Early Childhood National Centers

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework in Your Program:

Markers of Progress

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Dear Members of the Head Start Community,

You and your program are in a unique position to promote children's well-being – today and in the future – by engaging their parents and families. Parents and family members are the "forever" people in a child's life. They will shape their child's sense of self, others, and the world over the years and across the miles.

As research suggests, when you create positive and trusting relationships with parents and family members, they are more likely to become engaged in their young child's development and learning[1]. In Head Start/Early Head Start, these relationships focus on goals that families develop with the support of program leadership, staff, and engaged community partners. These goal-directed relationships are part of the two-generational approach of working with children and adult family members that distinguishes Head Start/Early Head Start from other early childhood initiatives. They are most likely to take root within programs that take intentional steps to promote parent and family engagement.

Working hand-in-hand with the Office of Head Start, we have created a definition of parent, family, and community engagement as follows:

In Head Start and Early Head Start programs, parent, family, and community engagement means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships and ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. It refers to the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and activities of families that support their children's positive development from early childhood through young adulthood. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood program, school and community, and is a shared responsibility with all those who support children's learning.

With this definition to guide us, we worked with the Office of Head Start to develop the ***Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness from Prenatal to Age 8***. Known in short-hand as the "PFCE Framework," this research-based tool shows that when parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school.

We then collaborated with the Office of Head Start to develop two easy-to-use, practical resources. The first of these has been released to the field and you may already have seen or be using it: ***Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a Self-Assessment***. This series of thought-provoking questions was developed to help you identify what you are doing well, celebrate your work, and consider what you might

1 *Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in schools: a core resource for school reform. Educational Leadership, 60(6). Lopez, M.E., Dorros, S., & Weiss, H. (1999). Family-centered child care. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.*

do differently. You will start thinking about who you need to partner with and in what ways, and the kinds of information you will want to gather to assess your practices and measure progress.

We are excited and proud to bring you a second new resource: ***Using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework in Your Program: Markers of Progress***. This resource was created to help you recognize your program's accomplishments in engaging parents, families, and the community. It also offers you the opportunity to identify aspects of your work in this area that can be strengthened and offers ideas for new and innovative ways to enhance your efforts. The information you gather from your observations, conversations, and reflections is important data that can be incorporated into your decision-making about your whole program. In fact, this guide and the subsequent information you collect, could be utilized to inform the required annual program Self-Assessment. In the area of parent, family, and community engagement – as in all program areas – knowing where you are on the road to change and where you want to go will help you reach your goals.

This guide can help you make parent, family, and community engagement live and breathe in every part of your program. It incorporates the input and feedback of hundreds of program directors and staff, as well as training and technical assistance specialists, regional office staff and OHS leadership. But, it is still a work in progress.

Please tell us how we can improve this guide to be a more useful resource for self-assessment of your work. We encourage you to share examples of your successes and challenges in engaging parents, families and your community. Stories, photos, quotes and videos are all welcomed. (Please send them to us at NCPFCE@childrens.harvard.edu). We look forward to hearing and learning from you. We appreciate the vital work you do each day to create positive and enduring change for children and families.

Our hope is that as you begin to look at all you have accomplished in the area of parent, family, and community engagement, you will see rich potential in building even stronger collaborations with families and community partners. We hope you will feel energized as you, your staff, your families and community partners come together to take next steps in promoting the well-being of children and families though parent, family, and community engagement practices.

With deep appreciation for everything you do every day for all of our children, their families, and their communities from all of us at:

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Foreword

What the Research Tells Us

Your work to engage parents and families in their children's development and learning matters. Research tells us that:

- Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy, better peer interactions, fewer behavior problems, and more motivation and persistence[2].
- Among the youngest children, daily parent-child reading prompts cognitive skills as well as early vocabulary gains that lead to more reading and vocabulary growth[3], a "snowballing" growth pattern.
- Continued family engagement is important through the school years. Longitudinal studies show that high family involvement is associated with improved literacy skills for children growing up in low-income households and whose parents have limited formal education[4].

So what you are doing today has a lasting impact on children's growth and well-being and on the well-being of their families too. When you work hand-in-hand with families to build trusting relationships, you help families support their children to reach their fullest potential.

As a field, we are increasingly learning that it is not just the single act of a parent-teacher conference, or inviting families into a program to observe, or hosting a parenting workshop that results in better outcomes for children and families. Instead, for Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs to fully support the growth, development and well-being of children and their families, PFCE practices need to be incorporated into everything that your program is and does.

The ***PFCE Framework*** will help you understand why this matters. It encourages programs to embed PFCE practices within the foundations of the program (program leadership, continuous program improvement, professional development) as well as the program impact areas (program environment, family partnerships, teaching and learning, and community partnerships).

Equally important is the depth of your PFCE practices. You may choose to begin exploring your PFCE practices by thinking about the questions in ***Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a Self-Assessment***.

Or you may turn directly to this guide. It will help you assess, plan, and take steps to move your program's parent, family, and community engagement efforts forward along a 3-tiered continuum of effective PFCE practices. (See page 78 for more on Research and Best Practices for PFCE).

This guide begins with a basic review of the PFCE Framework and PFCE key terms and principles. It then describes the steps to assess your program's current PFCE practices along 3 tiers of markers. Finally it will show you how to use your findings to celebrate successes, plan opportunities, and implement new practices for PFCE growth and innovation.

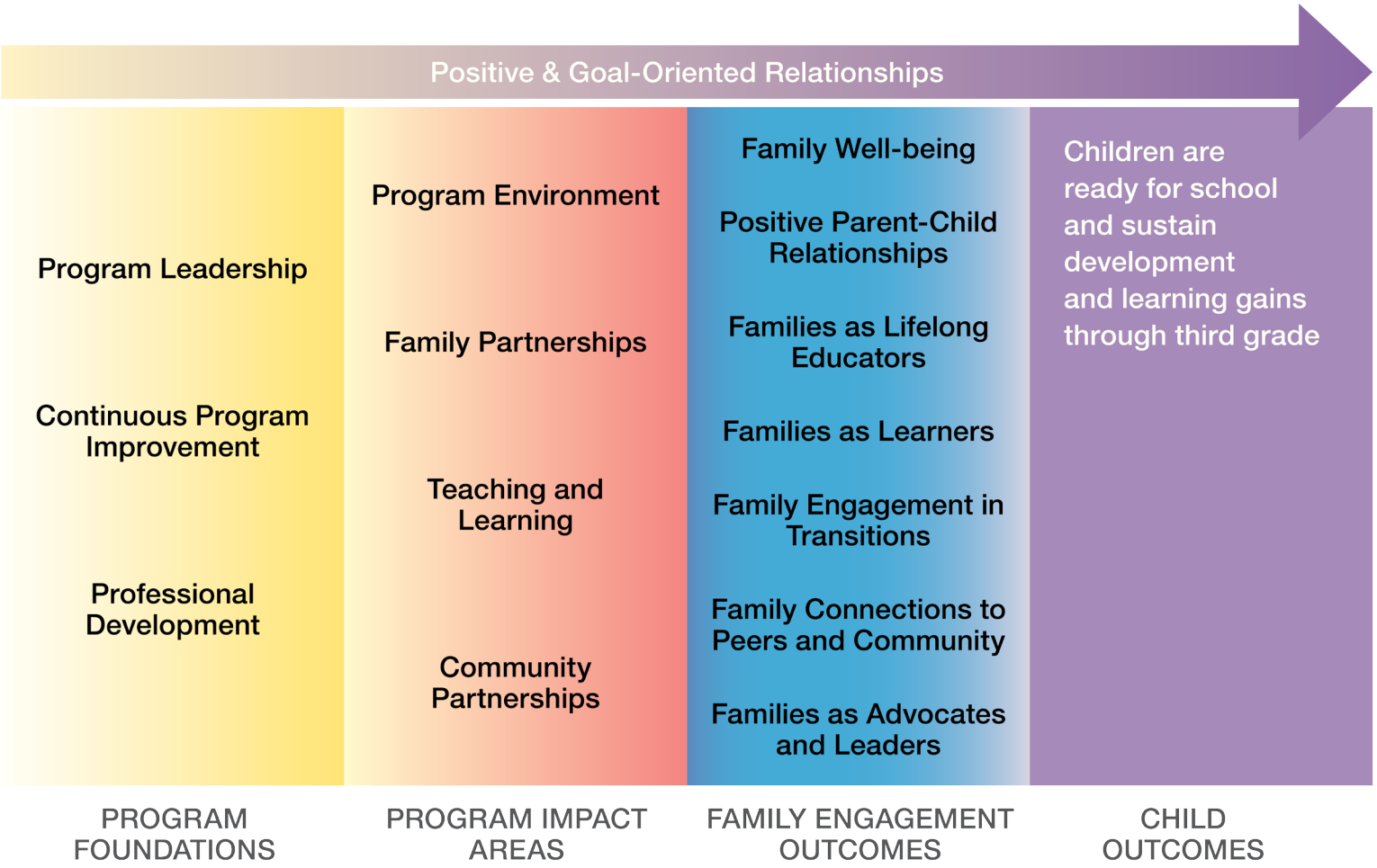
2 *Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., & Perry, M. (2004). Multiple dimensions of family involvement and their relations to behavioral and learning competencies for urban, low-income children. The School Psychology Review, 33(4), 467–480.*
Weiss, H., Caspe, & M., Lopez, M. E. (2006). Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education. Family Involvement Makes a Difference. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

3 *H.A., Pan, B.A., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S., et al. (2006). Mother–child bookreading in low-income families: Correlates and outcomes during the first three years of life. Child Development 77(4), 924–953.*

4 *Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., & Weiss, H. B. (2006). Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy performance: Longitudinal associations between and within families. Journal of Educational Psychology, 98, 653–664.*
Barnard, W.M. (2004). Parent involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. Children & Youth Services Review, 26(1), 39-62.

PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

When parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school. Parent and family engagement activities are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.



Source: Office of Head Start and the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (2011). *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness, From Prenatal to Age 8.*

Key Definitions and Principles: A Review

Key definitions and principles are summarized here to help you as you prepare to bring the PFCE Framework to your program using this guide. These have always been important to HS/EHS and are even more important today as poverty spreads and resources shrink. With the input of programs, regional staff, and OHS leadership, and with a growing body of research on effective PFCE, some of the definitions are extended to align with the PFCE Framework.

Definitions: *Family and Family Engagement*

What do we mean by ***family***?

Family is an enduring relationship, whether biological or non-biological, chosen or circumstantial, connecting a child/youth and parent/caregiver through culture, tradition, shared experiences, emotional commitment and mutual support[5].

What do we mean by ***family engagement***?

Family engagement means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and ongoing learning and development of parents and children alike. It refers to the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and activities of families that support their children's positive development from early childhood through young adulthood. Family engagement happens in the home, early childhood program, school, and community. It is a shared responsibility with all those who support children's learning.

PFCE is Systemic, Integrated, and Comprehensive.

Definitions: What do we mean when we say PFCE is a systemic, integrated, and comprehensive approach?

Systemic means that parent, family, and community engagement is anchored in leadership priorities, program management, continuous improvement systems, and staff development.

Integrated refers to the fact that to be effective, PFCE activities are carried out throughout the entire organization. For example, directors, teachers, assistant teachers, family support staff, home visitors, and health and disabilities staff all play a role in engaging families and supporting school readiness.

In a ***comprehensive*** approach, the full range of strengths, interests and needs of the adults and children in a family are considered and staff support families by connecting them with services and resources to achieve their goals.

5 *United Advocates for Children of California (2005). http://www.uacc4families.org/aboutus/mission.cfm*

Principles of Effective PFCE

What ***principles*** guide effective PFCE?

Effective engagement depends on our ability to form respectful, responsive relationships with parents, families, and community partners. How do we get to that point? We know from your experiences over the years that effective PFCE is:

- shaped by families, programs, and communities working together to co-construct opportunities for engagement that are most appropriate for families in their community;
- built upon a foundation of mutual respect and trust among families and staff;
- individualized for each family and developed over time to deepen and broaden their engagement in the program and the early learning of their children;
- focused on the strengths of children and families and built on those strengths to create a growth-oriented path toward enhanced family well-being and optimal educational outcomes for children;
- based upon a strong understanding of how children's behavior and development present predictable challenges to family functioning as well as to family-program relationships;
- shaped by genuine respect for the culture and linguistic diversity of the families enrolled and the importance of actively valuing and incorporating the richness of this diversity into the program's institutional culture, physical surroundings, learning environment, and social interactions between and among children, families, and staff;
- supportive of children and families with disabilities so that they can fully participate in the program and benefit from family and community engagement opportunities;
- aware and respectful of families as capable, competent partners in their children's development even when they are struggling with adversity; and
- achieved through effective leadership and management, ongoing training, support and self-reflection of program staff, an established protocol that reflects a commitment to engagement, as well as organizational culture that prioritizes families.

Getting Started

This self-assessment guide is a working document to help you examine your program's current practices related to parent, family, and community engagement. It offers concrete strategies to follow as you go beyond involving parents, families, and community partners to engaging them as an intentional strategy to promote the long term well-being of children and their families.

The guide is not an add-on or one more thing to do, when there are already so many. Instead, it can be used as part of your program's current Self-Assessment Process to help you focus on PFCE and contribute to your program's continuous learning and moving towards program excellence. As you go through the assessment process, use it to affirm what you are already doing well and to enrich and improve areas of your program that need work. Use the data you gather through this process in your decision-making for your entire program.

Remember that you are not alone in this endeavor. Your community can be an important source of social networks and service agencies. Invite community leaders to join with you to identify new opportunities for families, the community, and your program as you strengthen your relationships with them. As program leadership and staff, families, and community partners come together to enhance parent and family engagement, children and families will benefit, and your work will become even more effective and satisfying.

Using this Guide in Your Program

This guide is meant to be used regularly as part of your program's ongoing self-assessment efforts and as your program continues to learn, develop and enhance PFCE practices. As you get started, we suggest you review the Key PFCE Definitions and Principles above to ground your work in a shared understanding of PFCE.

3 Steps to Assess and Enhance PFCE

There are 3 steps to take as you use this guide to assess and enhance PFCE practices in your program:

1. **Build a PFCE Self-Assessment Team** that includes leadership, staff, families, and community partners;

2. **Use the Assessment Tool** to gather and analyze information to assess your program's current PFCE practices; and

3. **Create a PFCE Action Plan** that uses the data you collect to inform setting priorities, determine goals, and develop a strategic set of actions to improve your program's PFCE practices.

We take an in-depth look at the first two steps here and the third at the end of the assessment tool.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

POSITIVE, GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

Program Leadership

- Ambitious goals and high expectations
- Collaborative decision-making
- Parent, family and community engagement is a shared priority for all staff.

Continuous Program Improvement

- Data about parent, family and community engagement efforts and outcomes drive decision-making

Professional Development

- High quality training for all staff
- Cross-service area teams
- Career pathways and recognition

Program Environment

- Welcoming and inviting setting
- Cultural and linguistic responsiveness
- System of regular communication with families

Family Partnerships

- Families are partners in developing and achieving the goals in their family plan
- Respectful, trusting relationships between staff and parents

Teaching and Learning

- Parents partner to support children's learning and development
- Supporting families as lifelong educators
- Supporting positive parent-child relationships
- Support for transitions

Community Partnerships

- Commitment to social support systems within programs and with larger community

Family Well-being

Parents and families are safe, healthy and have increased financial security.

Parent-Child Relationships

Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.

Families as Lifelong Educators

Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school and in their communities.

Families as Learners

Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and/or other experiences that support their parenting, career and life goals.

Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.

Family Connection to Peers and Community

Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.

Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through third grade

BUILD

Step 1: Build a PFCE Self-Assessment Team

The collaboration of program leadership and staff, families, community leaders, and organizations will contribute to a more complete picture of your current PFCE efforts. Collaboration with multiple partners gives families the opportunity to share their unique perspectives and contributions. A broad based Self-Assessment Team promotes shared ownership of plans for improvement and encourages the entire community surrounding Head Start children and families to work together towards similar goals.

To build an effective Self-Assessment Team:

- Include partners representing diverse roles, cultures, and abilities – from within the program and community;
- Encourage all partners – families, program staff and leadership, and community agencies – to contribute their perspectives, information and insights to the self-assessment process.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for all partners based on their interests, strengths, and availability.

Use this space to record what you are already doing to build a PFCE Self-Assessment Team and/or new ways to build a PFCE Self-Assessment Team.

ASSESS

Overview of the PFCE Self-Assessment Guide

This easy-to-use tool is divided into seven areas – each a key element for bringing the PFCE Framework to your program. Three are the Program Foundations or Foundations for Success from the PFCE Framework: Program Leadership, Professional Development, and Continuous Program Improvement. These elements influence every area of the program. The four remaining elements are the Program Impact Areas that must be included for successful PFCE. Each of these seven key elements is briefly defined:

Foundations for Success

1. ***Program Leadership:*** The director, the governing board, parent committees and management teams determine the ways that Head Start and Early Head Start programs engage parents, families, and the community.

2. ***Professional Development:*** PFCE training is important for all staff. Professional development focuses on how staff members can contribute to program-wide PFCE efforts in their roles and how these roles fit together.

3. ***Continuous Improvement:*** Leadership and staff are committed to continuously improving systems and activities to engage and support parents, families, and the community.

Program Impact Areas

4. ***Program Environment:*** Families feel welcomed, valued, and respected by program staff and experience themselves as essential partners in understanding and meeting the needs of children.

5. ***Teaching and Learning:*** Families are engaged as equal partners in their children's learning and development.

6. ***Family Partnerships:*** Families work with staff to identify and achieve their goals and aspirations. To make a positive impact in the area of family partnerships, staff and families build ongoing, respectful and goal-oriented relationships.

7. ***Community Partnerships:*** Communities support families' interests and needs and foster parent and family engagement in children's learning. Programs and families can also strengthen communities.

The elements have been listed separately to make each easier to see and discuss. We do the same thing and for the same reasons when we talk about domains of a child's development separately. But just as the areas of development influence one another, these key PFCE elements are interrelated. Together they contribute to meeting family engagement outcomes. We call these connections among the elements *pathways of action* toward outcomes.

For example, **program leadership** can promote **professional development** strategies (such as cross-program training and team building) that build a **program environment** that respects the strengths and cultural backgrounds of families. Within this **program environment**, **teaching and learning** processes include teacher invitations for family visits to observe classrooms and share information about children's talents, interests, and needs. Through child assessments and surveys of teachers and parents, the program director and staff collect data for **continuous program improvement** so that they can better support **families as lifelong educators**.

Looking for and thinking about "connections" will help assure your PFCE practices are program-wide and lead to the well-being of children and their families. This will also lead you to use your time and resources wisely by building on and linking PFCE successes rather than initiating a series of isolated, unrelated efforts.

For each of the 7 sections of the Self-Assessment Guide addressing the 7 elements listed above, you will also find:

Definitions of each element's indicators:

Each of the 7 Program Foundation and Impact Area elements can be easier to see when you consider indicators that describe what these elements might look like in actual programs. These indicators are based on the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. (See page 6.)

An Assessment Grid that includes the:

- ***7 elements and their indicators:*** These help you to focus your self-assessment on a specific area of your program's PFCE practices. Each indicator is described by a short phrase that tells you the "story line" to look for as you go across that indicator's set of markers.
- ***Markers:*** These describe what actual programs are really doing, outcomes they are achieving, or goals they are setting for themselves for successful PFCE. These markers are presented in three levels – Starting Point, Progressing, and Innovating – across a spectrum of progress.

Each level is defined below:

» ***In this section*** you will find examples of practices that reflect Head Start's commitment to build partnerships with parents and families (children's first and most important educators, nurturers, and advocates). These practices encourage family participation in all aspects of the program. You will also find practices that reflect a commitment to build partnerships within the community to ensure children and families receive individualized services.

» ***Progressing:*** These practices go a step beyond to reflect a deepened focus on goal-oriented relationships between programs and parents and families. They describe how staff build on the trusting

» partnerships they have established with parents and other family members. They work together to promote the ongoing learning, development, and well-being of children and families alike.

» ***Innovative:*** At this level, effective parent, family, and community engagement practices are part of every aspect of the program. Practices in this column build collaborative relationships among the program, parents, families, and community. Parents are empowered as leaders and work side-by-side with staff to make decisions and develop program activities and policies. The community is embraced as the program sees itself as an active member of the community and the early childhood field. Data is collected and used to make decisions that result in improved family and child outcomes. PFCE approaches at this level are systemic, integrated, and comprehensive.

You can use these markers to develop a rating of your program's present level of quality on each indicator you choose to assess. You can then use these ratings to create a composite picture of your PFCE efforts for the elements you have assessed. This data should then be used to inform discussions and decisions about next steps to enhance your program's PFCE practices.

Assessment Grid Key

Elements

Indicators

Collaborative Decision-making

Levels

Markers

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Leaders engage families in collaborative decision-making.	Leaders create opportunities for families to participate in collaborative decision-making. They ensure there are effectively operating structures in place (e.g., Policy Council, Policy Committees, and Governing Board) that give parents the opportunity to contribute to decision-making. ☐ This best describes our program.	Across program areas, staff engages parents in collaborative decision-making on a wide range of topics (e.g., curriculum planning and community assessment). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders empower families and community partners to collaborate in decision-making in community-based programs, including public education. ☐ This best describes our program.
Leaders support parents as they develop skills as advocates and leaders.	Leaders provide interested parents with training on how to be effective advocates and program leaders on behalf of their children. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders invite community partners to provide parents with in-house training to enhance their leadership and advocacy skills. They provide ongoing coaching and mentoring as parents practice new skills in the program (e.g., serve as role models for other parents, participate in focus groups, and work with teachers to enhance curriculum). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders encourage parents to attenc advocacy and leadership training in the community. As parents practice and develop new skills (e.g., write a letter to the local paper about HS/EHS's benefits, speak about HS/EHS at a community meeting, participate in the PTO of an older child's school, etc.) they educate and encourage other parents to become leaders anc advocates. ☐ This best describes our program.

Step 2: Use the Assessment Tool

The PFCE Assessment Tool is designed to help you gather and analyze the information to assess the level of your program's current PFCE practices. The goal is to strengthen your program by strengthening the connections between the elements that support PFCE. To that end, we encourage you to assess your program's PFCE practices across all the elements.

Yet, we know many programs may find that isn't doable and decide to begin by focusing on one or two elements. For example, you might choose one element where you know your program shines to see how you can do even better, and one that you know needs much more progress. Or you might choose two or three different elements to focus on each year as part of your strategic planning process.

As you move forward, no matter how many elements you choose to explore, continue to look for connections. Over time this can help you to link together parts of your program that support and enhance PFCE.

To assess your program's current stage of parent, family, and community engagement:

Collect Data

- Choose an element(s) to focus on. Go through its indicators and markers to define your focus more clearly. Determine what sources of information will help you document your current level of performance or quality. Feel free to create your own markers to add to the ones offered here. Be sure to share them with us so that we can share them with other programs.
- Review and analyze documentation from your program reporting systems, community needs assessment, files on children and families, and other management systems that pertain to the indicators and markers you want to examine.

Ask Partners for Input

- To assure an accurate, well-rounded picture, ask for input from leaders, staff, current families, parents who were engaged with your program in the past, as well as community partners. This can be done in a number of ways, for example, through focus groups, open forums, short surveys, or individual interviews.

Analyze the Data

- Engage your PFCE Self-Assessment Team in reviewing the data you have collected. Use it with them to guide discussion of your program's current status on the indicators you want to learn more about. Encourage team members to examine whether a quality practice is widely and consistently observed in all parts of your program or implemented only in some instances or settings. This will help you see how far along you are in integrating high quality PFCE practices across your program. Document the main findings of your PFCE Self-Assessment Team. You will use this data to create your PFCE Program Action Plan, as outlined on page 72.

Assess

- Determine the level that best describes your program's status for each indicator you are examining.
- Engage the PFCE Self-Assessment Team in reviewing patterns of strengths and areas for improvement. Encourage team members to also consider possible links between the different indicators and elements. They may discover that there are patterns of strength or areas needing improvement across several indicators that shed light on your overall program self-assessment.

Communicate

- Develop a strategy and materials to share the PFCE Self-Assessment results and your subsequent Program Improvement Plan with staff, families, and community partners. These materials can also be used as part of your strategy to recruit others to join efforts to enhance your PFCE practices. For example, your PFCE Self-Assessment Team members might present findings at meetings of the governing board, Policy Council, management teams, staff, parents and community partners. Handouts and/or newsletter articles might include examples of what is working well and offer practical, hands-on suggestions of how people can contribute to enhance the program's PFCE efforts and the well-being of children and families.

BEGIN
Your self-assessment

Program Leadership

The director, the Governing Board, Policy Council, parent committees, and management teams determine the way that Head Start and Early Head Start programs engage parents, families, and the community. To begin, program leadership sets a clear vision and ambitious goals for PFCE. Program leadership makes sure that program systems (such as communication and human resources) integrate practices that help parent and family engagement to flourish. Leadership outlines strategic plans that bring systems, people, and activities together in a way that values staff and enhances parent and family engagement in the program.

Ambitious Goals

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Ambitious goals promote success in engaging parents, families and community.	Leaders inspire staff and parents to reach for ambitious goals as they create capacity to engage families and community partners. The director regularly communicates (e.g., in staff meetings, informal conversations and memos) the importance of standards and regulations and supports staff's understanding of how they promote family and child well-being. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together with staff, leaders use the PFCE Framework to identify and implement strategies to promote families' progress toward the PFCE Outcomes. Then, leaders support staff to incorporate families' goals into their daily planned activities and into their communications with families, other staff members, and supervisors. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together with staff, leaders regularly revisit and revise PFCE practices across program areas to promote families' progress on the PFCE Outcomes. Together they examine accomplishments and set progressively higher and inspiring goals for staff to enrich their practice with families. ☐ This best describes our program.

Collaborative Decision-making

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Leaders engage families in collaborative decision-making.	Leaders create opportunities for families to participate in collaborative decision-making. They ensure there are effectively operating structures in place (e.g., Policy Council, Policy Committees, and Governing Board) that give parents the opportunity to contribute to decision-making. ☐ This best describes our program.	Across program areas, staff engages parents in collaborative decision-making on a wide range of topics (e.g., curriculum planning and community assessment). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders empower families and community partners to collaborate in decision-making in community-based programs, including public education. ☐ This best describes our program.
Leaders support parents as they develop skills as advocates and leaders.	Leaders provide interested parents with training on how to be effective advocates and program leaders on behalf of their children. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders invite community partners to provide parents with in-house training to enhance their leadership and advocacy skills. They provide ongoing coaching and mentoring as parents practice new skills in the program (e.g., serve as role models for other parents, participate in focus groups, and work with teachers to enhance curriculum). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders encourage parents to attend advocacy and leadership training in the community. As parents practice and develop new skills (e.g., write a letter to the local paper about HS/EHS's benefits, speak about HS/EHS at a community meeting, participate in the PTO of an older child's school, etc.) they educate and encourage other parents to become leaders and advocates. ☐ This best describes our program.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement is a Shared Priority for All Staff

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Leaders help all staff understand their unique contributions to parent, family, and community engagement.	Leaders use written materials and ongoing interactions with managers and staff (e.g., job descriptions, initial orientation, ongoing training, supervision and evaluation) to communicate expectations for supporting parent, family, and community engagement. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders strengthen shared commitment to PFCE by their personal example as they interact and communicate with staff, families, and community partners. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders build a program-wide, deepening commitment to PFCE by helping managers and staff see that they can make a positive difference. Leaders help staff see how what they say and do each day can lead to positive, trusting relationships with families and community partners. They point out specific examples of how these relationships promote individual family's progress on Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes. ☐ This best describes our program.
Leaders make resources and staffing decisions that promote parent, family, and community engagement.	Leaders ensure that staff has enough time to plan and work one-on-one with families regularly – in both center and home-based programs. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders adjust assignments and caseloads to allow for additional interactions based on family needs, strengths and relationships with individual staff (e.g., Family Service Workers, Home Visitors and teachers) and managers. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders reallocate resources and time of all staff members to provide individual families with support needed to reach their goals. These decisions are based upon data about families' progress on meeting family and child goals (e.g., community assessment data, self-assessment data and data on staff-parent interactions). ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Continuous Improvement

Leadership and staff are committed to continuously improving systems and activities to engage and support parents, families, and the community. With a strategic PFCE vision and goals shared by program leadership, staff, and families, programs can conduct staff and parent surveys and use data from surveys, intakes, assessments and family partnership processes to set benchmarks. From there, staff can review reports, assess program progress, make decisions, and change or refine PFCE goals and actions.

Data about Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Efforts and Outcomes Drives Decision-Making

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Collection of data broadens to provide complete and accurate information.	Leadership, staff, families and community partners plan how to collect data related to PFCE. Data collection is timely, accurate and secure. Data items are meaningful for families and programs. They are chosen to guide decision-making and action steps that support ongoing improvement. ☐ This best describes our program.	The program collects data about program implementation, (e.g. the type and quality of relationships with and services for families). It also collects data about progress on PFCE Outcomes. The program uses culturally relevant data collection methods (e.g. stories, focus groups, parent interviews, standardized measures, surveys). ☐ This best describes our program.	The program partners with community organizations to collect data about progress of HS/EHS families and children over time, including the K-3 period in the school system. Together, they seek data to gain a deeper understanding of how to match PFCE services with family characteristics to improve practices to promote child and family well-being in the community continually. ☐ This best describes our program.
Data is used to enhance the effectiveness of the program's PFCE practices and those of individual staff members in their work with families.	The program uses data annually to document and improve the overall PFCE plan. The program shares data with individual parents, Policy Council/ Committees and community partners. ☐ This best describes our program.	The program uses data to improve PFCE practices to promote individual families' progress on PFCE Outcomes. ☐ This best describes our program.	All staff is supported in using data to improve work with children and families. Data are regularly reviewed and updated to determine how HS/ EHS children and families are faring in the program and the community over time. Program leadership invites staff, parents and community partners to use data to inform what they do together to promote progress on PFCE Outcomes. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Professional Development

PFCE training is important to all staff, and their professional development will focus on their specific roles in the program. To build a solid foundation for achieving family engagement outcomes, professional development plans should be comprehensive and include training, supervision, recognition, and information about career options. Giving staff members regular opportunities to come together as a 'community of learners' helps them find mutual support and ideas for turning training and information into action. These opportunities are also important for cross-service area teams, such as teaching, family services, and home visiting.

High Quality Training for All Staff

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Building relationships with families requires specific skills and strategies.	Staff participates in training and mentoring to develop strong, positive and effective relationships with families, including vulnerable families and families dealing with adversity. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff builds skills to produce supportive engagement that is reflective of individual families' cultures, strengths, and needs. Staff relies on ongoing mentoring and supervision to develop strategies to support families who may be dealing with challenging circumstances. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff initiates and sustains a "community of practice" as they exchange information and insights with staff from other agencies that provide family support. They meet regularly as 'peer experts' to share questions and expertise to enhance PFCE practices and relationships with individual families. ☐ This best describes our program.
Family engagement strategies are taught and incorporated into everyday practices.	All staff participates in training about what they as individuals can do and say in their daily interactions to promote PFCE. Training helps all staff begin to understand that "family engagement is everyone's business." ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff participates in training on specific PFCE strategies to promote progress on family outcomes with individual families. Staff is familiar with, discusses and uses research on parent, family, and community engagement to enhance daily practice. ☐ This best describes our program.	Program-wide professional development supports staff to work together across program areas to promote family and community engagement. It also promotes the use of data to inform decisions about program services and interactions with individual families over time. ☐ This best describes our program.
Ongoing support promotes PFCE-related skills.	Program supervisors provide feedback and coaching on PFCE-related practices at each staff member's annual evaluation. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff who work most closely with families participate in ongoing individualized mentoring and support on effective goal-oriented PFCE practices. ☐ This best describes our program.	All staff participates in PFCE-related training, mentoring and support. Community partners are invited to take part whenever feasible. ☐ This best describes our program.

Cross-service Area Teams

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
All staff work together to engage family and community partners.	Cross-program staff teams participate in training about working together to implement PFCE practices (e.g., home visits, parent-teacher conferences, the family partnership agreement process, and parent engagement in IFSP/IEP procedures). ☐ This best describes our program.	Cross-program staff members gain knowledge and develop skills as they work together (e.g., to design PFCE strategies, address challenges, conduct a self-assessment of progress towards PFCE goals, and celebrate successes). ☐ This best describes our program.	Team members share and study information about children's and families' progress. They use this information to expand and improve PFCE efforts (e.g., consulting with community partners and specialists such as mental health consultants). ☐ This best describes our program.

Career Pathways and Recognition

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Career development options for staff expand.	Leadership provides opportunities for staff to gain skills and experience that can help lead to career advancement in the area of parent, family, and community engagement. ☐ This best describes our program.	Effective staff members are groomed for and promoted into other positions (e.g., family advocate, family services coordinator, supervisor, manager) as they become available. They receive ongoing support as they transition into their new roles. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership works with higher education and other community partners to identify career opportunities for staff. Together they create processes for staff to gain career-advancement credentials in child and family fields (e.g., social work, education, and health). ☐ This best describes our program.
Parent volunteers' growing commitment and contributions can lead to expanded career development options.	Leadership and staff invite all family members to visit and observe. They are also invited to volunteer to support learning in classrooms as well as to try follow-up activities with their children at home. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff documents family interests and talents. Together with families, they co-create opportunities for parents to contribute to curriculum planning, learning opportunities and ongoing child assessment on-site and at home. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff encourages increased levels of responsibility for parents to work with groups of children in tandem with staff members. Programs go beyond documenting volunteers as non-federal share resources to tracking their contributions to other families' progress on PFCE outcomes. Leadership and staff encourage interested parents to apply to work in the program and/or community to support children and families ☐ This best describes our program.

Career Pathways and Recognition *(continued)*

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Effective efforts to promote PFCE are honored.	Leaders recognize staff and parent volunteers for their job performance in the area of PFCE. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders recognize the accomplishments of cross-service area teams in enhancing PFCE. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together with community partners, leaders recognize collaborations between all staff and parents to promote children's and families' well-being in the program and throughout the community. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Program Environment

Families feel welcomed, valued, and respected by program staff. Program leadership supports all staff to build strong relationships, both with each other and with families and communities. Staff and families work together to set expectations and support family goals and children's learning and development in culturally and linguistically responsive ways. Two-way communication and relationship-building with families are adapted to meet changing family and community circumstances. In addition, opportunities are provided for family support and development through the family partnership process and through intentional parent/family peer groups within the program and community.

Welcoming and Inviting Setting

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
The space supports interactions and relationships.	Physical space is calm, clean, safe and accessible. It reflects respect for the language and culture of children and their families (e.g., documentation of projects, artwork, and family photos). Culturally and linguistically appropriate information is available. ☐ This best describes our program.	In a dedicated, welcoming, and comfortable space for adults, parents can drop-in and connect with staff and peers. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and families use feedback from families as they work together to make public areas more welcoming and conducive to social interactions. The program shares space with the community in order to enhance connections between community agencies and families. ☐ This best describes our program.

Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Understanding of families' cultures deepens, builds trust and promotes engagement.	Leadership and staff talk with and learn from families about their home cultures (e.g., family structure, preferred child-rearing practices). This information is used to affirm families' culture and history in program policies, resources, activities and in staff professional development. ☐ This best describes our program.	They use new information and insights gained about families' cultures, and their own, as conversations continue and trust grows. Leadership and staff continually tailor services and systems to be more culturally and linguistically responsive. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership, staff, and community agencies discuss conflicting assumptions, complex feelings and challenging issues. Together with families, they design, implement and evaluate activities that remove cultural and linguistic barriers to family engagement and strengthen relationships with families of different cultures and backgrounds. ☐ This best describes our program.
Materials and resources increasingly reflect families' cultures and languages.	Staff supports families as lifelong educators by offering learning materials (books, games and other learning media) for children and parents that reflect families' cultures. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff regularly invites families to provide feedback about culturally appropriate books and other learning materials and to suggest additional ones for children and parents. ☐ This best describes our program.	Families and staff create culturally appropriate and relevant learning materials together. These extend beyond foods and holidays to include a broad range of activities. This process, and the materials that result, strengthen family engagement with the program, and parent engagement with their children. They also expand parent and child learning. ☐ This best describes our program.

System of Regular Communication with Families

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Communication becomes increasingly family-centered and responsive.	Leadership and staff create clear communication channels to promote regular dialog with families about child progress and program matters in ways that deepen trust and relationships. Families each have a designated contact person. The use of technology is tailored to different families and ages of family members. Interpreters are available as needed. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership and staff are proactive in communicating with families. They regularly ask families for feedback and suggestions about additional information they need. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and parents talk together regularly about how to improve communication between them. ☐ This best describes our program.
Professional ethics guide interactions with and about families.	Leadership models professional ethics when interacting with staff and families. Staff does not share confidential information about a child or family with other families or with staff who do not also work with that child/family. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership provides ongoing training to staff and provides support in the area of professional ethics (e.g., confidentiality, boundaries). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership models professional ethics when working with community partners. They take an active stance against negativity and unprofessionalism when talking about families. This remains true even when challenging issues are addressed and emotions run high. Codes of ethics from NAEYC and other organizations supporting families and young children are shared. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Jeremy
Gaetanne
Justin
Glue
Bethany
Glue Sticks

Family Partnership

Families work with staff to identify and achieve their goals and aspirations. To strengthen family partnerships, staff and families build ongoing, respectful, and goal-oriented relationships. They identify and act on family and child goals and aspirations. To promote progress, staff and families use program and community supports and resources.

Respectful, Trusting Relationships between Staff and Parents

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Leadership supports relationships between staff and families through professional development, technology, and their own relationships with staff.	Leadership develops trusting relationships with staff that are models for the relationships staff builds with families. Respect, caring, commitment, and flexibility characterize these relationships. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership expands staff development to tailor training, coaching and reflective supervision to help staff build trusting relationships with all types of families, from all cultures and backgrounds, including those who are vulnerable and severely stressed. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership creates an easy-to-use system that documents the quality of relationships between staff and parents. It includes feedback from families, documentation of reflective supervision efforts, and perspectives from community partners that are skilled in providing family support and mental health. Staff use this information to enhance their relationships with individual parents. ☐ This best describes our program.
Peer Support and Learning opportunities are enhanced.	Leadership and staff provide informal opportunities for parents to form connections with peers. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership and staff provide opportunities for peer networking, support and learning opportunities among parents. ☐ This best describes our program.	Parents work with each other and with leadership to design and enhance opportunities for peer-to-peer networking and support. ☐ This best describes our program.

Families are Partners in Developing and Achieving their Goals

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Staff partnerships with families grow and deepen.	When families consent, Partnership Plans/Agreements are developed to help staff identify and use family strengths as the foundation of their relationship with them. A family's decision not to create a plan is respected. Staff finds other opportunities to learn about the family's strengths, needs, and goals as an entry to this relationship. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and families meet regularly to update and expand Plans/ Agreements. These changes reflect their joint efforts, progress, and new circumstances and opportunities. Staff also regularly meets with families who choose not to create plans, to learn more about families' circumstances and goals. Staff uses these meetings for conversations about their children and to strengthen relationships with family members. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together, staff and families decide on the data they will use to monitor trends in family strengths, needs and goals. They use data to track their joint efforts and progress in reaching family outcomes. Learning to use data contributes to families' success in supporting children's development and learning. Using data together also strengthens parent-staff relationships. ☐ This best describes our program.
Staff help family members recognize their own contributions to their progress.	Staff provides ongoing information and support to families in using program services and community resources (education, career development, health) to achieve family goals and promote the well-being of children. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff helps individual families see how their use of services leads to progress. They help families overcome challenges in achieving their goals. ☐ This best describes our program.	Families and staff affirm the vital roles that families play in nurturing their children's learning and development. Together, they acknowledge and celebrate family members' growing knowledge and skills, and build upon these in their work together to support children. ☐ This best describes our program.

Families are Partners in Developing and Achieving their Goals *(continued)*

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Family partnerships open the door to families' use of resources and services.	Staff develops trusting relationships with families that make for responsive family referrals and effective information-sharing about program and community services and resources. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff uses knowledge of families to tailor referrals to services based on the strengths, needs, and styles of individual family members. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff-family partnerships empower families to independently seek and use community services that are tailored to their strengths, needs and cultures. ☐ This best describes our program.
Parents receive training and support for transitions.	Programs provide families with information, training and connections to future early care and educational settings to help facilitate the transition process for parents and children. ☐ This best describes our program.	Programs ensure that families have the skills to communicate with other early childhood programs and schools about their child's accomplishments, interests and needs and can refer to child assessment data to support their observations. ☐ This best describes our program.	Programs provide opportunities for parents to create relationships with other families and to participate in parent groups in schools to which children will transition. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Teaching and Learning

Families are engaged as equal partners in their children's learning and development. Staff and families work together as equal partners to build strong relationships that support information-sharing with each other about children's learning and developmental progress. Programs ensure that families have access to information about their child and that the information is understandable and meaningful. Parents share their knowledge about their child's progress at home. Together, staff and families use this information to set and work toward goals for the child in the program, home and community.

Families Grow into their Role as Educators at Home

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Supporting Families as Lifelong Educators for their children.	Staff works to develop relationships with families that allow them to effectively address children's learning needs and support families in the vital role they play in their children's learning and development. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff models specific learning strategies for families to help them promote children's learning during daily routines and play time. Staff sustains families' interest in learning new strategies by reflecting with them on children's progress over time. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together, families and staff identify new opportunities for families to support children's healthy development and learning. Families recognize that they are children's "forever" teachers. ☐ This best describes our program.
Staff and families promote children's development and learning in increasingly collaborative ways.	Staff welcomes families to participate in program activities. Staff provides basic information about children's learning and development during home visits, daily conversations, on bulletin boards and in e-mails. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff invites families to partner in planning activities in the program or at home to promote children's development and learning. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and families engage each other as partners in planning classroom or home activities that promote children's development and learning. Both have a clear understanding of what each contributes and what each can expect in their exchange of information. They use what they learn from each other to plan and implement learning activities for children at home or in the program. ☐ This best describes our program.

Families' Use of Child Assessment Information Promotes Children's Learning and Development

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Parents are informed about the purpose of assessment. Staff has scheduled meetings/ parent-teacher conferences to share assessment data with families.	Staff seeks input from families in developing goals for children and assessing children's progress. This includes families with young children with disabilities as they participate in IFSP and IEP planning and progress monitoring. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and families regularly share information and observations about how curriculum activities lead to the development outcomes outlined in the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. Staff invites parents to be part of the assessment process and explains that their input leads to a more complete, accurate picture of their child. Staff shares child assessment data with families and requests their impressions regularly. Staff uses child assessments to engage parents in determining how they can contribute to fostering their children's progress. Staff support and monitor those efforts and work with families to adjust and tailor goals for their children during the year. ☐ This best describes our program.	Together with families, staff regularly discusses formal assessments and share child-related questions, concerns and successes in order to create a picture of the child as a whole. Both home and program observations and assessments are used. Staff, families and community partners regularly use this data to decide how best to support children's learning and development in the program and in the community. Staff works with families to develop long-term goals for all of their children and family members, chart clear pathways towards those goals and prepare parents to continue to advocate for collaborative decision-making as they transition from HS/EHS to kindergarten. ☐ This best describes our program.

Supporting Positive Parent-Child Relationships

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Shared observations of family strengths and child behavior open the door to positive change in child outcomes.	Staff focuses on family and child strengths as an entry into relationships and conversations about children. ☐ This best describes our program.	In the home and program, parents see that staff interact with each child as an individual, and with respect and authentic caring. As a result, trust deepens and communication about each child's strengths and needs becomes more open. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and parents observe and learn from each other's interactions with the child. Staff and parents use their observations about the child's behavior as data. This guides the decisions they make together about their roles as the child's educators. ☐ This best describes our program.
Staff strengthen their partnership with families to address challenging child behaviors together in positive ways.	Staff tries to understand what children might be thinking/feeling when they behave in challenging ways. They use this information to decide how to discourage such behavior while promoting children's self-control. Staff takes steps to prevent challenging behavior whenever possible. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff discusses challenging behaviors with families in ways that demonstrate and strengthen the trust and respect between them. In their discussions, staff supports families to keep the child's best interests in the forefront even when strong feelings arise. ☐ This best describes our program.	Staff and parents work together to prevent challenging behaviors and address them in positive ways when they occur. This supports the child's healthy development and social competence and the families' engagement with the child and program. ☐ This best describes our program.

Supporting Positive Parent-Child Relationships *(continued)*

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Child assessment data informs work with community partners.	Programs develop school-readiness goals that are in line with those of their community. Programs participate in or provide training on transitions. This strengthens the relationships with other early care and educational settings and promotes the use of child assessment data during transitions from birth through age 8. ☐ This best describes our program.	Programs share school-readiness goals and related data with community partners. Their relationships and collaborations continue to develop. ☐ This best describes our program.	Programs extend relationships with community partners beyond sharing assessment data. Data is used to drive decisions intended to improve transitions. Together they work to implement their shared commitment to ambitious school-readiness goals. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

Community Partnership

Communities support families' interests and needs and encourage parent and family engagement in children's learning. Staff and families collaborate with community, health, mental health, social service, and school partners to build peer networks, to link families and children to needed services, and to support successful transitions for children and families.

Commitment to Social Support Systems within Program and with Larger Community

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Growing support for families as educators in communities.	Staff provides information about community resources (e.g., family literacy programs, and parenting workshops) to families. Representatives of trusted community organizations meet and present their offerings to families (e.g., at a parent meeting, and a community resource fair). ☐ This best describes our program.	Together with families, staff provides feedback to community partners about services that are most easily accessed and effectively used as well as about barriers and service gaps. ☐ This best describes our program.	Families, staff and community partners use information from families' experiences to decide how best to get the word out about existing community services, and to determine how to enhance them, remove barriers, and fill in service gaps. ☐ This best describes our program.
Family engagement moves into the community.	Staff links families to program/community opportunities for peer networking, volunteer activities, internships and other experiences that expand their personal and professional interests. ☐ This best describes our program.	Parents form relationships with parent-to-parent organizations or K-12 parent groups to facilitate their child's transition to community programs. ☐ This best describes our program.	Parents serve as mentors for one another and connect each other with alumni parents/families, elders and professionals in the community to promote advocacy, leadership development and families' engagement in the community. ☐ This best describes our program.

Collaborative Relationships to Support Family Well Being

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Staff and families participate in service development.	Leadership, staff and families collaborate to enhance program services to families. They address obstacles to families' awareness and use of services to meet their needs and goals. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership, staff and families collaborate with community partners. The PFCE Framework guides their work together to help families receive the services they need to reach their goals. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leadership, staff and families represent the program in inter-agency coalitions with community partners who serve the same families. Together they address obstacles to services and help ensure families receive needed services to reach family outcomes. ☐ This best describes our program.

Support for Transitions

	STARTING POINT: *Implementing PFCE Practices*	**PROGRESSING:** *Demonstrating Practices that Bolster PFCE*	**INNOVATING:** *Implementing PFCE Practices that are Systemic, Integrated and Comprehensive*
Program leadership provides support for transitions.	Leaders establish and maintain procedures and supports for successful transitions of all enrolled children and families. ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders build relationships among community partners so that transition efforts are mutual, (e.g. Head Start, early care and school staff and managers are all equally engaged in classroom observations, home visits, outreach to families and ongoing communication). ☐ This best describes our program.	Leaders model effective, family and child-centered transitions for community programs. They share insights and lessons learned from the program's transition efforts with community partners. ☐ This best describes our program.

Use this space to record your thoughts about what you are already doing that you would like to celebrate, challenges that you need to face, and new ideas about what you will do to move your program toward effective PFCE.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed your self-assessment

PLAN

Step 3: Create a PFCE Action Plan

Once you have completed a cycle of self-assessment, it is time to create a PFCE Action Plan. This written plan can be used to inform your multi-year long and short range goals (i.e. Continuous Quality Improvement Plan, and Strategic Plan) in addition to helping you identify the PFCE challenges to be addressed. It will be your guide and focus your program's efforts to enhance PFCE practices throughout your program.

Creating an Action Plan provides an opportunity to:

- create a realistic roadmap for change by organizing your ideas into concrete steps;
- track your progress;
- identify goals and then evaluate if and when they are met;
- adapt plans and goals in light of unexpected opportunities or obstacles;
- affirm existing PFCE skills encouraging leadership and staff to build on strengths as they develop new skills;
- continue positive change over time; and
- promote commitment to improvement in the area of PFCE by bringing parents and community partners together with staff and leadership. Together they can create a shared vision and specific near-term and longer term goals for improvement.

Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them

- Change can be exciting. For many of us, change is also unsettling. For this reason, creating an Action Plan can pose challenges. For example, it may be a challenge to:
- find time for busy team members to meet;
- come to consensus on areas to prioritize;
- decide on realistic goals;
- identify steps;
- agree on a realistic time frame; and
- acknowledge signs of progress.

To overcome challenges, it can be helpful to:

- create a shared vision of the benefits of engagement for children, families, the community, and program staff and leadership;
- build trust and promote a sense of collaboration among family members, community partners, and program staff and leadership;
- keep communication flowing so that decisions are recorded and partners who may miss a meeting can stay informed; and
- return regularly to the vision and its benefits to keep challenges in perspective.

Components of a PFCE Action Plan

The components of a PFCE Action Plan will vary from program to program, because each program has a unique set of resources, demands, participants, partners, and needs. We have developed a template you can use to personalize your plan and a sample showing how it might be used (see next page).

As you will see, this template is similar to program planning forms found in the Self-Assessment Toolkit and used by many programs around the country. You can use this Action Plan format to enhance your current multi-year long and short-range program planning efforts. What might be even more exciting is that you can use this form to connect with the 7 Family Engagement Outcomes to frame all of your required strategic planning efforts. Just as family engagement is everyone's business, and family engagement is integrated throughout all program operations.

This form provides a place for you to identify:

- Desired family engagement outcomes
- Your Goal(s)
- Element(s) from the PFCE Framework
- The PFCE indicators you are focusing on currently
- Action step(s)
- Resources available
- Person(s) responsible
- Time frame(s)
- Measure(s) of success

A Sample Template of a PFCE Action Plan

A DESIRED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME(S) *(from PFCE Framework, Blue Column)*:

B GOAL(S):

C ELEMENT	D INDICATOR	E ACTION STEP	F RESOURCE(S)	G PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	H TIME FRAME(S)	I MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS

- A ***Desired Family Engagement Outcome*** *(from PFCE Framework, Blue Column)*
- B ***Your Goal(s)***
- C ***Element(s)*** *(from the PFCE Framework Foundations and Program Impact Areas)*
- D ***PFCE indicators*** *(from Indicator Column of the Assess Section)*
- E ***Action step(s)***
- F ***Resources available***
- G ***Person(s) responsible***
- H ***Time frame(s)***
- I ***Measure(s) of success***

Getting Started on Your Action Plan

- Begin with the end in mind. What do you want to accomplish? Identify the desired Family Engagement Outcome you want to enhance or end-result you want to obtain. (In the sample Action Plan below, the Desired Family Engagement Outcome is Family Well-Being.)
- Identify a goal(s) to strengthen PFCE and improve outcomes for children and families. To choose, you may want to ask:
  - » Is there a goal within reach that will give you an early success on which you can build toward more challenging ones? (This may sound similar to your work with families – start with an early success and build from there.)
  - » Is there a goal that with focused effort could be moved from Starting Point to Innovating to build interest and excitement about additional change?

(In the sample, you might have chosen a different goal to enhance Family Well-Being. For example, if your focus was on safety your goal might be: Offer opportunities for every parent to be trained on first aid or CPR.)

- **Identify the elements (Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas) that you will focus on to meet the goal.** Most goals will require work in more than one element (for example, in the sample below, professional development and family partnerships are both involved) and coordination of your work across elements.
- **Identify the indicator(s) that you will focus on to meet the goal.** Again, many goals will involve more than one indicator. Consider how they link together. Efforts on one indicator can reinforce efforts on another.
- **Define the specific, concrete action steps you will use to make progress in each element.**
- **Identify the people and any other resources you want to engage in order to support change or enhancement in this priority area.**
- **Select a point person(s) from the team who will be responsible for seeing that the next steps toward implementing these strategies are taken, and for reporting setbacks if they arise.**
- **Set a time frame for accomplishing tasks. Your time frame should include check-in times.** These are times to check in on progress being made on specific tasks and the Action Plan itself. Keep in mind that your Action Plan is ***your*** plan. It is a road map, a way of tracking progress that you can adapt as needed.
- **Identify a measure of success that will indicate your goal has been met.** If a goal is to be of any value, there must be a way to accurately define and measure it. For example, see the Action Plan below. Success is measured in a variety of ways which include: a) staff and families are able to describe asset-building practices and related benefits; b) ongoing monitoring documentation that confirms all staff members are assisting families with asset-building strategies; c) a specific percentage of families incorporating asset-building strategies into their family partnership agreement; and d) resources in the community are observed to be established, available, and used to support families in obtaining their asset-building goals.

A Sample PFCE Action Plan

DESIRED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME(S):
Family Well-being: Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.

GOAL(S):
Offer increased opportunities for families to learn about and enhance asset-building strategies.

ELEMENT	INDICATOR	ACTION STEP	RESOURCE(S)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME(S)	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS
Program Leadership	*Ambitious Goals*	*Expand program policies, procedures, goals, and opportunities to encompass asset-building strategies for staff and families.*	*ECLKC, National Center on Program Management, and Fiscal Operations (NCPMFO) material, Community Partners*	*Management Team, Board, and Policy Council/ Committee*	*Begin during summer planning phase and implement in the fall.*	*Staff and families are knowledgeable about asset-building strategies and can describe the associated benefits.*
Professional Development	*High Quality Training for All Staff*	*Insert asset-building strategies as a standing agenda topic during monthly staff meetings to familiarize all staff with the concept, strategies, and opportunities for families.*	*ECLKC, NCPFCE materials, Community partners*	*Management Team*	*Begin with pre-service training sessions and continue monthly.*	*Ongoing monitoring reports indicate staff members across all content areas are able to assist families with asset-building strategies as part of their routine practice.*

As you will see in this Action Plan, program foundation and program impact area elements are connected. Each contributes to **Family Well-Being** through asset-building strategies. **Program Leadership**, that includes parents, creates a foundation of policies and procedures that are incorporated into **Professional Development** opportunities for all staff. This, in turn, provides staff with information they need to strengthen **Family Partnerships** as they work with families to individualize opportunities for asset-building strategies in the community. As families and staff move forward in exploring asset-building strategies, together they strengthen **Community Partnerships** as they work with community partners to identify and use relevant community resources.

A Sample PFCE Action Plan *(continued)*

ELEMENT	INDICATOR	ACTION STEP	RESOURCE(S)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME(S)	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS
Family Partnerships	*Families are partners in developing and achieving the goals in their family partnership agreements.*	*Staff and families collaborate to identify and share information related to asset building opportunities in the community.*	*Financial education Savings and Individual Development Accounts, Getting banked Managing credit and debt, Tax credits and tax filing assistance*	*Management Team and Policy Council/ Committee*	*Begin in early fall with the intention of sharing with all families by the first weeks of October.*	*Of the families who choose to develop family partnership goals, 10% explore and/or adopt goals around asset-building strategies.*
Community Partnerships	*Collaborative relationships for comprehensive services.*	*Staff, families, and communities participate in collaborations that respond to family goals and needs around asset-building strategies.*	*Board Members* *Local banks* *Local tax (EITC) entities* *Local housing (savings programs) authorities*	*Management Team and Policy Council/ Committee*	*Begin in late fall after assessing family asset-building strategies and implement any new opportunities by January.*	*Resources relating to goals parents set in family partnership plan are established, available, and used.*

Your Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Action Plan

Your Vision for PFCE in Your Program

As you conduct your self-assessments and plan your next steps, it will be helpful to keep in focus the shared vision that your program has developed for the children, families, and community you all serve. What is your vision of the future as parents and families become more engaged in their children's development and learning? (Briefly describe or draw your picture of how the lives of children and families, and your program will be changed as you enhance PFCE practices.)

Your Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Action Plan *(continued)*

DESIRED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME(S):

GOAL(S):

ELEMENT	INDICATOR	ACTION STEP	RESOURCE(S)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME(S)	MEASURE(S) OF SUCCESS

A Closing Thought

This guide was created to help you take a step back and learn about your program, then decide how to collaborate and move forward in the best interests of the children and families you serve. We invite you to be open – to your successes as well as areas that need improvement – and take advantage of this opportunity to enhance parent, family, and community engagement and the lives of the children and families you serve.

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