
National Family and Community Engagement Conference

Cleveland, OH
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ecta

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center



Preparing and Supporting Emerging Family Leaders

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Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

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.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S Department of Education (2016)

Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early Grades

Highlights from The Executive Summary: Research and Best Practice

- 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 on 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





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**POLICY STATEMENT ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
FROM THE EARLY YEARS TO THE EARLY GRADES**

May 5, 2016

PURPOSE

This policy statement from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) provides recommendations¹ to early childhood systems and programs on 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. For family engagement to be integrated throughout early childhood systems and programs, providers and schools must engage families as essential partners when providing services that promote children's learning and development, nurture positive relationships between families and staff, and support families. The term "family" as used in this statement is inclusive of all adults who interact with early childhood systems in support of their child, to include biological, adoptive, and foster parents; grandparents; legal and informal guardians; and adult siblings. Early childhood systems include child care options, Head Start and Early Head Start, early intervention programs, preschool programs, and elementary school from kindergarten through third grade. Providers include teachers and paraprofessionals in schools, preschools, and Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms; child-care providers, early intervention service providers; related service personnel; comprehensive services staff; and other professionals that work directly with children in early childhood systems.

Family engagement promotes children's learning and healthy development

The lives and experiences of young children are intertwined with those of their families. Families are children's first and most important teachers, advocates, and nurturers. Strong family engagement in early childhood systems and programs is central—not supplemental—to promoting children's healthy intellectual, physical, and social-emotional development; preparing children for school; and supporting academic achievement in elementary school and beyond. Research indicates that families' involvement in children's learning and development impacts lifelong health, developmental, and academic outcomes. Family engagement in early childhood systems and programs supports families as they teach, nurture, and advocate for their children, and in turn, family engagement supports and improves the early childhood systems that care for and teach children. When families and the programs where children learn work together and

¹ The information in this document is intended to assist State and local agencies to carry out their obligations under the applicable statutes and regulations and does not impose any new requirements.

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services/Dept. of Education

Policy Statement on Family Engagement in the Early Grades

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
- **Partnering** with professionals and policy makers to improve outcomes for all children with disabilities

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Parent Training and Information Center Priorities (cont.)

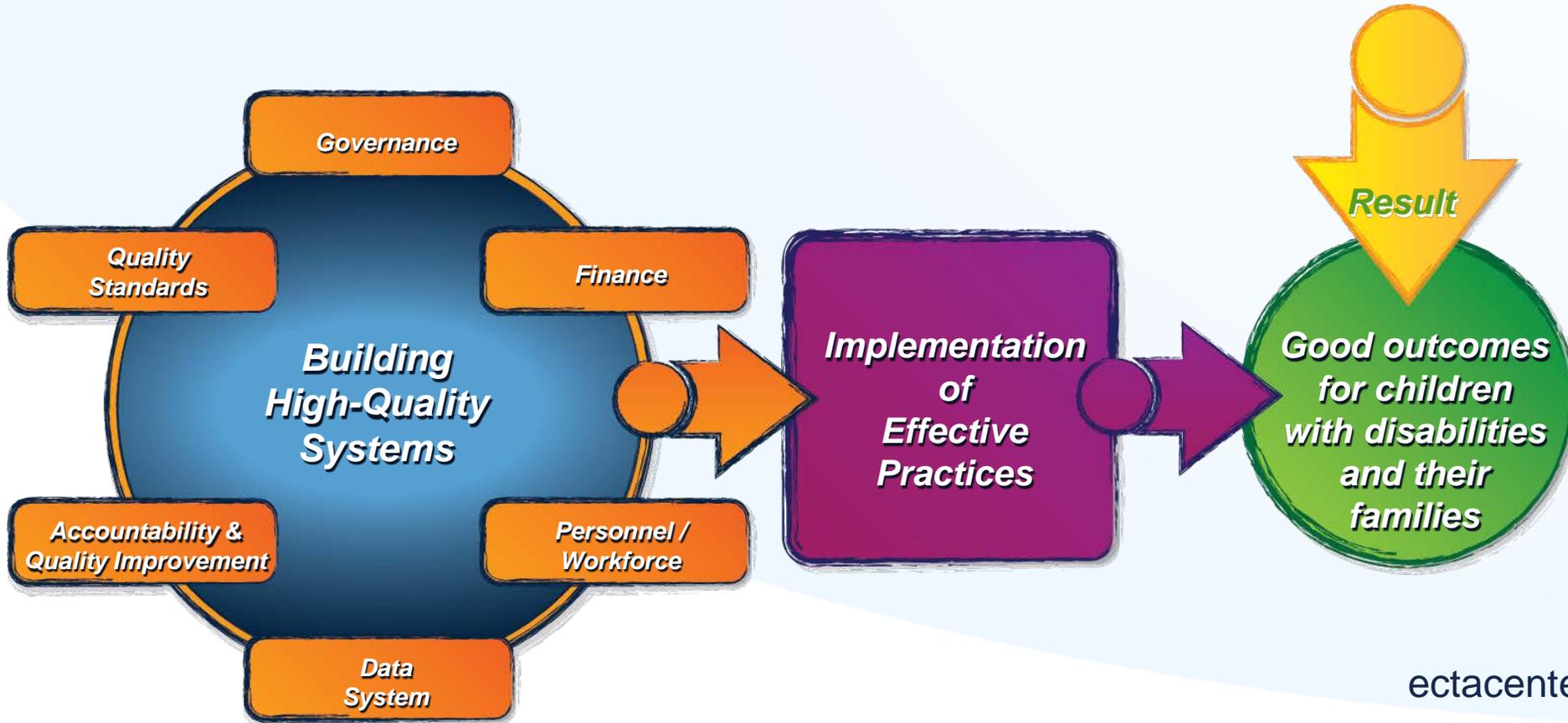
To increase parents' capacity to:

- 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

High-Quality IDEA Early Childhood Systems

Family engagement cuts across all components of high-quality systems.



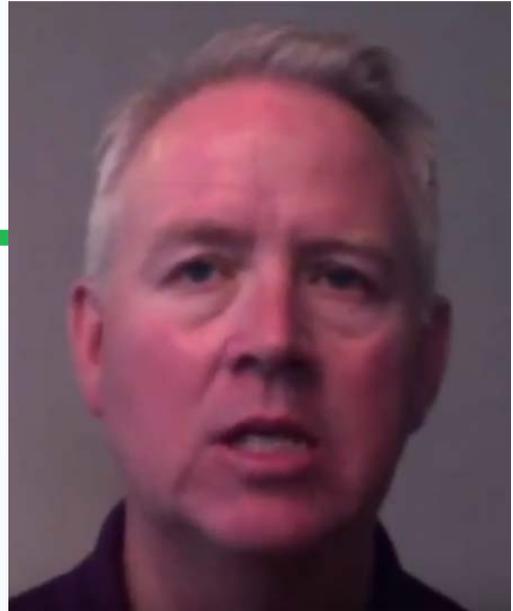
ectacenter.org/sysframe

DEC Recommended Practices: Family Practices

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



Video-Enhanced Activity



A video player interface with a blue background. At the top, the logo 'ecta' is displayed in white, followed by the text 'Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center'. Below this, the title 'Conversations with Family Leaders' is written in large white font. At the bottom, a green control bar contains a play button, a volume icon, the text '0:06 / 10:17', and icons for closed captions, settings, and full screen.



Takeaways

- Move toward authentic partnerships.
- Identify programmatic activities in which families can participate and articulate a clear, intentional clear 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 our family/stakeholder engagement.

How are we doing?

Questions to ask yourself:	Did we ask the question?	Do we know the answer?	No, we do not know the answer	Not sure, but we should look into this
Do we know if this is the right time for the parent with their personal situation to join this stakeholder group?				
Do families have what they need to make an informed decision about participating on this stakeholder group?				
Did we provide: Expectations, time commitment, support available to attend the meetings, etc.				
Do families understand their role and who they represent?				
Is there more than one parent involved?				
Is there a mentor assigned to each parent?				
Is there a reimbursement structure?				
If so, is the reimbursement structure clearly explained to the parent? (with timelines?)				

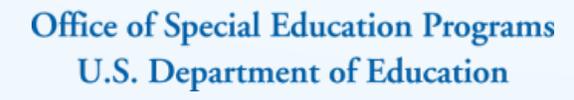
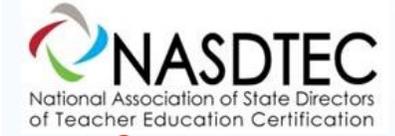
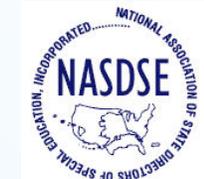
Self-Assessment to Measure Family/Stakeholder Engagement

National Technical Assistance Resources

No one group can do it alone, so we leverage our resources to partner among national TA centers and organizations.



The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)



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 Serving on Groups Guidebook (00:03 / 11:53) GLOSSARY RESOURCES ATTACHMENTS



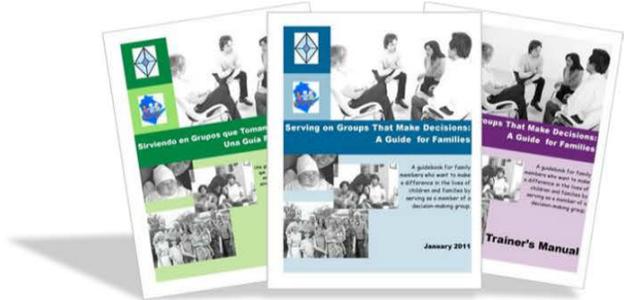
Notes Outline Search Thumbnails

Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families
00:33

Welcome to the introduction module of the Serving on Groups that Make Decisions: A Guide for Families. This is the introduction to the eight modules that will allow you to learn about this resource and how it can be applied.

This introduction serves as an overview of the guidebook highlighting its intended audience and its features. The outcomes of the guidebook pertain to information about shared-decision making. The purpose focuses on the research on family engagement.

Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families



Introduction

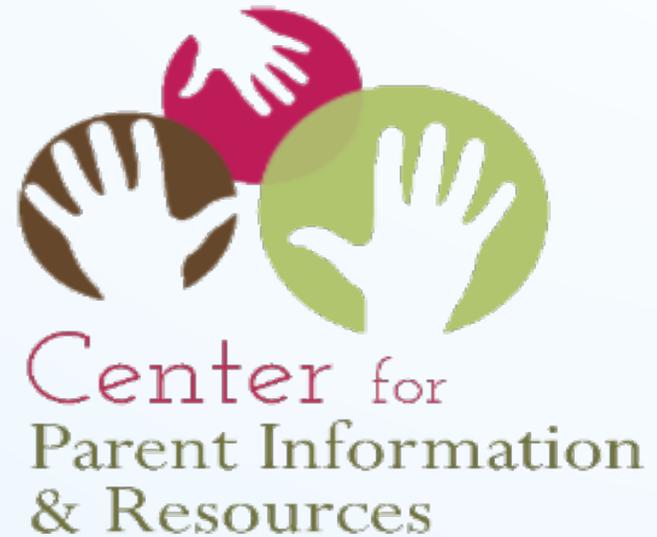
SLIDE 1 OF 16 PLAYING 00:03 / 00:33



<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?



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Conversations with Family Leaders: Final Reflections

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The ECTA Center is a program of the FPG Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, funded through cooperative agreement number H326P170001 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Project Officer, Julia Martin Eile.

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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/>

Thank You

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