WELCOME
Effective Strategies to Engage Families and Youth

Brought to you by Claudia Lopez and Debbie Baldemore
I Am A

- Parent
- Teacher
- Administrator
- Counselor (VR, School etc.)
- Transition Specialist/Job Coach
- Case Manager
- Caring Adult
What is family engagement?

Family engagement means including the voices of families in our work.

Families are engaged when they are motivated and empowered to identify their own needs, strengths and resources.

A positive change is reached when parents are actively contributing their time, energy and ideas.
Definitions

Family engagement is defined in the five disciplines as follows:

**Child Welfare (CW):** Family engagement is a family-centered and strengths-based approach to partnering with families in making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes.

**Juvenile Justice (JJ):** Family engagement is any role or activity that enables families to have direct and meaningful input into and influence on systems, policies, programs, or practices affecting services for children and families.

**Behavioral Health (BH):** Family engagement is the process by which families and providers develop and maintain a connection while simultaneously demonstrating and communicating information, needs, attitudes, and values. This definition suggests that engagement is an ongoing process necessary to develop and keep a positive alliance.
Definitions cont.

- **Early Childhood Education (ECE):** Refers to ongoing, goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and support what is best for children and families both individually and collectively. Staff and families share responsibility for the learning and development of children, the progress toward outcomes for children and families, and parent involvement in the program.

- **Education (ED):** Parental involvement in education is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving students’ academic learning and other school activities.
Themes

The qualities and characteristics of family engagement include:

- Family Centered
- Solution Focused
- Respectful and collaborative
- Joint Planning and Decision-Making
- Family Involvement
- Interagency Collaboration
- Informed Decision-Making
- Well-Being of Children
Participants that influence family engagement?

• The family, the service and the community all affect the level of support that a family receives.

• Simply receiving services alone does not make a family feel complete.

• It is when a person gives or is of service to others that there is a sense of accomplishment, confidence builds, and a feeling of self-worth.
The Family

Family structure and culture

Family strengths and experiences

Family interests and abilities

Family current needs
The Service

• How each service values the family’s time

• Identify and meeting the needs of families

• Relationships between families and service providers

• Have strategies to help support a welcoming environment by providing staff with proper training
The Community

• Community involvement can support family engagement

• Setting up networking meetings for service providers to share information

• Forming partnerships to enhance and strengthen community resources

• Being aware of local issues and working together with other agencies on solutions
Activity # 1

Form small groups and designate a supervisor (Keeps group from being squirrels!), a recorder (Who has legible handwriting?), and a presenter (Who is not shy or needs the practice?). As a group discuss the following question and develop a group list on the giant Post-Its. Activity will be given 10 minutes and then presenters will take turns doing their thing.

What has worked for you/ your agency in encouraging and motivating families to be more engaged?
Tips for building family engagement

• Families see professionals as experts while it is the professionals that need to see families as their own experts.
• Professionals need to demonstrate genuine interest in families.
• Professionals provide a non-threatening environment and communicate in clear and simple language.
Activity #2: How do you address barriers and/or challenges for family engagement?

- Family perspective
- Service provider perspective
- Community perspective
Tips for removing barriers and providing supports

- Relationships between professionals and families are interactive and family centered.
- Avoiding labels can reduce family resistance by reflection rather than confrontation.
- Professionals will negotiate with families to emphasize personal choice and control over their decisions.
- Professionals understand and accept that relapses are part of the process.
Activity # 3: Future Plans...

What practices would you like to implement moving forward to encourage family engagement?

Solving People Problems

3 Sources of Problems
- Different Perceptions
- Negative Emotions
- Unclear Communication

Strategies for Handling Problems
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Understand emotions, theirs and yours
- Discuss each other’s perceptions
- Listen actively
- Show that you understand them
- Speak to be understood
- Invent options for mutual gain
- Be friendly
What Works

- Relationships
- Compassion
- Truthfulness with them and yourself
- Persistence
- Understanding
- Follow through
True or False

• I have 100% engagement with my families!
• Families will become dependent if I do all the leg work.
• Being honest with families scares them away!
• Families would follow through if they really listened to me.
• Families that are not engaged do not really want help.
THANK YOU FOR COMING!

May the force be with you...

Now, go forth and promote family engagement!
APPS & Websites to Promote Family Engagement


- GoNoodle- Makes movement and mindfulness an integral part of the day, at school and at home. [https://www.gonoodle.com/](https://www.gonoodle.com/)
APPS & Website to help

• **Remind** - A communication tool that helps teachers reach students and parents where they are.
  
  [www.remind.com](http://www.remind.com)

• Web-capture - Screenshots of websites can be converted to JPG, PDF, etc.
  
  [web-capture.net](http://web-capture.net)
APPS & Website to help

- **Fluid Monkey** - Free software app that provides users with serene music and interaction with smooth and responsive pools of liquid. fluid-monkey.soft112.com

- **Social Work helper** - A progressive news website providing information, resources, and entertainment related to social work and social issues. www.socialworkhelper.com
• **Google voice** - Gives you a free phone number for calling, text messaging and voicemail. [https://voice.google.com](https://voice.google.com)

• Grasshopper App - A virtual phone system that helps your small business sound more professional and stay connected (local or toll free number, live call forwarding, on hold music, name directory, etc.). [grasshopper.com](http://grasshopper.com)
APPS & Website to help

- Waze- GPS navigation software that provides fastest routes to desired destinations.
  waze.com
- Northwoods Compass Pilot- Social services software and document management for caseworkers that reduces paperwork and increases agency-wide productivity by automating routine tasks.
  www.teaminnorthwoods.com