

Purpose

This document tells Family Support about ways to engage families in their child’s Early Learning program.

Guidance

When families are engaged in their child’s learning environment, it contributes to their child’s school readiness. There are many ways families can participate. Each family is unique so it’s important to offer different types and levels of involvement. The *Parent Participation Survey* gathers parents’ preferences for how they would like to be involved. For some parents, getting their child ready and on the bus is how they can participate, while other parents have the capacity to help plan family events at the site. Encourage everyone to find the best fit for their situation through conversations at enrollment and throughout the year. Learn about their interests, cultural traditions, goals and availability.

| Parents and families take on different roles when they participate in the program | |
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| Learner | observes in the classroom, attends parent trainings, attends GED classes, college classes or workshops |
| Contributor | gives ideas and thoughts for the program, takes time to volunteer or visit the classroom |
| Supporter | welcomes new families, encourages others to participate, helps staff set up an event |
| Evaluator | participates in program self-assessment, gives ideas to strengthen the program |
| Planner | helps with planning family activities, makes time for home visits/conferences |
| Decision Maker | participates in electing site’s PC representative, votes on the Center budget, chooses goals for themselves and their child, partners with staff to achieve goals |
| Prime Educator | works with their child to reinforce what is learned at school, reads to their child |
| Child Advocate | conveys their child’s needs, participates in child advocacy events, seeks out services |
| Leader | represents their site at Policy Council, is involved in their community, organizes a family activity |

Parents and families can volunteer at the site or at home

Parents can volunteer at the site by helping in the classroom, bringing in an activity or interest to share, helping staff complete clerical tasks or other tasks and activities. At home, parents can prepare materials for the class or type up a newsletter. A creative list of volunteer options can be shared with parents at enrollment or orientation.

Parents and families can be engaged in their child’s learning

Emphasize the home-school connection with parents. Parents are the first and most important educator of their child and it is crucial that they be involved in their child’s learning goals outside of the classroom. Parent engagement includes participating in home visits and conferences as well as extending and supporting their child’s learning by doing activities at home with their child.

| Family Leadership and Job Training Opportunities | |
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| Opportunity | Description |
| Center Parent Committee | Every parent enrolled in the program is a member of the Center Parent Committee. Parents are encouraged to participate in planning family activities at their site. They are also able to give input on how Parent Funds are spent and vote on a final Parent Fund budget. |
| Policy Council | Parents can learn more about the Early Learning Program and participate in the governance of the program as a Policy Council Representative. Family Support is responsible for assisting parent representatives to carry out their role. This might mean helping them find child care and transportation options so they can attend the Policy Council meetings. Family Support staff also support parent representatives in finding effective ways to communicate information from the Policy Council meetings back to their Center Parent Committee and receive information from parents to take to Policy Council meetings. |
| Peer Leadership Program | Parents who are interested in learning about Health and Literacy are encouraged to register for this opportunity. Site teams complete the <i>Parent Referral Form</i> and support the parent in arranging for childcare and transportation to attend six evenings of curriculum training. After completing the training parents can, upon request, teach the curriculum to other parents. This program is excellent for parents who want to learn facilitation and training skills in addition to health or literacy knowledge. |
| Job training opportunities | The Early Learning program provides interpreter and bus driver trainings for parents who are interested in these professions. Site teams refer parents and assist them in completing the requirements to participate in the trainings. This program has opened the doors to earning an income for many families in past years. |

Related Documents

Family Partnership Record and Contact Log

Parent Participation Survey

Parent Participation Survey Procedure

Parent Referral Form

Policy Council Parent Representative Notice and Verification Form