



12 “Do-able”

Strategies to Increase Student & Family Engagement:

1. Create a welcoming “first impression” - Clear signage; clean, comfortable, calming waiting areas.
2. Smile More! Demonstrate attitudes that are genuine, respectful and empathetic
3. Ask, Ask, Ask - for student and family input in IEP, treatment planning.
4. Explore, focus upon, and share family and student strengths at every opportunity.
5. Help families and students set their own goals and action steps.
6. Use active listening and open-ended questions.
7. Eliminate stigmatizing language as well as negative nonverbal and “micro-messages”—demonstrate respect.
8. Prepare for those with different cultural backgrounds—ask adult family members if you are in doubt about how to proceed.
9. Learn about resources in your community, and educate families about them.
10. Network with other community professionals and agencies.
11. Lose the jargon, and model consistent, pro-active, supportive communication.
12. Plan for transitions—help students & families “take the wheel.”

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