Durham’s Partnership for Children

Family Engagement Action Plan
Year: 2019-2020

Mission of Agency
To ensure every child in Durham enters school ready to succeed, we lead community strategies for children birth to age 5 and their families that promote healthy development and learning and enhance access to high quality care.

Definition of Family Engagement
According to Durham’s Partnership for Children, family engagement is a multifaceted approach. Family Engagement is a collaborative process where families, children, and early childhood professionals build positive relationships that honor family culture and fosters child success. Pre-K students are able to engage with other students, teachers, and their community in a fun environment. According to NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance shaped by DCDEE and NC Pre-K,

“Strategies should be designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision making. The following are examples of meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child’s education:

1. Allowing NC Pre-K program teachers the opportunity for home visits;
2. Formal and informal parent/teacher conferences;
3. Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities;
4. Parent education;
5. Allowing family members the opportunity for involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child's early childhood program; and
6. Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day”

Objective
Families, children, and early childhood professionals will feel more connected through the collaborative process of family engagement by building positive relationships that honor family culture and foster child success.

Last Updated 10/14/2019
**Family Engagement Goals/Outcomes**

- To build warm, open relationships with children and their parents that build trust and foster a bond.
- To assess family involvement activities on an ongoing basis.
- Parents are aware how their involvement is essential for their children to succeed.
- Children become acquainted with their teachers.
- Parents understand how to encourage their children to be creative and intuitive.

**Positive Impacts of Family Engagement on the Child**

- Social Competence
- Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills
- Literacy Development
- Vocabulary Growth
- Expressive Language
- Comprehension Skills
- Positive Engagements with peers, adults, and learning
Through the targeted Family Engagement Goals/Outcomes, DPfC has shaped its Family Engagement Action Plan based on 6 Components of Family Engagement: **Advocacy and Decision-Making, Communication, Community Collaboration, Parenting/Training, Student Learning, and Volunteering.**

**Family Involvement and Engagement**

Decades of research consistently links family involvement and engagement to higher student achievement, better attitudes toward school, lower dropout rates, and increased community support. Several practices that schools should do to foster school-family connections:

- Create a welcoming environment that fosters family-school relationships and transcends context, culture, and language
- Identify misconceptions that teachers and families hold about the motivation, practices, or beliefs of each other that lead to mistrust
- Direct resources and programmatic efforts to help families adopt effective strategies to support student learning
- Understand the effect of home context on student performance, including home culture, parenting practices, home crises, or significant events
- Create structures-policy, leadership, procedures, processes, and aligned resources that encourage family involvement
- Understand the effect that beliefs, self-efficacy, knowledge, perceived abilities, and previous experience have on the roles families create and use to support their children's education

**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It plays a role not only in communication and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. It provides a way for students to maintain their cultural integrity while succeeding academically. Not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence, they must help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities. “Culturally responsive” appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture. By observing students in their home/community environment, teachers are able to include aspects of the students’ cultural environment in the organization and instruction of the classroom. Culturally responsive teaching can be seen as a beginning step for bridging the gap between home and school. Teachers must be prepared with a thorough understanding of the specific cultures of the students they teach; how that culture affects student learning behaviors; and how they can change classroom interactions and instruction to embrace the differences. This can be carried out by doing each of these actions:

- Require each teacher to obtain proper certification, training, and professional development
- Increase teacher motivation to recognize diverse learners’ strengths, as well as their needs
- Decrease dependence on packaged instructional materials and increase implementation of strategies and techniques targeted to the needs of specific student groups
- Integrate the use of technology into instructional practice to bridge the generational divide
- Recruit and retain high-quality teachers for schools in rural and remote areas

_Last Updated 10/14/2019_
### DPFC’s Six Components of Family Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Component 1:</strong> Advocacy and Decision-Making</th>
<th><strong>Component 2:</strong> Communication</th>
<th><strong>Component 3:</strong> Community Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents are full partners in decisions that affect children, parents have something critical to share at each developmental stage, use the behavior of the child as your language</td>
<td>Programs should reaffirm and strengthen the families’ cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society</td>
<td>Be willing to discuss matters that go beyond your traditional role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include families as participants in decision-making in curriculum, school decisions, governance, and advocacy through school councils, committees, action teams and other parent organizations</td>
<td>Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications</td>
<td>Coordinate resources/services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and to provide services to the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement a comment box to ask questions, voice concerns, offer suggestions</td>
<td>Examples of welcoming environments (morning message board, diverse books/materials, interactive materials, teachers greet families, etc.);</td>
<td>Help parents to address barriers to utilizing community services, such as transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let letter sent home at beginning of school year to express importance/benefits of family engagement</td>
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<td>Collaborate with early childhood partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value and understand the relationship between the teacher and the parent</td>
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<td>Encourage parents to share information about community resources and events</td>
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<td>Home visits (home visit report to determine skills that need work)</td>
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<td>Sign-in sheets for parents and children</td>
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<td>Must be regular, two-way, and meaningful</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPONENT 4: PARENTING/TRAINING</td>
<td>COMPONENT 5: STUDENT LEARNING</td>
<td>COMPONENT 6: VOLUNTEERING</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students.</td>
<td>Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.</td>
<td>Improve recruitment, training, schedule to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support students and school programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use opportunities to model healthy parenting skills.</td>
<td>Provide list of books for families to read with children at home.</td>
<td>Parents are welcome, their support is solicited, all parents have strengths.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share parenting tips and discuss parenting issues during conferences.</td>
<td>Parents assist in learning, the parent is the expert on his/her child.</td>
<td>Invite families to share cultural traditions/customs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide parenting articles and resources.</td>
<td>Provide summer calendar of activities.</td>
<td>Include all types of families (fathers, grandparents, foster parents, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support parents with children with special needs by connecting them with parenting materials and resources.</td>
<td>Suggested websites to use at home.</td>
<td>Survey families to find out skills they can share.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer guidance for dealing with children’s different behavioral stages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use effective consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk to/listen to your child, help them develop a questioning mind, make learning a positive experience.</td>
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</table>
Family Engagement Action Plan Requirements

Family Engagement will be implemented within the childcare program and also within the home to support the home-to-school and school-to-home learning exchange. Documentation of family engagement efforts will be kept at each Pre-K site including the date, activity completed, and number of families in attendance. Please see specific program requirements below that will assist in building positive relationships and fostering child success:

1. Sites are required to complete at least two home visits per family each school year. Home visits must be documented in TS Gold.

2. Sites are required to complete one family engagement activity per quarter. Staff is to document family engagement activity in TS Gold by Checkpoint date.
   - Fall TS Gold Checkpoint, October 28, 2019
   - Winter TS Gold Checkpoint, January 17, 2020
   - Spring TS Gold Checkpoint, April 3, 2020

3. Formal parent/teacher conferences are required to be completed on a monthly basis. It is a great opportunity to (1) share academic progress and growth based on classroom observations, assessments, and portfolios, (2) learn from parents or guardians so you can be better informed about students’ strengths, needs, behaviors, and learning styles, (3) discuss enrichment or intervention strategies to support students’ learning, and (4) discuss issues that may be interfering with students’ learning and growth. Please note that in the event that a parent/family declines the conference, it must be documented with parent signature. Conferences must be documented in TS Gold.

Family Engagement Action Plan Materials

DPFC has created a number of documents that will capture all aspects of Family Engagement. Please see description of documents below.

- **Pre-K Child Introduction Questionnaire** - A form that introduces the child to the Pre-K staff. It addresses child’s interests, child’s strengths, allergies, learning styles, and preferred method of parental involvement.
  - **When:** Completed within 7 days of Pre-K start date
  - **Where:** Filed at Pre-K site in child’s portfolio
  - **Who:** Administered by Pre-K site

- **Pre-K Child Profile** - A form used to capture demographic information, best way to contact parent, family participation, child’s progress, suggested development strategies, etc.
  - **When:** Completed quarterly in alignment with TS Gold Checkpoints
    - Fall TS Gold Checkpoint, October 28, 2019
    - Winter TS Gold Checkpoint, January 17, 2020
    - Spring TS Gold Checkpoint, April 3, 2020
  - **Where:** Filed at Pre-K site in child’s portfolio
  - **Who:** Administered by Pre-K site
• **Pre-K Family Engagement Placement Contact**- A form designed to describe a family’s placement experience. Parents may rate their overall experience during the placement process. Parents are also able to provide suggestions on how the experience can be improved.
  o **When:** Completed monthly within first 3 months of program; **September 1st, October 1st, November 1st**
  o **Where:** Filed at DPIC
  o **Who:** Administered by DPIC staff via phone, email, in-person, etc.; results will be compiled and shared with DPIC staff and Pre-K site

• **Pre-K Family Engagement Initial Site Assessment**- A form that evaluates the six components of family engagement and the program’s strengths, goals, and needs from the Pre-K site perspective. This form is a requirement for Directors and Lead Teachers.
  o **When:** Completed by **September 30, 2019**
  o **Where:** Filed at DPIC
  o **Who:** Administered by DPIC; results will be compiled and shared with Pre-K site

• **Pre-K Family Engagement Parent Pre-Survey**- A form that evaluates the six components of family engagement, strengths, weaknesses, and needs from the parent’s perspective.
  o **When:** Completed by **90th day of school year, Sunday, November 24, 2019**
  o **Where:** Filed at DPIC
  o **Who:** Administered by DPIC; results will be compiled and shared with Pre-K site

• **Pre-K Family Engagement Final Site Assessment**- A form that evaluates the six components of family engagement and the program’s strengths, goals, and needs from the Pre-K site perspective. This form is a requirement for Directors and Lead Teachers.
  o **When:** Completed by **March 31, 2020**
  o **Where:** Filed at DPIC
  o **Who:** Administered by DPIC; results will be compiled and shared with Pre-K site

• **Pre-K Family Engagement Parent Post-Survey**- A form that evaluates the six components of family engagement, strengths, weaknesses, and needs from the parent’s perspective; transition out of Pre-K to Kindergarten to determine if a difference was made.
  o **When:** Completed by **March 31, 2020**
  o **Where:** Filed at DPIC
  o **Who:** Administered by DPIC; results will be compiled and shared with Pre-K site

*Please note the Family Engagement Specialist will complete formal site visits twice a year to ensure the adherence of program requirements, share site assessments results, and to provide an opportunity for Directors to express concerns/ask questions. Documentation of complete and incomplete assessments will be recorded by DPIC.*

  • **October 1, 2019-October 31, 2019**
  • **April 1, 2020-April 30, 2020**

*Family Engagement Newsletters will be sent quarterly to families (via email and mail correspondence) with DPIC’s Pre-K program updates. Monthly updates will also be sent to families with DPIC events, community events, free resources, etc. in efforts to engage with families on an on-going basis.*
### Six Characteristics to Prepare Teachers to be Culturally Responsive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural consciousness</td>
<td>A teacher's own way of thinking, behaving, and being are influenced by race, ethnicity, social class, and language. Teachers must critically examine their own socio-cultural identities and biases in the context of the inequalities culturally diverse segments of society experience. They must recognize discrimination based on ethnicity, social class, and skin color and inspect and confront any negative attitudes they might have toward diverse student groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>A teacher's affirming attitude toward students from culturally diverse backgrounds significantly impacts student learning, belief in themselves, and overall academic performance. By respecting cultural differences and using curricular and instructional practices related to the cultures of their students, schools and classrooms become inclusive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment and skills</td>
<td>A teacher’s role as an agent of change confronts barriers/obstacles to those changes and develops skills for collaboration. As agents of change, teachers assist schools in becoming more equitable over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivist views</td>
<td>A teacher’s contention that all students are capable of learning requires building scaffolding between what students already know through their own experiences and what they need to learn. Constructivist teaching promotes critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and the recognition of multiple perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of student’s life</td>
<td>A teacher’s learning about a student’s past experiences, home and community culture, and world in and out of school helps build relationships by increasing the use of these experiences in the context of teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally responsive teaching</td>
<td>A teacher’s use of strategies that support a constructivist view of knowledge, teaching, and learning assists students in constructing knowledge, building on their personal and cultural strengths, and examining the curriculum from multiple perspectives, thus creating an inclusive classroom environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five Qualities that Distinguish Effective Teachers

- Hold high expectations for all students and help all students learn, as measured by value-added or other test-based growth measures or by alternative measures.
- Contribute to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students, such as regular attendance, on-time promotion to the next grade, on-time graduation, self-efficacy, and cooperative behavior.
- Use diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities, monitor student progress formatively, adapt instruction as needed, and evaluate learning using multiple sources of evidence.
- Contribute to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civicmindedness.
- Collaborate with colleagues, administrators, parents, and education professionals to ensure student success, particularly the success of high-risk students or those with special needs.

Seven Essential Components to Educational Equity and Effective School Practices

- **Access**: ensure each student has an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of the educational process, including learning facilities, resources, and extracurricular and curricular programs.
- **Instruction**: use instructional practices that promote positive images of diverse groups.
- **Materials**: review textbooks, audiovisuals, and other materials to minimize bias in content, graphics, pictures, and language.
- **Assessment**: consider differences in students’ learning styles and cultural backgrounds when assessing students and align culturally responsive assessment results with school curricula, instruction, and systemic improvement goals.
- **Interactions**: adjust the ways you relate to students to ensure that you respect their cultural backgrounds.
- **Attitudes**: examine and acknowledge your own biases or prejudices that may be unintentional but could result in treating students differently because of their race, sex, ability, ethnicity, or other factors.
- **Language**: monitor language for subtle or overt biases that can create stereotypes or prejudicial attitudes.

*Last Updated 10/14/2019*
Teachers Creating an Equitable Classroom Climate

The National School Climate Council defines school climate as “the quality and character of school life” that is based on “patterns of students’, parents’, and school personnel’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, and interpersonal relationships, teaching, and learning practices, and organizational structures.” Key aspects of a positive school climate include safety (social, emotional, and physical), respect, and engagement. Teachers must be intentional about eliminating bias and creating a culturally responsive classroom climate. Six strategies that teachers should implement to create an environment in which all children have equitable opportunities to learn:

Teachers acknowledge their own biases and inequitable actions when they:

- Improve their communication skills by listening and adjusting to the communication style of others, continually checking for understanding, respecting differences, and using language that builds trust and positive relationships
- Participate in professional development on harassment and equity issues

Teachers make an effort to learn about their students’ cultural backgrounds when they:

- Include activities such as family history projects, selecting readings about the cultures of students in their classroom
- Plan family nights or cultural events that encourage discussion and learning about others in their school

Teachers examine curriculum and learning materials for bias when they ask:

- Does the curriculum provide for a balanced study of world cultures?
- Do classroom displays and instructional materials include positive representations of diverse international and domestic cultures?

Teachers build relationships with families and communities when they:

- Build partnerships with community members, youth organizations, and other service providers
- Invite local community groups to make presentations and conduct workshops for teachers and students

Teachers build caring, cooperative classroom environments when they:

- Immediately confront any biased or discriminatory behavior in the classroom or school
- Teach students how to treat each other with respect

Teachers identify curricular bias by looking for these practices:

a. **Invisibility**-overlooking certain groups that implies they are less valuable or important
b. **Stereotyping**-limiting the opportunities for a certain group on rigid perceptions of their ability or potential
c. **Imbalance or selectivity**-providing one viewpoint or selective information that leads to misinterpretation or an incomplete understanding of an event, situation, or group of people
d. **Fragmentation or isolation**-placing information about people of color, women, or other protected groups in a box or chapter that is separate from the main body of the text
e. **Linguistic bias**-using masculine words such as he and mankind exclusively, or using patronizing terms such as needy or less fortunate to describe a group of people
**Specific Activities as Culturally Responsive Best Practices for Teaching Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, and Linguistically Diverse Students**

- Acknowledge students’ differences as well as their commonalities
- Validate students’ cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials
- Educate students about the diversity of the world around them
- Promote equity and mutual respect among students
- Assess students’ ability and achievement validly
- Foster a positive interrelationship among students, their families, the community, and school
- Motivate students to become active participants in their learning
- Encourage students to think critically
- Challenge students to strive for excellence as defined by their potential
**Family Engagement Ideas**

Family Engagement will be implemented within the childcare program and also within the home to support the home-to-school and school-to-home learning exchange. Please see family engagement ideas/suggestions referenced below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-K Site Events</th>
<th>Home Activities</th>
<th>Pre-K Site Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Arts &amp; Crafts Night</td>
<td>• Visit the public library monthly</td>
<td>• Host events to encourage parent involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family Yoga Night</td>
<td>• Name the shapes of different street signs</td>
<td>• Orientation Video explaining class requirements/expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Instrument Petting Zoo</td>
<td>• Sort and match clothes by color</td>
<td>• Parents may volunteer to read to classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Puzzle Night</td>
<td>• Find the letters of your name in books/magazines</td>
<td>• Parents may help classroom monitoring needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talent Shows</td>
<td>• Play card games, cook together</td>
<td>• Parents may volunteer to be guest speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exceptional Education Success Night</td>
<td>• Time yourself-brush your teeth in two minutes</td>
<td>• Parents may chaperone field trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family Reading Night (board games, etc.)</td>
<td>• Practice buttoning a shirt/tying shoes</td>
<td>• Share fun and engaging classroom activities with parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Classroom Carnival</td>
<td>• Read together with a family member</td>
<td>• Plan trainings for parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wildlife Night</td>
<td>• Praise child’s accomplishments, let them know how important to you that they do well</td>
<td>• Offer classes understanding the use of technology, create email addresses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Field trips</td>
<td>• Parents fill out cards of encouragement that were given to their children</td>
<td>• Invite parents to speak with school staff to share parent perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Male Engagement Specific Activities</td>
<td>• Talk to your child about feelings everyday</td>
<td>• Conduct a tour of neighborhoods for teachers/next year parents</td>
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<td>• Remind your child how much they have learned since the beginning of the school year</td>
<td>• Schedule events out of the regular school day to meet the needs of working families</td>
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<td>• Create a learning center (tri-fold board with numbers, shapes, colors, child’s name, birthday, left vs. right, days of the week, months of the year, seasons, alphabet)</td>
<td>• Locate outside resources to support families</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The following holidays/observances may be incorporated/celebrated within the childcare program and in conjunction with parent/family interests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Observances: National Blood Donor Month, National Braille Literacy Month</td>
<td>Monthly Observances: American Heart Month, Black History Month, Canned Food Month, International Friendship Month, National Bird-Feeding Month</td>
<td>Monthly Observances: National Women’s History Month, Child Life Month, Youth Art Month, Social Workers Month, National Nutrition Month</td>
<td>Monthly Observances: Child Abuse Prevention Month, Autism Awareness Month, Financial Literacy Month, Lawn and Garden Month, Stress Awareness Month</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|   • New Year’s Day  
   • National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day  
   • Martin Luther King Jr. Day |   • Give Kids a Smile Day  
   • Chinese New Year  
   • Valentine’s Day  
   • Presidents Day |   • Saint Patrick’s Day  
   • National Doctor’s Day |   • World Health Day  
   • Easter  
   • Earth Day  
   • National Pet Day  
   • Siblings Day |
| May          | June                        | July                                       | August                                     |
| Monthly Observances: Foster Care Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, National Military Appreciation Month, Haitian Heritage Month | Monthly Observances: National Safety Month, African-American Music Appreciation Month, National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month | Monthly Observances: National Ice Cream Month, National Picnic Month, National Blueberry Month | Monthly Observances: National Immunization Awareness Month, Family Fun Month |
|   • National Teachers Day  
   • Mother’s Day  
   • Memorial Day |   • World Environment Day  
   • Father’s Day |   • Independence Day  
   • Parents Day  
   • Cousins Day  
   • Aunt and Uncle’s Day |   • National Friendship Day  
   • National Night Out (against crime) |
| September    | October                     | November                                   | December                                   |
| Monthly Observances: Classical Music Month, Self-Improvemnt Month, National Yoga Awareness Month, National Hispanic Heritage Month | Monthly Observances: National Bullying Prevention Month, Fire Prevention Awareness Month, Filipino American History Month, Italian-American Heritage and Culture month, National Vegetarian Month | Monthly Observances: Aviation History Month, Native American Heritage Month, National Caregivers Awareness Month, National Sleep Comfort Month | Monthly Observances: Bingo Month, Human Rights Month, Write a Friend Month |
|   • Labor Day  
   • Grandparents Day  
   • World Heart Day |   • Columbus Day  
   • S.A.V.E. Day  
   • Halloween |   • Veterans Day  
   • World Kindness Day  
   • Thanksgiving |   • National Volunteer Day  
   • Christmas  
   • Hanukkah  
   • Kwanzaa |