

DEVELOP A PLAN—BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT HOW YOU WILL ENGAGE FAMILIES

In order for family engagement to be successful, it is important to develop a plan of action for engaging families in your program. A plan needs to derive from a clear vision of what you want family engagement to look like in your 21st CCLC program. Consider inviting parents, staff, and community partners to help you review and assess your current practices and activities, develop your vision statement, and create your family engagement plan.

Review and Assess Your Current Family Engagement Practices and Activities

Think about your program as it is now. An internal scan and assessment of current family engagement practices can help to draft an effective vision statement for family engagement. This assessment will ground your vision and plan in reality--helping to either narrow your choices or see opportunities that had not been previously considered.

Take a look at what is happening now as a result of your family engagement strategies and practices? How has your program changed? What impact has your partnership with families had on academic achievement and meaningful parent participation? Do you collaborate with your families to:

- Develop or enhance of your family engagement plan
- Help in decision-making (i.e. participate in parent/community advisory committees)
- Plan or discuss needed activities linked to major program goals (i.e. improving family literacy, STEM programming, preparing for college and careers, etc.)
- Develop and participate in activities that build and enhance positive relationships between parents-program staff, parents-parents, and parents-students
- Participate in activities that increase the cultural competency of staff

List the current family engagement activities and practices which involve your families. For each activity and practice listed, answer the following questions:

- Does this connect to student learning and academic goals?
- How do we measure the success of this activity? What have been the benefits and outcomes of this activity to families? How have we measured these benefits and outcomes?
- What are the strengths of this practice/activity?
- What have been the challenges/weaknesses of this activity?
- What should we keep, change, tweak, or toss?

Create Your Vision For Family Engagement

Create a vision for how you want to engage families. Successful family engagement programs have clear task expectations, roles, and responsibilities, all of which should include parent input and ongoing assessment by staff, parents, and community members.

Develop a clear vision for engaging families. Part of every great plan is to have a vision of what it will look like when the job is done. It is an intentionally focused description of your program's desired future state for family engagement. Likewise, there needs to be a clear vision of what it will look like

when effective partnerships are formed within your 21ST CCLC program with families or others who will be working with your families.

A vision statement answers these questions: What will success look like? What would you like to accomplish in the future? Where do you want to be in terms of family engagement? It is a guiding image that is consistent with your program's values. It should be realistic, creditable, well-articulated, easily understood, appropriate, ambitious, and responsive to change. The vision statement should require the members of team to stretch their expectations, aspirations, and performance. It should energize, challenge, and inspire all stakeholders in the engagement of achieving the vision.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A VISION STATEMENT

- intentionally focused
- explicit
- straight-forward
- concise

DESIGN YOUR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Designing a plan for family engagement doesn't have to be complicated. Once complete, you should be able to pursue your plan in a logical and feasible fashion. Think of your plan as your program's user's guide to family engagement.

Keeping your vision in mind, consider the following steps to design a family engagement plan:

- **Identify desired results**—set goals for what your family engagement hopes to do. It will show where you want to go. It should answer the questions, “What do we want to accomplish? What will change as a result of your family engagement program? The changes will happen for whom? By how much? By when? By what method will the goal be measured?”
- **Determine acceptable evidence**—describe what evidence you will need to show that you are reaching your goals. Ask, “What type of tools will you use to access the effectiveness of your parent engagement activities? How will families, staff, and others participate in these assessments?”
- **Plan activities**—it should answer the questions, “How will we actually accomplish our work? What roles and responsibilities will staff, families, and community members assume in order to reach the goal and fulfill on the vision?”
 - ❖ Determine budget implications—how much have you allocated for family engagement? What are the costs for activities? What resources will you need?”
- **Identify and remove barriers**—Think about possible hurdles along the way and pre-formulate responses to them.
- **Identify partnership roles and responsibilities**--(family, community, staff, program, etc.)

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