

# Parent/Family Coursework in NASP-Approved School Psychology Programs

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# Background

## Family engagement

- The shared responsibility of school staff and families to support the learning, development, and health of children (CDC, 2021)
- Parent/caregiver involvement is critical for all students, and legally mandated for parents of students with disabilities per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) during educational decision-making

When families and schools collaborate to support children, there are significant benefits (Christenson & Reschly, 2009; Sheridan et al., 2019).

## Students experience:

- More positive attitudes toward school and learning
- Improved academic and social-emotional outcomes
- Reduced need for more intensive services such as special education

## Families experience:

- Enhanced self-efficacy
- More positive experiences with educators and schools
- Greater appreciation for the important role in their child's education

## NASP Practice Model Domain 7: Family, School, and Community Collaboration (2020)

### School psychologists:

- Understand principles and research related to family systems, strengths, needs, and cultures; evidence-based strategies to support positive family influences on children's learning and mental health; and strategies to develop collaboration between families and schools.
- In collaboration with others, design, implement, and evaluate services that respond to culture and context.
- Facilitate family and school partnerships and interactions with community agencies to enhance academic and social-behavioral outcomes for children.

# Purpose

- Despite the research base on family engagement and the inclusion of NASP Practice Domain 7, it is unclear whether graduate programs require courses that explicitly train future school psychologists to understand family systems, foster parent/family involvement, or engage collaboratively with families accordingly.
- The purpose of this project is to explore family-related graduate training.

# Research Questions

- Research Question 1: How many NASP-approved school psychology graduate programs in New England (NE) require one or more courses with the term “family,” “families,” “parent(s),” or “parenting” in the title?
- Research Question 2: Among NASP-approved school psychology graduate programs in NE that require one or more courses with the term “family,” “families,” “parent(s),” or “parenting” in the title, what types of family- or parent-related coursework are required (i.e., what content is covered in these courses)?

# Methods

- Searched NASP list of approved school psychology graduate programs in NE
- Searched graduate program websites for a list of their required coursework
- Identified required courses with the term “family,” “families,” “parent(s),” or “parenting” in the course title
- Determined the number and percentage of school psychology programs in NE with versus without required courses with key terms in course title
- Conducted a content analysis of the syllabi (if available) or course description of identified courses

# RQ1 Results: The Numbers

- Out of 13 NASP-approved school psychology programs in NE:
  - Two (2) required trainees to take one (1) course with the term “family,” “families,” “parent(s),” or “parenting” in the title (15.38% of programs). These were:
    - Plymouth State University in New Hampshire
    - Rhode Island College in Rhode Island

# RQ2 Results: The Content

Content Themes	Plymouth State University		Rhode Island College	
	SY 5300: Foundations and Multicultural Aspects of Parenting		SPED 534: Involvement of Parents and Families Who Have Children with Disabilities	CEP 544: Family Counseling Theory and Practice
<b>Consultation/Collaboration</b>			X	
<b>Family Systems</b>	X		X	
<b>Family Lifespan Development</b>	X			
<b>Family Counseling/Therapy</b>				X
<b>Multicultural Family Perspectives/ Diverse Families</b>	X			
<b>Family Attitudes/Concerns/Needs</b>	X		X	



# Discussion

- Main takeaway
  - Despite NASP's inclusion of Domain 7 in their Practice Model, few NASP-approved school psychology graduate programs require coursework explicitly focused on parents or families
  - School psychologists may not be receiving adequate preparation in their graduate programs to develop effective family partnerships
- Limitations of this research
  - Was unable to access course syllabi
  - Only looked at NASP-approved programs in NE
- Future directions
  - Conduct further research to determine if this coursework impacts school psychologists' self-efficacy for family collaboration or amount of time spent collaborating with families
  - States/NASP can hold programs accountable

# Example: Nevada

[Home](#) > [Standards & Certification](#) > [State School Psychology Credentialing Requirements](#)

## Nevada

### In This Section

[Alabama](#)

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[Arizona](#)

[Arkansas](#)

*Accepts NCSP as a route to school based credential and satisfies renewal requirements.*

#### SEA Credential:

Endorsement as a School Psychologist: To qualify, an individual must:

- a) Complete 3 semester credits in a course of study regarding parental involvement and family engagement; **AND**
- b) Have accomplished each of the following:

# References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2021, March). *Components of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)*. CDC Healthy Schools. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscs/components.htm>
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- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §300.32 (2004).
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). (n.d.). *Approved Programs*. <https://www.nasponline.org/standards-and-certification/graduate-program-approval-and-accreditation/program-approval/approved-programs>
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- Sheridan, S. M., Smith, T. E., Kim, E. M., Beretvas, S. N., & Park S. (2019). A meta-analysis of family school interventions and children's social-emotional functioning: Moderators and components of efficacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 89, 296–332.

# Questions?

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Thank you!