



Audio Conference

4 Tips for Empowering Families!

Audio Conference: Originally aired Wednesday, November 12, 2014 2:00-3:00 pm ET

Q&A: Originally aired Thursday, November 13, 2014 2:00-2:30 pm ET

You know that families are their children's first and most important caregivers and teachers. Do *they* know the importance of their role? Do they feel confident in their parenting decisions and interactions with their children? How can you support families in building their sense of competence? This audio conference focuses on lessons learned from the field testing of the *Legacy for Children™* intervention.

Before the audio conference:

- Use the pre-activity to consider your experiences in empowering families.
- If you are listening in a group, copy this packet for each participant.
- Review pages 1-3
- Schedule time following the audio conference for team reflection and/or discussion.

After listening to the audio conference and the Q & A:

- Check out "Put It into Practice" on page 6 to consider what you learned and try it in your work.
- Continue to use these materials to support your work.



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PRE-ACTIVITY

Before beginning the audio conference, take a few minutes to consider your own experiences with empowering families. There are no wrong responses!

Pregnancy is physically and emotionally demanding - so is parenting very young children! Sometimes families may feel like they are not up to the task. Consider your experience and think about an expectant parent or a family member with an infant or toddler with whom you have worked who had serious doubts about his or her role.

1. How did you know he or she was struggling?
2. How did this struggle impact your relationship with the family?
3. How did the struggle impact his or her parenting?
4. What did you do that seemed to work? How did you help him or her to feel confident?



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Objectives

As a result of listening to this audio conference, participants will:

1. Recognize the importance of supporting family empowerment for families with the youngest children as a strategy for supporting child health and development;
2. Gain new ideas to help families build their sense of self-efficacy and responsibility, enhance their relationships with their children, and support community building; and
3. Learn about the *Legacy for Children*TM intervention.





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Audio Conference Faculty



Amanda Perez has worked with the Early Head Start National Resource Center since 2000. She has coordinated over 30 audio conferences in that time. A writer and trainer, Amanda has particular interest in family engagement. She has a masters degree in Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Senior Writer and Training Specialist, Early Head Start National Resource Center

Lisa Desrochers is an early childhood educator with extensive experience working in child care, preschool, and health care environments. She has been working at the Brazelton Touchpoints Center at Boston Children's Hospital since 2001. Lisa is a faculty trainer and works as project director for a number of Touchpoints projects, including the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE). She holds a masters degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of New Hampshire.



Project Director, Special Initiatives and National Trainer Brazelton Touchpoints Center



Lara Robinson has been working with the CDC's *Legacy for Children™* program since she started at CDC in 2009. Lara has helped sites across the country implement and field test this intervention. She brings expertise in early childhood development, parenting, and translating research into practice. Lara has clinical experience in early intervention and as a mental health consultant for child care centers. She has a Master of Public Health degree from Tulane University and a PhD in Applied Developmental Psychology from the University of New Orleans. She also has postdoctoral training in children's mental health.

*Behavioral Scientist, Child Development Studies Team
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*



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Relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards

§ 1304.40 Family partnerships.

(d) Parent involvement-general.

(1) In addition to involving parents in program policy-making and operations (see 45 CFR 1304.50), grantee and delegate agencies must provide parent involvement and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents, both as individuals and as members of a group. Other community agencies should be encouraged to assist in the planning and implementation of such programs.

(e) Parent involvement in child development and education.

(2) Grantees and delegate agencies operating home-based program options must build upon the principles of adult learning to assist, encourage, and support parents as they foster the growth and development of their children.

(3) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children and to share concerns about their children with program staff (see 45 CFR 1304.21 for additional requirements related to parent involvement).

A Note About the Term *empowerment*:

These *Standards* indicate the Head Start understanding of families as the primary and lifelong caregivers and teachers of their children. Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start staff are not charged with making families powerful. Families are already powerful - in their children's lives and their own! When we use the term *empowering*, we mean staff supporting family members to recognize their influence on their children and build their sense of competence and confidence.



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Support family sense of self-efficacy!

Definition of self-efficacy: One's belief in one's ability to succeed – Albert Bandura

Strategies from *Legacy* include:

- Remind families there is no single "right way" to parent;
- Help families consider what they know;
- Avoid the term *parent education*; and
- Allow families to take the lead.

Other: (write strategies here)



Nurture parent-child relationship!

Strategies from *Legacy* include:

- Celebrate families as observers of their children;
- Offer parent-child time and experiences in a safe, supportive environment; and
- Encourage families to share parenting stresses and problem solve with peers.

Other: (write strategies here)



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3. Emphasize family sense of responsibility!

Strategies from *Legacy* include:

- Highlight the family role and the importance of the family as the child's advocate;
- Scaffold learning; and
- Support families in establishing goals and dreams for their children

Other: (write strategies here)

4. Build community!

Strategies from *Legacy* include:

- Give opportunities for families to learn from each other;
- Create a safe space;
- Provide opportunities for participation in community events; and
- Encourage contact outside the program

Other: (write strategies here)



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Put It into Practice!

Reflecting with the team:

Use the following questions to guide group reflection and discussion.

1. What is our program or team philosophy about family engagement? How do we share our philosophy with families?
2. How do we prepare staff to empower families? What could we do differently to enhance this part of our work?
3. What opportunities for community building do we offer to families? What other strategies could we provide?
4. Does *Legacy* seem like a good fit for us? What questions do we have after reading the handout "Are We *Legacy* Ready"? How can we use the information we have to think about *Legacy*?

Practice and reflect:

Use the following questions to consider your individual approach to family empowerment:

1. What strategies are you using to empower families in your work?
2. Consider a family member you are working with or have worked with who doesn't seem to feel confident or competent in his or her role. What makes you think he or she is struggling?
3. Consider the strategies listed in the chart on page 4-5. Pick two strategies you can use in your work with this family member, and try them out.
4. How did you use the strategies? What happened? Share what you learned with a colleague or supervisor about what you saw or learned.
5. What are your next steps with this family member?



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Resource List

For more information on *Legacy for Children™*, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/legacy.html>. For more on the topic of empowering families, see the following resources:

Dunst, Carl J., and Carol M. Trivette. "Capacity-Building Family-Systems Intervention Practices." *Journal of Family Social Work* 12 (2009): 119-143.

Early Head Start National Resource Center. *First Connections: Attachment and Its Lasting Importance* (Audio conference). Washington, DC: HHS/ACF/OHS/EHSNRC, 2011. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/school-readiness/FirstConnections.htm>

Hammond, Wayne. *Principles of Strength-Based Practice*. Calgary, Alberta: The Resiliency Initiative, 2010. http://www.mentalhealth4kids.ca/healthlibrary_docs/PrinciplesOfStrength-BasedPractice.pdf

National Center for Parent, Family and Community Engagement (NCPFCE). *Bringing Families Together: Building Community* (Best Practices in Family and Community Engagement video). Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital, 2013. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/best-practice-video-series.html>

NCPFCE. *Building Partnerships: Guide to Developing Relationships with Families* (Research to Practice series). Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital, 2013. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/building-partnerships-developing-relationships-families.pdf>

NCPFCE. *Families as Learners* (Research to Practice series). Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital, 2014. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/families-as-learners.pdf>

NCPFCE. *Family Connections to Peers and Communities* (Research to Practice series). Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital, 2013. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/rtp-family-connections.pdf>

NCPFCE. *Positive Parent-Child Relationships* (Research to Practice series). Boston, MA: Boston Children's Hospital, 2013. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf>

Perou, Ruth, Marc N. Elliott, Susanna N. Visser, Angelika H. Claussen, Keith G. Scott, Leila H. Beckwith, Judy Howard, Lynne F. Katz, and Camille Smith. "*Legacy for Children™*: A Pair of Randomized Controlled Trials of a Public Health Model to Improve Developmental Outcomes among Children in Poverty." *BMC Public Health*, 12(2012): 691.