Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment

Version 1

Early Childhood National Centers

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Parent, Family and Community Engagement

This document was originally developed with funds from Grant #90HC0003 and reprinted with funds from Grant #90HC0014 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Office of Child Care, and by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. *This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.*

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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 then 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***. Soon to be known in short-hand as the "PFCE Framework," this research-based tool helps us to see 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.

To support your program along a journey toward new heights of engagement, we have collaborated with the Office of Head Start to create ***Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment***. It is aligned with the PFCE Framework and provides a series of thought-provoking questions to spark your thinking about what the PFCE Framework means in practice. The descriptions of practices and the reflective questions will help you identify what you are doing, celebrate your work, and consider what more you might do and how best to do it. 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.

This is the first in a series of tools to help you make parent, family, and community engagement live and breathe in every part of your program leading toward systemic, integrated and comprehensive approaches that have a strong potential for meeting family and child outcomes. Although 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, it is still a work in progress.

As you think through these first questions, we invite you to share your ideas with us. How can we expand beginning a PFCE assessment into a useful resource for assessment of your work? We encourage you to share examples of your successes and challenges in the area of parent, family and community engagement to bring the content to life. Stories, photos, quotes and videos are all welcomed. 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. ***(Please send them to the NCPFCE at NCPFCE@childrens.harvard.edu.)***

Our hope is that as you ***Take a Moment to Think*** you will be inspired with a renewed spirit of collaboration 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 parent, family and community engagement practices.

NCPFCE Leadership Team and Staff

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.*

How You Can Bring the OHS Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program

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 of low-income children show that high family involvement offsets the risks of children growing up in low-income households and households with low parent 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. Your work is important and when you work hand-in-hand with families to build trusting relationships, you help families support their child in reaching their fullest potential.

As a field, we are increasingly learning that it's 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 changes to practices and behaviors that contribute to better outcomes for children and families. Instead, for Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs to reach their full potential in supporting child and family growth, development and well-being, PFCE practices need to be incorporated into everything that your program is and does. The OHS PFCE Framework helps us understand why this matters. It encourages programs to embed PFCE practices within the foundations of the program (program leadership, continuous improvement, and professional development) as well as the program impact areas (program environment, family partnerships, teaching and learning, and community partnerships).

Equally important is to consider the depth of your PFCE practices. ***Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment*** prompts thinking about ways that you can continuously deepen PFCE practices to reach levels of engagement that may unlock new opportunities for families, communities and your program, too. What more can you do to build trusting relationships with families that result in stronger child and family outcomes? Consider how you move from sharing information with families to co-creating experiences and learning opportunities with them. Similarly, consider how you engage your community in new and deeper ways beyond accessing resources. Test new heights of engagement where parents and staff take actions that strengthen the fabric of the community. Consider what more you can do to embrace the notion of continuous learning and improvement and to make it part of the culture of your program. What changes can your program make across the foundation and impact areas to shift the experience of using data – from an accountability burden to a valued asset? How can your program use continuous learning and improvement practices as a tool for uncovering challenges and stimulating innovation?

This document will more fully describe the program foundations and impact areas and prompt you to consider your practices and opportunities 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 *Raikes, H., Luze, G., Brooks-Gunn, J., Raikes, 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.*

Key Definitions and Principles: A Review

Before we move ahead to talk about ways that you can bring the PFCE Framework to your program, we should pause to review some key definitions and principles that have always been important to HS/EHS and are even more important today as the families and communities you are working with are increasingly faced by multiple forms of adversity. 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. Please ***Take a Moment to Think*** about the definitions.

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, and is a shared responsibility with all those who support children's learning.

5 *Source: 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? At a minimum, 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, established protocol that reflects a commitment to engagement and an organizational culture that prioritizes families.

PFCE is systemic, integrated, and comprehensive.

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, 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.

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

POSITIVE, GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS

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 IMPACT AREAS

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
- Collaborative relationships for comprehensive services

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

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.

Families as Advocates and Leaders
Parents and families participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

CHILD OUTCOMES

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

Getting Started

Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment takes you through the first step of bringing the PFCE Framework to your program. This step is focused on thinking together and talking about the PFCE Framework, what it means, what it really means, and where your program is in the process of moving toward systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE. To take this first step, you'll need to bring together your stakeholders – program leadership, staff, families and community partners. Together you can review the PFCE Framework and use this self-assessment process to guide reflection and discussion. In doing this, you will begin to:

- develop a common understanding of the program foundations and program impact areas and how PFCE practices can be embedded throughout your program;
- gather and review data/information on what your program is already doing;
- talk about where your program is along a continuum of practice strategies;
- spark new ideas and creative thinking of what you might like to try to do; and
- take risks and dare to innovate – your children, families and staff will all benefit.

Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment can be used as part of your current efforts to regularly assess the PFCE aspects of your program and engage in continuous learning and improvement. It should become a helpful tool for you to celebrate your work, to face your challenges, and to find inspiration for trying out new approaches. Remember that you are not alone in this endeavor. Your community is an important source of social networks and service agencies. Have them join with you in continuously deepening PFCE practices to reach levels of engagement that will unlock new opportunities for families, the community and your program.

Reflecting on the PFCE Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas

This section will take you through each of the program foundation and program impact areas presented in the PFCE Framework, further defining them. It is designed to spark your thinking about what you are doing now and what you might want to do in the future to advance your PFCE practices in an effort to enhance outcomes for children and families.

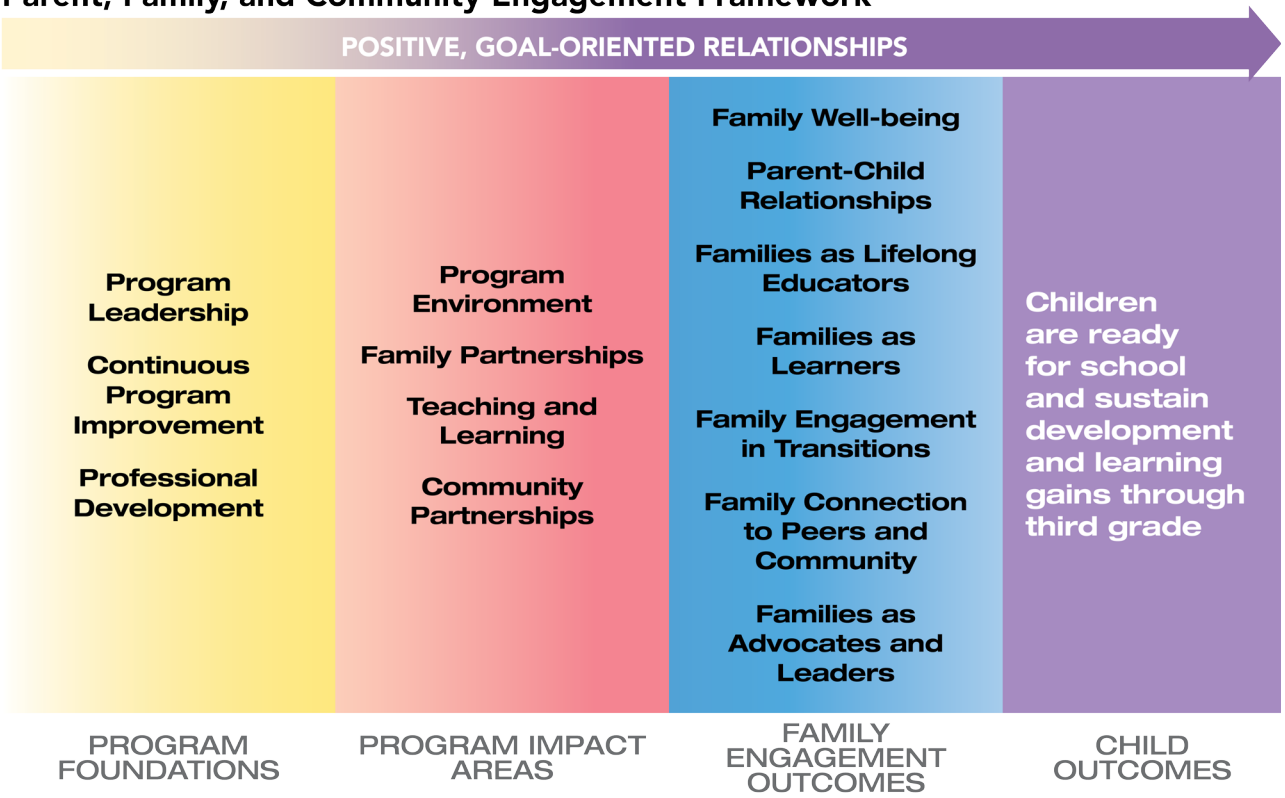
Before we look at the specific foundation and impact areas, let's ***Take a Moment to Think*** about the overall PFCE Framework, about how all of its parts come together.

Take a Moment to Think...

about your program's PFCE efforts in light of the PFCE Framework priorities.

- Do you adopt a systemic, integrated and comprehensive approach?
- Do leaders communicate the value, goals and performance expectations of PFCE?
- Does staff focus on family goals and use data for continuous learning and improvement?
- Do you provide ongoing training and support so that all staff and volunteers develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to partner with families?
- Does your program create a welcoming, respectful and culturally and linguistically responsive environment?
- Does staff engage families to co-develop goals and strategies that promote family well-being, positive parenting, families as lifelong educators and learners, family engagement in transitions, connections to peers and community, and families as advocates and leaders?
- Do you ensure that families have opportunities to promote child development and learning in the home, early childhood programs and transitions to new learning environments?
- Do you build community partnerships that focus on achieving family and child outcomes?

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



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.

Taken a step further, ***program leadership*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE relates to leaders creating an environment that supports:

- ***Ambitious goals and high expectations.*** The Director, the Governing Board, Policy Council and management team all have a clear vision and set ambitious goals for PFCE. They actively ensure the program is designed and implemented in a way that supports the practices that are proven to enhance PFCE.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking include program leadership moving:

From	To
Involving staff and families in parent, family, and community engagement efforts...	Mobilizing staff and families to document the progress and contributions of staff and families in promoting the well-being of their children.
Supporting staff to work with families in defining goals for their time in Head Start...	Expanding parent engagement to include setting and achieving long-term goals and advocating for their children beyond HS/EHS.
Engaging community partners in goal-setting for program families...	Mobilizing community-wide coalitions to set and meet goals for all children and families.

- ***Collaborative decision-making.*** When program leadership is committed to meaningful engagement, a vital message is sent to families, staff and community partners that they matter and are critical partners in program decision-making. Progress is made when leaders move from supporting decision-making by leadership to expanding opportunities for collaborative decision-making with families and community partners.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking include program leadership moving:

From	To
Engaging staff in collaborative decision-making...	Expanding opportunities for decision-making with families.
Supporting staff in developing goals with families for their time in the program...	Working with families to develop long-term goals as they transition from HS/EHS.
Providing training for parents on being effective advocates...	Working with community partners to provide parents with ongoing training for advocacy.

Parent, family, and community engagement is a shared priority for all staff.
With the commitment to engagement established, program leadership works in partnership with parents, families, staff and the community to implement practices that support engagement. All program leaders create policies, practices and a pervasive program spirit that encourages and rewards PFCE.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking include program leadership moving:

From	To
Promoting PFCE practice...	Being sure staff understand and value the connection between improving parent/family engagement and enhancing child development and school readiness.
Communicating clear expectations for supporting PFCE...	Demonstrating and modeling their commitment to PFCE in their everyday interactions.
Ensuring that staff workloads do not interfere with partnering with parents and families...	Using data on the number, frequency and quality of staff interactions with parents to reallocate resources and staff as needed.

Take a Moment to Think...

about your **program's leadership**.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how the leadership in your program can best support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- Does your program have a stated vision of PFCE that incorporates ambitious goals and high expectations?
- How is your vision of PFCE shared with staff and families and integrated into the daily life of your program?
- How do you measure your progress in moving toward this vision?
- How do you engage in collaborative decision-making with families, staff and community partners?
- How do you build a strong and meaningful commitment to PFCE as a priority for all staff members?

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

Taken a step further, ***continuous improvement*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***Using Data about Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Efforts to Make Decisions*** Program leadership makes use of regular assessments, data and benchmarks to inform program decision-making and actions to improve goal-directed and positive relationships with parents, families and communities. Leadership is committed to making progress on PFCE, reinforces the importance of change and improvement, and establishes an expectation of results.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking on continuous improvement include practices that move:

From	To
Basing program assessment on PFCE policies and regulations...	Expanding program assessment to include progress on PFCE outcomes and goals.
Collecting data on child and family outcomes separately...	Examining the connections between child and family outcomes.
Focusing on PFCE efforts of program staff...	Applying continuous improvement more broadly by engaging early care and education programs and providers in the community.
Using program and community data to inform continuous improvement...	Redesigning programs in response to program and community data.

Take a Moment to Think…

about **continuous improvement** in your program.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how continuous improvement can be used to support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- How do you define and document progress in PFCE relationships and practices in your program?
- How do you collect and use data on progress in all seven OHS Parent & Family Engagement Outcomes (family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement in transitions, family connections to peers and community and families as advocates and leaders)?
- How do you seek feedback from parents, families and community partners to inform your continuous improvement efforts?
- How is the data you gather used to inform change in your community?

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, but professional development focuses uniquely on staff roles in the program. To have 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. It also helps in cross-service area teams, such as teaching, family services, and home visiting.

Taken a step further, ***professional development*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***High quality training for all staff.*** All staff members receive ongoing support and training to engage parents and families.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking include moving professional development practices:

From	To
Providing training on PFCE...	Using data from child assessments and family partnership agreements to adjust training so that it builds on current staff skills, knowledge, and dispositions and helps them achieve child and family outcomes.
Offering support and supervision of staff on PFCE practices...	Measuring the effectiveness of PFCE professional development opportunities and using this information to improve professional development activities.

- ***Cross-service area teams.*** Staff members come together regularly as a "community of learners," finding mutual support to apply learning from training into practice and to gain new insights from working in cross-service area teams (e.g., family services, teaching and home visiting). Support staff and parents are also members of the team.

An example of change to spark your thinking includes professional development moving:

From	To
Separate training for different staff departments (e.g., family services, teaching, home visiting, health)...	Community-wide training focused on coordination and collaboration that will support child and family well-being.

- ***Career pathways and recognition.*** Professional development is comprehensive and includes training, supervision, support, recognition and information about career options related to PFCE.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking include the focus on career pathways and recognition moving:

From	To
Developing the skills of staff in PFCE...	Placing them on the pathway toward career development in fields related to working with children and families.
Recognizing staff, volunteers and parents for their individual work...	Recognizing and celebrating cross-service area and cross-agency collaboration in service of young children and families.

Take a Moment to Think...

about **professional development** in your program.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how professional development can support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- What high quality training do you provide to enhance the effectiveness of all staff members in engaging parents and community partners and promoting PFCE outcomes?
- How do your professional development efforts help staff apply what they learn to their everyday interactions with children, families and each other?
- How do your professional development efforts support effective cross-service area staff teams?
- What opportunities do you provide for staff and parents to develop career pathways in PFCE?
- How do you measure your effectiveness in providing PFCE professional development?

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 families and communities and with each other. 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.

Taken a step further, ***program environment*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***Welcoming and inviting setting.*** A welcoming program environment invites family participation in activities that support the achievement of family outcomes. This program impact area fosters family connection to peers and community, the development of advocacy and leadership skills and supports families in becoming lifelong educators of their children.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about a welcoming and inviting setting include moving:

From	To
Providing a safe and clean space...	Partnering with families to co-create program areas that are more welcoming and favorable for families to socialize.
Creating informal opportunities for parents to form connections...	Using data to identify common family goals and co-creating with families opportunities for group learning and networking.
Informing families about volunteer opportunities...	Tracking volunteer involvement as well as the effects of volunteering on the achievement of family goals.

- ***Cultural and linguistic responsiveness.*** All families feel valued, respected and welcomed by all program staff. Together, staff and families work to be culturally and linguistically respectful and to promote parent/family peer support systems.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about cultural and linguistic responsiveness include moving:

From	To
Affirming respect for families' culture and language...	Engaging families in decision-making about culturally and linguistically responsive practices.
Sharing information in the language(s) of families...	Soliciting family participation in designing culturally appropriate informational materials.
Providing culturally responsive parenting materials and children's books and games...	Engaging families in co-creating or co-selecting these learning resources.

- ***System of regular communication with families.*** Families participate in co-creating processes of two-way communication and relationship-building between staff and families.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about communication with families include moving:

From	To
Offering multiple communication methods...	Co-designing with families methods and processes for effective communication.
Setting confidentiality policies...	Staff engaging regularly in reflective practice and supervision around ethics boundaries and demonstrating appropriate practices.

Take a Moment to Think...

about your ***program's environment***.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how your program's environment can support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- What does your program do to make the physical environment inviting to parents and other family members?
- How does your program help families get to know one another? How do you help families create networks of support?
- How are families actively involved in volunteering? How does their volunteering impact their family and child outcomes?
- How do you ensure that your program respects the cultural and linguistic diversity of participating families?
- How would you characterize communication and relationship-building among leadership, staff and families?
- How do you document and assess your efforts in building an environment where families are welcome, valued and respected?

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.

Family Partnerships

Families work with staff to identify and achieve their goals and aspirations. To make an impact in the area of family partnerships, staff and families build ongoing, respectful and goal-oriented relationships. This means identifying and acting on family goals and aspirations and using program and community supports and resources to promote progress on family and child development goals.

Taken a step further, ***family partnerships*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***Families are partners in developing and achieving the goals in their family plans.*** Families work with staff to identify and achieve their goals.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about family partnerships include moving:

From	To
Staff working in partnership with families to develop family plans...	Families taking the lead in developing plans with the support of staff.
Staff and families communicating regularly about family plans...	Families taking pride in tracking data on progress.
Leadership and staff notifying families of available HS/EHS services...	Staff and families collaborating with community partners to identify and share information about community resources.
Staff following up with families about their experiences in accessing services...	Families and staff documenting family experiences to improve access to services for families in the future.
Staff working with families to identify obstacles to obtaining services...	Staff and families developing strategies to overcome barriers so they become lifelong advocates for themselves and their children.

- ***Respectful, trusting relationships between staff and parents.*** Together, staff and families build ongoing respectful and goal-oriented relationships.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about relationships include moving:

From	To
Leadership discussing the importance of respectful, trusting relationships with parents...	Leadership having systems in place to strengthen staff, family and child relationships program-wide.
Staff welcoming families into the setting...	Staff and families identifying program-wide opportunities to engage families that are nurturing and reflective of family culture and strengths.
Staff providing data on child development to families...	Staff first asking families about their perceptions, perspectives and feelings of their children and weaving that into goals that are co-developed with families and tracked over time.
Staff discussing challenges in working with families...	Staff receiving training and coaching to develop strategies for recognizing family strengths and family challenges as an opportunity to develop stronger relationships with families.

Take a Moment to Think…

about **family partnerships** in your program.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how family partnerships can support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- How do families and staff work together to develop family and child development goals and plans?
- How do you know when staff and families are achieving goals, experiencing success, and managing challenges?
- How do families and staff work together to identify and develop strategies and services to identify and address the challenges of families living with adversity (i.e., poverty, unemployment, homelessness, violence, depression and mental illness)?
- How does staff support families in seeking/accessing community services, including families and their children that need unique supports and resources?
- How do staff and families work together to support parents in identifying and participating in opportunities for their own education, training and career development?
- How does staff build relationships to foster family members becoming volunteers, advocates and leaders?

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, and together, staff and families use this information to set and work toward goals for the child in the program, home and community.

Taken a step further, ***teaching and learning*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***Parents partner with teachers to support children's learning and development.*** Learning is enhanced when families and programs work together to create meaningful learning opportunities, both in the program and at home.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about teaching and learning include moving from:

From	To
Recognizing the importance of a strengths-based approach with families...	Engaging individual family strengths in children's learning.
Welcoming families to observe and participate...	Observing and discussing children together as an integral part of planning learning activities in the program and at home.
Providing information on learning...	Creating opportunities for families to participate in activities that mirror their child's learning.
Informing families about assessment...	Creating a picture of the whole child together and using this collective information to drive decisions.

- ***Supporting families as lifelong educators.*** The unique role of families in learning is recognized and valued. Families are actively encouraged as they contribute to learning at home, in programs and in the larger community.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about families as their children's lifelong educators include moving:

From	To
Choosing and sharing appropriate materials and information for home activities...	Working with individual families to expand learning opportunities at home.
Inviting parents to learn from each other and staff in the program...	Supporting the leadership of families in resource sharing activities.
Providing information about community resources...	Collaborating with families on the development of unique materials to be shared among the community.

- ***Supporting positive parent-child relationships.*** The parent-child relationship is recognized as a unique and central component of children's learning.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about parent-child relationships include moving:

From	To
Inviting parents and families to observe staff interactions with children...	Partnering with families to enrich all interactions with children.
Understanding challenging child behaviors and communicating with families...	Creating strategies together that support the child's healthy development and social competence.

- ***Support for transitions.*** Programs and communities see successful transitions for all families as an important and integral part of family well-being and ongoing learning and development.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about transitions include moving:

From	To
Leadership addressing transitions related to regulations and policies to...	Staff building partnerships with parents and creating systems together that prioritize transition efforts.
Providing families with information and training about transitions...	Collaborating with community partners to systematize information-sharing, training and partnering on effective transitions for all families.
Working with schools and other programs to develop school readiness goals and to share assessment data...	Developing a shared commitment among families, HS/EHS staff and community partners for achieving ambitious goals and eliminating the achievement gap.
Providing ongoing professional development for staff to support successful transitions...	Developing and delivering comprehensive training that link transitions to community goals for all children.

Take a Moment to Think…

about your program's **teaching and learning** activities.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how teaching and learning activities can support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- How do all staff engage with families to strengthen positive parent-child relationships and support families as lifelong educators?
- How does your program individualize opportunities for each family to be involved in their children's learning?
- How does your program prepare families to understand and use data to support their child's healthy development and school readiness?
- How do you engage with families, schools and community partners to facilitate successful transitions to new learning environments?

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.

Gaetanne
Justin
Glue
Bethany

Community Partnerships

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, link families and children to needed services, and support successful transitions for children and families.

Taken a step further, ***community engagement*** within the context of systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE means:

- ***Commitment to Social Support Systems within the Program and Larger Community.*** Parents, staff and program leadership contribute to the well-being of the program and other community organizations. They serve on boards, volunteer and advocate for quality culturally-responsive services. This strengthens the overall fabric of the community for all residents.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about community engagement include moving:

From	To
Leadership and staff providing information about community resources and opportunities...	Leadership, staff and families collaborating with community partners to design and improve services to respond to family culture, goals and needs.
Leadership and staff providing opportunities for families to develop relationships with peers...	Leadership, staff and families partnering to build support systems and share information and resources program-wide.
Families being assisted to develop social support systems during program and community events...	Families being encouraged to lead events that bring together families in the program and the community.

- ***Collaborative Relationships for Comprehensive Services.*** Program staff and families collaborate with community health, mental health, social service and school partners. They build peer support systems, link families and children to needed services, and support successful transitions for children and families.

Some examples of change to spark your thinking about community engagement include moving:

From	To
Staff and families participating in discussions with program leadership about ways to make the program more responsive to family goals and needs...	Staff, families and leadership collaborating with community partners to create a support system to respond to family culture, goals and needs in the community.
Staff engaging in community partnerships to meet family needs...	Staff, families and communities designing and participating in collaborations that build on family and community strengths and respond to family goals and needs.
Community partnerships promoting the importance of family leadership, communication and advocacy skills...	To community partnerships engaging parent leaders who model effective leadership and communication skills and advocate for other parents to take on leadership roles.

Take a Moment to Think...

about **community partnerships** in your program.

Reflecting on these questions may help you focus on how community partnerships can support systemic, integrated and comprehensive PFCE:

- How do you build community partnerships that connect families to peers and social support systems?
- How do you build community partnerships to provide relationships and comprehensive services to foster progress for families and children?
- How do you support families and staff in contributing to their community as volunteers, board members and advocates?

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.

Moving Forward

Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment is meant to help you start thinking about the changes you can make in partnership with program staff, families and community partners to meet the promise of the PFCE Framework. Change can be exciting. For many of us, change is also unsettling. For example, it may be a challenge to:

- find time for busy team members to meet;
- come to consensus on priority areas to address;
- 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 future when parents, families and community partners are engaged and the benefits for children, families, the community and program staff and leadership are realized;
- 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.

This document 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 PFCE and the lives of the children and families you serve.

We hope that you can use your thoughts, conversations with your staff and community partners, and the data you collect to inform your work as you continue with the planning and decision-making you do every day to achieve effective parent, family, and community engagement.

Now that you've read *Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment* all the way through, it may help to consider the ways that each of the program foundations and the program impact areas can connect with and strengthen each other. Use this space to record your ideas about your program's next steps.

Resources

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Acknowledgments

Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a PFCE Assessment was developed by the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement for the Office of Head Start. This Center is a partnership between Brazelton Touchpoints Center at Children's Hospital Boston and the Harvard Family Research Project, with the Council of Chief State School Officers, National PTA, and Save the Children as active members of the NCPFCE Leadership Team.

Key contributors to this work include Leadership Team members Catherine Ayoub, Elena Lopez, Thomas Schultz, and Joshua D. Sparrow and staff members including Lisa Desrochers, Amy Dombro, Sue Heilman, and Deborah Stark. Our thanks also to Kiersten Beigel, OHS; NCCLR; NCQTL, and over 20 leaders of Head Start and Early Head Start programs around the country for their thoughtful reviews of this work. September 2011.

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