



# Newsletter

*Stay updated on monthly news, events, & resources for families, schools, and communities!*

## ✓ Welcome to 1<sup>st</sup> issue of the Hub Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Webinar: Family Math

April 8, 2025, from 11 am to 12 pm

[Registration Link](#)

### Upcoming Conference: SPAN Conference

September 27, 2025, from 8 am to 2 pm

Stay tuned for the registration link!



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# A welcome message from the Project Co - Directors

***Dear Families, Educators, and Community Partners:*** Welcome to the inaugural edition of the New Jersey Family Engagement Hub Newsletter!

We are thrilled to introduce this platform as a space for sharing stories, strategies, and resources that strengthen the connections between families, schools, and communities. As Co-Project Directors, we believe that meaningful family engagement is essential for the academic and social success of every child.

Our vision for the NJ Family Engagement Hub is rooted in collaboration and trust. Families are not just stakeholders—they are essential partners in the learning journey. Together, we can create environments where all children thrive.

***As Dr. Karen Mapp reminds us:***

*“When schools and families work together, everyone benefits—students do better in school and in life, families become more empowered, and communities grow stronger.”*

*This newsletter will highlight inspiring work from across the state, elevate the voices of families, and provide actionable tools for engagement. Whether you are a parent, educator, or community leader, we hope this newsletter supports you in building deeper partnerships and fostering student success.*

*Thank you for being a part of this journey with us. Let's continue to grow, learn, and lead—together.*

In partnership,  
Dr. Lanisha Makle-Ridley and Jeannette Mejias  
Co-Project Directors  
New Jersey Family Engagement Hub





*Dr. Lanisha - Makle Ridley*  
Lanisha Makle-Ridley



*Jeannette Mejias*  
Jeannette Mejias

## Hub Updates & Community Highlights

### School Districts with signed MOUs: 6 and Growing!

We've partnered with six school districts. Regional specialists from the NJ Family Engagement Hub help create diverse school action teams, now conducting a GAPS Assessment to identify challenges and develop strategic solutions.



**Sign up for our newsletter to stay updated on our progress  
and opportunities to get involved!**

**Subscribe Today!**

## Welcome to the Team! Jamie Betances, our new Central Regional Engagement Specialist!



Jamie has over 10 years of experience in child welfare, family advocacy, and community outreach. Fluent in English and Spanish, Jamie excels in case management, family empowerment, and advocating for children's rights. She has a proven track record of collaborating with schools, government agencies,

and nonprofits to provide comprehensive supporting for families. Jamie has successfully coached families facing challenges like mental health, substance abuse, and neglect, using a trauma-informed, strengths-based approach with experience at the Department of Children & Families in New Jersey.

As a passionate advocate for family engagement, Jamie is committed to fostering strong relationships with community partners and empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds.

**We're excited to have you on board!**

### **Engagement with the Community:** *Serving on Groups and Leading By Convening Summit*

On March 25, 2025, NJFEHUB hosted its second Serving on Groups and Leading by Convening Summit at the NJ FEA Conference Center in Monroe Township, New Jersey.

Serving on Groups (SoG) "train the trainer" session teaches people how to present an interactive training series on serving on decision-making groups and develop leadership skills for diverse families to participate effectively in advisory groups and task forces.



Leading by Convening (LbC) focuses on reshaping meetings to prioritize content and relationship-building, helping leaders engage stakeholders to improve outcomes for children and youth with disabilities while driving sustainable change.



### Advisory Committee Update

On January 16, 2025, the New Jersey Family Engagement Hub held its first advisory committee meeting. Our advisory members include parents and organizations such as Booksmart, NAFSCE, the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE), Paterson Education Fund, and SEL 4 NJ met the Hub team, discussed the committee’s purpose, reviewed initiatives, and shared a collective vision to support families, students, and communities.



**We're inviting more parents to help shape our efforts!  
Learn more about joining the Advisory Committee and apply today.**

[Get Involved](#)

## **Spotlight On! The Partners Driving NJFEHUB Forward**

**Jamie Zibulsky is co-author of *Book Smart: How to Support and Develop Successful, Motivated Readers***



A how-to guide for parents rich with stories, lessons, activities, and ideas aimed at addressing the broad range of interpersonal, social, emotional, and motivational skills that must be fostered in young children. Based on the activities described in the book, Jamie created the BookSmart reading workshop series to support parents and

caregivers of young readers in making home reading sessions engaging and interactive. Each workshop session focuses on a key early literacy skill and provides examples of how to embed information about that concept into home reading time in a fun and developmentally appropriate way.

Caregivers who have completed these workshops report building many skills that support reading development, as well as increasing their time spent reading as a family.



## **NAFSCE Center for Family Math: The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)**



NAFSCE Center for Family Math: The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE) is a membership organization dedicated to advancing family, school, and community engagement to promote equitable educational outcomes for all children.

The Center for Family Math is an emerging movement to promote math activities within the context of family relationships and everyday life, from the grocery store to the playground during breakfast, bath time, or bedtime.

The practices inherent in Family Math are designed to help young children strengthen their math skills and feel enthusiastic and confident in their math abilities.

The movement empowers parents, organizations, and early educators with knowledge, tools, and resources that help them feel excited about introducing and exploring mathematical concepts.

## **New Jersey Department of Education (DOE)**



New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE): The official New Jersey Department of Education website provides information, resources, and updates on education policies, programs, and services for students, parents, educators, and schools across the state.

## Paterson Education Fund



Paterson Education Fund: is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to stimulate community action for change so that the Paterson Public Schools ensure that all Paterson children achieve high standards. Founded in 1983, PEF's activities build and nourish a constituency for systematic school reform by educating

the community on the importance of high standards and expectations in providing quality education for all children. PEF convenes and brokers relationships between the Paterson school district and private sector entities interested in public education in Paterson.

## SEL 4 NJ Social Emotional Alliance for New Jersey



SEL 4 NJ (Social Emotional Alliance for New Jersey) promotes and supports high-quality social-emotional learning (SEL) in New Jersey schools and communities to foster student success and well-being. The mission of SEL4NJ is to continuously build a network of organizations and individuals in New Jersey that are committed to the

importance of developing students' social and emotional competencies, and through this collaboration, promote a systematic and intentional integration of SEL, as broadly defined, in schools and other organizations, including before and after school programming.



## Featured Articles and Resources



March 19, 2025

### Family Math

What are some engaging games, videos, and printable materials—like the Education Development Center's "Young Mathematicians Math at Home" and DREME Family Math Activities—that help make math fun and practical for children?

[Read More](#)

"Family Math - National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement." Nafsce.org, 2021, [nafsce.org/general/custom.asp?page=familymath](https://nafsce.org/general/custom.asp?page=familymath). Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.



March 19, 2025

### Libraries as Community Hubs

Have you ever wondered how libraries are so much more than just places to borrow free books — and how they serve as powerful hubs for the entire community?

[Read More](#)

Team, PressReader. "The Ongoing Evolution of Public Libraries as Community Hubs." Pressreader.com, PressReader, 9 Dec. 2024, [blog.pressreader.com/libraries-institutions/the-ongoing-evolution-of-public-libraries-as-community-hubs](https://blog.pressreader.com/libraries-institutions/the-ongoing-evolution-of-public-libraries-as-community-hubs). Accessed 19 Mar. 2025.

**Looking for more fun family math tips and how libraries can be community hubs?**

*Check out NJFEHUB Fridays and Youth Engagement Saturdays on Instagram!  
Get inspired with awesome activities and epic highlights.*

**Follow SPAN on Instagram now!**





# Stay Connected

Get the latest on the Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) and the New Jersey Engagement Hub Project (NJFEHUB) — stay informed, stay connected, and be part of the journey!

[SPAN Eventbrite](#)

## Need to reach us? We're here to help!

**Visit the SPAN Office:** 570 Broad Street, Suite 702 | Newark, NJ 07102

**Contact SPAN:** Toll-free in NJ: (800) 654-SPAN (7726) Tel: (973) 642-8100 |  
Fax: (973) 642-8080

**Email:** [info@spanadvocacy.org](mailto:info@spanadvocacy.org)

## Get the latest resources and updates from SPAN & NJFEHUB!

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