As we're preparing for the school year, families are looking for both online and in-person support as they navigate their students education this year.

Strong and clear communication will help unify families and out-of-school time program providers in helping to create a safe, engaging, and fun experience for kids, regardless of their circumstances. Consider the following practices in maintaining communication with families.

**Provide a parent guide with information on safety protocols.**
- Social distancing strategies and expectations
- Drop-off and pick-up
- Health screenings
- What to do if a youth show signs of illness at home or at the program
- Everyday preventive actions
- What may happen in the event of a temporary program closure

**Utilize numerous forms of communication to maintain contact and update families.**
- Use social media, texts, phone calls, emails, and newsletters to provide timely information on policy updates, available activities, and changes to programming.
- Use surveys and needs assessments to distinguish what is needed in your community.

**Maintain regular communication regarding the youth you support.**
- Youth have experienced unexpected challenges with disrupted routines and may struggle more than usual. Communicate positive and negative behaviors with families in order to maintain consistent and aligned support for all youth.

**Gather feedback and ideas regarding challenges, concerns, and successes in your program.**
- Conduct feedback surveys
- Make check-in phone calls
- Find opportunities to check-in with parents during pick-up and drop-off

**Distribute timely information regarding community resources and connections.**

[utah afterschool.org/fallplanningtools]
American Camp Association Summer Planning Guide
The American Camp Association (ACA) and the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) provide educational resources to both day and overnight camps, state and local health departments, and parents/guardians and campers regarding the safe operation of summer programs and camps. https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/camp-business/camp-operations-guide-summer-2020

Family Engagement During a Pandemic and Beyond | UAN Professional Learning To-Go
UAN School Alignment Specialist, Holly Phillips, and Salt Lake County Youth Services Program Director, Danielle Latta, share tips on maintaining strong communication with families during COVID-19 in this streaming webinar. https://utahafterschool.org/program-resources/calendar-and-events/afterschool-nuggets-professional-learning-to-go-with-kristen-and-elinor-12

Building Families in Out-of-School Time Programs Toolkit

Engaging Families in Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs: A Review of the Research
This article reviews the overall benefits of building strong relationships with families https://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/engaging-families-afterschool-and-summer-learning-programs-review-research

Found in the Quality Tool
www.utahafterschool.org/quality

The following indicators in the Quality Self-Assessment Tool support family communication.

Develop Meaningful Relationships
B. Program, Family, School, and Community Relationships Domain
B-2: Program Fosters family engagement to support program goals.
B-2-1: Program encourages family engagement and maintains ongoing outreach efforts.
B-2-2: Program makes community resources information available to families
B-2-3: Staff interact with parents/guardians concerning the well-being of their youth.