



# BUILDING A SYSTEM OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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# SUPPORTING CHILDREN BY IMPROVING FAMILY OUTCOMES

- All programs that serve young children and their families can improve outcomes for children by making a difference for their families. This video describes the importance of supporting families, collecting data on family outcomes, and using the data to improve the program. Using the family data collected by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education's Part C/Early Intervention Program as an example, this video highlights how three families who received early intervention benefited from support to their family. This video is a companion to the video [Child Outcomes: Step-By-Step](#).
- The intended audience for this video is program staff, leaders, and families in all programs for young children, including early care and education, early childhood special education, early intervention, child care, and Head Start.
- [Supporting Children by Improving Family Outcomes](#)



WHAT IS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

What does family  
engagement look like in  
your state?

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What does family engagement look like for you and how do you as leaders facilitate?
- There is no one way to engage families
- Need to offer a variety of ways to support families to be engaged
- Allowing families to define how they want to be engaged



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

# DEFINITION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

- There is no definition of family engagement in the regulations
- There are resources to support family engagement
  - POLICY STATEMENT ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FROM THE EARLY YEARS TO THE EARLY GRADES
    - Provides principles of family engagement
    - Family engagement promotes children's learning and healthy development



# STATUTE AND REGULATIONS

The Statute includes families in terms of stating that one purpose of early intervention is to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities.

# STATUTE AND REGULATIONS

## Individualized Family Service Plan:

- Parents are members of multidisciplinary team
- Family-directed assessment of resources, priorities, and concerns and identification of supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the infant or toddler
- A statement of the family's resources, priorities, and concerns relating to enhancing the development of their child
- IFSP content must be explained to parents and informed written consent must be obtained from parents
- IFSP meetings should be conducted in the mode of communication (language) that the family uses



# MASSACHUSETTS MODEL

**Dedicated staff person within the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition (BFHN) at Department of Public Health (lead agency)**

**Primary function is to identify, train, provide on-going support to Early Intervention parent leaders**

**ICC Co-Chair is always a parent**

**Active participation sought on all ICC Committees and Sub-Committees with stipend support**

# MASSACHUSETTS MODEL

**Higher level trainings for parent leader, tied to a requirement for a parent led community based project**

**Active participation on broader BFHN Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessments and annual funding application**

**Annual solicitations of parent concerns and development of a family engagement document for state human services executive offices**

**Strong commitment of diversity in parent leadership**

# RESOURCES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- DEC Recommended Practices  
[Family Practices](#)
- Joint HHS/USDOE policy statement on family engagement  
[POLICY STATEMENT ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FROM THE EARLY YEARS TO THE EARLY GRADES](#)



Questions