

# Family Engagement

Engaging Every Family in a Culturally Responsive Way:  
McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Arizona Department of Education  
Academic Standards  
Early Childhood



# Quick Activity



**What comes to mind when you hear the words "family engagement"?**

**Put your thoughts in the chat – don't overthink it, type whatever comes to mind**

**You can post multiple responses**



# Family Engagement

What does family engagement mean?



A collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships



# Barriers- Part One

## Engaging Families: Positive Experiences & Challenges



**Step 1: On a piece of paper or index card, identify 3 Positive Perspectives about working with families.**

**Step 2: On the backside, identify 3 things you find challenging when working with families.**



### Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data: 2021

- Preschool-age children not in school: **66%**
- Fourth grade children NOT proficient in reading: **69%**
- Children whose parents lack secure employment: **27%**
- Children living in households w/ high housing cost burden: **29%**
- Children in single-parent families: **37%**

**Overall child wellbeing, state ranking:  
Arizona ranks 40th out of the 50 states**



# Barriers- Grounded in Research

Constantino, NAESP



## Personal Barriers:

- Lack of confidence
- Time
- Assumptions
- FEAR

## Institutional Barriers:

- Resources
- Communication strategies
- Assumptions
- FEAR

# Barriers In Context:

## The Impact of Housing Instability & Homelessness on Families



### Possible Daily Realities for Families Experiencing Homelessness

- **Transportation**
- **Access to Employment**
- **Food & Meals**
- **Demands/ Requirements of Services (housing, employment, SNAP benefits, etc.)**
- **Hygiene/ Access to Bathrooms**
- **Adequate space to study & do homework**
- **Privacy**
- **Unmet medical and/or mental health needs**
- **Safety – Physical & Emotional**

# Barriers In Context:

## The Impact of Housing Instability & Homelessness on Families



### ***INTERNAL: Emotional & Cognitive States***

- **Stress**
- **Anger**
- **Fear**
- **Mistrust/ suspicion**
- **Depression**
- **Frustration**
- **Embarrassment**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Lack of comprehension**

### ***EXTERNAL : Outward Behaviors***

- **Appearing disconnected/ "doesn't care"**
- **Appearing impatient/ rude to staff**
- **Ignoring phone calls/ emails**
- **Not completing paperwork/ not following through on referrals**
- **Questions *everything***
- **Doesn't appear "grateful" for the help being offered**



# Culture and Cultural Competency

## Understanding the Impact of Cultural Beliefs



The cultural beliefs of individual family members and the entire family inform decisions made about the child and the family. Cultures shape our views on key issues such as family roles and goals, caregiving practices, learning, education, school readiness, child behaviors, and the nature of childhood itself.



# Family Capacity

## Supporting and Strengthening Families



- Ongoing, reciprocal communication with schools
- Opportunities to continually build cultural and social capital
- Support for family wellbeing

# Barriers- Part Two

## Engaging Families: Positive Experiences & Challenges



1. Reflect on your list of positive experiences.
2. Reflect on your list of challenges.
3. Now reframe those challenges so they become **OPPORTUNITIES**. Jot down the opportunity directly under the perceived "challenge".



# Resources

## Engaging Every Family



- **Arizona Statewide Family Engagement Center:** <https://readonarizona.org/resources/az-family-engagement-center/>
- **Head Start ECKLC Children & Families Experiencing Homelessness:**  
• <https://ecklc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-support-well-being/article/children-families-experiencing-homelessness>
- **National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP):** <https://www.naesp.org/>
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): Understanding the Sociocultural Context of Families:** <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/understanding-sociocultural-context-families-more-important-ever>

# Contact

## Early Childhood Education



### General Early Childhood Questions

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