

**EDUC1890: Family Engagement in Education**  
**Spring 2020**  
**Thursdays: 4-6:30pm**

**Instructor:** Yoko Yamamoto  
**Office:** #202 Innovation Room  
164 Angel Street (2F of the book store)  
Education Department

**Email:** Yoko\_Yamamoto@brown.edu  
**Office Hours:** Thurs.: 1:30-3:40pm  
and by appointment

---

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How do families support and influence their children's development and educational processes? What are the strengths as well as barriers in navigating their children's education experienced by families from diverse sociocultural backgrounds? How can schools and families build partnerships to promote children's positive development and educational processes?

This course involves unique and collaborative inquiry through connections between classroom learning and fieldwork experiences at public charter schools in Providence. In classrooms, students will be actively involved in discussions to examine theories and original research studies focused on mechanisms and roles of family engagement in children's educational processes in diverse social and cultural contexts. We also partner with Achievement First, K-8 public charter schools in Providence where students will have volunteering opportunities and conduct projects for them. This is a community engaged course, and students are strongly encouraged to connect the theories and research studies learned in this course to their observations and fieldwork. We will also conduct group projects to provide resources that help Achievement First formulate strategies promote family-school relations and empower families in the community. Our projects and research will be shared with and provided to families in Achievement First as well as related organizations in Providence.

**Objectives/goals**

Key objectives of this course are for you to:

- 1) Gain an understanding of the complexities of family socialization processes as well as challenges faced by families in diverse sociocultural and racial/ethnic contexts.
- 2) Develop skills to objectively examine the roles and mechanisms of family engagement in children's developmental and educational processes.
- 3) Develop analytical skills and demonstrate the ability to think critically, and to reason logically using research, evidence, and examples.
- 4) Connect your classroom learning with your real-world observations, fieldwork, and projects, co-create your knowledge through these experiences, and contribute to the community.

### **Course Organization**

The course meets once a week, and each class lasts 2 hours and 30 minutes. The structure of the course combines multiple engagement formats (e.g., Interactive lectures, community partners' talks, group presentations, discussions/activities, etc.). For the first half of each session, students will examine and explore topics in greater depth interactively with the instructor through her presentations. Then discussion leaders will lead group discussions and activities through which students apply the readings into their experiences, community contexts, and practical implications. There will also be times allocated for presentations by community members or students (e.g., group presentations). We will aim to connect the readings and research studies to your fieldwork, observations and projects as much as possible. In this way, we will build a community of learning to which we all are expected to be a member of a group to work with and contribute to families/children in a larger community.

### **Credit Hours**

For full-credit courses at Brown, in-class and out-of-class hours total 180 hours over the length of a semester. This is a full-credit course with an estimated credit hour load of 180 hours. Students can expect to spend 35 hours in class (2.5 hours per week for 14 weeks), 70 hours (5 hours per week) on reading and submitting weekly responses, 10 hours preparing to lead a discussion and submitting a write-up, 15 hours volunteering/ fieldwork at Achievement First including hours for a school tour and writing a fieldnote, 15 hours working to complete assignments/tasks for a group project and presentation, and 35 hours working on the final project, preparing for a poster, and writing the final paper.

These are estimates; you may spend more or less time reading/writing than the numbers suggested above.

## **FIELDWORK-RELATED INFORMATION**

### ***Our Partner School***

#### **Achievement First (public charter schools in Providence)**

370 Hartford Avenue

Providence, RI 02909

<https://www.achievementfirst.org/schools/rhode-island-schools/achievement-first-providence-mayoral-academy-elementary/about/>

All students are required to get a state background check (BCI) to volunteer at Achievement First. Please give or email a form to the instructor by February 13.

### **Transportation to Achievement First Providence**

Take RIPTA Route 28. The closest bus stop is Hartford/killingly.

<https://www.ripta.com/28?d=2#schedule>

No fee to use RIPTA for Brown students! Show your Brown ID.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Class Participation & Engagement**

#### **Class Attendance and Active Participation in Discussions and Activities (15%)**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Class discussions on the readings and active participation in workshops and activities play critical roles in your success in this course. It is important that you come to class having read all the materials assigned for the day. This class is based around lively, respectful group discussions and activities. Thus, it would be very helpful when students are prepared to think critically and creatively about course reading, to discuss the readings' main points in connections with their experiences, and to apply the concepts learned from the reading. Please respect your classmates and the experiences of the community people. Participation in class and engagement in activities/discussions will be graded. When you cannot come to class for a legitimate reason, please contact me. Your absence will be excused with an official supporting document.

The use of phones/smartphones could be disruptive for active learning and others around you. I would greatly appreciate if you could put your smartphones away in this class unless needed for activities.

#### **Weekly Reading Responses (15%)**

Each week you are expected to submit reading responses of at least two of the assigned readings except for the week you are leading a group discussion. This assignment is intended to help each student prepare for his or her engagement in class and participation in group discussions. These assignments are not summaries, but considered to be critical responses to the readings. These analyses or questions can engage with things you found interesting, confusing, or provocative in the readings. Students are encouraged to bring their questions to class to share with the peers if there is extra time. **Please submit your responses to CANVAS by 3:30pm each Thursday!** The weekly responses will be graded. Submissions for weekly responses will begin Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> (Week 3). The guidelines/rubrics are available on CANVAS.

#### **Leading a Discussion & Critical Analysis Write-Up (15%)**

You will lead a discussion session once during the course. The discussions are designed to cover all of the readings for that week. You will develop 3-4 broad questions pertaining to the readings and lead discussions and activities to facilitate applications and connections of the readings (Please read the guidelines available on CANVAS!). The leaders are encouraged to design creative activities to engage group members and maximize everyone's participation. Each discussion leader is expected to submit a 3-page write-up (double spaced) analyzing the readings critically and explaining his or her respective rationales for raising these discussion

questions to **Canvas by 11pm on Wed.**, the day before their discussion day (Students do not need to submit weekly reading responses when leading a discussion section). When you lead the discussion with another student (when two or three students signed up for the topic/date), please make sure that you go through the preparation process as outlined above independently and separately. You can discuss and decide how you organize or lead a session with the other student AFTER you prepare for your questions.

The instructor will work with the leaders to discuss their plans and activities before their discussion days. In addition to the preparation for the content of the discussion, leaders are encouraged to discuss their organization and techniques for leading the actual discussion with the instructor.

### **Fieldwork and Project-Based Assignments**

#### **Group/Team Project (10%)**

You will sign up for one group project (The sign-up sheet will be available after shopping period). The group projects are different depending on the week. They are designed to explore community-based questions, research local resources, and/or collect information that could empower families in the community or promote family-school relations in Achievement First. For example, a project may focus on investigating potential resources in Providence (e.g., sports programs/events, cultural events), or interviewing families to identify their needs. Every year we have different group projects as these projects are selected based on needs of and communications with Achievement First. The number and size of group presentation assignments will be determined by final enrollments. Instructions and guidance for each of the assignments/projects will be provided and available on CANVAS.

Each group will give a 10-minute presentation about the summary of their projects or the class (The group presentations begin in February and dates vary). Based on feedback provided by peers, the group members will revise their product (e.g., brochure, booklet, a video) to be provided to Achievement First and/or to other organizations.

Within two weeks after your group presentation, please upload your group product on CANVAS. As a group, please also submit a three-page report describing your research/project products (two pages) and how work was divided among your group (one page), e.g. who was responsible for what tasks. Please divide work for a group project and presentation fairly and equitably.

#### **Fieldwork/Volunteering and Writing a Fieldnote (15%)**

An important component of the course is your observation and volunteer work related to family engagement or school activities at Achievement First. These opportunities will help you gain insights about the schools, students, and families in our community. These fieldwork experiences will also help you develop insider/emic perspectives regarding family-school relations. During the course, there will be various opportunities to visit and volunteer at Achievement First. While you are encouraged to volunteer as many times as you can, you will be required to engage in at least one event/activity as a volunteer. You will write a 2- to 3-page

fieldnote (single spaced) that records your observations, insights, and reflections based on your volunteering experiences within 2 weeks of your fieldwork (The guideline is available on CANVAS). This assignment will help you relate what you are learning in class to your volunteering experiences. The instructor will try to allocate time for students to report their volunteering experiences in class and share their insights with their classmates.

There will be various opportunities/dates for you to volunteer at Achievement First. More information about dates will be available as staff at Achievement First schedule events during the semester.

Please sign up for the dates you are volunteering on through the google sheet [posted on CANVAS](#) (Front page). Please make sure to remove your name if your schedule changes and you no longer can volunteer. Staff and teachers at Achievement First check the sheet to count the number of volunteers for each event, so it would be very helpful if you could update them as your plans change.

### **Final Project Paper (30%)**

You will choose one of the projects listed below and conduct your project. You will write an 8-page final paper (double space, 12 point font) on a project/research of your choice that includes your critical analyses of some of the course materials in relation to the topic/project of your choice.

Findings, suggestions, and proposals of your final projects will be synthesized and shared with the Achievement First schools.

#### Community-Based Project (You can partner with someone to complete this project)

- a) Research and identify sites, centers or extracurricular places in Providence that could provide useful and helpful information and resources to families or staff in Achievement First or in Providence (other than those presented as group projects). Visit the place or conduct web research and collect data (e.g., documents, observations, casual conversations with staff or others), synthesize them with some materials covered in this class, and report how it could be best used for parents at Achievement First.
- b) Research various strategies and resources that could provide useful information for parents/caretakers (e.g., technology, music activities), collect some useful information, and explain why they could be helpful for families at Achievement First or in the Providence community using knowledge/evidence gained in this course, and make a brochure/booklet/report.

#### Fieldwork-Based Paper

- a) If you volunteer at the Achievement First schools three times or more, this project can be your choice. Try to have casual conversations with parents or staff when you volunteer at AF (when possible) and reflect what you observed/learned. Connect your

insights and observations with the readings and topics covered in this class. You might want to focus on one or two topics (e.g., SES, the roles of school, mothers' views of parental involvement, school-family partnerships, etc.) or examine some of the models or theories covered in this course when you analyze your observations/fieldnotes.

### Research-Based Project/Paper

#### a) Literature Review

Pick a topic of interest that emerged from your experiences in this class that you want to learn more about. Conduct a literature review of at least 5 additional readings. You can focus on a specific developmental stage (e.g., preschool, adolescent) or can write about changes/differences across different developmental periods.

#### b) Pilot study (Mini-Interviews)

Conduct a pilot study by interviewing parents, teachers, students, or youth, and examine the application of a topic or theory learned in this course. For example, you can interview 3 college students about their perceptions of their parents' involvement at high school to examine a topic(s) of your choice (e.g., family obligations, parental control/structure, their perceptions of supportive parents). Then you can analyze the interviews in relation to the materials covered in this course. Interviewees do not need to be related to Achievement First.

### Other ideas

Please consult with the instructor, if you have any other project in mind!

**Final Project/Paper Guidelines will be available on CANVAS.** The instructor will support students for choosing a project/topic, and writing the final project paper. You are also encouraged to work with a writing fellow.

### **Poster Presentation**

At the end of the semester, we will hold a poster conference session (April 30). All students will report preliminary findings/products of their final projects. The goal of this poster session is to give you an opportunity to share your project with your classmates and get feedback from them so that you can use their feedback/suggestions in writing your final project/paper. Details of how to present findings and create posters will be explained in class.

\*Teachers and staff at Achievement First will be invited to this poster session.

Please observe the following deadlines.

**Final project selection completed:** April 9 (suggested)

**Begin your research/project:** April 9 (suggested)

**Complete your preliminary project/analysis:** by April 25 (suggested)

**Poster presentation:** April 30

**Final project paper due:** May 10

The grade breakdown is as follows: Class attendance and engagement (15%), submission of reading responses (15%), leading a group discussion & your write up (15%), a group project/presentation (10%), volunteering & submission of a fieldnote (15%), and a final project paper (30%).

### **READINGS**

There is no required book for this course. The research articles and chapters assigned for this course are listed under the “Course Schedule” below. All of the readings are available on EDUC1890’s Canvas.

Please complete all assigned readings before Thursday’s class meetings.

### **CANVAS**

Students will use Canvas.

- to find an updated syllabus
- to find and read the assigned readings
- to sign up for volunteering opportunities, and group projects
- to read the guidelines for your assignments (e.g., weekly responses; leading a discussion section and preparing for a write up; writing a field-note; final project paper)
- to submit all of the assignments
- to utilize the discussion section (e.g., posting PPT files; reviewing PPT files; sharing ideas; exchanging thoughts among students and between the instructor and students).
- to receive announcements from the instructor
- 

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND SHORT TERM ADJUSTMENTS**

This is an inclusive class. Please seek out the following resources if necessary to your completion of the course:

- Students seeking accommodations due to a disability or medical condition should contact: Student and Employee Accessibility Services.
- Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans: Dean of the College
- Students seeking psychological support services should contact: Counseling and Psychological Services.
- Students should contact me early in the semester—in office hours, via email, or after class—to discuss any accommodations necessary in conjunction with SEAS.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

As with all Brown courses, there is a zero-tolerance policy for academic dishonesty and plagiarism in this course. Please read [the Academic Code](#) (Principles of the Brown University community).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Week 1 (Jan. 23): Overview and Themes of Course**

Overview of the course

Why do we need to understand and examine family engagement in education?

### **Family Engagement: Theories and Mechanisms**

### **Week 2 (Jan. 30): Does Family Engagement Matter? Roles of Parental Involvement in Children's Education**

Commer, J. (2005). The rewards of parent participation. *Education Leadership*, 62, 38-42.

Pomerantz, E. M., Moorman, E. A., & Litwack, S. D. (2007). The how, whom, and why of parents' engagement in children's schooling: More is not necessarily better. *Review of Educational Research*, 77, 373-410.

Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental engagement and students' academic achievement: a meta-analysis. *Educational psychology review*, 13(1), 1-22.

Harris, J. L. (2009). Do parents matter? *Scientific American*.  
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/parents-peers-children/>

### **Week 3 (Feb. 6): Why Do Parents Become Engaged? Theories and Findings**

Hoover-Dempsey, K. et al. (2005). Why do parents become involved? Research findings and implications. *Elementary School Journal*, 106, 105-130.

Yamamoto, Y., Holloway, S. D., & Suzuki, S. (2016). Parental engagement in children's education: Motivating factors in Japan and the U.S. *School Community Journal*, 26(1), 45-66.

Finders, M., & Lewis, C. (1994). Why some parents don't come to school. *Educational Leadership*, 51, 50-54.



#### **Week 4 (Feb. 13): Families and Communities in Ecological Models: Engagement in Achievement First**

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 3, 1643-1647.

Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. C. (2004). Partnering with families and communities. *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 12-18.

Cohen, P. N. (2017). Families are changing - and staying the same. *Educational Leadership*, 74, 46-50.

Presentation about Achievement First and Q&A by Ms. Elizabeth Winangun, Director of Team External Relations at Achievement First.

Please check [the website of Achievement First](#), and [AF schools in Rhode Island](#).

**We will try to have a group tour at Achievement First outside of class time on the morning of 2/11, 2/12, or 2/13. We will decide on the date/time for the group tour based on most students' availabilities.**

#### **Parenting and Parental Involvement from Infancy to Adolescence**

##### **Week 5 (Feb. 20): Parental Goals, Parental Care & Parenting**

LeVine, R. (1988). Human parental care. In R. LeVine, P. M. Miller, & M. M. West. (Eds.), *Parental behaviors in diverse societies: New Directions for Child Development*. (pp. 3-12). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Edwards, C. P., Sheridan, S. M., & Knoche, L. L. (2010). Parent-child relationships in early learning. In *International Encyclopedia of Education* (pp. 438-443). Elsevier Ltd.

Grolnick, W. S., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2009). Issues and challenges in studying parental control: Toward a new conceptualization. *Child Development Perspectives*, 3, 137-204.

##### **Week 6 (Feb. 27): Early Childhood and School Readiness**

Jung, S., Fuller, B., & Galindo, C. (2012) Family functioning and early learning practices in immigrant homes. *Child Development*, 84(5), 1510-1526.

Holloway, S. D., Rambaud, M. F., Fuller, B., & Eggers-Pierola, C. (1995). What is "appropriate practice" at home and in child care? Low-income mothers' views on preparing their children for school. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 10, 451-473.

Brooks-Gunn, J. & Markman, L. B. (2005). The contribution of parenting to ethnic and racial gaps in school readiness. *The Future of Children*, 15(1), 139-168.

### **Week 7 (March 5): Parental Beliefs about Intelligence and Learning**

Dweck, C. S. (2015). [The secret to raising smart kids](#). *Scientific American Mind*.

Harkness, S., Super, C.M., Bermúdez, M.R., Moscardino, U., Rha, J., Mavridis, C.J., Bonichini, S., Huitrón, B., Welles-Nyström, B.L., Palacios, J., Hyun, O., Soriano, G., & Żylicz, P.O. (2009). Parental ethnotheories of children's learning.

Okagaki, L. & Sternberg, R. J. (1993). Parental beliefs and children's school performance. *Child Development*, 64, 34-56.

### **Week 8 (March 12): Home Environment and Practices: Math, Literacy, and Technology**

Snow, C. E., & Beals, D.E. (2006). Mealtime talk that supports literacy development. *New Directions for Child & Adolescent Development*, 111, 51-66.

Patrikakou, E. N. (2016). Parent involvement, technology, and media: Now what? *School Community Journal*, 26, 9-24.

Elliott, L., & Bachman, H. J. (2018). How do parents foster young children's math skills? *Child Development Perspectives*, 12, 16-21.

### **Week 9 (March 19): Parental Involvement for Adolescents and Youth**

Hill, N. E. (2015). Family-school relationships during adolescence: Clarifying goals, broadening conceptualizations, and deepening Impact. In S. M. Sheridan & E. M. Kim (Eds.), *Research on family-school partnerships: An interdisciplinary examination of state of the science and critical needs*. New York: Springer.

Qin, D. B. (2008). Doing well vs. feeling well: Understanding family dynamics and the psychological adjustment of Chinese immigrant adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37, 22-35.

Fuligni, A. (2007). Family obligation, college enrollment, and emerging adulthood in Asian and Latin American families. *Child Development Perspectives*, 1, 96-100.

## March 26: Spring Recess

### Contexts of Family Engagement

#### **Week 10 (April 2): Unpacking Social Class and Socioeconomic Status**

Lareau, A., & Calarco, J. M. (2012). Class, cultural capital, and institutions: The case of families and schools. In Susan Fiske and Hazel Markus (Ed.), *Facing social class* (pp. 61-86). Russell Sage Foundation.

Roubinov, D. S., & Boyce, T. (2017). Parenting and SES: relative values or enduring principles? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 15, 162-167.

Parcel, T.L. & Bixby, M. (2016). The ties that bind: Social capital, families, and children's well-being. *Child Development Perspectives*, 10, 87-92.

Listen to Ted Talk: Noble, K. (2019). [How does income affect child brain development?](#)

#### **Week 11 (April 9): Race, Ethnicity, & Immigration**

Cooper, S. M., & Smalls, C. (2010). Culturally distinctive and academic socialization: direct and interactive relationships with African American adolescents' academic adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39, 199–212.

Lopez, G. (2001) The value of hard work: Lessons on parent involvement from an (im)migrant household. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 416-438.

Yamamoto, Y., & Holloway, S. D. (2010). Parental expectations and academic performance in sociocultural contexts. *Educational Psychology Review*, 22(3), 189-214.

#### **Week 12 (April 16): No Class (Work on your final project or a group project!)**

#### **Week 13 (April 23): Empowering and Culturally Responsive Family-School Partnerships**

Mapp, K. L. (2003). Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning. *School Community Journal*, 13(1), 35.

Jasis, P. M., & Rosario, O. (2012). Latino parent involvement: Examining commitment and empowerment in schools. *Urban Education*, 47, 65-89.

One more reading TBD

**Week 14 (April 30): Family Engagement: What Can We Do & What Do We Need To Know More?**

Final Project Poster Presentations

Reflections and Dissemination

\*Teachers and staff at Achievement First will be invited to this poster session.

**May 10: Final Project Papers due on Canvas by 5pm**