

R.E.A.L : For Talking with Families with Young Children

The R.E.A.L. framework can help educators explain the importance of showing up, especially given the challenges experienced during the pandemic, and reflect upon what is needed to make showing up to school worthwhile. We've tailored the concepts below slightly to use language that works best for families with young children.

When adapting R.E.A.L., consider where people in your school community have the greatest challenges. Get to know families so you can decide which talking point(s) make most sense. For example, if families are struggling with housing or basic needs, you might want to start with offering Access to resources rather than emphasizing routines.

Showing up matters for **R.E.A.L** because it is an opportunity to:

- Build **R**outines
- Increase **E**ngagement
- Provide **A**ccess to resources
- Support **L**earning

Routines: Daily attendance routines can reduce stress, increase your child's self-confidence and lay a foundation for good attendance in later grades.

Engagement: Participation in school helps your child connect with other children and adults and get excited about learning.

Access to Resources: Schools can give you access to meals, physical and mental health care and other supports, and fun enrichment activities (sports, clubs, music, afterschool and summer programs, etc.).

Learning: Children learn best from hand-on activities and through meaningful interactions with their teacher and other students.

Use these concepts in your interactions with families with elementary children, including during morning greetings, one-on-one conversations in the hallway, calls home, parent teacher conferences or comments delivered at school or community events. Keep the tone positive, respectful and supportive, whether you are speaking face-to-face or in writing.

[Return to the toolkit, Showing Up Matters for R.E.A.L.](#)