Creating Engagement Pathways for Families During Remake Learning Days and Beyond
Global Family Research Project

Reflecting on their family engagement work, organizations noted they are most proud of:

> "Creating an environment where both parents and children learn by working together in ways that help parents listen and pay attention to youth voice."

> "The long-term partnerships between organizations and people in our community that I have been a part of that have been working collectively to help strengthen and support families."

> "The ways we've seen our activities encourage families to collaborate on projects, learn from one another, and spend time relaxing and being creative together."

Our thanks to the many Southwest Pennsylvania Remake Learning Days 2019 organizations that completed our recent survey about their goals, activities, and ideas for increasing family engagement during Remake Learning Days and beyond. A total of 101 organizations—including schools, out-of-school time programs, libraries, community centers, and others—completed the survey.
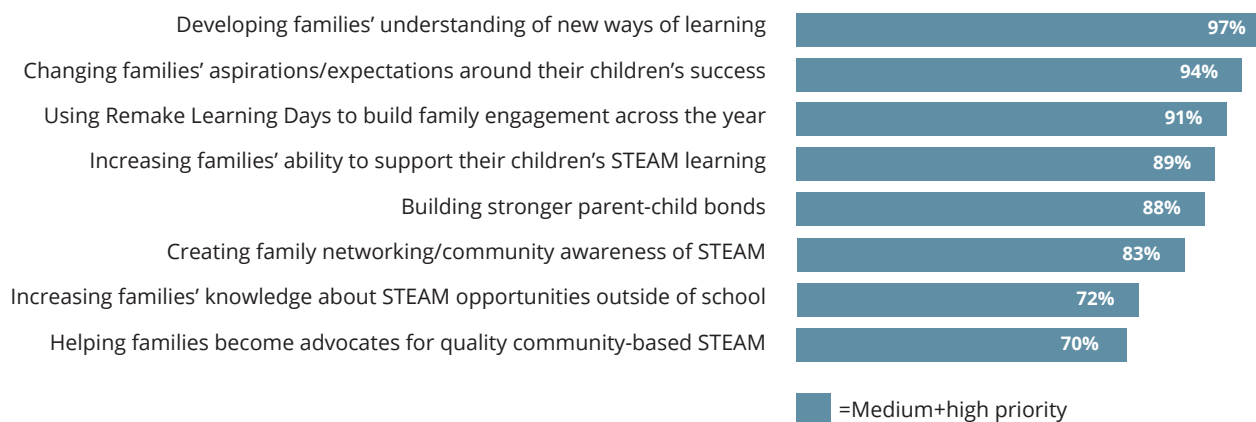
This Learning Memo highlights key findings from our preliminary analysis of the survey data we collected. Here, we describe the ways that organizations are prioritizing families and the many practices they are putting in place so that families see and experience new ways of learning and can continue engaging in STEAM beyond the special events and across the year. We note the means through which organizations are addressing the barriers families face in participating in Remake Learning Days and related STEAM activities, and report the types of support organizations would welcome to improve their capacity to engage families in STEAM learning.

FINDING 1: Organizations are transforming family understanding of and capacity for supporting children's learning through STEAM.

Organizations have multiple goals for supporting family engagement in STEAM learning, as Table 1 shows. They are creating events and experiences that increase families' understanding of and aspirations and expectations for STEAM learning. They are also building capacity and confidence so that families can support their children's STEAM learning in the Remake events and throughout the year, both in and out of school.
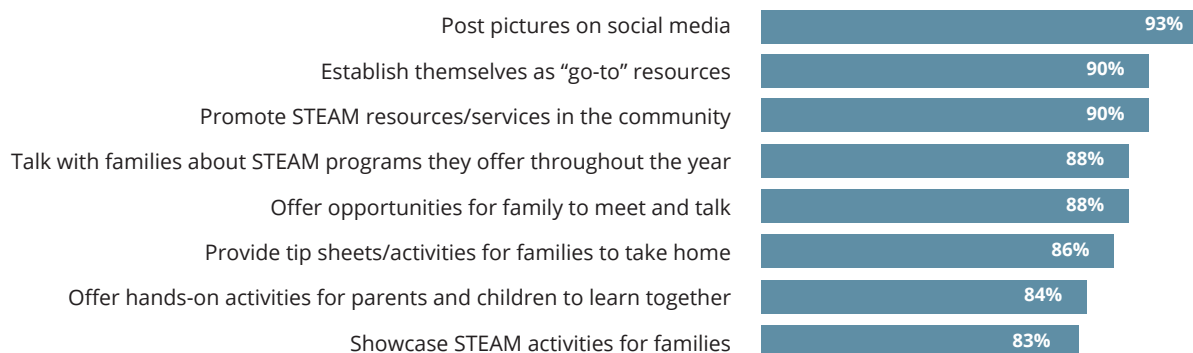
Table 1: Organizations' Family Engagement Goals and Priorities

Goal	Percentage
Developing families' understanding of new ways of learning	97%
Changing families' aspirations/expectations around their children's success	94%
Using Remake Learning Days to build family engagement across the year	91%
Increasing families' ability to support their children's STEAM learning	89%
Building stronger parent-child bonds	88%
Creating family networking/community awareness of STEAM	83%
Increasing families' knowledge about STEAM opportunities outside of school	72%
Helping families become advocates for quality community-based STEAM	70%

■ =Medium+high priority

FINDING 2: Organizations engage families through various practices and seek to ignite family engagement in STEAM throughout the year.

Organizations are working hard to engage families during Remake Learning Days 2019 and to extend families' support for and engagement with STEAM across the year. As Table 2 shows, organizations are establishing themselves as trusted resources to support family engagement in STEAM learning both within the organizations and throughout the broader community. They are connecting families with information to continue engagement in STEAM learning in several ways: by posting pictures during and after events, by talking with families about similar programs, and by promoting other STEAM resources. They are also sending home tip sheets and activities so that parents can continue to support learning both at home and in the community. Altogether, these efforts are helping to build a strong STEAM ecosystem, and as you will see in our next finding, organizations are working hard to make sure it is an equitable one.

Table 2: How Hosts Will Engage Families in 2019

Practice	Percentage
Post pictures on social media	93%
Establish themselves as "go-to" resources	90%
Promote STEAM resources/services in the community	90%
Talk with families about STEAM programs they offer throughout the year	88%
Offer opportunities for family to meet and talk	88%
Provide tip sheets/activities for families to take home	86%
Offer hands-on activities for parents and children to learn together	84%
Showcase STEAM activities for families	83%

FINDING 3: Organizations are using a variety of strategies to ensure that families can participate in Remake Learning Days 2019.
Families have busy lives, and organizations are doing a variety of things to ensure that all families—particularly those often left out due to their racial, cultural, linguistic, or economic status—can participate. To accomplish this, organizations are:

Reducing Barriers to Attendance
-Creating a comfortable and inviting space so children, youth, families, and community members feel welcome
-Offering events free of charge
-Developing transportation options (such as buses) so people can attend
-Hosting events at locations where families already spend time
-Offering breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snacks
-Providing child care
-Holding events at times when families can attend
-Translating and offering materials in multiple languages

> "Our event is occurring at a public space located on a bus line. We have chosen to hold our event on a Saturday afternoon and co-market with another Remake event that is occurring that day to provide the opportunity to reach as many folks as possible."

Providing Participation Incentives
-Holding raffles
-Offering prizes and take-home materials
-Making donations to scholarship opportunities for further STEAM learning

Reaching Out to Families
-Getting youth excited to motivate their families to join
-Connecting with networks of families already linked to the organization to spread the word
-Creating partnerships between schools and out-of-school providers to encourage families to participate
-Marketing outreach (e.g., posters, flyers, direct calling)
-Social media outreach

> "We widely advertise the event, not only on our website and marketing materials but also by sending home flyers and reminders through the schools."

Providing Resources for Families to Continue to Engage with Their Children Around STEAM Learning
-Offering lending libraries
-Providing take-home activities and tip sheets

> "Our event is held in the evening after (traditional) work hours. In addition, we are having the 'grand opening' of our STEAM Lending Library. Through funds from the STEAM Catalyst Grant, we have created a lending library of STEAM-related technology, books, and activities that students can check out, take home, and share with their families."

FINDING 4: Organizations welcome financial support, opportunities to learn with and from each other, and other means for building their capacity to engage families.

As organizations* develop their Remake Learning Days events and promote family engagement in STEAM learning across the year, they indicated a number of things that would help them build their capacity as well as the larger STEAM ecology of which they are a part. Some of the key supports cited are:

Stipends to participate in meetings, a trainings.

"Hosting events to bring together organizations has been super-helpful in the past. Mini-grants have also helped us conduct residencies in communities that we would otherwise be unable to reach."

Workshops, webinars, and other training opportunities to strengthen staff capacity in Remake and beyond.

"I benefit greatly from conferences that bring others from different areas to network. I thrive in learning from others and hearing their success."

Opportunities to connect and share with others. s

"The Remake Learning Network is valuable in that it offers the opportunity to learn from other practitioners in the field as well as providing opportunities for continuing education in the form of webinars and workshops, etc."

"This allows us to serve our families with an ever-increasing knowledge base, professional network, and capacity for family engagement, which strengthens our community."

*Please note that in southwestern PA and West Virginia, event hosts belong to a regional network called the Remake Learning Network, which supports event hosts in strengthening family engagement efforts throughout the year.

Global Family Research Project is an independent, entrepreneurial nonprofit organization that supports effective engagement practices and policies so that all children find success in and out of school. We create a worldwide exchange of ideas that furthers the understanding and implementation of anywhere, anytime learning for all. With more than 30 years of leadership, we provide a research base and proven expertise for capacity building in schools, community-based organizations, philanthropic entities, and other related ventures.

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