Preparing and Supporting Emerging Family Leaders
Today’s Presenters/Facilitators

**Stephanie Moss**  
Parent to Parent of Georgia/Region 3 Parent Technical Assistance Center  
Email: stephanie@p2pga.org

**Amy Nicholas**  
Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center/Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems  
Email: amy.nicholas@unc.edu

**Darla Gundler**  
Early Childhood Personnel Center  
Email: gundler@uchc.edu

**Sherri Williams**  
Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center  
Email: sherri@email.unc.edu
Workshop Purpose

To highlight strategies, practices, and approaches for effectively preparing and supporting new or emerging family leaders to engage in systems-level advocacy and decision-making related to early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) programs.
Workshop Agenda

- History and Overview of Family Leadership
- Policies, Frameworks, and Supports
- Families and High-Quality IDEA Early Childhood Systems
- Video-Enhanced Activity: Parent Perspectives
- National Technical Assistance Resources
From Family Participation to Family Involvement to Family Engagement…What’s the Difference?

In the 1990’s, we called it family participation. Families participated as members of IFSP teams and served on program advisory councils/boards, e.g., State Interagency Coordinating Councils (SICCs).

In the 2000’s, we called it family involvement. “Principles of Family Involvement” was published by the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC).

In 2016, we started calling it family engagement. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services & U.S Department of Education published their joint “Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the Early years to the Early Grades.”

Moving from individual child/family advocacy to systems level advocacy.
• Families have strong and sustained effects on children’s learning, development, and wellness.
• Family activities such as reading and talking to young children lead to positive outcomes.
• Promoting enriching learning activities in the classroom and in the home contributes to children’s learning and development.
• Family well-being is a strong predictor of children’s school readiness, and promoting families’ strengths and resilience through comprehensive services and promising practices such as two-generation approaches support young children.
• Strong, positive relationships between families and providers reinforce learning at home and in the community and are enabled by two-way communication and cultural and linguistic responsiveness.
• Parents who have more supportive and extensive social networks create more stimulating home environments for their children, communicate better with their children, and feel more confident in their role as parents.
Family Engagement

Family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems.
Families as Leaders & Advocates

• Expressing viewpoints

• Thinking creatively “outside of the box”

• Working toward win-win solutions

• Advocating for children, families, practitioners, and systems
Families as Leaders & Advocates (cont.)

• Taking advantage of resources from Parent Training and Information Centers
• Participating in advocacy and leadership training
• Mentoring other families and being mentored by families in advocacy activities
• Informing other families about program and community advocacy events and encouraging them to consider participating
Beliefs About Leadership

• Leaders are not born – they rise out of a person’s passion for how they want the world to be.
• Leadership isn’t a gift – it’s accessible to anyone who wants it.
• Leadership isn’t a calling – it’s a matter of listening to a question and trying to come up with an answer.
• A leader is anyone who has a very big and compelling story of how it could all turn out.

Source: Serving on Groups That Make Decisions
What Do Family Leaders Need?

- Encouragement
- Support
- Training/Knowledge and Skill Development
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Follow-Up Support

Sources: National Center for Deaf Blindness
http://familieslead.org/
https://nationaldb.org
Shared Decision-Making

“Decision-making means a process of partnering, of shared views and actions toward shared goals…not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas.”

- Dr. Joyce Epstein

Source: Serving on Groups That Make Decisions
Benefits to Shared Decision-Making

FOR FAMILIES

• Awareness and input on policies
• A feeling of ownership
• Shared experiences and connections with professionals and other families

FOR PROFESSIONALS

• Awareness of family perspectives
• Increased confidence and ability to partner with families
• Acceptance of family representatives in leadership roles

Source: Serving on Groups That Make Decisions
Policies, Frameworks, and Supports
Federal Laws that Emphasize the Importance of Family Engagement

- Head Start Act
- Child Care Development Block grant (CCDBG)
- Maternal, Infant and Child Health Home Visiting Program
- Public Health, Title V
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
U.S. Department of Education’s
Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

Partnering with families in multiple roles:
Supporters
Encouragers
Monitors
Advocates
Decision Makers
Collaborators

Provides recommendations to early childhood systems and programs on family engagement.
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
Parent Training and Information Center Priorities

- **Working** with families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, birth to 26
- **Helping** parents participate effectively in their children’s education and development
- **Partnersing** with professionals and policy makers to improve outcomes for all children with disabilities
To increase parents’ capacity to:

- Effectively support their children with disabilities and participate in their children’s education
- Communicate effectively and work collaboratively in partnership with early intervention service providers, school-based personnel, related services personnel, and administrators
- Resolve disputes effectively
- Participate in school reform activities to improve outcomes for children
Families and High-Quality IDEA Early Childhood Systems
Family engagement cuts across all components of high-quality systems.

High-Quality IDEA Early Childhood Systems

Good outcomes for children with disabilities and their families

Implementation of Effective Practices

Building High-Quality Systems

- Governance
- Quality Standards
- Accountability & Quality Improvement
- Data System
- Finance
- Personnel / Workforce

Result
F10. Practitioners inform families about leadership and advocacy skill-building opportunities and encourage those who are interested to participate.
Video-Enhanced Activity

Conversations with Family Leaders
Takeaways

• Move toward authentic partnerships.
• Identify programmatic activities in which families can participate and articulate a clear, intentional purpose for their involvement.
• Use a variety of methods to inform families of opportunities to become involved.
• Close the loop about decisions.
Continuous Improvement

Self-Assessment to Measure Family/Stakeholder Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to ask yourself</th>
<th>Did we ask the question?</th>
<th>Do we know the answer?</th>
<th>Yes, we do know the answer</th>
<th>No, we do not know the answer</th>
<th>Not sure, but we should look into this</th>
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<td>Do we know if this is the right time for the parent or their personal situation to join the stakeholder group?</td>
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<td>Do families share what they need to make an informed decision about participating in this stakeholder group?</td>
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<td>Did we provide expectations, time, commitment, support available to attend the meetings, etc.</td>
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<td>Did families understand their role and who they represent?</td>
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<td>Is there more than one parent involved?</td>
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<td>Is the reimbursement structure clearly explained to the parent(s)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a reimbursement structure?</td>
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ECPC Early Childhood Personnel Center
National Technical Assistance Resources
No one group can do it alone, so we leverage our resources to partner among national TA centers and organizations.
Online Toolkit: Building Stakeholder Knowledge About Data

This toolkit provides stakeholders with an orientation to IDEA data and other data-related topics to help them meaningfully participate in conversations about important programmatic issues and decisions.
Serving on Groups—Online Module & Book


Introduction

http://www.servingongroups.org/guidebook
10 Great Things You Will Find on the “CPIR Hub” at parentcenterhub.org

1) Resources Galore
2) Buzz from the Hub
3) Daily Facebook and Twitter Posts
4) Private Workspaces for Parent Centers
5) Survey Item Bank
6) Materials from Other Parent Centers
7) Buzz from the Hub
8) Webinars & Webpages on Priority Topics
9) Central Event Calendars
10) Who Knows What?
Conversations with Family Leaders: Final Reflections
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Find Us Online

ECTA Center: http://ectacenter.org

DaSy Center: http://dasycenter.org

ECPC: https://ecpcta.org/

Parent to Parent of Georgia: http://p2pga.org/
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