Australian
Education
Research
Organisation

Family engagement implementation checklist
Secondary classroom teachers

This checklist can be used to plan the implementation of your school's approaches for engaging with families to support student learning. It is based on work by Evidence for Learning[1], showing implementation in school as a series of stages relating to thinking about, preparing for, delivering, and sustaining change.

This checklist can be paired with AERO's Promising approaches audit tool – secondary classsroom teachers, which will help schools determine the promising approaches areas requiring most attention.

The following diagram, created by Evidence for Learning, illustrates the process of implementation as a series of stages relating to thinking about, preparing for, delivering and sustaining change, and acts as the basis for the checklist structure.

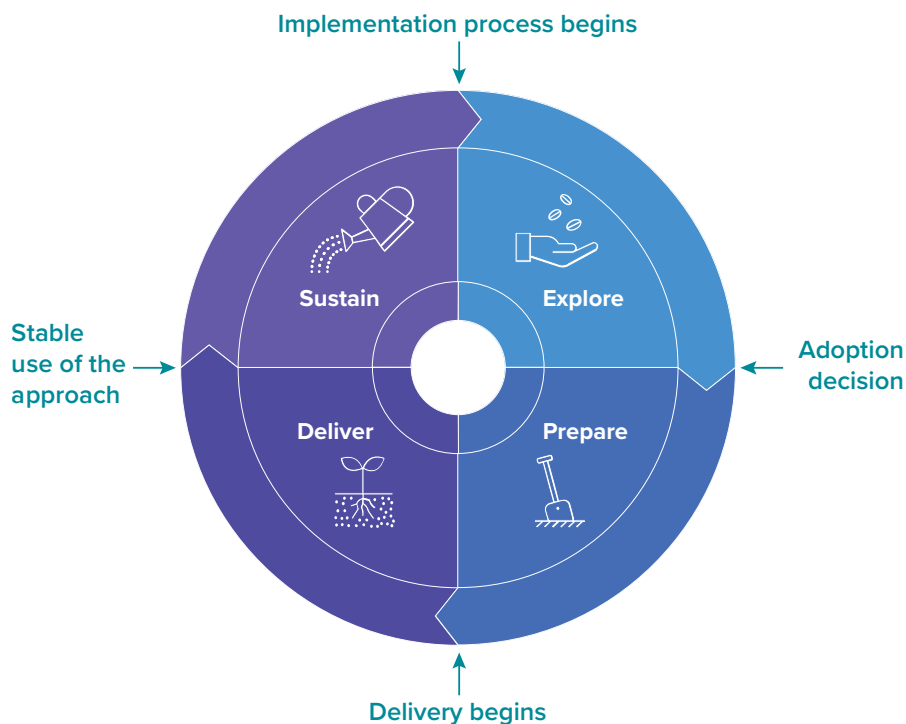### Figure 1: Foundations for good implementation

Figure source: *Putting evidence to work: A school's guide to implementation,* Evidence for Learning, 2019.

---

1   Including: *Putting evidence to work: a school's guide to implementation* (2019) and *Working with parents to support children's learning* (2019)

**This tool was created by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)
for the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO).**

Using this checklist

This tool is organised around the 6 recommendations for implementation, which emerged from a review of the research (Education Endowment Foundation 2019; Evidence for Learning 2019), conducted by <u>Evidence for Learning</u>. These start with 2 important foundations for good implementation: a) treating implementation as a process; and b) school leadership and climate.

The rest of the tool follows the 4 well-established stages of implementation – Explore, Prepare, Deliver, Sustain. Although the four stages are presented discretely, they inevitably overlap, and should be treated as an overall guide, rather than a rigid blueprint.

The checklist questions in each section are designed to assist teachers plan the implementation of their own approaches for engaging with families to support student learning.

---

1. Foundations for good implementation

a) Treat implementation as a process, not an event. Plan and execute it in stages.

- Allow enough time for effective implementation, particularly in the preparation stage; prioritise appropriately.

b) Create a leadership environment and school climate that is conducive to good implementation.

- Set the stage for implementation through school policies, routines, and practices.
- Identify and cultivate leaders of implementation throughout the school.
- Build leadership capacity through implementation teams.

Checklist questions

Has the school leadership team led the creation of a clear vision and understanding of expectations about the purpose of engaging with families to support student learning?

- Do you know what this vision and theseexpectations are? Have staff had the opportunity to input into these?
- Do you have your own vision for, and understanding of, the purpose of engaging with families to support student learning?
- Do you have a clear sense of how family engagement in learning can contribute to school improvement goals?
- Is there a shared commitment to the value of engaging with families to support students' learning, with families recognised as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning?

Are there opportunities to make fewer, but more strategic, decisions around how the school works with families to support student's learning?

- Can the goals of multiple initiatives or programs be aligned? Efforts towards one may have a positive impact on another, which should help you prioritise your own actions where it will give most benefit. For example, work supporting the engagement of families may also help the goals of relationship-based positive behaviour programs or support the transition of each year's new cohort into the school.

2. Explore

Define the problem you want to solve and identify appropriate programs or practices to implement.

- Specify a tight area of focus for improvement that is amenable to change.
- Determine a program of activity based on existing evidence of what has – and hasn't – worked before.
- Examine the fit and feasibility of possible interventions to the school context.
- Make an adoption decision.

Checklist questions

Have you completed an audit of your school's approaches for engaging with families to support student learning?

- You can use AERO's <u>Promising approaches audit tool – secondary classroom teachers</u> for this. Research evidence shows promising approaches for engaging with families which can have a measurable positive effect on student learning outcomes. Primary school teachers should aim to strengthen their efforts in those areas.

Have you invited your students' families into the conversation to understand their perceptions and needs?

Have you listened to a range of stakeholders, not just the families who are the most active?

- Have the perspectives of all/most of your students' families been canvased?
- Have these opportunities been culturally responsive and respectful, and inclusive of the diversity of your students' families?

3. Prepare

Create a clear implementation plan, judge the readiness of the school to deliver that plan, then prepare staff and resources.

- Develop a clear, logical, and well-specified implementation plan.
- Assess the readiness of the school to deliver the implementation plan.
- Practically prepare; for example, train staff, develop infrastructure.

Checklist questions

Does the school have a logical action plan as to how to work with families? Do you know what it is?

Do you have your own action plan as to how to work with families?

- You can use AERO's <u>Promising approaches audit tool – secondary classroom teachers</u> to help determine your own priorities for an action plan.

Have you developed a plan to capture feedback on your process?

- Consider feedback from stakeholders, including families and peers in your network (staff often learn best from each other).

4. Deliver

Support staff, monitor progress, solve problems, and adapt strategies as the approach is used for the first time.

- Adopt a flexible and motivating leadership approach during the initial attempts at implementation.
- Reinforce initial training with follow-on coaching within the school.
- Use highly skilled coaches.
- Complement expert coaching and mentoring with structured peer-to-peer collaboration.
- Use implementation data to actively tailor and improve the approach.
- Make thoughtful adaptations only when the active ingredients are securely understood and implemented.

Checklist questions

Are teachers supported with appropriate professional learning around how to work with families?

- The professional capacity of staff is a vital consideration in the success of whole-school approaches to family engagement in learning.
- What does this look like in your school?

5. Sustain

Plan for sustaining and scaling an intervention from the outset and continuously acknowledge and nurture its use.

- Plan for sustaining and scaling an innovation from the outset.
- Treat scale-up as a new implementation process.
- Ensure the implementation data remains fit for purpose.
- Continuously acknowledge, support, and reward good implementation practices.

Checklist questions

Has the school leadership developed a plan for the ongoing professional learning for teachers, supporting them to work with families? Do you know what this plan looks like?

- Building the skills required for engaging with families in learning develops over time with practice and reflection. School leaders can provide vital support by encouraging professional learning to occur.
- Sharing and considering good practice though a peer network is ideal.