

Engaging Teen Parents: Lessons from Teens about What Works for Them Webcast Viewers' Guide

Welcome to the EHS NRC/OHS Webcast ENGAGING TEEN PARENTS!

To make the most of this training experience:

- ✓ Review the handouts before the webcast begins. They are designed to help you prepare and use the information you hear during the program.
- ✓ Schedule some time for reflection and/or discussion after the webcast. Use the Applying the Information handout individually or with your team. In most cases, discussing information, strategies and ideas as a team is the best way to think about what is already in place in your program and how you might enhance your work with teens.
- ✓ Use the handouts to discuss new information and to plan for the future.

Introduction

This webcast is designed to help you as you work to engage teen parents. The webcast includes interviews with Early Head Start teen parents talking about what has worked for them, and panelists reflecting on engaging teens in the context of the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. Faculty will discuss:

- How programs can reach out to teen parents and make them feel welcome (Program Environment)
- How program staff and teen parents can work together to identify and achieve the family's goals and aspirations (Family Partnerships)
- How programs can partner with teen parents to support children's learning and development and positive parent-child relationships (Teaching and Learning)
- Which community partnerships are particularly meaningful to teen parents and how programs can help connect teen parents to others within the larger community (Community Partnerships)

Faculty

Moderator, Jennifer Boss

Parents Engaged as Teens in Early Head Start Programs

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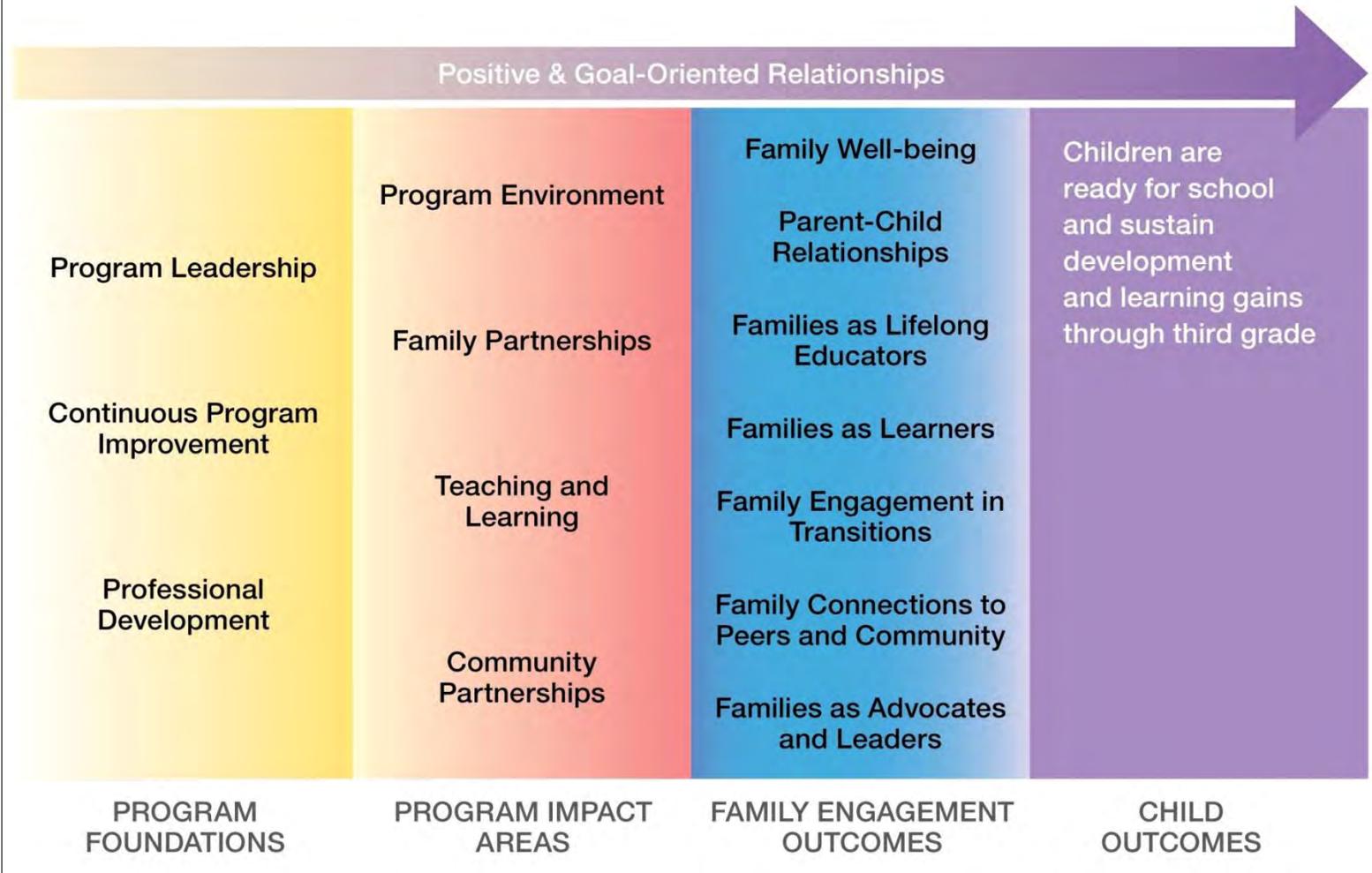


For training
planning, please
note that this
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PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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.



Stages of Adolescent Development

Stages of Adolescence	Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Social-Emotional Development
Early Adolescence <i>Approximately</i> 11 – 13 <i>years of age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty: grow body hair, increase perspiration and oil production in hair and skin, <i>Girls</i> – breast and hip development, onset of menstruation <i>Boys</i> – growth in testicles and penis, wet dreams, deepening of voice • Tremendous physical growth: gain height and weight • Greater sexual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing capacity for abstract thought • Mostly interested in present with limited thought to the future • Intellectual interests expand and become more important • Deeper moral thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle with sense of identity • Feel awkward about one’s self and one’s body; worry about being normal • Realize that parents are not perfect; increased conflict with parents • Increased influence of peer group • Desire for independence • Tendency to return to “childish” behavior, particularly when stressed • Moodiness • Rule- and limit-testing • Greater interest in privacy
Middle Adolescence <i>Approximately</i> 14 – 18 <i>years of age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty is completed • Physical growth slows for girls, continues for boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued growth of capacity for abstract thought • Greater capacity for setting goals • Interest in moral reasoning • Thinking about the meaning of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense self-involvement, changing between high expectations and poor self-concept • Continued adjustment to changing body, worries about being normal • Tendency to distance selves from parents, continued drive for independence • Driven to make friends and greater reliance on them, popularity can be an important issue • Feelings of love and passion
Late Adolescence <i>Approximately</i> 19 – 21 <i>years of age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young women, typically, are fully developed • Young men continue to gain height, weight, muscle mass, and body hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think ideas through • Ability to delay gratification • Examination of inner experiences • Increased concern for future • Continued interest in moral reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firmer sense of identity • Increased emotional stability • Increased concern for others • Increased independence and self-reliance • Peer relationships remain important • Development of more serious relationships • Social and cultural traditions regain some of their importance

Adapted from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent’s Facts for Families. © All rights reserved. 2008



Key Head Start Program Performance Standards

Angie Godfrey lists the following Standards in her introduction. How do these Standards inform your work with teen parents?

§ 1304.40 Family partnerships

- (a) Family Partnerships. (1): Grantee and delegate agencies must engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and other supports. This process must be initiated as early after enrollment as possible and it must take into consideration each family's readiness and willingness to participate in the process.
- (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 members of a group. Other community agencies should be encouraged to assist in the planning and implementation of such programs.



Taking Note: Important Messages from *Performance Standards, Parents and Panelists*

Use this space to record ideas, thoughts and questions about PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT and serving teen parents in your program.

Particularly relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards:

§1304.21 Education and early childhood development

- (a) *Child development and education approach.* (1) In order to help children gain the skills and confidence necessary to be prepared to succeed in their present environment and with later responsibilities in school and life, grantee and delegate agencies' approach to child development and education must:
 - (iii) Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity, and family composition.

§1304.40 Family partnerships

- (a) *Family goal setting.* (5) Meetings and interactions with families must be respectful of each family's diversity and cultural and ethnic background.
- (d) *Parent involvement – general.* Early Head Start and Head Start settings must be open to parents during all program hours. Parents must be welcomed as visitors and encouraged to observe children as often as possible and to participate with children in group activities. The participation of parents in any program activity must be voluntary, and must not be required as a condition of program enrollment.

Notes:

Taking Note: Important Messages from *Performance Standards, Parents and Panelists*

Use this space to record ideas, thoughts and questions about FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS and serving teen parents in your program.

Particularly relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards:

§1304.40 Family partnerships.

(a) *Family goal setting.* (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and supports. This process must be initiated as early after enrollment as possible and it must take into consideration each family's readiness and willingness to participate in the process.

Notes:



Taking Note: Important Messages from *Performance Standards, Parents and Panelists*

Use this space to record ideas, thoughts and questions about TEACHING AND LEARNING and serving teen parents in your program.

Particularly relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards:

§1304.21 Education and early childhood development

- (a) *Child development and education approach.*
 - (2) Parents must be:
 - (i) Invited to become integrally involved in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development and education.
 - (b) *Child development and education approach for infants and toddlers.*

§1304.40 Family partnerships

- (e) *Parent involvement in child development and education.* (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.

Notes:

Taking Note: Important Messages from *Performance Standards, Parents and Panelists*

Use this space to record ideas, thoughts and questions about COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS and serving teen parents in your program.

Particularly relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards:

§1304.40 Family partnerships

- (a) *Accessing community services and resources.* (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must work collaboratively with all participating parents to identify and continually access, either directly or through referrals, services and resources that are responsive to each family's interests and goals.
- (2) Grantee and delegate agencies must follow-up with each family to determine whether the kind, quality, and timeliness of services received through referrals met the families' expectations and circumstances.

§1304.41 Community partnerships

- (a) *Partnerships.* (2) Grantee and delegate agencies must take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs.

Notes:

Applying the Information

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program's approach to connecting with families.

1. Consider the key *Standards* on family engagement listed here. How do these *Standards* inform your work with teen parents?
2. Consider the teens you are serving. What do you see as their individual strengths and/or their strengths as a group? What do you see as the most critical challenges in working with them?
3. How is your program using the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework? How are you using/can you use the Framework to think specifically about engaging teen parents?
4. This webcast features parents talking about their experiences as teens in Early Head Start programs. How does your program collect information from young parents about what works for them? How do you use that information to inform your work?

Program Environment:

5. Take a tour of your program environment. Are teen parents represented in the literature, brochures, and pictures on the walls? How do you think your program welcomes and engages teen parents?
6. Dr. John Hornstein and others talk about the importance of a safe and welcoming emotional environment for teens and their children. How do you create that sense in your program? What do you hear from parents and panelists on this webcast that can enhance the emotional environment you create for teens?
7. What other things do you hear from teen parents in this webcast about what is important for them in a program environment?
8. What ideas from parents and panelists can you use to enhance your the sense of welcome and safety that parents feel in your program environment?

Applying the Information (cont'd.)

Family Partnerships:

9. What do you already do in your program to build effective partnerships with teen parents? Where are there challenges? What do you think is unique about building partnerships with teen parents?
10. As panelists suggest, working with extended family is an important part of working with teen parents. How do you create individualized partnerships with extended family members in your work with teens?
11. What other ideas do you hear from teen parents in this webcast about how to build effective partnerships with them?
12. What ideas from parents and panelists can you use to enhance the partnerships you build with teen parents?

Teaching and Learning:

13. John and Jennifer talked about the importance of the infancy and toddlerhood for laying foundations for school readiness. How do you currently support teen parents in their important role as their children's first and primary nurturers, advocates, caregivers and educators?
14. What do you hear from teen parents in this webcast say about how to support them in this role?
15. What ideas from parents and panelists can you use to enhance your program's ability to support teens in this role?

Community Partnerships:

16. What community organizations and resources do you see as particularly important in serving teen parents? How have you engaged these partners already?
17. What community partners do the teen parents in this webcast identify as important resources for them? What do they identify as important ways that staff can support them in accessing necessary resources?
18. What ideas from parents and panelists can you use to enhance your program's ability to support teens in accessing necessary services?

What Do the Teen Parents in Your Program Think?

After the webcast, make a plan to talk with teen parents in your program. Ask them for their feedback on the way your program engages them. Use the following questions, and/or ask your own. Consider how to help parents feel safe in sharing their honest opinions and ideas.

Program Environment:

Take them on a tour of your program environment. Is this a comfortable/welcoming space for them? Why or why not?

How would they describe the emotional environment for your program? What drew them in?

Family Partnerships:

How do the teen parents in your program describe their partnerships with staff?

Teaching and Learning:

What do they see as their role in their children's development and learning?

How have/can program staff do to help young parents know their important role in their children's learning and development?

Community Partnerships:

What community resources are important to them? How can you help them access those resources?

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Head Start Program Performance Standards

To access all of the Head Start Program Performance Standards online, please visit the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) at <http://www.eclkc.acf.hhs.gov> and click on the link located on the left side of the page, under Head Start Act.