

Ready! Set! Frame!



Whether you are just brainstorming the content of a message or editing a completed draft, this checklist can keep your framing on track. Use the framing principles below as a guide to make sure you are incorporating effective framing strategies into all of your communications:

Widen the lens to tell a story about the *Conditions of Engagement*.

A strong message will:

- highlight how equitable engagement practices create conditions that afford all families the opportunity to participate in their children's education
- tell a "we" story about many people working together
- focus on systems, programs, policies, funding, or group actions (rather than on individual heroes or individual recipients of services)
- demonstrate how social or environmental conditions like work schedules or school policy can help or hinder people's engagement
- appeal to your audience as engaged community members capable of action (rather than passive consumers of information)
- inspire your audience to take action and fix a set of conditions

Use values to show why family, school, and community engagement (FSCE) matters.

A strong message will:

- use a tested value (*Opportunity for All*) near the beginning, which can help guide people's interpretation of the information that follows
- appeal to the *Opportunity for All* value to establish that FSCE is about making sure all children—regardless of race, family income, or origin—have access to the support and resources they need to do well in school
- use the *Opportunity for All* value to introduce examples of inclusive engagement practices to prime people to understand why they are needed



- when communicating to educators, appeal to the *Interdependence* value—the idea that engagement is a partnership among schools, families, and community—to drive home the idea that strong engagement requires policy support and that it is not the sole responsibility of the practitioner
- reinforce the value you are focused on by repeating it in other places in your message

Pair the *Opportunity for All* value with concrete examples to talk about addressing inequities in engagement practices.

A strong message will:

- offer concrete examples to illustrate how to address barriers to engagement
- explain how effective family engagement can be realized in all communities, and why that is desirable
- share specific examples of what schools can do to support equitable, inclusive engagement practices

Use *Space Launch* to explain how FSCE works and build support for stronger family and community engagement policies.

A strong message will make comparisons such as:

- a space launch involves many experts such as engineers, mathematicians, and physicists: explain how successful engagement also requires many partners working together including families, school staff, and community members
- successful launches depend on collaboration: show how engagement is better when everyone works together and contributes their different types of expertise
- planning a launch requires setting goals: talk about how the successful “launch” of a child’s learning depends on goal-setting and clear and consistent communication on a regular basis
- space launches take time: emphasize the importance of starting planning early, both in the school year and in early childhood
- “mission accomplished” equals healthy development and student success: be clear about what the end goal looks like



Foreground the benefits of engagement for teachers and students.

A strong message will:

- leverage the benefits that accrue to students and teachers to make the case for equitable engagement practices
- illustrate how better engagement practices can create substantive change, leading to better outcomes for teachers and students
- suggest engagement solutions that put students and teachers at the center
- demonstrate how social or environmental conditions like work schedules or school policy can help or hinder people's engagement

Use parents as messengers to communicate the benefits of engagement to families.

A strong message will:

- discuss the benefits that accrue to parents to make the case for equitable engagement practices
- illustrate how better engagement practices can be transformative, leading to better outcomes for families as well as students
- suggest engagement solutions that depict parents as equal partners in their children's education