Engaging Families in the Partnership Process

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Learning Outcomes

CHSA participants will:

- Identify opportunities and strategies that support family partnerships
- Describe the Five Key Elements of family engagement
- Address barriers and challenges to the partnership process
- Practice identifying family strengths, needs, and goals using the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Process
Agenda

1. Family Engagement: Five Key Elements
2. Welcome
3. Opportunities and Strategies in the Head Start Program
4. Overcoming Barriers and Challenges
5. Family Assessment and the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Process
6. Head Start Requirements – the FPA Process
7. Taking the Practice Home
What is Expected

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Program must engage in a process of collaborative partnership building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services.
What is Expected

The Family Partnership Process must:
• Be initiated as early after enrollment as possible
• Be an individualized family partnership agreement
Engaging Families in the Partnership Process

Provides Staff Opportunities to:

- Check in regularly with families
- Strengthen relationships with families
- Offer concrete family support
- Connect the family to the community – resources and referrals
Every interaction with Families is an opportunity to build partnerships
Five Key Elements of Family Engagement
Five Key Elements

1. Each Family Is Unique
2. Families Benefit From Family-Centered Support Practices
3. Families Who Live in Isolation Thrive When Their Network of Support Expands
4. The Goal of Working With Families is to Strengthen, Not Substitute for, Family Responsibility
5. Families Benefit From Support
Family Responsibilities

Families assign different priorities for:

- **Economic** - critical needs such as food, clothing, and shelter.
- **Health Care and Wellness** - basic health care needs of children and other family members. Protecting their members from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and social violence.
- **Education and Socialization** - being the primary educator for the children and transmitting family values and traditions.
- **Family Maintenance** - emotional nurturance, intimacy, understanding, and support to sustain the family unit.
Five Element Activity

In Small Groups:

1. Discuss the Key Element
   - What it means to you; strategies to engage families in this area
   - What barriers or challenges exist

2. Identify someone to report out the major ideas discussed
Family Partnerships

- Develop Goals
- Assess Needs
- Build Trust
- Identify Strengths
- Provide Resources & Referrals
- Review Progress
- Family Support
Family Partnerships

**ARE:**
- An ongoing process that evolves & adapts to changing needs
- Initiated at enrollment and continues through transitions
- Developed through formal and informal approaches
- Engages all staff within their service areas/program options
- Embedded in all sections of the Performance Standards

**ARE NOT:**
- A one-time event leading to a completed form or agreement done every year
- Only a formal meeting held to set goals with the family
- A role for the designated family service staff to perform
- Only found in one section of the Performance Standards
Assessing Family Needs

- Conversation versus Checklist
- Identify Strengths
- Understand Community Resources available
- Draw from previous contact, observations and discussions
- Incorporate needs for all family members
- Adopt a “not knowing” and “wanting to understand” attitude
Examples of Types of Interactions:

• Complement pre-existing family plans i.e. transition plans, health plans, and IEPs

• Provide emergency and/or crisis assistance

• Offer opportunities for families to enhance parenting, literacy, education and job skills

• Facilitate family access to services and resources in the community
S.M.A.R.T. Goal Setting Process

**S - Specific:** Specifies who is doing what, when, where, and why.

**M - Measurable:** Measures how the change will be determined.

**A - Action-oriented:** Describes strategies to be used; tasks to be done.

**R - Realistic:** Is it achievable, sensible and practical?

**T - Time bound:** Has deadlines and helps organize when it should happen.
Tips for Developing Goals

• Goals Are Broad Statements That Describe What The Family Wants To Achieve.

• Check The Goal By Asking:
  - Is it realistic, and within the family’s control and ability to achieve?
  - Does it meet the family’s needs and build upon strengths and interests?
  - Does it build upon pre-existing family plans, if appropriate?
  - Will achieving the goal raise the family’s quality of life or self-reliance?
Examples of Goal Statements

*Improve* parenting skills
*Increase* participation in social groups or child’s school
*Complete* formal education or job training
*Gain or Improve* written or verbal skills
Case Scenario

Discuss and Identify:

- Family strengths, interests, needs
- Potential topics for goal setting
- One priority goal
What Will You Take Home?

• The S.M.A.R.T. Goal Process?
• Increase Informal or Formal Parent Engagement Opportunities?
• Implement Additional Family-Centered Practices?
• Share Information With Staff Who Aren’t Here?
Celebrate Families!

Celebrate Yourself!