

SHARING LEARNING FROM AND WITH THE REMAKE LEARNING NETWORK AND COMMUNITY



Makers of Change: Creating STEAM Pathways for Children and Families Global Family Research Project

It's a weeknight in May and a group of families and their upper-elementary-age children gather at their school's maker space as part of a Remake Learning Days event. The families and their children are given a challenge: to work together answering clues on a digital tablet to break free from a virtual escape room. Students who are familiar with this kind of learning from their typical school-day instruction lead their parents and siblings in collaborative coding, risk taking, sequencing, and problem solving to complete the task. As they delight and marvel in the process together, parents and grandparents see their children in a different light, come to understand what STEAM learning looks like in new and vibrant ways, and take pride in their school. When the event has come to an end, no one wants to leave.

This story is just one of the many we at Global Family Research Project have heard on our journey to understand the ways that families are part of and influenced by Remake Learning Days. By examining past Remake Learning Days surveys and talking with a range of school and non-school event hosts, we've learned inspiring ideas that echo what the research shows. Families play an important role in STEAM learning—from the ways they talk about and engage with their children in STEAM activities in the home and community, the ways they hold high expectations for STEAM learning, and the ways they connect their students to high-quality STEAM learning both in and out of the classroom. And when families are engaged in STEAM, students are more likely to succeed academically, take more advanced STEAM courses, and pursue STEAM-related careers.

Our exploration of the experiences of the diverse host organizations participating in Remake Learning Days has also gleaned important benefits of family engagement, including:



Families developing a greater understanding of what learning looks like for an increasingly technology-driven future.

Parent survey data collected from Remake Learning Days events from 2016 through 2018 show families are increasing their knowledge of STEAM learning concepts, including the importance of problem solving, taking initiative, incorporating multiple viewpoints, and dealing with uncertainty. As one after-school provider explained, "One of our biggest hopes [for Remake Learning] is that parents will see a new way of learning."

The strengthening of parent-child relationships. When asked to describe a positive outcome of hosting a Remake Learning Day event, over a quarter of hosts noted that an important benefit was that they had created an environment in which parents and children had fun learning together. The importance of enjoyable learning experiences was also reflected in parents' open-ended responses. One parent commented, "It was nice and interactive. Had fun working together as a family team," a sentiment shared by many other parent participants.

Families becoming champions of STEAM learning. We heard from many of those we interviewed that by opening doors for families to participate and learn during Remake Learning Days that families grew deeper commitments and pride for their schools and community organizations. As one librarian commented, "Beyond just bringing everybody in ... we're hoping to turn them into advocates ... we need more people that understand what our library is trying to do."



Remake participants are also creating next-step challenges and opportunities to bring more families in, promote positive family learning experiences, and use Remake as a means to build a strong, year-round, and more equitable STEAM learning ecology in and out of school for children and families. **These challenges and opportunities include:**



**INCREASING
ENGAGEMENT OF A
BROAD ARRAY OF
FAMILIES**

Our analysis of surveys and interviews suggests that while so much is happening during Remake Learning Days, more can be done to ensure that a diverse array of families participate. As one of our interviewees commented, "Equity is more than just making events free:" it means scheduling events at times when parents can participate, creating easy sign-up requirements (or none at all!), making transportation available, and even going out beyond school and organization doors to provide events closer to where families frequently go. ***What are you doing to reach all families, and what more can you do for Remake Learning Days?***



**SPREADING
NEW STEAM
LEARNING IDEAS TO
FAMILIES**

Families are eager for ideas to support and continue to promote students' STEAM learning. Through co-learning experiences—like the one in the story at the start of this brief—student showcases, tip sheets, social media postings, exhibits, and hands-on workshops, event hosts are giving families suggestions and inspirations for ways they might expand STEAM learning into the home throughout the entire year, from preschool through high school. ***As you gear up for Remake Learning Days, what might you do to help amplify the ideas and knowledge families glean during your event?***





FACILITATING IN- AND OUT- OF-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS FOR FAMILIES TO ACT ON



As Remake makes evident, STEAM learning takes place everywhere, all the time—not just in classrooms and laboratories. And when there are equitable opportunities for STEAM learning in and out of school, kids are more likely to stay on the pathway to success. Many organizations are making explicit connections for parents about the opportunities that exist for students to experience high-quality STEAM learning after school, on weekends, and during the summer months. ***What more might you do during Remake Learning Days to connect families to other STEAM learning resources in the community throughout the summer and school year?***



CONNECTING FAMILIES TO EACH OTHER TO BUILD SOCIAL NETWORKS

One theme that we heard over and over again is that all of us—especially parents—have busy lives. Having time for social interactions in welcoming and safe spaces reduces family isolation and builds community, all of which improves family well-being. Simple practices during Remake Learning Day events—like setting up spaces for adults to talk or making time for families to meet the parents of their children's friends—are important ways that schools and organizations are influencing how families connect with each other and share STEAM and other learning opportunities and ideas. ***During Remake Learning Days, what will you do to help build family connections?***



BUILDING ON WHAT'S BEEN LEARNED ABOUT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

One of the most powerful lessons we've learned from this work is how events are changing parents' understanding of how and why kids learn. ***As you prepare for Remake Learning Days, what can you do to learn more from families themselves about what they want and need? How might you get parent feedback and input not only after your event, but beforehand, to help shape and design it?***

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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