

Family, School, and Community Connections Symposium:  
***New Directions for Research, Practice, and Evaluation***  
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*Readiness: The Role of Family-School Connections in Supporting Student Success in Early Childhood*

**Christine M. McWayne**, Assistant Professor of Applied Psychology, Steinhardt School of Education, New York University, New York, NY

In this presentation, Christine McWayne shares her findings in the area of early childhood and how family-school connections support student success. McWayne points out that most of the research on parent involvement emphasizes the relationships between specific parent involvement behaviors and children's achievement, while some studies have linked parental beliefs and expectations about children's learning to children's beliefs about their own competencies as well as their achievement. However, fewer studies have linked parent involvement to children's outcomes for vulnerable groups, such as low-income, preschool children. McWayne suggests that family involvement practices may manifest in culturally specific ways in the home. These practices are typically invisible to school personnel and, therefore, go unrecognized. Furthermore, McWayne cautions that traditional family involvement practices are inadequate for some groups such as recently immigrated or working single parents and that schools need to acknowledge what's going on at home, particularly when schools serve different cultural groups. McWayne shares with participants her work in the validation of two multi-dimensional instruments instrument for preschool and kindergarten parents. McWayne concludes that to develop a successful family involvement program, schools must have a collaborative decision-making process in place to involve families, to understand where they're coming from, what they need, and what they value.