

Building Equity in Research-Practice Partnerships

+ What is a **research-practice partnership**?

Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) are mutually beneficial and open-ended collaborations between educators and researchers seeking to improve educational practices and outcomes. Learn more about RPPs at:

researchandpractice.org

learndbir.org

wtgrantfoundation.org/RPP

+ What do we mean by **equity** in research-practice partnerships

Equity in RPPs means that all partners have shared interest and equal voice in the purpose, conduct, and outcomes of a study. Because partners often come from different institutions with distinct vocabulary, communication structures, and work practices, special attention is needed to ensure that all partners experience the projects as equitable.

equitable partnerships =

- + Challenge power dynamics and hierarchies.
- + Equally value all knowledge, experience, and skills.
- + Collaboratively develop shared language and vocabulary regarding research, educational theory, and practice.
- + Create opportunities to share local knowledge and histories (e.g., the school, program, community, sociocultural contexts, etc.).
- + Collaboratively define research questions, purpose, goals, and definitions of success.
- + Represent broad local interests in project conversations (children, families, practitioners, researchers, and other community members).
- + Regularly clarify and surface needs, wants, and expectations relating to the partnership and partners' professional contexts.
- + Respect the pressures, demands, schedules, and resources of partners' professional lives.
- + Attend to the changing needs of the collaboration as research questions and educational strategies shift over time.



How can we create partnerships that are **truly equitable**?

Building equity among partners is essential to supporting equity-focused education and research. Use the ideas and guiding questions below to facilitate how your RPP **establishes, engages, and encourages** equity. Read more of how we build equity in RPPs at researchandpractice.org/equitystory

ESTABLISHING EQUITY

Form an equitable foundation through organized discussions that build shared meaning and language.

- + **Create a shared meaning for “equity.”**
 - + What do we mean by “equity” in this partnership?
- + **Identify possible privileges and inequities.**
 - + What experiences and expertise does each partner bring?
 - + How can we bring a greater diversity of skills, knowledge, and expertise to this group?
 - + How can we productively address issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, education, and experience?
- + **Develop common definitions.**
 - + How do we know if we have the same definitions for project topics related to learning, teaching, etc.?
- + **Define shared project outcomes.**
 - + What impact will our project have?
 - + What will we know, be able to say, and understand as a result of working together?

ENGAGING EQUITABLY

Decide how resources and constraints will be addressed in an equitable way.

- + **Identify and negotiate collaborative activities.**
 - + How will decisions about the partnership, big and small, be made?
 - + Who is involved, when, and doing what for various project activities and stages: deciding research questions, designing activities, gathering and analyzing data, developing resources, testing and refining, disseminating outcomes, sharing at conferences and events, etc.
 - + How will partners work together and be compensated (e.g. meeting space, wages, meals, travel)?
- + **Discuss how to deal with very real institutional and professional limits.**
 - + What pressures, demands, and timeframes impact partners’ professional lives and contexts (e.g., teaching responsibilities, school/organization policies and initiatives, evaluation and assessment)
- + **Decide how resources (both tangible and intellectual) are distributed and allocated.**
 - + How will time, money, and resources be divided across the partnership and how will this impact the work? (e.g., the researcher(s) may have more time to review data but may want to involve educator partners in analysis. Can substitute teachers be paid for so educators can work with the RPP?)
 - + How will documents and data be shared and reviewed (asynchronous/synchronous, on/off-line)?

ENCOURAGING EQUITY

Develop respectful processes for monitoring perspectives and responding to conflicts.

- + **Discuss plans for communicating honestly and repairing relationships as needed.**
 - + Are we using modes of communication that promote transparency and inclusive participation?
 - + What actions should we take to recognize when tensions arise and ensure respectful reconciliation?
 - + What are our “deal breakers” and “non-negotiables”?
- + **Develop routines for reflecting on project and partnership progress.**
 - + When should we check-in about how our RPP is going?
 - + Are all partners getting what they need and want?
 - + How will we adjust course if necessary?