Family Engagement Supporting Families of Children with Special Needs

Presented by:

Arizona Department of Education

Early Childhood Education Unit

Objectives

Participants will:

Understand what Family Engagement is and the 6 factors that support Family Engagement

Understand factors that influence families of children with special needs

Understand ways you can effectively engage families in your program

Explore frameworks for supporting Family Engagement

Explore resources to support families of children with special needs

What is Family Engagement?

Six Factors in Family Engagement

1. Programs encourage and validate family participation – families are given opportunities to <u>actively</u> take part in decision making

Practice Profile

Strategy #1 Improve the partnerships between educators and families to increase inclusive education opportunities				
Core Component	**Contribution to the Outcome**	**Expected Use in Practice**	**Developmental Use in Practice**	**Unacceptable Use in Practice**
Description of this component	Why this core component is important to achieving the outcome	Description of practitioner behavior	Description of practitioner behavior	Description of practitioner behavior
1. A continuum of service options is communicated to both educators and families and the specific needs of the child are prioritized.	Placement options must include a full continuum—from Regular education child's program. This continuum must consider meeting both the needs of the family while addressing the individual needs of the child.	Use of Least Restrictive Environment chart/diagram and or program description; clear outline of options; Inclusive Early Child Special Education Services provided; use of ECTA guiding questions.	Continuum of placement options is available and; regular early childhood classroom placement is considered first.	A predetermined decision is made about placement prior to meeting with the families.
2. The child's team (child's family, related service providers, general education staff, child care staff, and medical) is comprehensive and includes all the people who contribute to the education and care of the child in decision making.	The family and all those who play a role in the child's development are needed to make decisions that are comprehensive which then support the child's educational needs.	Invite all team members of child (family, child care program staff, related service providers and medical); All team members collaborate to identify child's needs.	Invite school personnel; Invite private child care; and all IEP team members are present.	No knowledge about the child prior to the meeting, required members of the team are not all present. Failure to provide a copy of procedural safeguards are not provided to the families.
3. An environment of mutual support is established, one that is culturally sensitive and one which fosters a family's freedom to communicate openly about the needs of their child.	Because the Family and team members are; empowered, informed, and knowledgeable, they can contribute and communicate to effectively develop educational plans.	Invitation to participate is extended at each meeting; information is scaffolded to support families' needs; in families' home language. School based advocates are provided to support families at meeting. Awareness of cultural needs is established by listening to and respecting all perspectives by learning about each family's beliefs and values.	Information about the special education process is provided in parent friendly language. Families are encouraged to bring a supportive adult or friend. A List of what input by the families will be expected is shared with families prior to the screening, MET, and the IEP meeting.	Culture of families is not prioritized or considered. Families are not comfortable communicating about their child's educational needs.
4. Programs self-assess to build quality educational environments, inclusive settings and quality educational experiences.	Programs that self-assess are reflective and can engage in continuous improvement around relationships, environments and quality educational experiences.	Programs utilize the ECQUIP process to build interdependent relationships with local programs and align improvement strategies which focus on the relationship with families.	Programs self-assess using the example the ECQUIP process and develop an action plan based on the results.	Programs are not engaged in a process of quality improvement. As programs self-assess they do not evaluated or consider improvement around relationships, environments, and quality educational experiences.
5. There are ongoing educational opportunities and professional development to build the capacity of both families and educators.	Engaging in and providing professional development and additional educational opportunities enables all team members to be equal participants and contributors to the development of educational plans.	Parents and educators collaborate to identify aligned professional development and education; professional development and education opportunities are provided frequently that builds capacity for partnerships.	Educational opportunities are provided for families and educators to build an understanding of the special education process. Professional development around the topics of parental rights and the least restrictive environment are provided at least one time per year.	Minimal effort is given to provide educational opportunities for families and professionals that would support partnerships.

http://www.azed.gov/ece/inclusion/

Six Factors in Family Engagement

2. Two-way communication is facilitated through multiple forms and is timely, continuous, and invites conversations

3. Families and the program collaborate and exchange information

Crosswalk Tool

Principle #2: Communicate Effectively and Build Relationships		

Description: There is consistent evidence that effective communication and relationship building creates environments in the schools that are welcoming, respectful, and conducive to family engagement. The school places an emphasis on effective communication with every family and stakeholder within the learning community and seeks to build trusting relationships with every family.

Dr. Constantino Indicators	ADE ECE Indicators	Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Framework
2.1 The school creates and maintains a welcoming and respectful environment that is inviting, supportive, and encouraging to every family.	1.2 Program personnel build positive nurturing relationships with children and parents, and work to improve inclusive practices, and parent and community involvement.	**6. FAMILY CONNECTIONS TO PEERS AND COMMUNITY** Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life
2.2 The school employs strategies that extend relationship-building opportunities beyond the school walls so that every family can substantially contribute to the education of their children.	3.1 Leadership has led an inclusive process of developing a sustained and shared vision and mission as well as a written philosophy that is the basis for program planning, implementation, evaluation and modification	
2.3 The school ensures that healthy, two-way communication is consistently maintained. A sense of caring to truly collaborate with every family exists as evidenced by numerous mechanisms to allow families to communicate easily and directly with the school.	1.1 Teachers communicate the results of individual child assessments regularly with families and other stakeholders.	**5. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSITIONS** Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.

Six Factors in Family Engagement

4. Programs and families emphasize creating and sustaining early learning opportunities at home and in the community that extend what is being taught in the classroom

5. Families create a home environment that values learning and supports the efforts of the program
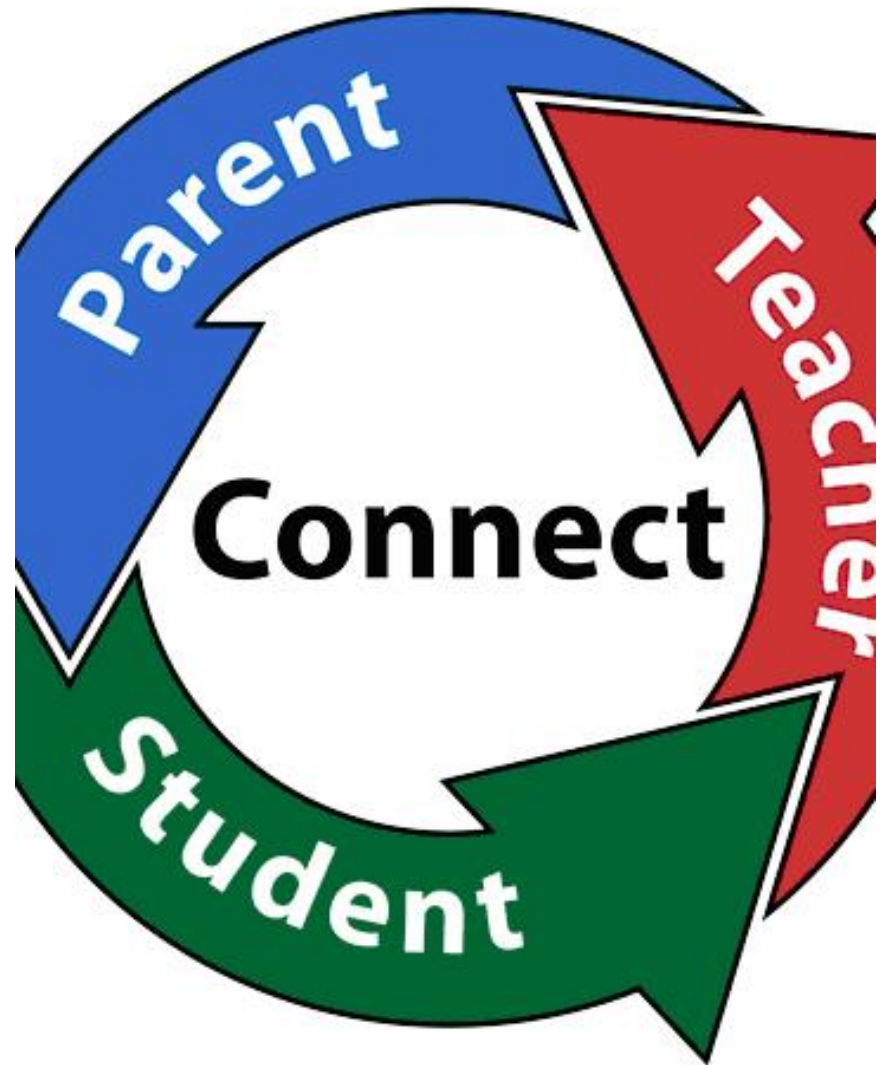
Six Factors in Family Engagement

6. Programs create an ongoing and comprehensive system for promoting family engagement that ensures leadership and teachers have the training and supports needed to fully engage families

Supporting Families of Children with Special Needs

Many families go through stages similar to the 5 stages of grief when adjusting to having a child with special needs

Building Partnerships

Parents are the first and most important teachers of young children

Scenario

A child in your class has just had an IEP written for Developmental Delays. You are meeting with the family for the first time since the IEP meeting and the mother begins crying and states that she still just can't believe there is anything wrong with her child.

- Where is this mother in the stages? What can you do to support this family?
- Discuss with your group the conversation you would have with this family
- Discuss what resources you might provide

What you can do

- Provide information to parents about parent advocacy or parent support groups

- Provide families information regarding their rights

What you can do

- Provide opportunities for parent education

- Provide opportunities for parents to be part of ECQUIP teams, policy councils, or become board members

What you can do

- Hold parent teacher conferences regularly throughout the year

- Ask parents their hopes and dreams for their child

- Share assessment data with parents

- Invite input on menus, themes, learning opportunities

- Allow parents opportunities to volunteer

- Have an open door policy

- Provide information in parent's home language

- Invite parents to share their culture, job, or hobbies with the class

- Invite parents to provide input into your ongoing progress monitoring system (i.e. Teaching Strategies Gold)
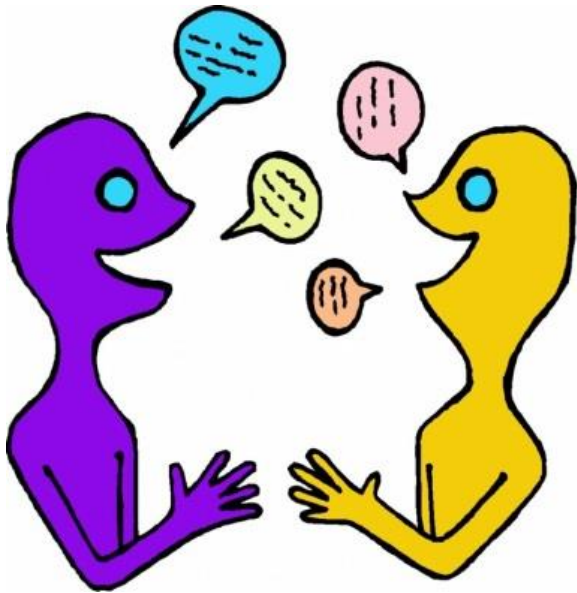
Activity

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1. At your tables, chart specific activities that you are currently doing to support Family Engagement in your school/program (15 mins.). Identify which of the 6 Factors each activity falls under. Be prepared to share.

2. Discuss with your group something new you plan on implementing to support Family Engagement in your school/program (5 mins.)

US Department of Education Dual Capacity-Building Framework

Figure 2: The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

THE CHALLENGE

Lack of opportunities for **School/Program Staff** to build the capacity for partnerships

Ineffective Family–School Partnerships

Lack of opportunities for **Families** to build the capacity for partnerships

OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS

Process Conditions
- Linked to learning
- Relational
- Development vs. service orientation
- Collaborative
- Interactive

Organizational Conditions
- Systemic: across the organization
- Integrated: embedded in all programs
- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the "4 C" areas:
- **Capabilities** (skills and knowledge)
- **Connections** (networks)
- **Cognition** (beliefs, values)
- **Confidence** (self-efficacy)

FAMILY AND STAFF CAPACITY OUTCOMES

School and Program Staff who can
- Honor and recognize families' funds of knowledge
- Connect family engagement to student learning
- Create welcoming, inviting cultures

Effective Family–School Partnerships Supporting Student Achievement & School Improvement

Families who can negotiate multiple roles
- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates
- Decision Makers
- Collaborators

Harvard Family Research Project
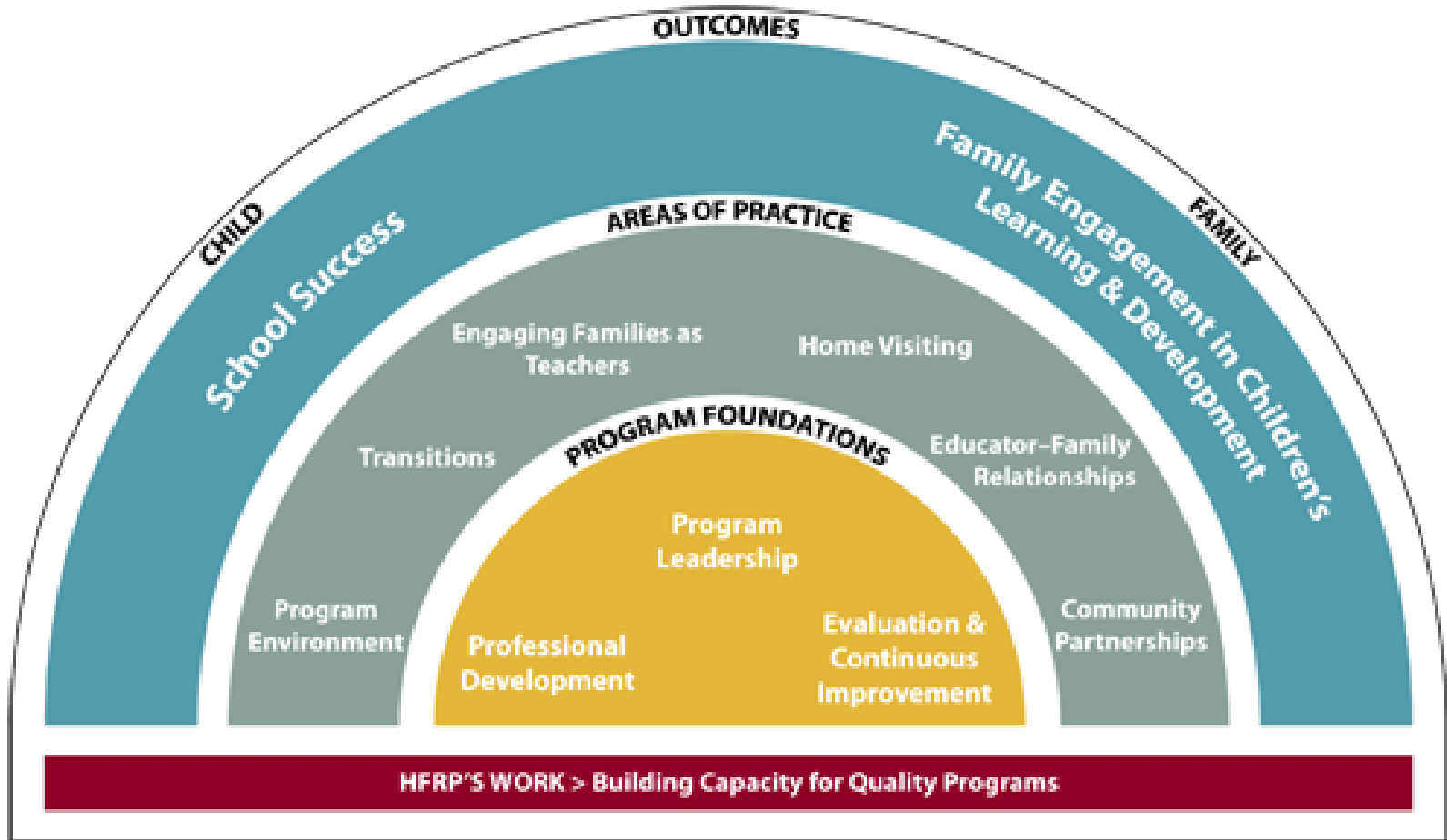
Office of Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework

OHS PFCE Framework

Positive & Goal-Oriented Relationships

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS	PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES	CHILD OUTCOMES
Program Leadership	Program Environment	Family Well-being	Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade
Continuous Program Improvement	Family Partnerships	Positive Parent-Child Relationships	
Professional Development	Teaching and Learning	Families as Lifelong Educators	
	Community Partnerships	Families as Learners	
		Family Engagement in Transitions	
		Family Connections to Peers and Communtiy	
		Families as Advocates and Leaders	

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/pfce-framework.pdf

Resources

- https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family
- http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement
- http://www.hfrp.org/
- http://www.azed.gov/parents/familyengagement/
- http://www.dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices
- Halgunseth & Peterson (NAEYC) and Stark & Moodie (Pre-k Now) in Family Engagement, Diverse Families and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature (2009)
- Building Family, School, and Community Partnerships, Third Edition (2007); Wright, Stegelin, and Hartle; Pearson Publishing

Wrap Up

Questions, Comments, Thoughts

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