

With approximately 150 Title I schools in Denver Public Schools, it is important that the district be thoughtful with the supports it needs to succeed. To provide additional support to Title I schools and families, the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) department introduced Parenting Partners, a six-week program that combines parenting and leadership skills to empower parents to contribute to their student's success.

The Parenting Partners program begins with an invitation to Title I schools from the FACE Department. School leadership and liaisons are trained by district staff in a large group setting of up to 15 school leaders, which creates a collaborative environment for schools to learn alongside each other. The first session is called the 'trainer-of-trainers.' After the trainer-of-trainers session, school leadership and liaisons return to their schools to implement the program with their families. From there, the FACE department supports as needed, such as providing childcare and co-facilitation to ensure the schools' workshops run smoothly.



The Parenting Partners program builds parent leadership capacity and produces strong family-school partnerships. There are six comprehensive workshops to equip parents with practical tools to:

1. Support their children's academic, emotional, and social success.
2. Create structure for productive home learning environments.
3. Boost family wellness and positive effective communication.
4. Become engaged advocates, contributors, and leaders.

FACE began the Parenting Partners program in the 2021 school year. In 2021, only eight people were trained to facilitate the program. Since 2022, 50 facilitators have been trained to implement the program at their individual schools or offices with 16 more school leaders on the waitlist for programming this coming fall. Each of the 58 trainers can lead parent training for up to 40 parents. The most recent training was led by Elvia Lubin, a family liaison at Goldrick Elementary. Elvia trained eight English speaking parents and 14 Spanish speaking parents. She reported that families were engaged and completed all homework sessions, which increased their connection to their students and their ability to be involved in their student's learning.

After each training session, trainees submit feedback for improvement of the program. The feedback was used to individualize the program and make small shifts that better fit individual school needs. The biggest challenges identified were the length of the program and finding room in the budget to fund such a large toolkit-based program. However, the Parenting Partners organization has other options leading to similar family-school partnership outcomes. For example, schools and families that are unable to do a full six weeks of classes can complete smaller programs such as the Healthy Meals Challenge program, a three-week workshop to help families have better conversations around the dinner table. FACE will host a Parenting Partners reunion in the 2023 summer to gather more feedback and to be able to come in even stronger for the 23-24 school year.

The advice the program would give to districts that want to implement a Parenting Partners program, or any parenting program, is to be flexible with the curriculum. Nothing is one size fits all when it comes to parenting so it is important to know the cultures you are working with and plan accordingly. Another important finding in implementing this practice is holding space and time for families and school leadership to collaborate and practice presenting. Ample time is given during training sessions for questions and discussion. The last 2-3 workshops invite trainees to lead as a group. They are given feedback on their leadership so that they feel better equipped to lead sessions on their own and feel confident to share Parenting Partners with more families time and time again.