

Family Friendly School Self-Assessment

Updated in August 2025

The Family Friendly and School Partnership Assessment helps school communities develop a clearer understanding of their strengths and areas of growth in creating meaningful family partnerships. There are five essential objectives that make up effective family partnerships and each objective has three or more critical components. Altogether there are 20 critical components and each critical component scores at: 0 (not here yet), Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4 (Gold). **Schools can certify as Family Friendly at Level 3 or Level 4 (Gold).**

Created in Partnership by



**Kentucky Collaborative
for Families and Schools**

The Prichard Committee



**Commonwealth Institute
for Parent Leadership**

The Prichard Committee



National Center for
Families Learning



learning grove



*Partners for
Rural Impact*



Kentucky Department of

EDUCATION

This assessment is informed by the research-based, US Department of Education Dual Capacity-Building Framework.

INSTRUCTIONS

It is okay to score “0 not yet.” Completing this Self-Assessment is less about a finish line and more about building awareness on where you are now and being inspired to start making progress and setting goals. Remember, whatever the beginning score is, students win when staff get an accurate picture of strengths and areas of growth for family partnerships.

1. Identify a small group to take this self-assessment. This group can be more than 5 people, but must include at least two teachers, two family members, and a building leader. **Ensure family members taking the self-assessment are not also school employees to get rich feedback from your community.**
2. Meet as a group and discuss each component. Have each person use their self-assessment and provide an individual score. There should be some variation in scores because people don't need to come to consensus, but it will be important to share what is happening in each section because no one person will know everything about the school. After everyone has completed the self-assessment, share the total points and make your school average. Use that as your baseline for your work and to determine if you are ready to apply for certification.
3. You can approach action steps in two ways. Build on your strengths by starting with the Objective where you scored the highest and find ways to use those strategies to strengthen other objectives. Or start with the area you scored the lowest and get family feedback on how to improve. Relationship Building is foundational to all family engagement efforts. If Relationship Building is a 1 or low 2, focus efforts here.
4. Revisit the assessment at least annually to see if your scores are improving. Change the voices around the table and always ask families for input before you start a new strategy. We keep this phrase in mind to ensure family co-design: “It’s about doing WITH families, not TO families.”
5. Improving family engagement efforts is a process, not a checklist. Be patient and celebrate each step you take as a team. After taking steps to improve, go back and take the self-assessment with the team again to see if anything has changed. When applying for certification, your most recent score.

Certification: School teams can use this tool to become a Family Friendly Certified School. Schools scoring at Level 3 are eligible to certify, and schools scoring at Level 4 can certify at the Gold Level. Benefits of the process include:

- Demonstration of commitment to families as equal partners in student education
- Focus on continuous improvement efforts on evidence-based practices that improve student and school outcomes
- Recognition by KDE and your community for your commitment to family engagement
- Contribution to the state-wide commitment to families and communities

PERFORMANCE LEVELS	
Level 1	There is a growing interest in building school and staff capacity to engage families in the education process. Schools in this category are good at keeping families informed of individual student progress.
Level 2	Schools at this level demonstrate a belief that all families play a vital role in their student’s education. These schools use a variety of inclusive approaches to engage students and families in student learning.
Level 3 - Certification Level	Schools at this level demonstrate a widespread belief that families play a vital role in education, and they engage in multiple, culturally specific, inclusive approaches to engage families in both their student’s learning and continuous improvement processes at the school. Schools at this level can be certified as a Family Friendly School .
Level 4- GOLD Certification Level	These schools demonstrate skills in engaging families as co-creators in the education process. Staff employ multiple, equity-driven strategies to individualize engagement with families. Schools at this level can be certified as Family Friendly School -- Gold

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Objective	Critical Attribute	Description
Relationship Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcoming Environment ● Culturally Responsive and Respectful ● Engage Families as Co-Creators ● Relational: Built on Trust ● Asset-Based 	Staff build productive, meaningful relationships with students and families to build trust, confidence, and authentic partnerships.
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interactive ● Family and Student Conferences ● Families and Students Engage in Diverse Roles ● Linked to Learning 	A variety of constructive, two-way communications flows regularly between staff, students, and families about academic achievement and individual needs.
Shared Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linked to Learning ● Collaborative ● Families in Leadership and Decision-Making Roles ● Honoring Families' Funds of Knowledge 	Staff ensures that families have multiple learning opportunities to understand how to support their student's learning and to participate in decision-making and school improvement efforts.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunity for All ● Students and Families as Advocates ● Student and Family Voice 	Staff identifies and supports at least one family member or other adult who can take responsibility for understanding and speaking for each student's learning needs.
Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective Partnerships Supporting Student and School Improvement ● Sustainable Infrastructure and Resource Processes ● Meaningful Community Integration ● Systemic Wholeness Approach 	Staff engages and partners with community members and families to plan and implement substantive work to improve student achievement and school improvement.

1. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Staff build productive, meaningful relationships with students and families to build partnerships.

Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Welcoming Environment	The school building is easy to navigate, with helpful signs and displays.	Level 1 + Front office staff create a welcoming environment, and teachers create a welcoming classroom environment for both students and families.	Level 2 + School has a central location where families can get information they need about the school. The school website also has regularly updated information for families.	Level 3 + The school has a dedicated space for families and community partners to connect with school staff and other families. The school is a hub for the community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Culturally Responsive	Teachers welcome families at the beginning of the year with the goal of building a classroom culture as a whole group.	Level 1 + Teachers purposefully get to know individual students and their families as well their interests, cultures, skills, learning styles, languages, disabilities, etc.	Level 2 + Teachers and staff use knowledge of students and families throughout the year to individualize interactions with students and families and build relationships in ways that respect family values and cultural backgrounds.	Level 3 + Teachers share responsibility for student learning by partnering with families and community partners to create a classroom that encourages diverse viewpoints and ways of knowing.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Engage Families as Co-Creators	Teachers welcome feedback from families about students' academic needs.	Level 1 + Teachers informally and formally request family advice about students and their learning. School administrators seek family feedback about school improvement.	Level 2 + Teachers and staff engage in frequent 2-way communication with families to promote student success.	Level 3 + Building leaders, staff, and families create and implement a plan to listen to families' ideas, suggestions, and feedback throughout the year.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

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Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Built on Trust	School staff warmly welcome families at school events. School staff participate in confidentiality training.	Level 1 + Teachers and building leaders use multiple strategies to learn about individual students and their families to build trusting relationships. When asked, families say that they can trust schoolteachers and that teachers follow through on commitments.	Level 2 + School staff identify "go-to" person at home for each student. Teachers make positive contacts with families throughout the school year. Supported by administrators, school staff meet families on their home ground (e.g., home visits, tables at festivals, meetings at community centers)	Level 3 + When asked, families can name a person at the school they trust to help them. School leaders develop a system for building relationships throughout the year with new families and families whose students are at-risk of disconnecting from school.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Asset or Strengths-Based	The school uses a universal screener and results are shared with families.	Level 1 + Schools identify student strengths and results are shared with families. Students and families' strengths are celebrated by school staff.	Level 2 + School administration prioritize a Whole Child approach. School administrators approach teachers and other staff from a strengths-based mindset. School staff and teachers have the information and training they need to approach students and families from a strengths-based perspective.	Level 3 + The school culture centers around the collective strengths of students, families, and staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Scoring _____ out of 20

2. COMMUNICATIONS

A variety of constructive two-way communication flows among staff, students, and families about academic success and individual needs.

Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Interactive	Staff provides developmental and/or academic information to families. Materials are translated into applicable home languages.	Level 1 + Administrators design an effective communication plan that is focused on student success and that involves multiple strategies for communicating with families throughout the school year.	Level 2 + School staff and families participate in the development and fine-tuning of the family communications plan. Teachers communicate regularly with families about teaching and learning goals, including in families' home languages.	Level 3 + School administration ensure that regular two-way family communication is part of every classroom. Teachers personalize interactive communications with families based on students' needs and strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Family and Student Conferences	School offers family conferences at the school. Individual families are invited to conferences based on student needs.	Level 1 + There are multiple informal opportunities for teachers, families, and students to discuss learning and grade level or course level expectations over the course of the school year. Teachers report that families contact them with questions about student success.	Level 2 + Most families participate in a conference focused on student progress and individual learning needs at least once a year. Based on student age, the student should participate in/lead this conference.	Level 3 + School offers opportunities for conversation about student success at multiple checkpoints throughout the year (for example, at each midterm, grading period, and before testing). Schools create an MTSS procedure for determining the need for more intensive contact with families to support student success.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

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Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Families and Students Engage in Diverse Roles	Schools survey families annually about school culture, family engagement, and student success. The results are publicly posted.	Level 1 + School creates and implements plans to survey or interview previously unreachable families, with attention to students of color, ELL students, students with disabilities, and kinship care families. Families serve on SBDM and school committees.	Level 2 + Teachers and staff engage in frequent 2-way communication with families to promote student success.	Level 3 + Building leaders, staff, and families create and implement a plan to listen to families' ideas, suggestions, and feedback throughout the year.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Linked To Learning	Teachers regularly send families information about learning in their classroom. School leaders ensure that families receive information on learning expectations at each grade level/course level. Information is provided in families' home languages.	Level One + Teachers provide regular prioritized information about learning and progress that is timely, clear, and gives families an action to take based on the information.	Level Two + Families receive individualized information about their child's learning and progress on regular basis. Families have regular opportunities to give feedback on information shared.	Level Three + families have opportunities to learn together about student success as a community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Scoring _____ out of 16

3. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Families have opportunities to understand how to support student learning. Families participate in decision-making and school improvement efforts.

Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Linked to Learning	The school hosts an annual open house where materials about learning, grade-level or course materials, assessment, and curriculum are distributed. Materials are available in families' home languages.	Level 1 + The school hosts opportunities for families to learn about ways to support learning at home. Opportunities should include self-directed and virtual options.	Level 2 + The school uses their Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports for individualized conversations with families and offers training for families to support learning at home.	Level 3 + At family conferences, teachers ask families about how they support learning at home and offer supplemental strategies in addition to what families are already using. These conferences support a whole-child approach, including academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Collaborative	The school offers targeted family workshops and materials for families needing extra help in supporting student learning.	Level 1 + Teachers make contacts with families and work together as team to help students access services, such as ESS or tutoring. Building leaders create processes for getting feedback from families about student learning at home.	Level 2 + Building Leaders create processes to get parent/guardian input on family learning opportunities throughout the year. Building leaders set building-wide expectations for staff to work collaboratively with families to support student learning.	Level 3 + Families serve as co-creators in designing family learning opportunities. In surveys, families report that the school offers learning opportunities that fit their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

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Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Families in Leadership and Decision-Making Roles	Building leaders inform families about opportunities for leadership on SBDM and Committees. Building leaders and committee leads have processes in place to welcome families to leadership work.	Level 1 + Building Leaders have a plan to recruit and train a diverse set of family leaders for committees and SBDM. Recruitment and training materials are available in families' home languages.	Level 2 + Teachers encourage families to serve in leadership roles. Committees and councils work to organically engage families in the work.	Level 3 + The culture of family leadership is so rich that family leaders recruit and train new leaders. Each year, building leadership strives to bring more families into more leadership positions and to make sure that family leaders reflect the diversity of the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Honoring Funds of Knowledge	Teachers contact families for information about their child when there are concerns about learning, behavior, or well-being.	Level 1 + Teachers use two-way communication to regularly ask all families questions about students and use those answers to shape classroom learning.	Level 2 + Building Leaders create and implement a plan for a "reach to each" so that all families have opportunities to share knowledge about their child with a caring adult at school.	Level 3 + Teachers and building leaders create processes to partner with families to share their strengths, talents, and cultures at school and/or in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Scoring					_____ out of 16

4. ADVOCACY

School staff identifies and supports a caring adult for each student who understands and can speak up for that student's learning needs.

Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Opportunity for All	Building leaders encourage teachers to identify a family member or other caring adult for students. Teachers know the name of a family member for many students. Families are participants in IEP, ISFP, PSP, 504 meetings.	Level 1 + Building leaders create and implement systems for identifying students' caring adults at home and in the building. A designated staff member makes positive contact with caring adults.	Level 2 + Staff make regular contact with students' caring adults and invite them to family conferences. In conferences, teachers and families discuss and share successful strategies for meeting the student's individual learning needs.	Level 3 + School staff implement a plan for identifying students who need more intensive contacts between school staff and the caring adult at home.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Students and Families as Advocates	Building Leaders and Teachers encourage families and students to advocate for their learning and to participate in IEP, ISFP, 504, and PSP meetings.	Level 1 + Staff work with families and students on individualized plans for learning, such as career pathways, transitions, etc. Information is presented in accessible formats in families' home language.	Level 2 + Advocacy trainings are provided for interested families or interested families are connected with KY-SPIN, CIPL, etc.	Level 3 + cohorts of families are trained in advocacy, such as grandparents as parents, families of students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Student and Family Voice	There is a clear policy and process for resolving family/student complaints. SBDM materials are in families' home languages.	Level 1 + SBDM parent representative seats are filled, and representatives play a meaningful role in decision making at the school. Family input is solicited for CSIP. There are opportunities for participation in families' home languages.	Level 2 + Families give input into processes and policies the school uses in problem solving. Family representatives on SBDM and PTO make connections with other families.	Level 3 + Families and students are active partners on committees and groups that set school policy and procedures, track data, and identify improvement strategies. Building leaders and staff	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Scoring

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5. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations ensure that the school is a hub of the community, which meets whole child needs.

Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Effective partnerships supporting student and school improvement	School and/or district leadership invite employers and community organizations to support students and families in their work.	Level 1 + School and/or district leadership develop partnerships with employers and community organizations to support student learning and family resources.	Level 2 + Community partners offer services at the school building and/or at school-wide events.	Level 3 + School and/or district leadership involves community partners in planning, decision making, and school improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Sustainable Infrastructure and Resource Processes	Families receive information about community resources at the beginning of the school year.	Level 1 + Families receive periodic reminders about community resources during the school year. Staff help families and students access community resources.	Level 2 + Designated staff members (often FRYSC) provide students and family members with equitable access to community resources through an interconnected system of supports.	Level 3 + Collaborative problem-solving teams that cross sectors in the school (FRYSC, SRO, academics) work together to provide wraparound services for students and families through an MTSS system. Equity is an important part of these teams' work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

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Critical Attribute	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Certification)	Level 4 (Gold)	Score
Meaningful Community Integration	The school has a space, often in the front office, where families can easily find information about community resources and school programs.	LEVEL 1 + Designated school staff help families access community resources off-site and sometimes at school, at times that are convenient for families and students.	LEVEL 2 + Community partners provide regular services on-site in the school building.	LEVEL 3 + The school serves as a community center where students and families can find educational, social, health, cultural, and recreational resources. Families partner with school staff to add new services and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4
Systemic Wholeness Approach	Designated school staff provide supplemental academic, socio-emotional, wellness, and basic needs resources when requested by families and if families qualify for those services.	Level 1 + Building leaders and teachers partner with designated staff (usually FRYSC) to connect students in Tier 2, Tier 3, or Special Education with other resources beyond academic or behavioral intervention.	Level 2 + Building leaders set a tone for a strengths-based approach to students and families. Teachers and staff use a whole-child/whole-family approach to address barriers to learning.	Level 3 + Building leaders and designated staff use results from screenings and assessments to identify and establish new community partnerships to address emerging needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 (not there yet) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4

Scoring _____ out of 16

OVERALL SCORING WORKSHEET

Objective	My Score	Total Possible
1. Relationship Building		20
2. Communications		16
3. Shared Responsibility		16
4. Advocacy		12
5. Community Partnerships		16
TOTAL		80

Mark your achievement level: **Level 1** (20 or Lower) **Level 2** (20-47) **Certified** **Level 3** (48-71) **Gold** **Level 4** (72+)

What Does My Score Mean?

- **Level 1:** The school has a beginning awareness of the best practices of Family Engagement and is starting to implement some of those practices.
- **Level 2:** The school has begun developing a systematic Family Engagement plan that aligns with best practices.
- **Level 3:** Family Friendly School: The school implements a systematic Family Engagement plan that aligns with best practices in the field. School staff and leadership see families as true partners. This school is eligible to apply for Family Friendly Schools status if it meets other requirements for the certification.
- **Level 4:** Family Friendly School Gold: The school implements a systematic Family Engagement plan that aligns with best practices in the field. Families and Community partners are true co-creators of education for student success. This school has successfully engaged nondominant and/or unreached families. This school is eligible to apply for Family Friendly Schools Gold status if it meets other requirements for the certification.

Suggestions for Small Group Debrief:

1. Where did our team have the most **similarities? Differences?** Discuss the different perspectives and experiences based on roles within the school.
2. Where do we feel our **school is strongest?** What areas need the **most improvement?** What **surprised you?**
3. Where do we need more **feedback and clarity?** How can we get this information? How can we bring in more **voices and diversity** i.e. student voice?
4. Where do we want to **start and how will we know if we are making progress?**
5. Set the **next meeting date** and assign at least one follow-up item for each member of the team.

Visit the **Prichard Committee Family Friendly Website** for the accompanying Guide book, online modules and Digital Playbook categorized by these 5 Self-Assessment Objectives- prichardcommittee.org/familyengagement/ email familyfriendly@prichardcommittee.org for additional questions.