

## 2014-15 PSESD Early Learning Self-Assessment: Family Engagement<sup>1</sup>

- Are staff competent and knowledgeable in working successfully with all families across different cultural groups?
- In what areas do staff feel they need more training to better engage parents?
- What skills do parents think staff need to improve to better engage parents?
- What is the extent to which parent/family events are helpful to families in (a) Supporting school readiness for their children, (b) Making progress toward their goals, (c) Learning about transitions and preparing for K-12, (d) Connecting with peers.
- What are characteristics of parent/family events that have been beneficial in achieving those goals?

### Strengths

- **Work with children and families across different racial and cultural groups**
  - Overall, **98%** of the 220 **site staff** ( $n=216$ ) stated that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families across different racial and cultural groups. **77%** ( $n=169$ ) assessed themselves very or extremely effective in this area of their work.
    - **100%** of **site staff** ( $n=57$ ) who identify as *persons of color* said that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families of different races and cultures. **88%** ( $n=50$ ) of these staff said that they were very or extremely effective in this aspect of their work.
      - **98%** of 142 site staff ( $n=139$ ) staff who *do not identify as persons of color* indicated that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families of different races and cultures. **75%** of site staff ( $n=107$ ) staff said that they were very or extremely effective in this aspect.
    - Likewise, **100%** of **site staff** ( $n=59$ ) who *speak a language other than English* said that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families of different races and cultures. **85%** ( $n=50$ ) reported that they were very or extremely effective.
      - **97%** of 157 **site staff** ( $n=153$ ) who *do not speak a language other than English* said that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families of different races and cultures. **74%** of **site staff** ( $n=116$ ) reported that they were very or extremely effective in this aspect of their work.
  - Overall, **80%** of 587 parents and family members ( $n=470$ ) said that site staff are at least very effective in working with children and families of different cultures and races.
    - **84%** of 203 parents and families who identify as *persons of color* ( $n=170$ ) rated site staff as at least very effective in working with children and families of different cultures and races. (In fact **50%** of the parents ( $n=102$ ) who identify as persons of color thought that site staff were extremely effective in this aspect.)
      - **79%** of 299 parents and families who *do not identify as persons of color* ( $n=235$ ) rated site staff as at least very effective in working with children and families of different cultures and races.

<sup>1</sup> Data sources: Surveys from 264 site staff, 50 center directors, 81 PSESD Early Learning Staff, 649 parents/family members, and 11 focus groups with 74 parents/ family members and 15 focus groups with 115 site staff and leaders. Total N's/number of respondents for surveys may vary because not everyone answered all survey questions.

## Strengths

- **82%** of 315 parents and families who *speaks a language other than English* ( $n=257$ ) rated site staff as very or extremely effective in working with children and families of different cultures and races.
  - **78%** of 265 parents and families who do *not speak a language other than English* ( $n=207$ ) rated site staff as at least very effective in working with children and families of different cultures and races.
- **93%** of 40 **center leaders** ( $n=37$ ) stated that they are at least somewhat effective in working with children and families across different racial and cultural groups.
- **Site staff, center leaders, and PSESD staff** identified how they are effective in working with or supporting the work with children and families across different racial and cultural groups:
  - Providing interpreters whenever they are needed.
  - Respecting everyone and their cultures, and treating everyone in the same way without judgment. Staff is there to support families whoever they are.
  - Getting to know families, their customs, values and religion, foods, and dress.
  - Including materials like books, food, songs, and pictures including family photos in the classroom that reflect various cultures and make children and families feel welcome.
  - Holding cultural nights or other events for families to share their cultures.
  - Establishing relationships with families that promote open dialogue about cultural expectations both in and out of school.
    - Being open to learning other ways of thinking and doing things and listening actively when asking families about their culture and customs.
    - Learning from other sources especially those found in the community.
    - Building relationships between families, the center, and larger community.
  - Cultivating cultural humility and sensitivity: checking assumptions, being aware of preconceptions, and acknowledging differences and emphasizing these differences as strengths. Acknowledging children and families, not staff, are experts on their culture.
  - Conducting parent interest and participation surveys to see what families are interested in doing and how they want to be involved.
- In addition to many of these practices, **parents** shared ways that sites are effective in working with families across races and cultures:
  - Providing a place where they can join with parents from other cultures and they can share their cultures with one another.
  - Helping parents learn about other kinds of food and ways of preparing food.
  - Having staff who pay attention to information that might affect a child's day (e.g., providing alternative protein sources for Catholic children at Lent; helping children of military-service parents through transitions after multiple moves through many countries).
- **Work with children and families who speak a language other than English**
  - Overall, **86%** of 220 **site staff** ( $n=190$ ) stated that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
    - **88%** of 58 **site staff** ( $n=51$ ) who self-identify as *persons of color* stated that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who spoke a language other than English.
      - **85%** of 141 **site staff** ( $n=120$ ) who *do not self-identify as persons of color* said that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who spoke a language other than English.
    - **93%** of 58 **site staff** ( $n=54$ ) who *speaks a language other than English* indicated that they

## Strengths

- were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who spoke a language other than English.
- **84%** of 158 **site staff** ( $n=132$ ) who *do not speak a language other than English* said that they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who spoke a language other than English.
- Altogether, **72%** of 583 **parents and family members** ( $n=381$ ) said that site staff are at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
    - **72%** of 202 parents and families who identify as *persons of color* ( $n=146$ ) rated site staff as at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
      - **68%** of 297 parents and families who *do not identify as persons of color* ( $n=202$ ) rated site staff as at least very effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
    - **78%** of 313 parents and families who *speak a language other than English* ( $n=244$ ) rated site staff as very or extremely effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
      - [Note: See section on Challenges for effectiveness ratings of site staff work with children and families who speak a language other than English from parents and families who *do not speak a language other than English*.]
  - **85%** of 41 **center leaders** ( $n=35$ ) stated they were at least somewhat effective in working with children and families who speak a language other than English.
  - **Site staff, center leaders, and PSESD staff** cited the following examples of their work or support of work with families who speak languages other than English:
    - Having Bilingual Instructional Assistants (BIAs) and other language services, such as the language line from PSESD.
      - Having the same BIA or para-interpreter who have been in the classroom as opposed to having different ones.
      - Using interpreters for all family interactions.
    - Providing various materials—e.g., forms, brochures, flyers, notes—in different languages.
    - Having a staff member who can speak a language other than English.
      - For classrooms with many Spanish-speaking children, having one English-speaking teacher and one Spanish-speaking teacher helps the children to hear and learn in both languages.
    - Staff learning and using learned languages in interactions with children and families.
    - Having parents or children take on role as interpreter. Or, finding interpreter resources in the community.
    - Using refugee arrival data to inform sites of new languages that are coming into the community. Partnering with community- and ethnic-based organizations for referrals.
    - Being open, polite, warm and welcoming in communication with families, and checking with families if communication.
      - Using pictures and gestures to assist in communication.
  - **Parents** described how sites work effectively with families who speak languages other than English:
    - Appreciating and accommodating these languages —through interpreters and translated materials—instead of telling parents “they are in America and they need to learn English.”

## Strengths

- Providing opportunities for both non-English-language-speaking families and English-speaking families to learn phrases and songs in another language.
- **Parent/Family Events**
  - Among **parents/family members** who attended at least one parent/family event ( $n=477$ ), a majority rated parent/family events as at least very helpful in supporting parents/family to:
    - Prepare their children for school, including transition to kindergarten for preschool children, or to preschool for Early Head Start children (**85%** of 451 parents/family members,  $n=381$ ).
    - Learn about community resources (**80%** of 442 parents/family members,  $n=353$ ). Make progress towards family goals (**79%** of 446 parents/family members,  $n=353$ ).
    - Meet and get to know other parents/families (**75%** of 445 parents/family members,  $n=333$ ).
    - Participate in peer learning opportunities such as teach-backs, etc. (**73%** of 439 parents/family members,  $n=321$ ).
  - In focus groups, **parents** mentioned ways that all parents can get involved in many ways including attending meetings, being a Policy Council representative, or volunteering in the classroom.
    - Parents also mentioned that those who participate in parent meetings get to offer suggestions about how the parent budget could be spent for the year and vote on the suggestions.

## Challenges

- **PSESD Staff supporting work with children and families of different cultures and races**
  - **37%** of 65 **PSESD staff** ( $n=24$ ) said supporting Center Directors and site staff to work effectively with *children and families across racial and cultural groups* was at least somewhat challenging.
    - Among 29 **PSESD staff** who are *persons of color*, **38%** ( $n=11$ ) said that supporting center leaders and site staff to work effectively with children and families across different racial and cultural groups was either somewhat or very challenging.
      - Among 30 **ESD staff** who are not *persons of color*, **37%** ( $n=11$ ) said that supporting center leaders and site staff to work effectively with children and families across different racial and cultural groups was at least somewhat challenging.
- **Site Staff and PSESD program staff work with children and families who speak a language other than English**
  - **45%** of 264 **parents and families** who do *not speak a language other than English* ( $n=118$ ) said they did not know how to rate site staff work with children and families who speak a language other than English.
    - **Only 55%** of 264 parents and families who do *not speak a language other than English* ( $n=145$ ) were able to rate site staff (and they rated site staff as at least somewhat effective) in their work with children and families who speak a language other than English.
  - **44%** of 64 **PSESD staff** ( $n=28$ ) indicated that supporting Center Directors and site staff to work effectively with *children and families who speak a language other than English* was at least somewhat challenging.
    - Among 29 **PSESD staff** who are *persons of color*, **38%** ( $n=11$ ) said that supporting center leaders and site staff to work effectively with children and families who speak a language other than English was at least somewhat challenging.

## Challenges

- Among 29 PSESD staff who are *not* persons of color, 52% (n=15) said that supporting center leaders and site staff to work effectively with children and families who speak a language other than English was either somewhat or very challenging.
- **Site Staff, Center Directors, and PSESD staff** cited the following areas of concern:
  - Not all program forms are translated to other languages (e.g., ASQ is translated in Spanish only).
    - Forms are translated too late to be used when needed (particularly forms used later in the year, after enrollment).
  - Limited available interpreters.
    - Some centers/sites/districts do not have a language bank.
      - It is difficult to get interpreters to come to outlying/rural areas.
      - Some sites use the language bank but interpreters only show up half the time.
      - Sometimes it takes time to get an interpreter and then even with an interpreter, it takes more time to build the relationship with families.
      - Sometimes it is difficult to get interpreters or interpreters in specific languages.
    - Bilingual Instructional Assistants (BIA) are helpful, but there is not a common understanding among site staff about what they can do – sites have been told different things by BIA staff.
      - Formal procedures using a BIA (e.g., tracking their time) are not clear.
    - BIA is not assigned to the site for the full year, and center directors are not involved in information loop between BIA and ESD staff. And yet, teachers can only request BIA with information going through the site director and a BIA can be pulled with only the Site director, and not the site staff, being notified.
    - Site staff do not know how to access translation or other relevant services, including who to go to/contact at the PSESD and feeling they are passed on to different people when they call the ESD.
    - The Language Line has not always worked well. Some staff could not find the language that they needed and others could not access the Language Line at times when they need it (e.g., late in evening).
  - Staff do not feel they have received support or information on modifying the curriculum for Dual Language Learners and do not know to whom they should address their questions.
  - Classroom environments are not necessarily culturally responsive, and do not reflect the racial and cultural make-up of the students.
- **Parents and other family members** reported the following challenges in site staff work with children and families across different race/culture or speak a language other than English:
  - No interpreters are on site.
  - None of the teachers in some sites speak Spanish or any language other than English.
  - Not feeling able to share their culture through food because of rules/regulations.
- **Parent/Family Events Attendance**
  - 35% of 586 parents and family members (n=203) reported attending only one or none of the parent/family events at their sites. Conversely, only 63% of parents/family members reported attending 2 or more events.
    - Among the 96 parents **who did not attend any event: 56%** (n=54) indicated that they either could not attend or chose not to attend; 31% (n=30) reported other reasons such as

## Challenges

work schedules, illness and treatments, or being new to the program; and 10% ( $n=10$ ) said that either events were not held or parents did not know they were offered.

## Suggestions for Improvement

- **Site staff and center leadership** suggested the following improvements to Center Leadership or PSESD support for working with children & families across cultural, racial, and language groups:
  - Translate all program documents and forms, including assessments, into various languages and made available in timely fashion.
  - Provide phrases in different languages that can be used by staff and in the classroom.
  - Provide easy and reliable access to interpreters and translators. Translation services need to be efficient (i.e., quick turnaround for requests).
    - Recruit interpreters in the less common languages.
    - Have employed bilingual staff visit other programs that do not have bilingual staff nor access to interpreters even one day a week to provide support.
  - Provide more information on Bilingual Instructional Assistant (BIA) program, including:
    - BIA role in the classroom (some sites experience the role as just an interpreter, while others have BIA that provides instruction to ELL students. It seems to depend on the BIA/ESD staff and how they describe their role to the staff.)
    - Qualifications for BIAs to be in the classroom, the expectations to meet to determine the BIA is no longer needed, and how these decisions are made
  - Provide ELL classes for families year-round.
  - Provide staff training. (“You can never have enough training on looking at your own biases and knowledge of the cultures we serve.”)
    - ESD to provide cultural coaches that come to sites and work with staff on cultural competency.
    - More training on cultural responsiveness and how to assess if staff are culturally responsive.
    - Use Professional Development resources for staff to learn another language, e.g., Rosetta Stone.
  - Recognize existing bilingual staff and pay them more for their abilities because often they do additional work.
    - Provide support for staff who undergo additional training to become bilingual.
  - Hire a more diverse staff (e.g., race, culture, language, and gender) that reflect children and families.
  - Share with families information about the opportunity gap and help families learn to advocate as they approach K-12 education.
- **PSESD EL staff** suggested the following improvements to the support they provide sites:
  - Stay true to the mission and vision of Head Start, ECEAP, Early Head Start, and PSESD. Work on racial equity across all aspects of the program.
  - Strengthen implementation of Dual Language Learner strategy.
  - Provide training and coaching for staff on cultural competencies, including not being afraid to inquire about differences and ways to appreciate and utilize those differences to be more effective and cooperative in reaching the ESD goals.
    - Provide resources, including software programs, to learn about cultures, languages, and about diversity.
  - Create opportunities for families to be the teachers and share their culture, history, language.

## Suggestions for Improvement

- **Parents and other family members suggested:**
  - Having all notices and reminders in two or more languages. Also, offering more bilingual opportunities and supporting bilingual assessments.
    - Offering ESL classes in languages other than Spanish.
  - Making more interpreters readily available and hiring bilingual staff from the communities who are like the site's families.
  - Providing more meal options for children that reflect cultural diversity.
  - Allowing sharing of food/recipes and other cultural traditions (e.g., cultural nights).

## Demographic Information

- **Following is a description of the make-up—starting with majority numbers—of the different groups in the Early Learning Program who responded to Self-Assessment survey questions:**

- **52%** of 582 parents and family members ( $n=301$ ) do *not* identify as persons of color.
  - **35%** of 582 parents and family members ( $n=203$ ) identify as persons of color.
- **55%** of 584 parents and family members ( $n=319$ ) speak a language other than English.
  - **45%** of 584 parents and family members ( $n=265$ ) do *not* speak a language other than English.
- **61%** of 201 parents and family members ( $n=203$ ) who identify as persons of color speak a language other than English.
  - **39%** of 201 parents and family members ( $n=79$ ) who identify as persons of color do *not* speak a language other than English.
- **57%** of 299 parents and family members ( $n=170$ ) who do *not* identify as persons of color, also do *not* speak a language other than English.
  - **43%** of 299 parents and family members ( $n=129$ ) who do *not* identify as persons of color, speak a language other than English.
- **66%** of 216 site staff ( $n=142$ ) do *not* identify as persons of color.
  - **27%** of 216 site staff ( $n=58$ ) identify as persons of color.
- **73%** of 217 site staff ( $n=158$ ) indicated that they do *not* speak a language other than English.
  - **27%** of 217 site staff ( $n=59$ ) indicated that they speak a language other than English.
- **52%** of 56 site staff who identify as persons of color ( $n=29$ ) do *not* speak a language other than English.
  - **48%** of 56 site staff ( $n=27$ ) who identify as persons of color reported that they speak a language other than English.
- **85%** of 141 site staff who do *not* identify as persons of color ( $n=120$ ) also do *not* speak a language other than English.
  - **15%** of 141 site staff ( $n=21$ ) who do *not* identify as persons of color reported that they speak a language other than English.
- **90%** of 38 center leaders ( $n=34$ ) do *not* identify as persons of color.
  - **8%** of 38 center leaders ( $n=3$ ) identify as persons of color.
- **83%** of 40 center leaders ( $n=33$ ) indicated that they do *not* speak a language other than English.

## Demographic Information

- 17% of 40 center leaders ( $n=7$ ) reported that they speak a language other than English.
  - 91% of 33 center leaders who do *not* identify as persons of color ( $n=30$ ) also do *not* speak a language other than English.
    - 9% of 33 center leaders who do *not* identify as persons of color ( $n=3$ ) speak a language other than English.
  - Two of 3 center leaders who identify as persons of color speak a language other than English.
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- 47% of 66 PSESD Early Learning staff ( $n=31$ ) do *not* identify as persons of color.
    - 45% of 66 PSESD Early Learning staff ( $n=30$ ) identify as *persons of color*.