultural context, format of delivery, and minimising technical and jargon-heavy language.
- **Multiple channels:** schools should not assume that parents will receive communication that has been sent home with students. Multiple channels for communication and information provision offer the optimum approach to meet different communication preferences and needs (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012; C. Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Education Review Office, 2008; Educational Transformations, 2007; Huat See & Gorard, 2013).

Beyond general communication between the school and families, individualised communication about children's progress and wellbeing is important. However, research on the content and focus of parent-teacher communication has clearly identified that problem-driven communication has negative impacts on both parental engagement and student outcomes.

Fan and Williams (2010) used the United States of America (US) nationally representative *Educational Longitudinal Study* to examine correlations between parent engagement behaviours and students' academic outcomes, self-efficacy and motivation. The study found that communication from the school about problems or issues was consistently a predictor of poorer outcomes, reduced self-efficacy and diminished motivation and engagement in learning. Conversely, positive communication from the school was a small but significant predictor of improved outcomes.

Parent-school communications concerning students' school problems can easily lead to certain discouraging conversations, criticisms or punishments from parents, which decrease students' confidence, interest and engagement in learning. On the contrary, parent-school communications regarding other school issues, such as academic programming and future educational plans, can assist parents by providing resourceful and useful information (W. Fan & Williams, 2010, pp. 68-69).

Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction

Hoover-Dempsey's work on the drivers of parental engagement has established that there are a number of factors that shape the extent to which parents are involved in their children's learning:

- what parents believe their role is in terms of supporting their children's learning (role construction);
- their confidence in their ability to make a difference (self-efficacy);
- invitations and expectations communicated by children, teachers and school; and
- contextual factors (time, energy, resources) that enable or inhibit engagement (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005).

Role construction and self-efficacy are discussed in greater detail in the section on Short term indicators for the family. The key point here is that school communication can play an important role in conveying messages that support positive role construction and build self-efficacy (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski and Apostoleris, 1997; Sonnenschien et al, 2012; Lynch, 2002; Sheldon, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1992).

For example, the [Progressing Parental Engagement](#) factsheet for parents highlights the important role that parents play and acknowledges that many parents are already supporting their children's education in important ways concluding with a range of achievable strategies for parents to consider.

When families and schools work together, children are more likely to build good relationships and do better at school.

There are simple things parents can do at home, and with their child's school, to help their child to do their best. Showing children that education is important, building their confidence and connecting with their school helps to shape children's learning and well-being.

Progressing Parental Engagement Parent Fact Sheet

Invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community

Hoover-Dempsey et al (2005) also highlight the important role of explicit invitations to engage in both influencing role construction and creating norms around engagement. Invitations to engage with their child's learning show parents that their involvement is desired and valued by the school (Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski and Apostoleris, 1997; Dauber and Epstein, 1996), and are associated with higher levels of engagement (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Green, Walker, Hoover Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). Specific invitations from teachers was shown in one study to have the strongest relationship with levels of parent involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007), and has also been a strong predictor determining school-based parent involvement.

Invitations can relate both to engagement in learning (i.e. through interactive homework, opportunities to be informed about what children are learning, the provision of tips and suggestions for parents) as well as invitations to participate in school partnership activities. These activities could include:

- extending opportunities to talk to the teacher about children's learning and wellbeing;
- visiting the classroom;
- participating in workshops;
- being a volunteer at the school; contributing to school councils; and
- participating in events and activities.

Invitations to involvement from important others are often key motivators of parents' decisions to become involved. Although strong role construction and efficacy may precipitate involvement, invitations to involvement from members of the school community also serve as an important motivator of involvement because they suggest to the parent that participation in the child's learning is welcome, valuable, and expected by the school and its members. These invitations may be particularly significant for parents whose role construction is relatively passive and whose sense of efficacy is relatively weak (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005).

The influence of teacher invitation or outreach to parents has also been shown to be correlated with improved student performance, whereby schools in which teachers engaged in high levels of outreach to parents (a combination of meeting face-to-face, telephoning regularly, and sending materials to parents to help their child learn at home) achieved a far greater rate of improvement in test scores compared with those that engaged in low outreach (Department of Education, 2001).

Information about practical strategies to support learning

One of the strongest themes emerging from the qualitative research undertaken for the Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT project was parents' desire for more information about specific things they can do to help their children learn – including tips on linking what children are learning at school to things they do at home, simple activities they can integrate into their everyday activities (e.g. shopping, cooking, talking about television programs), and understanding how children learn as well as more targeted information about helping children with a specific difficulty or challenge.

"I'm willing and open to learning more about how my child learns but don't know where to start..."

*"...stop using acronyms we can't understand ... we're not teachers – but how do kids learn best, tell us!"
(ACT parents, 2014)*

In the research literature, there are a number of interventions that have involved interactive homework (home learning tasks that foster parent-child communication and collaborative working) and the delivery of training for parents in maths and literacy (Nye, Turner and Schwartz, 2006; Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein and Loyd, 2013; Saint-Laurent and Giasson, 2005). For example, parents involved in the TIPS interactive homework program were found to have increased bi-directional communication with teachers compared with a control group, with corresponding improvements in children's learning outcomes (Bennett-Conroy, 2012). Henderson and Mapp (2002) suggest that providing students with prompts to involve their families in homework resulted in stronger parent engagement in homework.

Providing courses and workshops to help build parents' knowledge and skills to support their children's learning is supported by a few low to moderate quality studies, although this is an emerging and promising area of practice. These programs tend to focus on issues around parenting, children's learning and development, demystifying the school environment and teaching practical strategies for enhancing learning.

For example, pre-post evaluations of the *Parent Institute for Quality Education* (US) found:

- increased knowledge of the school system and child's learning activities;
- moderate increases for parent efficacy to support children in learning; and
- small to moderate increases in parent role construction, college aspirations for children, home learning and parenting activities (Chrispeels, González and Arellano, 2004).

A Southwest Educational Development Laboratory study identified a range of strategies for engaging parents in family-led learning activities:

- Using role-playing or demonstrations to model interactions and conversations.
- Providing parents with practical, curriculum-relevant tools, guidelines and strategies.
- Information to help families know if children are learning key concepts or content.
- Encourage interactive parent-child games around maths, reading or other content.
- Kits for students to use at home with parents, with activity packs or worksheets that are connected to the curriculum, and activities that are creative and reflective of families' own situations (e.g. photo activities, interviewing family members, family excursions to community spaces such as botanic gardens or museums) (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2004).

Partnerships with community agencies and the ability to refer families to extra support when needed

For many families, life circumstances create significant barriers to engagement in children's learning, even where parents hold very high aspirations for their children and wish to be more engaged. These life circumstances often impact heavily on children's learning and relationships at school. Teachers and school staff may not always have the confidence or expertise to support families experiencing challenging circumstances. Partnerships with community agencies, establishing referral pathways or becoming part of an integrated service network are all strategies that can provide schools and families with the resources they need to work collaboratively to meet children's needs and support their learning.

Schools alone cannot meet students' needs, especially the needs of those students who are the most disadvantaged. These students in particular need the benefits of an anywhere, anytime learning approach, in which an array of school and nonschool supports complement one another to create an integrated set of community-wide resources that support learning and development from birth to young adulthood (HFRP, 2014).

The literature suggests that developing partnerships that enable more holistic and comprehensive engagement with families with complex needs may contribute to:

- an increase in parents engaged as volunteers or paid program staff within the school (Whalen, 2007);
- increased parent reports of feeling welcome in school and being observed in the school premises; and
- higher involvement in their child's education (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003).

A United Kingdom (UK) evaluation of extended schools involved partnerships with local health and social services and the use of multi-disciplinary teams to identify vulnerable children and young people. It presented evidence that the extended school model was associated with improved school performance, better relations with local communities and an enhanced standing of the school in its area (Brechman-Toussaint & Kogler, 2010, p. 18). A Victorian evaluation of four pilot extended schools found initial indications of improved outcomes, including reductions in developmental vulnerability and increases in student motivation (DEECD, 2013). Similarly, a Western Australian evaluation of extended schools found that schools reported increased parent engagement in learning, increased parent attendance at school activities, and an increase in parent-teacher meetings (Department of Education Western Australia & TNS Social Research, 2012).

Emerging strategies deemed to contribute to increased engagement include:

- targeted recruitment of parents;
- the engagement of parents as volunteers;
- regular forums through which parents can meet; and
- adult learning programs and parent education classes (Black et al., 2010).

There are also a number of more intensive programs that can be run through schools (usually by external agencies, although often in collaboration with school staff) which provide more intensive training and support for families to be engaged in their children's learning. These programs may be targeted at families of children considered 'at risk' of struggling at school or experiencing significant behavioural difficulties, or they may be targeted at particular developmental stages (such as transition).

These programs tend to be multifaceted; including a range of components from parenting skill development, support for improved parent-child interaction, and the capacity to respond to underpinning issues such as housing instability, mental illness or drug and alcohol issues. A number of these programs have been reasonably rigorously evaluated, with promising indications of effectiveness (see Table 1 for examples).

Table 1: Examples of parent engagement programs

Program	Description
Families and Schools Together (FAST)	Whole family intervention designed to improve behavioural and academic outcomes for at-risk children. Program commences with an outreach phase of home visits, inviting families and children to participate. Multi-family engagement sessions are then held at school or in a community venue on a weekly basis for eight weeks. The sessions involve family time together, structured activities with others, and separate child play and family discussions. Participants are encouraged to stay connected to the program through FASTWORKS, involving monthly reunions of FAST graduates. FAST is run by a community collaborative team, with an essential core of four partners from the school, a community based agency, a drug and alcohol agency, a parent (usually a FAST graduate) plus other community agencies.
The Incredible Years	The Incredible Years (IY) Series is a set of programs for parents, teachers and children. There are four basic parenting programs that target key developmental stages: 0–8 months; 1–3 years; 3–6 years; and 6–12 years. In addition to the parenting programs, there are: two child programs, a small group child treatment (ages 4–8 years) and a whole-classroom prevention program (ages 3–8 years); and one Teacher Classroom Management Program for teachers of children ages 3-8 years.
Fast Track	The program is designed to prevent antisocial behaviours through promoting child competencies, improved school context, parent-school relationships, and parenting skills. Parent groups, social skills training groups, and academic tutoring were implemented for parents at high risk of conduct disorder and convened once a week. During the first hour of the program, parents meet to discuss parenting strategies, and children meet in social skills training groups. Following this, parent-child pairs spent 30 minutes together in cooperative activities. In the last 30 minutes, children worked with an academic tutor, while parents observed.
Positive Action	School-based program focused on social and character development, supporting skills, and the attitudes of children and adolescents. The program consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a classroom curriculum; • a principal’s kit, a counsellor’s kit; • a family kit that contains prepared home lessons paralleling the school program, along with parent-involvement activities; and • a community involvement program. The total time students are exposed to the program during the academic year is approximately 35 hours, while family kits are implemented weekly over the whole school year.

Shorter term indicators for the family

The shorter-term indicators contained in the conceptual model draw on the qualitative research conducted for this project, the review of effective strategies for engaging families, and the work of Hoover-Dempsey (1997, 2005) and Pomerantz, Moorman and Litwack (2007). As previously noted, the key elements identified include:

- what parents believe their role is in terms of supporting their children's learning (role construction);
- their confidence in their ability to make a difference (self-efficacy);
- invitations and expectations communicated by children, teachers and school; and
- contextual factors (time, energy, resources) that enable or inhibit engagement.

Hoover-Dempsey's model of parental engagement: definitions

Parental role construction is defined as parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education and the patterns of parental behaviour that follow those beliefs. Role construction for involvement is influenced by parents' beliefs about how children develop, what parents should do to rear their children effectively, and what parents should do at home to help children succeed in school. Role construction is also shaped by the expectations of individuals and groups important to the parent about the parent's responsibilities relevant to the child's schooling.

Parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed in school relates to a belief in one's abilities to act in ways that will produce desired outcomes. Self-efficacy is a significant factor in decisions about the goals one chooses to pursue as well as effort and persistence in working toward the accomplishment of those goals. Self-efficacy theory thus suggests that parents make their decisions about involvement in part by thinking about the outcomes likely to follow their actions. It asserts also that parents develop behavioural goals for their involvement based on their appraisal of their capabilities in the situation. Thus, parents high in efficacy will tend to make positive decisions about active engagement in the child's education; further, they are likely to persist in the face of challenges or obstacles and work their way through difficulties to successful outcomes. Relatively weak self-efficacy for involvement is often associated with lower parental expectations about outcomes of efforts to help the child succeed in school and relatively low persistence in the face of challenges (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al, 2005, pp. 108-109).

The shorter-term indicators address the underpinning beliefs, attitudes and circumstances that shape parental engagement behaviours, as well as parental perceptions of the enabling conditions for parental engagement discussed in the previous section.

The conceptual model identifies eight major dimensions where parents' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours can be affected through actions schools can take and which are appropriate for measurement. These are:

- sense of welcome/belonging at the school;
- frequency of communication with the school;
- quality of the relationship with the teacher;
- knowledge about what children are learning;
- belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction);
- parental confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self-efficacy);
- attendance at school events/relationship with other parents; and
- frequency of family-led learning activities.

These indicators align with the focus of existing parental engagement survey instruments and can provide data that can inform the focus and impact of school-based parental engagement strategies.

Measuring parental engagement

Despite the compelling evidence about the positive impact that parental engagement can have on student learning, there are very few robust evaluations of Australian parental engagement programs and initiatives. This is partly because parental engagement has often been just one component of broader initiatives, rather than a target area of policy and investment in its own right and also because of a lack of conceptual and definitional clarity around what parental engagement is and therefore what should be measured. As a result, it has been difficult to isolate the effect of parental engagement from other activities and to identify the specific aspects of parental engagement that are predictive of improved outcomes for children.

Additionally, it is clear that the collection and use of quality data is central to improving practice in education and the social sector more broadly (Datnow, Park and Wohlstetter, 2007; ARACY & KPMG, 2009; Hattie, 2009; Westmoreland et al, 2009; Flatau et al, 2015). The shift towards more robust, data-driven decision-making is necessary to support high value investment decision-making where time and financial resources are limited.

In the context of parental engagement, the development and systematic use of robust and rich 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.

This section outlines in more detail the 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.

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).

Measuring parental engagement outcomes

The *Progressing Parental Engagement in the ACT* project offers the opportunity to develop a coherent and systematic approach to how parental engagement is conceptualised and measured within the ACT. This will enable schools to develop a more comprehensive understanding of current beliefs, values, expectations and practices of parents in terms of their engagement in their children's learning. Importantly, schools will be able to measure change over time and therefore the long-term impact of strategies, practices or programs they implement. Having robust and consensus-based efficacy measures is empowering for schools. Consistent outcome measures will enable schools and the ACT Government to identify strategies that are working and where additional effort or alternative strategies are needed.

The focus of this report is to develop a tool for measuring and monitoring 'outcomes' – understood as a change or difference in attitudes, values, behaviours or conditions as a result of a school or system's actions (Flatau, 2015). The conceptual model encapsulates the 'theory of change' that underpins the ACT's approach to parental engagement. It also provides a set of indicators to guide measurement. These indicators articulate key elements of parental engagement (for parents, schools and children) and highlight the priority areas to measure. The survey produced for this project is intended to be a key data source (although not the only potential source of information) for measuring and monitoring these indicators.

An outcomes-focused measurement approach is designed to:

- Provide evidence that strategies, practices or programs are working as intended.
- Provide evidence that strategies, processes or programs are having an impact on the beliefs, values, expectations and practices of parents.
- To provide a basis for learning within schools and across the system.
- To provide a framework for evaluation and strategic planning (Fleateau, 2015).

The outcomes approach enables a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the impact of parental engagement efforts. In particular, it shifts the focus beyond quantitative 'outputs' (for example the number of events the school organised, the number of times teachers contact parents etcetera) to the impact of these efforts on parents' beliefs about their role in their children's education, their confidence to support their children's learning, and the actions they take as a result.

Importantly, the collection of data is not an end in itself, given the purpose and intent of measuring outcomes is to drive improved practice. Data collection must be part of a continual quality improvement cycle. Regarding parental engagement it is important that this process is integrated with broader school improvement, strategic planning and reporting requirements.

A simple framework schools can use to ensure data is used meaningfully is the Plan, Do, Assess, Review cycle:

Plan: identify the desired impact of their parental engagement strategies and how this can be measured

Do: implement engagement-focused activities, strategies or programs, and collect information on outcome indicators.

Assess: assess the information collected, making sense of the data and draw conclusions about outcomes.

Review: communicate impact, learn from the findings and use them for improving work and ongoing strategic planning including the setting of target.

Review of parental engagement measures

To identify appropriate and reliable measures of parental engagement for use in the ACT, an extensive review of existing measurement tools was conducted. Data collection instruments were identified through reviewing significant research studies and searches of academic databases and grey literature.

To identify a broad and comprehensive range of instruments, research papers were identified through parental engagement keyword term searches. Key phrases and terms included:

- family/parent-engagement/involvement;
- home-school relationships/partnerships;
- family-friendly schools; and
- parents as partners
 - parents in partnership
 - parent voice, parent view, parent knowledge
 - student learning outcomes
 - family path.

The instruments included in this analysis are those which collect quantitative data, have been piloted and tested for reliability and validity and that can be readily obtained and used for program and policy evaluations and research studies. The review is not designed to be an exhaustive listing of parental engagement data collection tools but rather an analysis of approaches that measure the indicators identified in the conceptual model and are relevant and appropriate in an ACT context.

In most cases the measurement tools reviewed in this paper were sourced from the US, UK and Canada. The primary reason for this is that there appear to be more measurement tools piloted and tested for reliability and validity in these countries that can be readily obtained and used for program and policy evaluations and research studies than are available in other countries.

Contexts for measurement

Analysis of the validated measurement tools sourced for review indicates that parental engagement can be measured in different contexts depending on the circumstances. This review identified three primary contexts in which parental engagement has been rigorously measured:

- National or system level monitoring of population-level parental engagement practices or attitudes.
- School-level measurement, with a focus on facilitating culture change tool and monitoring outcomes.
- Research studies or experimental/quasi-experimental program evaluations.

There are commonalities between the elements and indicators measured in each of these contexts but as they serve different purposes, their form and nature can differ.

More detail on specific surveys is provided in Appendix A, which provides the following information about each data collection instrument:

- Instrument: includes the title of the data collection instrument and who developed it.
- Context for measurement: the context under which parental engagement is being measured.
- Measure description: describes what the instrument measures and background to the development of the instrument.
- Administered to: lists the types of respondents whose behaviours, knowledge, and attitudes are assessed by the instrument (e.g. parents, students, teachers, principals).
- Measure structure: outlines how the instrument is formatted including length and type of questions.

- Key concepts measured: lists the key concepts measured, including attitudes, knowledge, and practices relating to parental engagement.
- Availability: provides information on how to access the measurement tool.

National / system level monitoring

There are a number of large-scale, population-level measurement tools which have been designed to inform policy and planning needs by providing information by jurisdiction. In the following examples, parental engagement is included as a priority area of data collection.

Surveys of this nature produce population-level data and are valuable for their ability to provide trend analysis over time; therefore they are useful for measuring the impact of large-scale policy shifts, new funding models or system-wide changes. They are often able to generate representative data and detailed information about subgroups within the given population. However, this type of population-level data has limited ability to provide in-depth information and cannot provide local information or data to inform school-level practice or impact.

United States

The *National Household Education Survey* conducted by the US Department of Education provides system level monitoring of education in the US. Trend data informs educators, policymakers, schools and universities about changes in the condition of education across the country.

The *Parent and Family Involvement in Education* (PFI) topic covers a variety of themes with various scales (yes/no, frequency, agree/disagree, multiple choice and satisfaction). This topic was collected in 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2012. In 2012 a total of 17,563 PFI questionnaires were completed, representing a population of 53.4 million students when weighted to reflect national totals.

United Kingdom

Within the UK, several large-scale population level surveys exploring education systems and parental engagement have been developed. The aim of the *Parental Opinion Survey* (2010) was to provide policymakers with information about the opinions of parents on a range of issues focusing on their role as parents and in particular their confidence as parents and their views about the services that they or their children use.

An earlier survey, *Parental Involvement in Children's Education* (2007, 2004 and 2011) was developed to examine parental involvement in children's education specifically and to investigate the extent and variety of parents' involvement in their children's schooling. Another objective was to examine the level of awareness parents have of government initiatives in this field.

International

The *Program for International Student Assessment* (PISA) has been developed by the OECD. Conducted triennially, this survey aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. To date, students representing approximately 70 economies have participated. The PISA survey has been conducted five times since its inception in 2000. The most recent wave (2012) surveyed over 500,000 students in 65 economies. The survey largely focuses on students and their school principals, answering questionnaires to provide information about the students' backgrounds, schools and learning experiences and about the broader school system and learning environment.

Since 2006, a parental involvement questionnaire has been offered in addition to the student and school questionnaires that are distributed in all PISA participant countries. It is used to determine whether parents were actively involved with their children when they entered primary school, their present levels of involvement and parental engagement and attitudes towards reading. This questionnaire is optional and therefore not carried out in all the participating countries. In 2009 and 2012, 13 and 11 countries, respectively, offered the parental questionnaire.

Australia

Population level monitoring of the education system in Australia is conducted by the ABS. The *National Schools Statistics Collection* (NSSC) is an annual publication of data on schools, students and staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education for all Australian states and territories. However, large scale measurement of parental engagement at the population level has yet to be developed.

The only national collection of data related to parental engagement in learning in Australia is the *Growing Up in Australia' Longitudinal Study of Australian Children* (LSAC). LSAC is a major study following the development of 10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia. The study commenced in 2004 with two cohorts: families with 4–5 year old children and families with 0–1 year old infants. It is investigating the contribution of children's social, economic and cultural environments to their adjustment and wellbeing.

School level cultural change tool and outcomes monitoring

Measurement tools developed for this context are designed to help assess parental engagement practices, programs and initiatives within schools, often from multiple perspectives including those of families, educators and children.

These types of surveys are able to provide detailed information at the school-level and can be embedded in standard administrative data collection systems. They provide highly localised data and are ideal for measuring the impact of practice changes. However, these surveys can be challenged by low response rates. Examples of these types of measures are listed below.

- The *National Network of Partnership Schools* was established in 1996 at Johns Hopkins University in the US and is directed by Joyce Epstein. Its objective is to assist schools, districts, states and organisations to use research-based approaches to organise and sustain programs of family and community involvement aiming to increase student success in school. Member schools are able to draw from a range of surveys developed for parents, students and teachers. The *Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades* (2007) is a 7-page, 100-item (across 11 questions) survey developed to assess parents' beliefs about a range of aspects relating to parental involvement.
- The *Parent and School Survey* (2005), also from the US, measures six dimensions of family involvement adapted from typology from the National Network of Partnership Schools (Epstein). It was designed to be administered to parents and is a concise 30-item measurement tool.
- The *Survey of Chicago Public Schools Teachers* (2003) is administered to elementary school teachers. The parent involvement and community relations section of the survey assess participant relations through several measures, including parent involvement in school, teacher outreach to parents, teacher-parent trust, knowledge of student culture, use of community resources and ties to the community.
- The *Fast Track Project* (2001) is a preventive intervention program designed to help children develop social skills and academic competencies in order to succeed in school and life. It was developed by academics at four universities across the US along with teachers, principals, and administrators in selected public school systems across the country. The study was based on the hypothesis that improving child competencies, parenting effectiveness, school context and school-home communications will, over time, contribute to preventing certain behaviours across the period from early childhood through adolescence. Among the instruments used in the study were the *Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaires for parents and teachers*, both concise measures developed to assess facets of parent and teacher involvement.
- The *Family-School Partnership Lab Scales Parent and Student Questionnaires* are based on the Hoover-Dempsey model of parental role construction and measure three levels of parent involvement: motivators for involvement (including perceptions of invitations to be involved and perceived life context), types of involvement (home-based and school-based, as well as report of mechanisms to be involved) and perceptions of involvement. The parent questionnaire is extensive, including 116 items and a student questionnaire with 49 items. Responses are coded on 6-point scales.

Research and evaluation

A number of measures have been used across a multitude of research studies and program evaluations; these can be instruments or measures that are developed specifically for that project or study or can include lengthy validated questionnaires (such as the *Family-School Partnership Lab Scales*) that may need to be administered by trained researchers or may be too technical or lengthy to be practical for administration by schools or non-specialists.

Mapping survey questions to the conceptual model

The conceptual model was developed to provide the basis for a technical definition of parental engagement. It encapsulates the core evidence-informed elements of parental engagement to guide practice and measurement. It synthesises:

- the parental actions that can support children's learning outcomes;
- the enabling factors and actions that schools can take to strengthen parental engagement;
- a range of indicators of shorter term outcomes of changes in parental beliefs, values and actions;
- a range of indicators of shorter term outcomes for children, reflecting the underpinning mechanisms or processes through which parental engagement is thought to impact children's academic outcomes; and
- the longer term outcomes associated with parental engagement.

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

In order to develop a survey that aligns with the conceptual model, questions from appropriate existing surveys were mapped against the indicators in the conceptual model (Tables 2 and 3). The intention of this process was to identify, where possible, survey questions that had already been validated and in use internationally. Using existing questions enables data to be benchmarked.

Surveys that inform the parent survey include:

- *My Voice My School Chicago Public School Surveys* (teacher and parent versions);
- *Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire - The Fast Track Project*;
- *Parent and School Survey (PASS)*;
- *UK Parental Involvement in Children's Education (PICE)*; and
- *The Family-School Partnership Lab Scales: Parent Involvement Project (PIP)*.

For the teacher surveys, there was a much smaller pool of validated surveys to draw on. The strongest and most robust teacher survey is the *Chicago Consortium My School My Voice Survey*, which covers some but not all of the key constructs outlined in the conceptual model.

Further detail about the instruments is provided in Appendix A. These surveys were chosen because they collectively covered all levels of measurement, required minimal alteration to fit with the project requirements for language and response format, and were able to be used for both parent and teacher formats surveys. Additionally, these surveys have strong theoretical and conceptual foundations and multiple administrations that indicate acceptable reliability.

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, where possible, in both parent and teacher surveys to ensure consistency between the two surveys.
- The questions had to be able to be embedded 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 fit the conceptual framework, new questions were developed and will be 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 eight dimensions. 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. Connections between family behaviour, effective strategy, indicator and questions are therefore apparent. Figure 3 and Tables 2 and 3 highlight these linkages. The final versions of the surveys are provided at Appendix B and Appendix C.

Figure 3: Operationalising the conceptual model

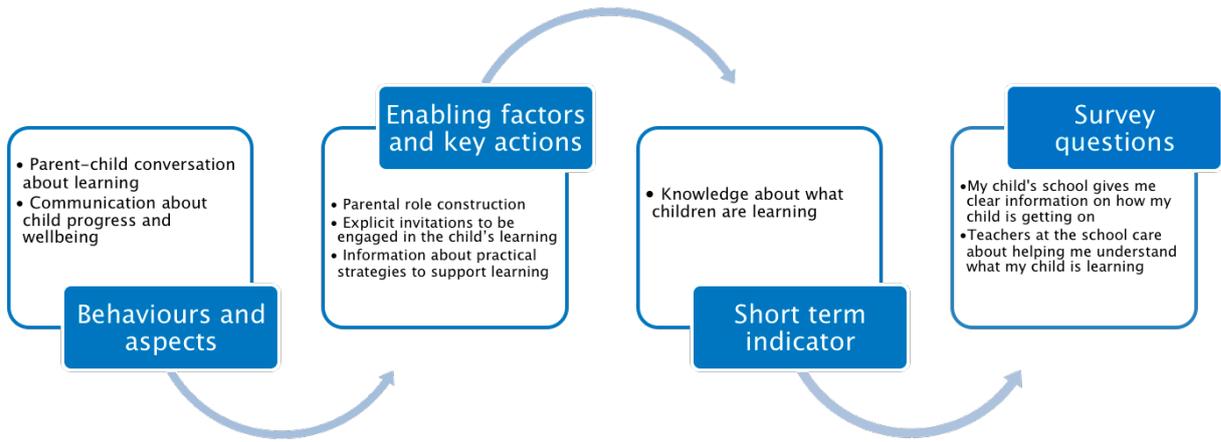


Table 2: Mapping questions to the conceptual model: parent survey

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 Genuine partnership Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Parent-teacher relationships	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning
Parent-child conversation about learning Communication about child progress and wellbeing	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	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on Teachers at the school care about helping me understand what my child is learning
Genuine partnership between parents and schools Communication about children's wellbeing and progress Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	School culture supportive of engagement Welcoming environment Positive parent/teacher relationships Parental engagement policies and leadership	Sense of welcome/belonging at the school	Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child's school? 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 Support for social and emotional wellbeing Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Positive parent/teacher relationships Communication about children's wellbeing and progress Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction	Quality of the relationship with the teacher	Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs 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 3: 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 Genuine partnership Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school	Parent-teacher relationships	Frequency and quality of communication with the school	This school encourages feedback from parents and the community I feel uncomfortable when I have to talk to parents about difficult topics 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 Communication about child progress and wellbeing	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 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 Communication about children's wellbeing and progress Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school Support for social and emotional wellbeing	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 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? Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school 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
<p>Parent/child conversation, around learning</p> <p>Support for social and emotional wellbeing</p> <p>Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school</p>	<p>Positive parent/teacher relationships</p> <p>Communication about children's wellbeing and progress</p> <p>Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction</p>	<p>Quality of the relationship with the teacher</p>	<p>Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs</p> <p>The school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents</p> <p>Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents</p> <p>My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis</p>
<p>High expectations</p> <p>Shared reading</p> <p>Parent/child conversation, especially around learning, social issues, family stories</p>	<p>Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction</p> <p>Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community</p>	<p>Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)</p>	<p>A child's education is [whose responsibility]</p> <p>Parents pay attention to my suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning</p> <p>The principal at this school is very supportive of parents and the role they play in their children's education</p> <p>This school involves parents in improving students academic outcomes to the following extent</p>
<p>Engagement in the school community and positive attitudes to school</p> <p>Communication about what children are learning and specific information about what families can do to help</p> <p>Parent/child conversation, especially around learning</p>	<p>Explicit invitations to be engaged in the child's learning and/or in the school community</p> <p>Regular communication about progress and wellbeing</p>	<p>Attendance at school events</p>	<p>Parents and family members are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.</p> <p>Parents are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.</p>

Parental engagement aspects	Enabling Factors and key actions	Short Term Outcome for the Family	Survey Questions
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)	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school
	Communication that targets parental self-efficacy and role construction Information about practical strategies to support learning	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

Table 4: Alignment of parent and teacher questions

Short Term Outcome for the Family	Parent Survey Questions	Teacher Survey Questions
Frequency and quality of communication with the school	My child's school encourages feedback from parents and the community	This school encourages feedback from parents and the community
	My child's teacher pays attention to my suggestions about my child's learning	I feel uncomfortable when I have to talk to parents about difficult topics
		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]
	Knowledge about what children are learning	My child's school gives me clear information on how my child is getting on
Teachers at the 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
		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
Sense of welcome/ belonging at the school		Parents are greeted warmly when they call my child's school
	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit my child's school	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?
	Thinking about all the issues raised in this survey, how satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your child's school?	Parents are greeted warmly when they visit this school
	The principal at my child's school is very supportive of parents and the role we play in student education	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?

Short Term Outcome for the Family	Parent Survey Questions	Teacher Survey Questions
Quality of the relationship with the teacher	Staff at my child's school work hard to build trusting relationships with me	Teachers at this school work closely with parents to meet their child's learning needs
	Teachers at school work closely with me to meet my child's learning needs	The school gives me sufficient time and resources to build effective relationships with parents
Belief that parents have an impact on children's learning (role construction)	When my child's teacher communicates with me about my child's learning it is usually ...	Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents
	A child's education is [whose responsibility]	My school discusses the parental engagement expectations required of staff on a regular basis
	I believe it's my responsibility to communicate with my child's teacher regularly	A child's education is [whose responsibility]
	Overall, my involvement with my child's education is ...	Parents pay attention to my suggestions about how they can help/support their child's learning
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	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
Confidence in their ability to support children's learning (self efficacy)		Parents and family members are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.
	When I was at primary school I really enjoyed it	Parents are invited to participate in classroom activities such as family stories and shared reading.
	I know how to help my child do well at school	I feel confident in my ability to build effective relationships with the parents of the children I teach
	As a parent I have little or no impact on my child's academic success	Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school
	I often don't understand the work/projects/assignments my child brings home from school	Most parents of the students in my class know how to help their child do well at school

Short Term Outcome for the Family	Parent Survey Questions	Teacher Survey Questions
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?	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
	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?	

Conclusion and next steps

The Parental Engagement in the ACT conceptual model has identified a set of evidence-informed constructs that provide a technical definition and core elements of parental engagement to guide consistent measurement. This paper has also articulated the development of a set of survey questions to operationalise the technical definition thus enabling schools to measure parental engagement values, attitudes and practices within their community.

Part 3 of the Technical Report will outline the process for pilot testing, validating and analysing the data from the surveys and will be published towards the end of 2015.

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Appendix A

Review of parent engagement instruments

Instrument	Context	Description	Respondents	Measure structure	Keys concepts measured	Availability
<p>National Household Education Survey (NHES) – Parent and Family Involvement in Education topic</p> <p>US Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics</p> <p>1991 – current</p> <p>US</p>	National / system level monitoring	<p>The NHES is a self-administered questionnaire which aims to investigate students' and families' experience with their schools, and covers learning at all ages, from early childhood through school-age to adulthood. The survey regularly fields studies of five topics, including Parent and Family Involvement in Education. The most recent NHES was conducted in 2012.</p> <p>The <i>Parent and Family Involvement in Education (PFI)</i> topic was collected in 1996, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2012, therefore questions have been validated over many waves. In the most recent wave the total number of completed PFI questionnaires was 17,563, representing a population of 53.4 million students when weighted to reflect US national totals.</p>	Parents	<p>The survey contains 113 questions, and covers a variety of themes with various scales: yes/no, frequency, ratings (e.g. satisfaction), and multiple choices.</p> <p>Administered by trained interviewers.</p>	<p>Child's current schooling</p> <p>Parent expectations of child's schooling</p> <p>Families and school, parental involvement in school activities, events and meetings</p> <p>Parent satisfaction with aspects of child's schooling</p> <p>Aspects of homework (amount, parental involvement with, resources)</p> <p>Parental engagement with family activities outside of school</p>	<p>Available online as a PDF: http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/pfi/PFI_enrolled_2012.pdf</p>
<p>UK Parental Involvement in Children's Education (PICE)</p> <p>Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2001, 2004, 2007</p>	National / system-level monitoring	<p>In 2007 DCSF commissioned a survey of parents and carers of children, in order to examine parental involvement in children's education and investigate the extent and variety of parents' involvement in their children's schooling. Given this survey had been conducted previously, data from this survey was able to be compared to data from the 2001 and 2004 surveys.</p> <p>A telephone survey of 5,032 parents and carers of children aged 5-16 attending maintained schools (living in England) was carried in 2007. The survey was based on a nationally representative sample of this group. Previous surveys of parent's attitudes and involvement were carried out in 2001 and 2004 and it is possible to identify various trends over time.</p>	Parents	<p>The survey contains 90 questions, and covers a variety of themes with various scales: yes/no, frequency, ratings (e.g. satisfaction; agreement; confidence), and multiple choices.</p> <p>Telephone interview administered by trained interviewers. Survey approximately 20 minutes in length.</p>	<p>Parent attitudes towards education</p> <p>Parental level of involvement</p> <p>Parental responsibility for a child's education</p> <p>Parental involvement with homework and other activities</p> <p>Communications with the school</p>	<p>Available online as a PDF. Survey on p. 100: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/attachment_data/file/222325/DCSF-RR034.pdf</p>

Instrument	Context	Description	Respondents	Measure structure	Keys concepts measured	Availability
<p>Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) – parental involvement and reading habits questionnaire</p> <p>OECD, 2006, 2009 & 2012</p>	National / system-level monitoring	<p>PISA is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. To date, students representing approximately 70 economies have participated. The PISA survey has been conducted five times since its inception in 2000.</p> <p>In addition to the student and school questionnaires that are distributed in every country and economy that participates in PISA, since 2006 a parental involvement questionnaire has been offered. This questionnaire is optional and therefore not carried out in all the participating countries. In 2009, only 13 countries and economies implemented the parental questionnaire option, and 11 in 2012. These can be used to study parental involvement - whether it matters for student success, whether it varies across school systems and across different groups, and whether it can help address disparities in student outcomes.</p>	Parents	<p>The survey contains 25 questions and covers a variety of themes with various scales: yes/no, frequency, and ratings (e.g. agreement; importance).</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p>Parent attitudes to child's school</p> <p>Parents' involvement with child's school</p> <p>Parent perspectives of school choice</p> <p>Parental support for learning in the home</p>	Available online as a pdf: http://pisa2012.acer.edu.au/downloads/MS12_PaQ_ENG.pdf
<p>Growing Up in Australia – The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)</p> <p>Commonwealth Department of Social Services, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004 (biennial)</p>	National / system-level monitoring	<p>LSAC is a major study following the development of 10,000 children and families from all parts of Australia. The study commenced in 2004 with two cohorts - families with 4-5 year old children and families with 0-1 year old infants. Growing Up in Australia is investigating the contribution of children's social, economic and cultural environments to their adjustment and wellbeing. A major aim is to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families and for early intervention and prevention strategies. Wave 5 of the survey was conducted in 2012.</p>	Child, parents, carers and teachers	<p>The parent survey contains 68 questions; several refer to themes of parent engagement.</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p>Parent sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school</p> <p>Parental involvement in homework and school activities</p> <p>Parental time per week spent actively doing things with children</p> <p>Family support for own learning as a child</p>	Available online as a PDF: http://www.growingupinaustralia.gov.au/study/qns/wave5qns/w5labelledqns/w5-02-p2lb12.pdf

Instrument	Context	Description	Respondents	Measure structure	Keys concepts measured	Availability
<p>Surveys on School, Family, and Community Partnerships</p> <p>The National Network of Partnership Schools, Centre on School, Family & Community Partnerships, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore</p> <p>Sheldon, S. & Epstein, J. 2007</p> <p>Epstein, J. & Salinas, K. 1993</p>	School-level culture change tool and outcomes monitoring	<p>Joyce Epstein has conducted research into the area of parent engagement for over three decades. She is the director of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), at Johns Hopkins University.</p> <p>Established in 1996, the NNPS is a membership network that helps schools, districts and states to develop their parent engagement programs under a research-based framework of tools and strategies. Among the tools available are a set of seven surveys used to assess attitudes about the parent-teacher relationship.</p>	Parents, teachers, students	<p>Varies depending on the questionnaire. For example, the Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement contains 100-items (across 11 questions). The answers are coded on item-specific 4-point rating scales.</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p><i>Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement</i> (2007):</p> <p>School outreach to involve families ('school's contact with you')</p> <p>Parents' attitudes about the school ('school climate')</p> <p>Parental involvement</p> <p>Parents' responsibilities and skills (role construction and efficacy)</p>	Available for purchase through the NNPS.
<p>Parent and School Survey (PASS)</p> <p>Ringenberger, Funk, Mullen, Wilford, and Kramer, 2005</p>	School-level culture change tool and outcomes monitoring	<p>PASS is an instrument which measures six dimensions of family engagement. It is adapted from typology from the National Network of Partnership Schools. The six constructs of the framework are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parenting (parents' actions that foster the children's learning and cognitive development, not necessarily tied to school) 2. Communicating (home-school communication about child's academic issues) 3. Volunteering (activities in the school and classroom) 4. Learning at home (assisting with homework, encouraging hard work in school, and emotionally supporting the child in her/his academic challenges) 5. Decision making (involvement with governance and shaping policies/practices at school, reflects how much parents advocate for their children's interests and influence the school environment) 6. Collaborating with community (parent knowledge and use of community resources for learning). 	Parents	<p>A relatively short survey, the instrument has 30 items across two sections, and responses are coded on 5-point and 3-point scales. The PASS generates a score for each parental involvement construct and these scores are used as dependant variables in a series of multiple regressions. Each construct is evaluated for its relationship to various demographics, allowing for the development of profiles of different groups of parents and how they are involved in helping their children succeed in school.</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p>Communication with child's school</p> <p>Home learning environment</p> <p>Learning at home, parent sense of efficacy, parent knowledge & skills</p> <p>Decision making regarding school policies/practices</p> <p>Volunteering</p> <p>Collaborating with community</p>	Available online as a PDF. Survey on p. 134: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ794812.pdf

Instrument	Context	Description	Respondents	Measure structure	Keys concepts measured	Availability
KidsMatter Parent Survey Commonwealth Department of Health, beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society, Principals Australia Institute, 2006	School-level culture change tool and outcomes monitoring	<p>KidsMatter Primary is a mental health and wellbeing framework for primary schools and is proven to make a positive difference to the lives of Australian children. It provides methods, tools and support to help schools work with parents and carers, health services and the wider community, to nurture happy, balanced kids.</p> <p>The survey asks parents and carers for their perspectives on their child's school and what they think is important for schools to consider in better supporting children's mental health and wellbeing.</p>	Parents and carers	<p>The survey contains 15 questions, most of which are focused on what parents think is important for schools to consider in better supporting children's mental health and wellbeing. However several 5-point scale statements refer to parent engagement topics.</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p>Parental feelings of involvement</p> <p>Communication with child's school</p> <p>Decision-making regarding school policies/practices</p> <p>Parental sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school</p>	Available online as a PDF: www.paivement.com/Uploads/Files/KMPSurveys/KidsMatter_Parent_Survey.pdf
Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire –The Fast Track Project Reid, Webster-Stratton & Beauchaine, 2001	School-level culture change tool and outcomes monitoring	<p><i>Fast Track</i> is a comprehensive intervention project designed to look at how children develop across their lives by providing academic tutoring and lessons in developing social skills and regulating their behaviours. As youth get older, their risk behaviours increase due to peer influences, academic difficulties, and their personal identity development.</p> <p>The <i>Fast Track</i> project is thus based on the hypothesis that improving child competencies, parenting effectiveness, school context and school-home communications will, over time, contribute to preventing certain behaviours across the period from early childhood through adolescence.</p> <p><i>Fast Track</i> has been disseminated in several countries. Initially, <i>Fast Track</i> identified a sample of children in kindergarten through a multistage screening of nearly 10,000 children. With four communities participating (Durham, Nashville, rural Pennsylvania, and Seattle) and with the help of researchers from Washington University, Vanderbilt University, Duke University, and Penn State University, sets of schools were matched on size, ethnic composition, and poverty, and were randomly assigned to intervention and control conditions. Three successive cohorts were recruited in 1991, 1992, and 1993 to yield a sample of 891 children (445 in the intervention group and 446 in the control group). Attrition throughout the study was low, with participation rates for year 19 and 20 at 80 percent.</p>	Parents and teachers	<p>The Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire: Parent version contains 26 questions developed to assess facets of parent and teacher involvement. The answers are coded on item-specific 5-point scales.</p> <p>The survey uses a self-completion methodology.</p>	<p>Type of contact between teacher and parent</p> <p>Parent interest and comfort in talking with teachers</p> <p>Parent satisfaction with aspects of child's schooling</p> <p>Parental involvement in school activities</p>	Available online as a PDF: www.fasttrackproject.org/techrept/ptip

Instrument	Context	Description	Respondents	Measure structure	Keys concepts measured	Availability
Survey of Chicago Public Schools Teachers Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago	School-level culture change tool and outcomes monitoring	The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research has been conducting research with teachers, principals and teachers in Chicago Public Schools since 1990. For over 15 years, regular surveys with teachers have included sections on parent involvement and community relations.	Teachers	The survey contains 109 items with a specific section on parent involvement and community relations (25 items over 5 questions). The answers are coded on item-specific 4 and 5-point rating scales. The survey uses a self-completion methodology.	Parent involvement in school Teacher outreach to parents Teacher-parent trust Knowledge of student culture Use of community resources Ties to the community	Available online: http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/surveys/documentation
The Family-School Partnership Lab Scales: Parent Involvement Project (PIP) Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 2005	Research and evaluation	The Family-School Partnership Lab Scales are based on the Hoover-Dempsey parental role construction for involvement, and measure three levels of parent involvement: motivators for involvement (including perceptions of invitations to be involved and perceived life context), types of involvement (home-based and school-based, as well as report of mechanisms to be involved), and perceptions of involvement. PIP scales have been designed from the Model of Parental Involvement developed by Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1995, 1997). The original model was revised in 2005 and describes five levels: 1. Parental involvement decision (personal motivation, invitations, life context) 2. Parent mechanisms of involvement (encouragement, modelling, reinforcement & instruction) and parent involvement forms (values, home involvement, school communication; school involvement) 3. Mediated by child perception of parent mechanisms (encouragement, modelling, reinforcement & instruction) 4. Student attributes conducive to achievement (academic self-efficacy; intrinsic motivation to learn; self-regulatory strategy use; social self-efficacy teachers) 5. Student achievement	Parents and students	The parent questionnaire is extensive, containing 116 questions and a student questionnaire with 49 items. Responses are coded on 6-point Likert-type response scales. The survey uses a self-completion methodology.	- Parent valence towards school - Parent sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school - general school invites - specific teacher demands - parent role beliefs - Parent knowledge and skills, time and energy - Parent encouragement of the child - Mechanisms through which parent involvement influences child/student outcomes (modelling, reinforcement and instruction) - Specific child demands on parents	Available online as a PDF: www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scale_descriptions/papers/english_parent_S4.pdf

Appendix B

Family and School Survey (parents)



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 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.

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.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Dakin".

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 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?

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree 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 positive Somewhat positive Mostly positive Unsure/ negative Negative
 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.

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

- P K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. 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

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

- Under one year 1 – 3 years More than 3 years Don't know

29. Who is completing this questionnaire?

- Father Mother Carer Other

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

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

**31. 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

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

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

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

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

34. What is the highest level of education obtained by any parent/carers 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
 Degree Post Graduate 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
BAYSWATER VIC 3153

Appendix B

Family and School Survey (teachers)



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.

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.

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,



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

INSTRUCTIONS

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

Option 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. 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

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

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Opinion

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

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree No Opinion

18. 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

19. 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

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

25. What year do you primarily teach?

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

26. 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

27. How many years in total have you been teaching?

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

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

- Yes No Don't know

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

- No Yes, Torres Strait Islander only
- Yes, Aboriginal only 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 D

ACT Parental Engagement: Postcard and poster

How do you think
SCHOOLS and **PARENTS**
can work together
to boost your child's
learning?

Have your say about your school!

 www.parent-survey.com.au

-  Voluntary and confidential
-  4 August to 9 September
-  Only takes 10-15 minutes
-  Online, mobile or hardcopy options

Research shows that students achieve better outcomes from their education when schools and families work together. Your views are valuable and will help your school improve on this important partnership.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate in partnership with the non-profit Australian Parents Alliance for Children and Youth, The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT.

Appendix E

Communications Kit: Family and School Survey (Parents)



Communications Kit: Family and School Survey

Topic: ACT Family and School Survey

Field dates: 3 August – 4 September, 2015

Distribution: Miles Franklin Primary School, Monash Primary School, Orana Steiner School, St Francis of Assisi Primary School

Enquiries: Tim Sealey, tim.sealey@aracy.org.au, 6248 2407
Barbara Barker, barbara.barker@aracy.org.au, 6248 2400 (Tues to Thurs, 9.30 – 2.30)

What is the Family and School Survey and why is it important?

The ACT Government is the driving force behind new research into ways families and schools can best work together to support learning outcomes for children. See ACT Parental Engagement resources here.

This concept of 'parental engagement' is seen as a crucial factor in raising standards across schools, placing it in the same category as quality teaching and school infrastructure.

The Family and Schools Survey is part of the ACT Government school review and development process. The survey has been developed to help schools understand and measure parental engagement beliefs and practice in their community, and as a tool to measure the impact of their activities to build family and school collaboration over time.

So how can schools promote it?

These ideas have been put together to help your school get the most out of this opportunity to find out what parental engagement in your school looks like right now. The more data, the better!

2.1 Hard copy

Key Messages

- Help inform decisions about how your school partners with its families to help support children's learning
- How do you think schools and parents can work together to boost children's learning?
- Your views are valuable and will help your school improve on this important partnership
- Have your say!
- Voluntary, confidential, at a time convenient to you
- Quick and easy – online, mobile, or hardcopy options
- Only takes 10-15 minutes

Postcards and Poster

How do you think
SCHOOLS and PARENTS
can work together
to boost your child's
learning?

Have your say about your school!

 www.parent-survey.com.au

 Voluntary and confidential	 4 August to 9 September
 Only takes 10-15 minutes	 Online, mobile or hardcopy options

Research shows that students achieve better outcomes from their education when schools and families work together. Your views are valuable and will help your school improve on this important partnership.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate in partnership with the non-profit Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT.

How do you think
SCHOOLS and PARENTS
can work together
to boost your child's
learning?

Have your say about your school!

 www.parent-survey.com.au

 Voluntary and confidential	 4 August to 9 September
 Only takes 10-15 minutes	 Online, mobile or hardcopy options

Research shows that students achieve better outcomes from their education when schools and families work together. Your views are valuable and will help your school improve on this important partnership.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate in partnership with the non-profit Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, and the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT.

Newsletter text

The Family and Schools Survey

[Insert school name] is taking part in a study and we need you to be involved!

The Family and Schools Survey will help us understand how families and schools can best work together to support learning outcomes for our children. Between weeks 3 and 8 (Term 3), we will be encouraging all parents to complete a [quick survey](#) (no more than 10-15 mins).

Have your say! It's voluntary, confidential, quick and easy, comes in various formats (online, mobile devices, hardcopy) and can be completed at a time that's convenient to you.

3.2 Digital

You can promote the survey via your digital channels:

Your school app

TV Screen at reception

School Facebook page

Tweets

Example tweets schools that can be used to promote the Family-School survey to parents:

- parent-survey.com.au is now open! Quick & confidential, your views will help us to improve how we partner with families to boost children's learning & wellbeing – *136 characters*
- Only one week left to tell us how you think parents & schools can work together to boost children's learning parent-survey.com.au – *129 characters*
- Only one week left to tell us what you think about #parentengagement at your school parentsurvey.com.au – *104 characters*
- There's still time to have your say about #parentengagement at your school but be quick - parentsurvey.com.au closes tomorrow! – *127 characters*
- Today is your last chance to tell us how you think parents & schools can work together to boost children's learning parent-survey.com.au – *136 characters*
- Today is your last chance to have your say about #parentengagement at your school parentsurvey.com.au – *102 characters*
- Your thoughts will guide the way we partner with families to boost children's learning & wellbeing! Have your say today parent-survey.com.au – *140 characters*
- We need YOU! Help strengthen the Australian evidence base by sharing your thoughts on #parentengagement at your school parent-survey.com.au – *139 characters*
- Help us to improve how we partner with families to boost children's learning & wellbeing Add parent-survey.com.au to your to do list today! – *138 characters*
- Children are more likely to excel at school when families & schools work together. How do you think this should happen? parent-survey.com.au – *140 characters*

- Be part of Australian first research! Tell us how you think parents & schools can work together to boost children's learning – *123 characters*
- We need YOU! Tell us what you think about parent engagement at your school - parentsurvey.com.au is quick & confidential – *102 characters*
- Tell us how you think parents & schools can work together to boost children's learning parentsurvey.com.au – *107 characters*
- Waiting for the bus? Our parent-survey.com.au only takes 10 mins. Your thoughts are valuable and will make a real difference to our school! – *139 characters*
- Have your say about #parentengagement at your school! Your views are valuable and will make a real difference parent-survey.com.au – *130 characters*

Direct email to families

Dear [insert]

We appreciate families are busy, but we'd really like your help in understanding more about how our school partners with its families to help support children's learning.

You may have read that [Insert school name] is taking part in Family and Schools Survey.

Please find the time to take the [survey](#) before 4 September (Week 8).

It's voluntary, confidential, quick and easy (no more than 10-15 mins).

Thanks very much for helping out.

3.3 In person

Staff champions

Have you thought of appointing a staff champion to mobilise the parent community and coordinate efforts to maximise engagement with the survey? Remember, the higher the number of parents and carers completing the survey, the more robust the results will be for your school.

Face-to-face

Perhaps talk about the survey using the Key Messages at assembly, morning teas, in the Community Hub, in the car park, @ before and after school care, during class meetings with parents, at the P&C meeting, or anytime parents are visiting the school – have an iPad, laptop or paper copies of the survey at the ready!

Learning Journey visits (Week 8) – these are a great opportunity to engage parents while they are already at the school! Again, have an iPad, laptop or paper copies of the survey at the ready!