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Family Engagement with Schools: Strategies for School Social Workers and Educators.

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Review

Chavkin, N. F. (2017). *Family Engagement with Schools: strategies for school social workers and educators*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0-19-064212-9.

Believing that it is possible and necessary to change the way schools and families work together, the book *Family Engagement with School: Strategies for School Social Workers and Educators* presents conclusions on more than forty years of research that shows that family engagement is the most effective approach to improve education for all children. The purpose of the book is to provide school social workers, social workers students and educators, with evidence-based strategies and methods that can help them work towards true family engagement.

The book has eight chapters. Each chapter starts with a quotation that relates to the ideas discussed in that chapter, and ends with 3 final sessions: the “looking ahead” session, where the author introduces what is going to be discussed in the next chapter, the “key points” session, that summarizes the critical ideas of that chapter, and the “questions to consider” session, where the author brings questions to help the reader exam their work and reality. I found the three final sessions in each chapter very useful, as it helps you to recap the essential ideas of the chapter and examine your reality through the questions provided. The user friendly language used in the book makes it possible for anyone interested in the subject of family engagement to comprehend the ideas presented.

Through the chapters, the author brings a lot of useful examples of logic models, conceptual frameworks, evaluation resources and links that help the reader understand more about different family engagement efforts in different contexts. The appendix contains family engagement toolkits and

other resources as well as a list of organizations working in areas related to family engagement with schools.

The author emphasizes that family engagement work is not easy. It is not simply about promoting activities such as cupcakes seals with parents, or inviting parents to the school; family engagement means building partnerships with families and schools to improve outcomes for all students. To make family engagement a reality, it is necessary to reframe the vision of what family engagement should look like, and the book focuses on giving the readers means to make that happen. In the first and second chapter, the author reflects on models of family engagement, reviewing theories and framework. The new Dual Capacity-Building Framework is introduced in the second chapter, and the author presents the benefits of the framework for students, families, schools and communities. The third and fourth chapters present tools to help the reader identify the strengths of the families and communities and use those strengths to address challenges.

The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters focus on the 3C's approach, which are three key strategies: connecting, communicating and collaborating with families. These three chapters are divided in five parts: examples of best practices, addressing differences, overcoming challenges and a case vignette. As the family engagement approach emphasizes that all families need to be included in their children's education, the chapters' division helps the reader understand the importance of being culturally responsive to families and establishing partnerships build on trust and openness. The last chapter returns to the idea of reframing the vision, as it summarizes the VIP (Very Important Partnership) and 3C's approach, helping the reader understand how to increase sustainability and capacity using the Dual Capacity-Building Framework.

Although the author makes it clear that it is necessary for each school or community to develop their own family engagement plan, the book provides many useful examples, frameworks, logic models and tools that can certainly help any school social workers and educators interested in building their family engagement plan. The books helps the reader understand the importance of going from family participation to true family engagement in order to transform schools and work towards connecting

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education issues to social justice. I would strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in working with family engagement.

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