



Liz Dempsey Lee

PARENTS AS
ADVOCATES

Supporting K-12 students and their
families across identities

Education Studies

Collection Editor
JANISE HURTIG

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To my family—mom and dad—for all the support and love, Amelia, Abby, and James—for the laughter and fun, Jodi—for having faith in me, and Chris—none of this would be possible without you. I am full of love.

Author's Note

All names in this book are pseudonyms and identifying details have been changed to protect anonymity.

Abstract

The family-school relationship is central to a child's education, and research demonstrates that family engagement can lead to better educational outcomes for students. No matter how well-prepared educators are, to meet the needs of their students and families, interpersonal conflict and parent advocacy are normal and expected parts of the family-school relationship.

Schools in the United States serve students from many, and overlapping, social identities. Each family's specific social identities shift the ways in which they interact with their child's school, and, the more educators understand about their students and families, the better they can support them.

Key words

Parent advocacy

Family-school relationship

Family engagement

Race and parent advocacy

Ability and parent advocacy

Gender identity and parent advocacy

High socioeconomic status and parent advocacy

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Learning objectives

1. Family (or child) social identities are critical aspects which inform how and why parents advocate.
2. Developing understanding of family (or child) social identities results in more compassionate and informed responses to parent concerns.
3. Developing understanding of family (or child) social identities results in deeper and stronger family-school relationships.
4. Compassion, informed responses, and better family-school relationships lead to better outcomes for children.

