

Developing a PFCE Learning Community: Starter Toolkit



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
**Parent, Family, and
Community Engagement**

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This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0003 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement.

We are grateful to our colleagues and the families in the Head Start and Early Head Start community for their contributions. Special thanks to the Head Start and Early Head Start programs who participated in the NCPFCE Learning Community.



Dear Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Childhood Program Leaders,

We're delighted that you're interested in building a learning community focused on parent, family, and community engagement. This toolkit grew out of our experience hosting our own National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) Learning Community.

The NCPFCE Learning Community was composed of eight Head Start and Early Head Start programs across the country interested in engaging in a community of practice to strengthen their parent, family, and community engagement work. The toolkit incorporates the wisdom of our NCPFCE Learning Community members and similar groups from across Head Start and Early Head Start.

We hope to extend the practices of active learning and engagement that were a part of these communities to you and your programs. The toolkit is a resource for leaders in all roles—directors, staff, parents, community partners—to bring members of your programs and community together as a group to explore and enhance parent, family, and community engagement.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of families and their children.

Sincerely,

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

Developing a PFCE Learning Community: Starter Toolkit



Introduction

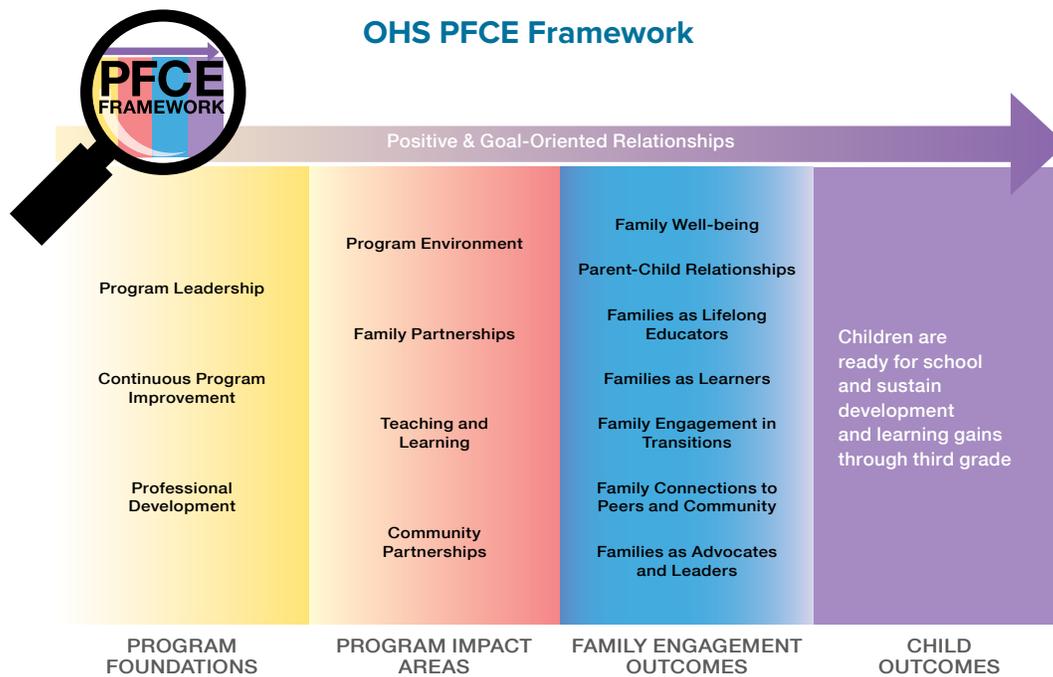
We are excited to bring you this new resource *Developing a PFCE Learning Community: Starter Toolkit*, designed to help you develop a learning community focused on parent, family, and community engagement.

A learning community—also called a community of practice—is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do. It is a way for them to improve their work as they interact regularly.¹ Mutual learning ties the learning community together. Participants commit to learning from one another to enhance what they do.

How can the toolkit help you?

Parent, family, and community engagement (PFCE) activities are most successful when they are integrated into the life of a program. This means that PFCE work needs to be everyone’s business. The Office of Head Start (OHS) PFCE Framework is a road map for programs to create goals, objectives, and strategies to make progress toward expected outcomes for families and children. This leads to better family and child outcomes.

This toolkit can help you bring managers, teachers, family service staff, parents, and community members together to explore and reflect on PFCE related topics and the different components of the PFCE Framework.



1. This definition is from <http://wenger-trayner.com/theory/>

Introduction (cont)

A learning community is a great way to help with PFCE program planning and goal setting. For example, you might start a learning community to focus on your program's progress toward PFCE program goals. Or you might get started with a learning community in the fifth year of your grant to consider what PFCE goals and objectives you want to prioritize for a new grant.

The exercises in this toolkit come from a human-centered design approach.² This approach creates and tests new ideas, keeping the focus on the people who will use the product. Human-centered design encourages all participants to have a voice in the design process. In this way, the toolkit includes opportunities for all learning community members to learn from one another.

Who can use this toolkit?

This toolkit is a resource for program staff or community members interested in facilitating or organizing learning communities. The goal of this toolkit is to help facilitators initiate a learning community in their program. This guide can be used with and adapted to a variety of meeting formats: virtual, mixed-setting, or in-person.

How is the toolkit organized?

This toolkit includes four sections. Each section has an overview and additional resources that are intended to help you, as the organizer, better understand the topics each section addresses. Each section also offers an activity that the learning community can work on together as a team.

- **Section 1:** Forming a Learning Community—this section is designed to help you form your learning community and build trust among members.
- **Section 2:** Knowing Your Families—this section will help you learn more about the families you work with by placing their needs and experiences at the center of your planning processes. This section can be adapted to help a learning community get to know the person or people at the center of their learning community activities.
- **Section 3:** Planning Your Work With Families—this section offers activities for your learning community to consider what services they want to implement based on three questions: Are they Desirable? Feasible? Sustainable?
- **Section 4:** Focusing Your Learning Community on Data and Program Planning—this section will help you use data to improve your program planning around parent, family, and community engagement.

2. Human-centered design (HCD) is a method that is used to develop new products, services, environments, organizations, and modes of interaction. It is human-centered because it is focused on people – those that will be affected by the products, services, environments, organizations, and modes of interaction – and their needs, dreams, and behaviors (IDEO, n.d.). The HCD approach builds on Head Start and Early Head Start's long people-focused history of engaging families, recording their hopes and dreams, and supporting children's learning and development.

Section 1:

Forming a Learning Community



Overview

What is a learning community?

A learning community is a group of people who agree to work on a shared project and learn from one another over time. Members can be from the same program or from different programs, depending on the goal of the learning community.

- Learning community members:
 - participate in group discussions and reflect on program practices,
 - identify obstacles and try out new approaches to overcome them, and
 - engage in strategy development, learning, and continuous improvement.

Why start a learning community?

- A learning community is a way for a group of people to engage in ongoing learning together. By sharing and discussing successful practices and tough challenges, members will increase their own learning, gain new perspectives and approaches, and improve practices.
- Learning community members can share the skills, knowledge, effective strategies, and practices they've learned with other programs, colleagues, and families.
- Learning communities can also be used to focus on particular practices related to the OHS PFCE Framework. For example, a program might convene a learning community to:
 - Understand the OHS PFCE Framework
 - Engage with NCPFCE materials aligned with the PFCE Framework (see related resources on page 12)
 - Explore a particular PFCE Family Engagement Outcome
 - Integrate data into PFCE work to promote continuous improvement
 - Generate ideas for improving family partnerships and father engagement
 - Investigate different teaching and learning approaches that better engage families
 - Choose a new child, family, or classroom assessment

Developing Group Guidelines: Example from the Field

The Milpitas Unified School District in California developed the following ground rules for its task force meetings.

Brevity: Go for honesty and depth, but don't go on and on.

Curiosity: Seek to understand rather than persuade.

Diversity: Invite and honor diversity of opinion.

Equality: Encourage all voices to be heard.

Listening: Respect one another.

Sincerity: Speak from the heart.

For more information visit
<http://www.musd.org>

Overview (cont)

Regardless of your learning community goal(s), you want to make sure that everybody agrees about the purpose of the learning community.

How does a learning community work?

- A learning community centers on mutual, jointly developed learning. Everyone's ideas and experiences have value.
- The creation and use of a shared set of expectations, or group guidelines, is essential for a successful learning community. Group guidelines are explicit agreements that build openness and trust among members. Effective group guidelines often address the following questions:
 - How often do we meet?
 - How should we communicate and give feedback to each other?
 - What should we do if a team member cannot attend a meeting?
 - How do we handle disagreements?

Who might you invite to be part of your learning community?

Although all members of a learning community have an equal voice, as the organizer of the learning community you will take charge of bringing the group together. Who you invite will be based largely on your goals and what you'd like to accomplish. For example:

- If you are hoping to initiate a discussion among families and staff with different responsibilities related to family outcomes, you might invite families, teachers, home visitors, directors, and family service staff to participate.
- If you are hoping to broaden your program's dialogue about family and community engagement, you might build a team that includes families, teachers, family service staff, community members, and Head Start or Early Head Start colleagues from other programs.

Participants in a learning community focused on parent, family, and community engagement work could include:

- Head Start/Early Head Start staff
- Parent leaders
- Policy council members
- Community partners

To help you build your team and decide who to invite, refer to *Worksheet 1: Building Your Team* on page 8. As the organizer, you might complete this worksheet on your own or with other people who are helping you launch the learning community.



Reflection Tool

Worksheet 1: Building Your Team

Use this worksheet on your own or with other people to help you build your learning community.

Step	Consideration	Hint
Step 1: Consider your goals	<p>What are your goals for your LC? What would you like to accomplish?</p>	<p>Consider the role that you might want your Policy Council to play in your learning community.</p>
Step 2. Generate a list of potential participants	<p>Who will you include in your LC? We recommend 8-10 people. Choose a number that works for you. Four or more members is ideal.</p> <p>Consider including: Management Policy Council members Staff Parents Community Members</p>	<p>How can you use a spot or two on your LC team to cultivate new and sustain existing relationships with community partners that provide family services?</p>
Step 3. Review your team's membership	<p>Does your team represent different perspectives that will help you achieve your goal?</p> <p>Are different ages of children represented? Are different roles (e.g. families, leadership, front-line staff, community partners) represented?</p> <p>Are multiple families with diverse backgrounds included?</p>	<p>Limiting your team can sometimes be hard. Try to make sure that whenever possible you are including members with different perspectives.</p>
Step 4. Invite members to your first meeting	<p>What is the best way to reach out and invite each member?</p> <p>Who will I invite in-person?</p> <p>Who will I call by phone?</p> <p>Who will I send an e-mail?</p>	<p>People have preferences for how they like to communicate with others. You probably already know how most potential members would like to be approached. If you aren't sure try giving them a few options. For example you might say, "I'd like to talk with you about including you in a new idea for our program. How do you prefer that I share more information with you?"</p>



Building Team Trust

Your first learning community meeting will be about establishing team guidelines and building team trust. Follow these 5 steps to prepare, carry out, and reflect on your first meeting.

Time	Materials	Roles
Approximately 45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Printed copies of <i>Worksheet 2: Building Team Guidelines and Trust</i> (page 11)Pens and PencilsFlip Chart, paper, and markers	<p>Facilitator – moves team members through the exercise</p> <p>Timekeeper – keeps team on track to complete the activity in the allotted time</p> <p>Notetaker – records key discussion points for future reference</p>

Get Ready For Your Meeting

1

5–10 minutes

Gather the following materials to bring to the meeting: copies of *Worksheet 1: Building Team Guidelines and Trust*, writing utensils, and a flip chart, paper, and markers.

2

Welcome

5–10 minutes

Invite one of the team members to take notes during the meeting and one member to keep track of time.

Invite each learning community team member to introduce himself or herself. Members might share what role they play in the Head Start or Early Head Start program or in the community. Members can also share what they hope to gain or accomplish by being a part of this learning community.

3

Group Activity

20 minutes

Explain what a learning community is and why you would like members to participate.

Ask the group to establish guidelines for how you will work together successfully. Share that you have a goal to build trusting and respectful relationships.

Distribute *Worksheet 1: Building Team Guidelines and Trust*.

Discuss each question from the worksheet as a group and have one member of the team write responses on a flip chart.

Activity: Building Team Trust (cont)

4

Group Reflection

15 minutes

As a group, take a few minutes to reflect together on the following questions:

- What are you excited about for this learning community team?
- What are the initial benefits of having this team in place?
- Did the group encounter challenges, disagreements, or issues when creating the guidelines? What did the group learn that can help in future discussions?

Decide on a process for sharing information with others in your program, community, state, or region, related to your learning community goals. How can others help or be involved? Who might benefit from your efforts? How will you update others about your team's progress?

Set a date, time, and location (if needed) for your next meeting.

5

Share

Share an announcement about your newly formed learning community with others in your program, community, state, or region, as appropriate. Communicate the purpose of the learning community, membership, and how you plan to inform others about your progress.

Worksheet 2: Building Team Guidelines and Trust

Use this worksheet to guide your discussion about building effective relationships.

Step	Question	Hint
1. Recognize strengths	What are some of your combined strengths as a team?	Review <i>IDEO's Ten Faces of Innovation</i> . Which voices/learning roles are represented on your team? How can you encourage each other to take on new roles to effectively move through the activities in this toolkit and ultimately reach your family engagement outcome(s)?
2. Get commitment from the team	What steps can you take to gain commitment from your team? What supports (e.g., a dedicated space, a dedicated time to meet, materials) do you think you will need?	Make sure all members are in agreement about the goal(s) of the learning community.
3. Decide on methods of communication	How will you communicate as a learning community (e.g., in-person meetings, virtual (web-based) meetings, phone calls, e-mail, or a combination)?	Discuss preferences with team members and avoid assumptions about your team's comfort with and accessibility to the computer.
4. Decide on a facilitation model	What facilitation model do you plan to use (e.g., one steady facilitator, rotating facilitator)? Why? What do you hope to accomplish with this model?	Regardless of what model you choose, we recommend having a point person to lead the overall implementation of your learning community.
5. Set guidelines for respectful discussion	What guidelines will your team adopt so that conversations are respectful?	Successful teams give equal value to all ideas and solutions and welcome all contributions in non-judgmental ways.
6. Talk about what to do when disagreements come up	How will your group handle disagreements if they come up?	Everyone has a preference for how to address disagreements. Look for ways to compromise so that each member feels included, valued, and respected.



Be Informed: Additional Resources

See below for two sets of resources that can help you get to know the people at the center of your learning community: (1) articles and reports about empathy maps and the design thinking process and, (2) resources developed by NCPFCE that focus on relationship-building. You might read these resources on your own or share them with your learning community.

Design-thinking Resources

- Bland, D. (2012, June 25). *Agile coaching tip: What is an empathy map?* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.bigvisible.com/2012/06/what-is-an-empathy-map/>
- Farnworth, D. (n.d.). *Empathy maps: A complete guide to crawling inside your customer's head* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.copyblogger.com/empathy-maps/>
- IDEO and Riverdale Country School. (2012). *Design thinking for educators*. Retrieved from <http://designthinkingforeducators.com/toolkit/>
- Kelley, D. (2002, February). *David Kelley: Human-centered design* [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/david_kelley_on_human_centered_design.html

NCPFCE Resources

- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Building partnerships: Guide to developing relationships with families*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pgor/index.php>
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2013). *Head Start and Early Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies: For staff and supervisors who work with families*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/foundations/ohs-rbc.pdf>



Family Engagement is All About Relationship-Building!

Resource Spotlight

The NCPFCE Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Simulation Series: Boosting School Readiness through Effective Family Engagement provides practical, real-life scenarios on how to keep relationships at the core of your interactions with families. http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/center/pfce_simulation

Section 2:

Getting to Know Your Families



Overview

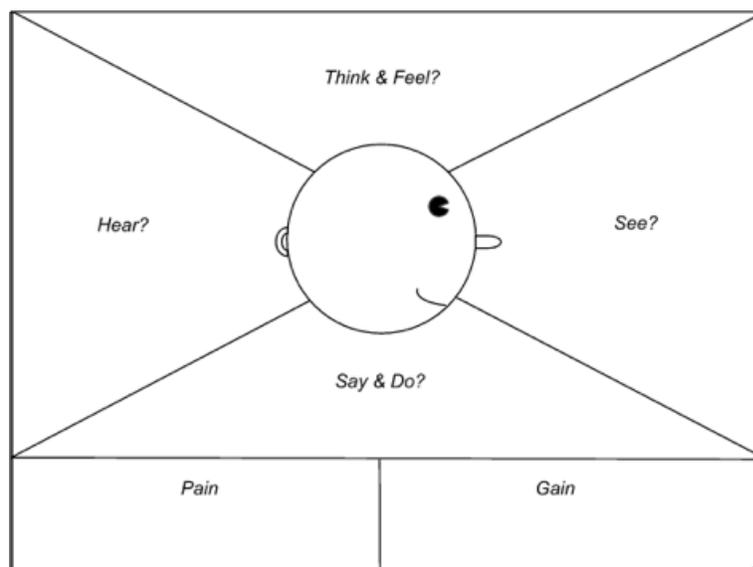
The exercise in this section is an excellent way to get a learning community off the ground. The point is to keep people—their interests, needs, wants, fears, and experiences—at the center. If you look at the PFCE Framework you will see that progress toward better family and child outcomes are the goal for every program. Getting to these outcomes begins with adopting a “human-centered” mindset.

A “human-centered” mindset puts people ahead of programs. Human-centered thinking is about developing empathy and putting yourself in another’s place, imagining what that person feels and experiences.

Once you’ve formed your learning community, the next step is to learn more about your families. Knowing your families is essential! Theodore Roosevelt observed, “Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” You want to show families that you care. And caring about families begins with knowing them.

Program members may have many questions about families. Why don’t families come to our events? How can we help families complete their GEDs (General Education Development) degree? Why are children and families often absent our center? How can we support mothers who experience post-partum depression? How can our home visitors reach more families consistently? How can we better support diverse families? By developing empathy and knowing families, your learning community will be in a stronger position to develop project plans and support families with goal setting.

The group activity in this section focuses on the Empathy Map. An Empathy Map consists of a simple face surrounded by six sections: (1) Think & Feel, (2) Hear, (3) See, (4) Say & Do, (5) Pain, and (6) Gain. It is a tool to help you gain deeper insights into the families you serve.





Empathy Map³

The Empathy Map activity in this section will help your learning community team gain insights about the thoughts and feelings of the families in your program. You may find insights for improving your work with families or others in your program, for example, team members or colleagues. You can also use the *Empathy Map* to reflect on your program activities.

Time	Materials	Roles
Approximately 60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed copies of the <i>Empathy Map</i> provided on page 18.• Data about the family member or family group you will focus on in this meeting.• Sticky notes• Pens• Flip chart paper and markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator – moves team members through the exercise• Timekeeper – keeps team on track to complete the activity in the allotted time• Notetaker – records key discussion points for future reference• Writer – summarizes action steps

Working with a virtual learning community

If your team is spread out across different locations and you need to work via video conference or web interface, you can save your own copy of this digital version of the *Empathy Map* created by David Bland and work electronically on the map: <https://docs.google.com/drawings/d/1IXxZwISoSWySYU5CsPOs8yf4wsUW0S8Qo5kshCVeY5I/edit>

³ This exercise has been adapted from Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business model generation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and Gray, D., Brown, S., & Macanufe, J. (2010). *Gamestorming: A playbook for innovators, rulebreakers, and changemakers*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

Activity: Empathy Map (cont)

1

Get Ready for Your Meeting

5-10 minutes

Gather the following materials to bring to your meeting: copies of the Empathy Map, sticky notes, pens, flip chart paper, and markers. Note: You can also create your own Empathy Map on a piece of large flip chart paper.

2

Welcome

15 minutes

Open the meeting with a quick reflection activity, related to the goals of the learning community. For example, you might ask members to think about a successful family activity their program implemented over the past year. Ask members to share with the group:

1. What was the activity?
2. Why was it successful?

Talk generally about how family engagement initiatives are most successful when they respond to families' interests, show parents that you care, and communicate with families in ways they prefer.

Explain that the Empathy Map is a tool to help you gain deeper insights into the families you serve so that you can answer questions such as:

- Does our work with families offer opportunities to meet their interests?
- Does our work help them address their challenges?
- How do individual family members want to be reached?
- How are we communicating with families?

Activity: Empathy Map (cont)

3

Group Activity

25 minutes

Ask learning community participants to agree on the groups of families they want to enhance their work with. For example, your team can focus on fathers that you would like to bring together for peer-to-peer interactions or families that could be more engaged in reading with their children.

Explain to the learning community that the group should represent types of families (e.g. fathers, active parents, immigrant families, families of children with special needs, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer parents), etc.) rather than one individual family.

Provide each team member with a set of sticky notes and a pen.

Ask each team member to describe—from one family's point of view—their experience, moving through the questions below.

As you move through each question, each member of the team should provide at least one answer to each question on a sticky note and paste it on the Empathy Map on the flip chart paper. It is okay if there are repeat answers. Below are a set of questions to consider:

- **What would the family see?** What does their environment look like? What surrounds them? Who are their friends? What challenges do they encounter at home and at the Head Start or Early Head Start center? What happens at socializations or on home visits?
- **What would the family hear?** What do their friends say? Their other family members? What do they hear from your staff and community partners?
- **What would the family think and feel?** What is important to them? What is meaningful to them? What might keep them up at night? What influences them? What are their strengths? What are they proud of?
- **What would the family say and do?** What are some quotes and defining words you've heard them use? Do you see any conflicts between what they think and feel and what they say and do? How do you interpret that?
- **What might be the family's challenges?** What are their frustrations? What obstacles stand between them and what they want or need to achieve?
- **What would the family gain?** What do they truly want or need to achieve? How do they measure success? What are some strategies they might use to achieve their goals?

Activity: Empathy Map (cont)

4

Group Reflection

10 minutes

After you complete the map, ask team members to summarize what they see. What does this family want? What are their strengths? What forces are motivating them? What might be a challenge for them? What do you still want to know?

As a group, take a few minutes to reflect together on the following questions:

- What did you see? What did you hear?
- How can you use the information about family's strengths and assets? How can you use the information about challenges and frustrations? How can you use this information to work with families to develop meaningful goals?
- How can you apply what you learned from this activity?
- How did the team respond to these questions? What patterns emerged from your answers?

5

Share

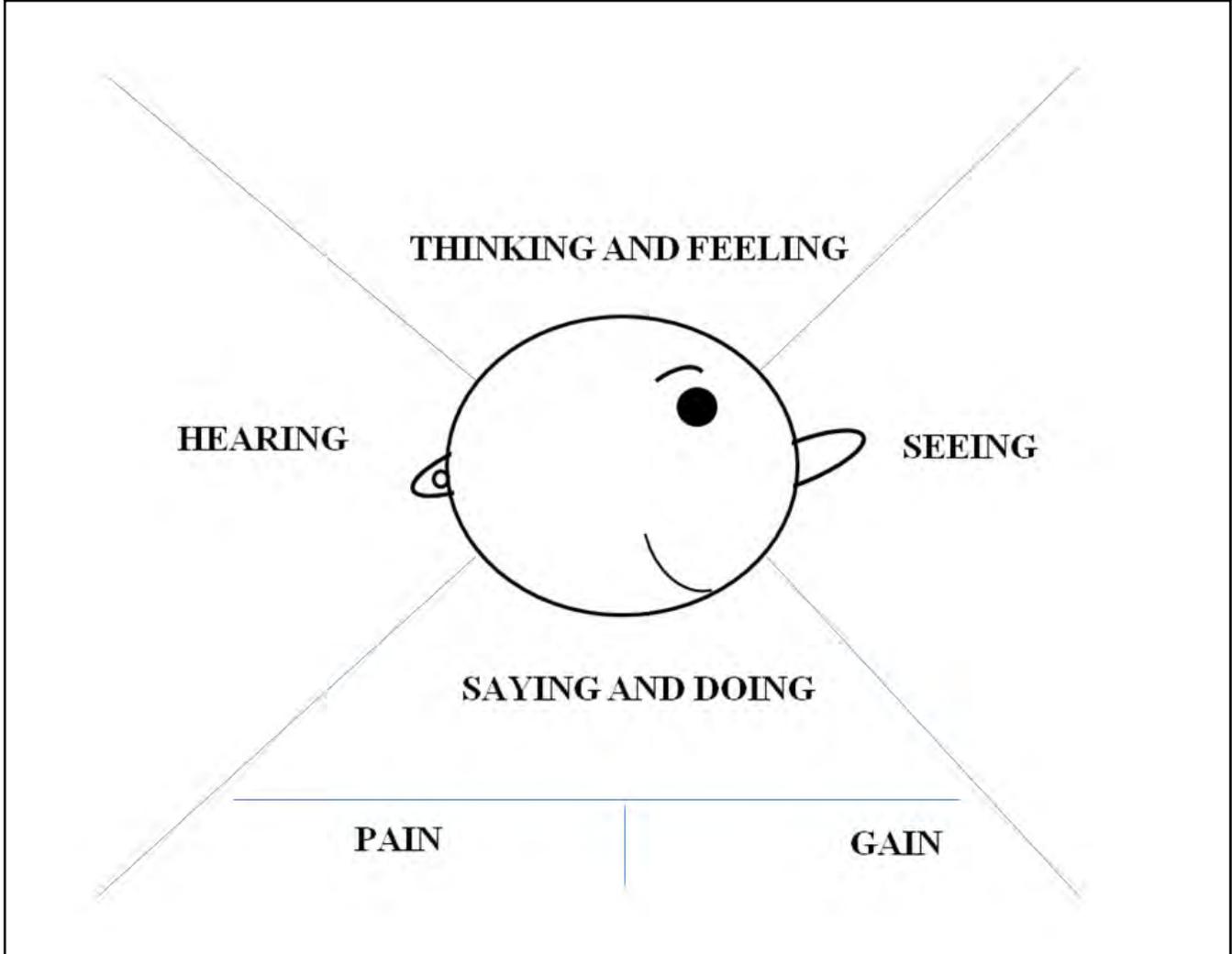
10 minutes

Based on your discussion, ask each member to write one principle (or rule of action) in a sticky note that would enhance your relationships and activities with families. A principle is a behavioral guideline or agreement informed by participants' experiences and feedback. For example, a principle for a learning community focused on father engagement might be that all fathers want to be engaged with their child's learning or that all fathers want their child to be successful.

Collect the sticky notes and write a summary. Share this with team members before the next meeting. Think about what you might want to share with other stakeholders.

At the end of the Empathy Map exercise you will have a set of principles, ideas, or beliefs that will guide your work with families. Keep this set of principles handy as you complete the next activity of your learning community: designing services and activities.

Empathy Map



This image was adapted from Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business model generation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and Gray, D., Brown, S., & Macanuso, J. (2010). *Gamestorming: A playbook for innovators, rulebreakers, and changemakers*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media



Be Informed: Additional Resources

See below for two sets of resources that can help you form your own learning community: (1) articles and reports about the learning community process and, (2) resources developed by the National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) that can serve as background material about family engagement topics. You might read these resources on your own or share them with your learning community.

Learning Community Resources:

- Education Week. (2011). *Spotlight on professional learning communities*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/products/spotlight-professional-learning-communities.html>
- SEDL. (1994). Schools as learning communities. *Issues...about Change*, 4(1). Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues41/Issues_Vol4_No1_1994.pdf
- Wenger-Trayner, E. (n.d.). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. Retrieved from <http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/06-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf>

OHS Resources

Use this resource to explore the PFCE Framework and how Program Foundations, Program Impact Areas, and Family Outcomes contribute to children's school readiness and healthy development.

- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Measuring What Matters: Using Data to Support Family Progress*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters.pdf>
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Using the Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework in your program: Markers of progress*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/ncpfce-markers-of-progress.pdf>
- National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations. (2014). *Foundations for excellence: Planning in Head Start*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/planning-complete-booklet.pdf>



Understand More about the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

Resource Spotlight

Use this resource to explore the PFCE Framework and how Program Foundations, Program Impact Areas, and Family Outcomes contribute to children's school readiness and healthy development.

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2011). *The Head Start, Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/ims/2011/pfce-framework.pdf>

Section 3:

Planning Your Work with Families: Goals, Objectives, and Services/Activities



Overview

Regardless of the purpose of your learning community, you have likely assembled a group to change something about your work, explore a topic, or learn about a new idea. In this section, you will be working on the Program Foundations (yellow column) and Program Impact Areas (pink column) of the PFCE Framework.

Section 2 helped you explore and understand more about families' experiences and feelings. Your learning community can now focus on designing effective plans that target families' interests and needs related to your program's goals and objectives. This section offers your learning community a powerful perspective on your PFCE goals, objectives, and services/activities.

Goals, Objectives, and Services/Activities: Three Key Components of Program Planning

A **goal** is an inspirational statement that describes what you seek to accomplish and the general targets you intend to reach. Goals should be BROAD: Bold and innovative, Responsive, Organization-wide, Aspirational, and Dynamic.

An **objective** is an element of your goal. Objectives specify what your program wants to achieve so you can measure your progress. Objectives should be SMART: Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

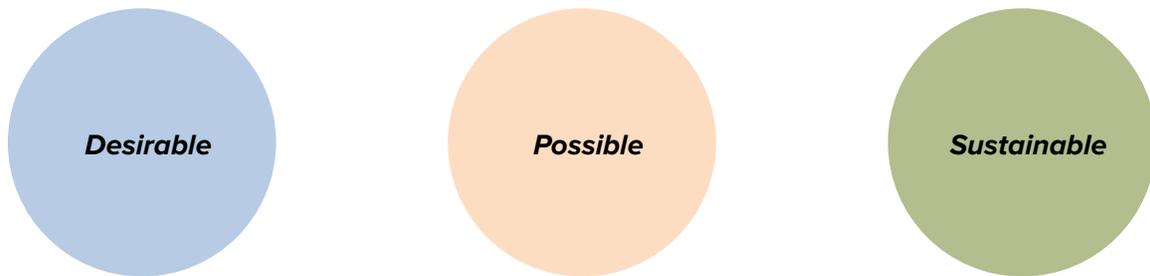
Services and activities should align with your program goals and objectives.

For more information see *Foundations For Excellence: Planning in Head Start* for a detailed discussion of goals, objectives, and services and activities.

Three Lenses for Effective Planning: Desirable, Possible, Sustainable

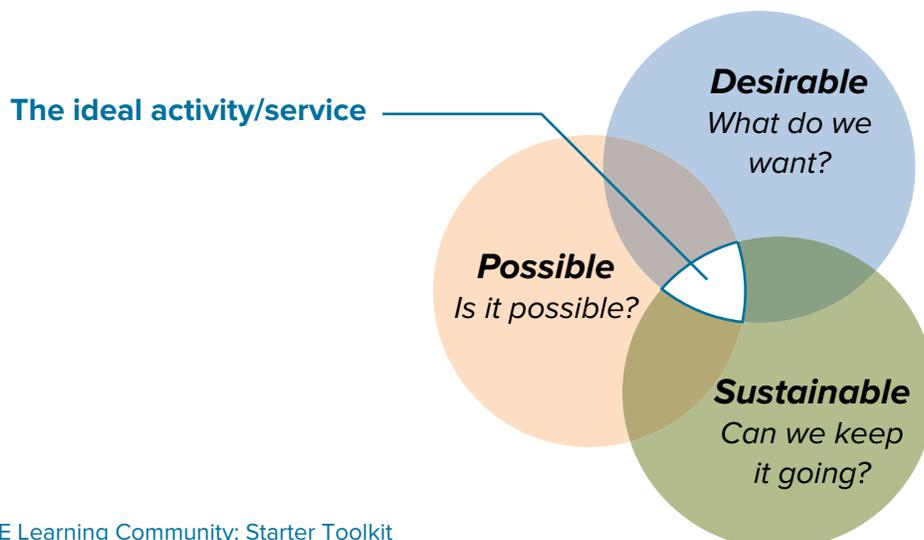
Designers at IDEO (<http://www.ideo.com>) suggest that in order to make program planning processes more effective, you examine your goals, objectives and services to determine whether they are Desirable, Possible and Sustainable.

Note: IDEO is a design organization leader in introducing innovative approaches to planning and problem solving.



Desirable	Possible	Sustainable
Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to respond to families' needs and wants. When a program sets goals, objectives, and services/activities, it is important to ask questions such as: What do our families and staff desire? What are their dreams? What do they need?	Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to be realistic and possible in your organization. They need to be within the capacity of the program and the community.	Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to be sustainable over your project period or until your objective is met.

The most effective goals, objectives, and services are the ones that meet all three of these qualities. As your learning community works on a particular project or initiative, you might want to consider reaching a balance of these three qualities. In other words, you can think of most effective planning when your goals, objectives, and services/activities fall in the intersection of all these three characteristics:





Three Lenses of Good Design

In order for services/activities to be effectively implemented, consider if they are a good fit for your program. One way to approach this is to think whether the services/activities are desirable, possible, and sustainable.



- Desirable: *What do we want?*
- Possible: *Can we do it?*
- Sustainable: *Can we keep it going?*

Time	Materials	Roles
Approximately 75 minutes <i>Note: Ask team members to review Table 1 before the meeting.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed Copies of <i>Table 1: Planning Services and Activities Example</i> (page 26) and <i>Table 2: Planning Services and Activities Template</i> (page 27) • Printed copies of the <i>Three Lenses Venn diagram</i> • Flip Chart paper and markers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator – moves team members through the exercise • Timekeeper – keeps team on track to complete the activity in the allotted time • Notetaker – records key discussion points for future reference • Writer – summarizes action steps



Get Ready for Your Meeting

15 minutes

Gather the following materials to bring to the meeting: Copies of Tables 1 and 2, the Three Lenses Venn Diagram, a flip chart, and markers. Ask team members to review Table 1 before the meeting.

Activity: Three Lenses of Good Design (cont)

2

Welcome

15 minutes

Open the meeting with a quick reflection activity. Ask members to think about a successful family activity their program implemented over the past year. Ask members to share with the group:

- Was the activity **desirable**: something that families wanted or were interested in?
- How was it made **possible**: what did it require in terms of staff time, resources, parents time, etc.?
- Was it **sustainable**: what made the activity sustainable?

Invite one of the team members to take notes during the meeting.

3

Group Activity:

25 minutes

Briefly introduce to the group the three elements to consider in order to achieve effective planning:

Desirable

Possible

Sustainable

Desirable	Possible	Sustainable
Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to respond to families' needs and wants. When a program sets goals, objectives, and services/activities, it is important to ask questions such as: What do our families and our staff desire? What do they need? What are their dreams?	Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to be realistic and possible in your organization. They need to be within the capacity of the program and the community.	Goals, objectives, and services/ activities need to be sustainable over your project period or until your objective is met.

Activity: Three Lenses of Good Design (cont)

Start planning by taking these steps:

- Identify a PFCE goal for your program. *Note: Refer to Table 1 for an example of one program's goals, objectives, and services.*
- Identify an objective for this goal. *Note: Your goal and objective may or may not align with Group Activity 2. But if they do, then review the principles that you developed as you plan your services/ activities.*
- Identify the services or activities that will help you meet your objective.
- Be sure that you have evidence/data to back up why the activity is desirable, possible, and sustainable.
- Use the Venn Diagram (either on the printed copies or drawn on a flip chart) to jot down where each of the services or activities falls. For example:
 - A service may be desirable and possible but not sustainable. In this case, you will jot it down in the overlapping space between desirable and possible.
 - A service may only be desirable but not possible and sustainable. In this case, you will jot it down only in the desirable space.
 - A service may be possible and sustainable but not desirable. In this case, you will jot it down in the overlapping space between feasible and viable.
 - A service may be desirable, possible and sustainable. In this case, you will jot it down in the overlapping space of these three elements.
- Take a look at where each of the services or activities falls on the Venn diagram. Do any of them fall in the middle and qualify as desirable, possible, and sustainable?
- Use Table 2 to prioritize and summarize the activities and services that meet all three criteria—they are desirable, possible, and sustainable for your selected goal and objectives (an example is provided in Table 1).
- Prioritize the activities/services that meet all three criteria—they are desirable, possible, and sustainable. These services or activities are likely a good fit for your program at this point in time.

Activity: Three Lenses of Good Design (cont)

4

Group Reflection

10 minutes

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you learned from completing the Three Lenses activity.

- Which services or activities are the most desirable?
- If the desirable services or activities are not currently possible, what do you need to do to make it possible to implement them?
- What can do you to ensure that these services or activities are sustained during your five-year project period or until your objective is met?

5

Share

10 minutes

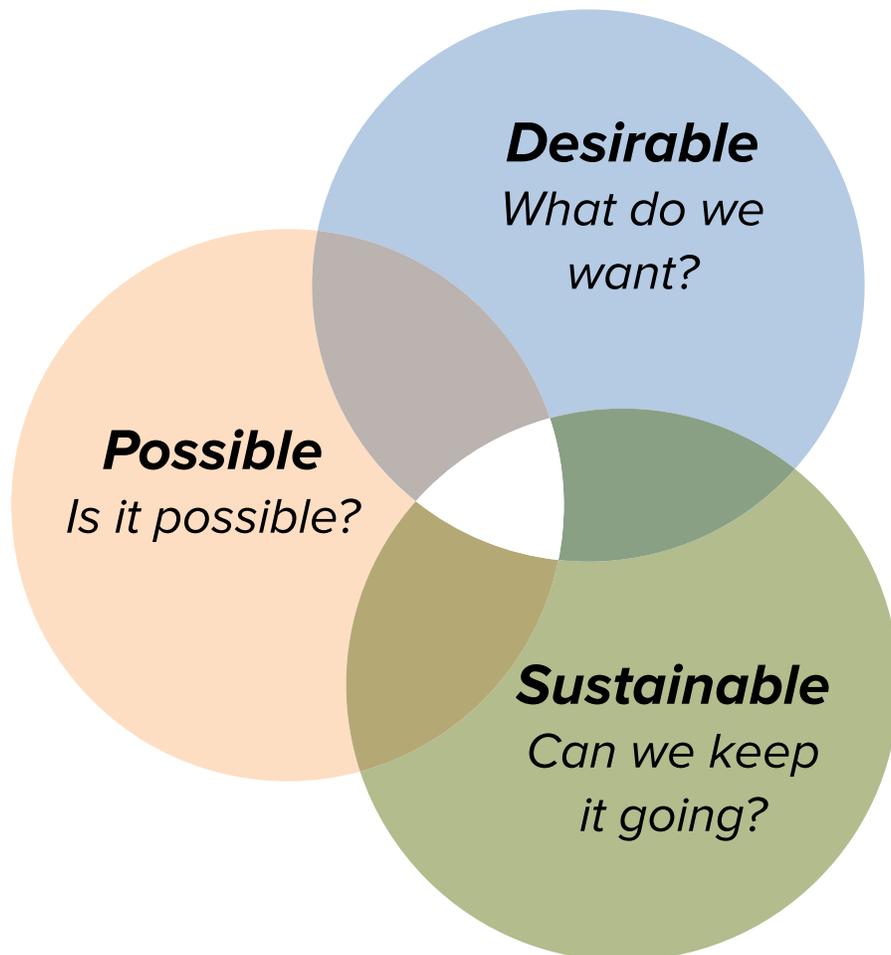
At the end of this meeting you will have a set of services or activities that are desirable, possible, and sustainable. Prioritize the activities in this list and prepare an announcement to be shared with your entire program. Use the list and the Three Lenses criteria for future planning.

Table 1. Planning Services and Activities Example: Desirable? Possible? Sustainable?

Review this Table for an example of how to use the Three Lenses Activity.

<p>Goal: <i>Our program will ensure that all families have the guidance, support, and tools they need to advocate for their children’s education across transition periods from birth, through, and into kindergarten.</i></p>						
<p>Objective: <i>Our program will strengthen the transition to school for children and families by including at least one staff training related to transition.</i></p>						
Proposed Service/Activity:	Is the service/activity desirable for you? For families?	What data do you have to support that this service/activity is desirable?	Is the service/activity possible?	What data do you have to support that this service/activity is possible?	Is the service/activity sustainable during the five-year grant period?	What data do you have to support that this service/activity is sustainable?
<p>Example Conduct joint transition training across HS/EHS and local educational agencies.</p>	<p>Example For program— Yes For families— Yes</p>	<p>Example At our last staff meeting, teachers shared that they lack formal training in this area and need additional support to help families. Our parent survey shows that parents sometimes find the transition to kindergarten to be an overwhelming process.</p>	<p>Example Yes</p>	<p>Example The center has established, on-going partnerships with a number of educational agencies. The center has a transitions working group that can implement training.</p>	<p>Example Yes</p>	<p>Example The center has a five-year school readiness plan and successful transitions are part of that plan.</p>

Three Lenses Venn Diagram: Desirable? Possible? Sustainable?





Be Informed: Additional Resources

See below for two sets of resources that can help inform your decision making and strengthen your family engagement activities: (1) article about the Three Lenses of Good Design, (2) resources developed by the National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) that can serve as background material for using the PFCE Framework and tracking program progress. You might read these resources on your own, or share them with your learning community.

Three Lenses Resources:

- Lamp, A. (n.d.). *The value of balancing desirability, feasibility, and viability*. Retrieved from <http://forty.co/value-balancing-desirability-feasibility-viability>

NCPFCE Resources:

- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Putting the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to work in your program: Integrating strategies for program progress (ISPP) Part I*. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/integrated-strategies-for-program-progress-ppce.pdf>
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Putting the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to work in your program: Integrating strategies for program progress (ISPP) Part II*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/integrating-strategies-for-program-progress-ispp-part02.pdf>
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d.). *Resource guide: Strengthening connections across the PFCE Framework's program foundations*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/webinar/docs/pfce-framework-resource-guide-webinar-01.pdf>
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2013, April 4). Strengthening connections across the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework's Program Foundations [Webinar]. In *Understanding How Program Foundations Work Together to Strengthen Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Webinar Series*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/webinar/webinar-1.html>



Assess your progress!

Resource Spotlight

As you design services that are desirable, possible, and sustainable, you can use the NCPFCE Markers of Progress (MOP) or Digital Markers of Progress (DMOP). The MOP and DMOP provides concrete tools that allow you to keep track of how your program's PFCE services and activities meet your program's goals. This tool will help you engage in a cycle of continued improvement. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/dmop/en-us/>

Section 4:

Focusing Your Learning Community on Data and Program Planning



Overview

Effective planning is an essential part of Head Start and Early Head Start program operations. Learning communities are an exciting way to engage a variety of staff, families, and community members in that process. While thoughtful planning has always been important it becomes even more so as Head Start and Early Head Start programs shift from an indefinite grant period to a five-year project period.

Planning for parent, family, and community engagement is particularly important. As a program, you first need to assess how well you are providing quality services for children and families and the ways you can improve your work. You also need to measure progress toward family outcomes. This means you need to use data to inform your parent, family and community engagement program planning more than ever before.

To support programs in these efforts, The National Center for Parents, Family, and Community Engagement created the *Measuring What Matters: Exercises in Data Management* series. This series consists of four exercises that will help you learn how to use data more effectively in the context of your five-year project plans. Each exercise tells a story about a Head Start or Early Head Start program to illustrate the content. The four data activity exercises are:

Prepare: This exercise focuses on getting ready for data collection by thinking about the different kinds of data you need to show the progress your program is making toward its parent, family, and community goals, objectives, and expected outcomes.

Collect: This exercise focuses on identifying how to gather data that are useful and easy to interpret.

Aggregate and Analyze: This exercise helps you learn ways to look at data to examine how well your program and families are doing related to the Family Outcomes of the PFCE Framework.

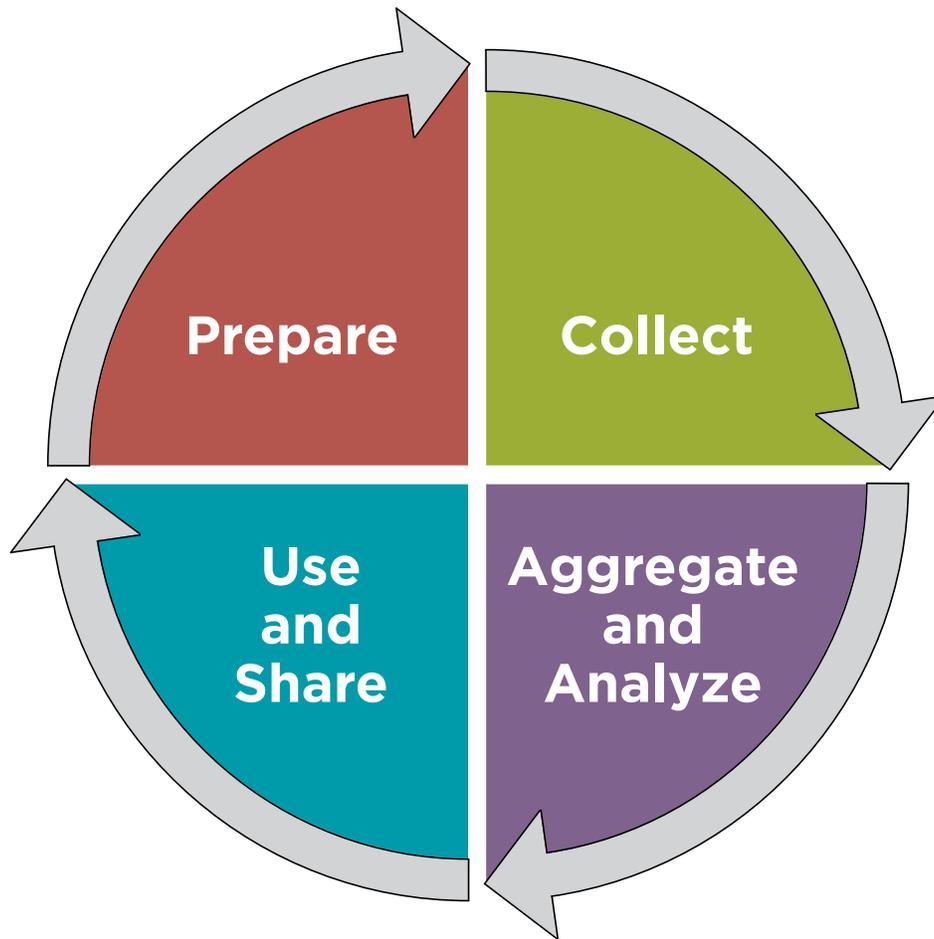
Use and Share: This exercise focuses on understanding the importance of sharing data in accurate, appealing, and accessible ways and using data to inform aspects of programming.

Learning Communities and Program Planning: A Special Consideration

Because this section of the Toolkit focuses on program planning, it is best used by a learning community whose members all come from the same program. However, the *Measuring What Matters: Exercises in Data Management* series described here, along with the Group Activity that follows, can be used by learning communities whose members come from different agencies, such as health care, social services, libraries, and schools. All collaborating agencies, to the extent possible, should use similar measures to track progress – for each individual agency as well as for the learning community. Collaborative learning communities might meet to:

- Share best practices for preparing data
- Join efforts in adopting common data collection methods
- Think about how to conduct analyses
- Consider how to jointly share data with the community

The Four Data Activities



The group activity in this section focuses on using the Four Data Activities as the basis for four learning community meetings. This activity can be used by a program that is starting to think about writing a five-year plan, or by a program that wants to review its five-year plan in a meaningful way.



Using Data to Support Program Planning for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

This activity is designed to guide you through four meeting sessions, each focused on one of the four data activities—prepare, collect, analyze and aggregate, and use and share. The general structure of each meeting will be the same; the content of each meeting will vary. Follow these five steps to help you prepare, carry out, and reflect on each meeting.

Time	Materials	Roles
Four sessions, each approximately 60 minutes <i>Note: Ask team members to read the related exercise before each meeting.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed copies of the Measuring What Matters Data Series Exercise you will focus on in the meeting.• Your five-year project plan (if available)• Create and cut out smiley, frowny, and neutral faces for the welcoming exercise (See examples on page 33)• Pens and Pencils• Flip Chart and markers• Sticky notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator – moves team members through the exercise• Timekeeper – keeps team on track to complete the activity in allotted time• Notetaker – records key discussion points for future reference

1

Get Ready For Your Meeting

5–10 minutes

Gather the following materials to bring to the meeting: copies of the appropriate *Measuring What Matters Exercise Tables*, your five year project plan, faces for the welcoming exercise, pens and pencils, sticky notes, and a flip chart and markers. Use a large poster board to recreate the exercise tables (see Group Activity beginning on page 33 for specific instructions). Ask team members to read the related exercise before the meeting.

Using Data to Support Program Planning for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (cont)

2

Welcome

5–10 minutes

Invite one team member to take notes during the meeting.

Once the meeting begins and everyone has an opportunity to welcome one another, tape three “faces” onto the side of a meeting wall. As you place the faces on the wall explain that:



The smiley face represents that the member is comfortable and confident with a Data Activity (e.g. Preparing, Collecting, Aggregating and Analyzing, and Using and Sharing).



The neutral face represents that the member is neutral about a Data Activity.



The frowny face represents that the member is uncomfortable and has little confidence in a Data Activity.

Ask each member of the learning community to come stand near the face that best represents their feelings towards the particular Data Activity.

Once members have selected a face, discuss as a group why members might feel different levels of comfort about data and planning for parent, family, and community engagement. Talk with members about what part of the story in the exercise they related to and why.

Helpful Hint

Feel free to adapt this activity, as well as all the activities in the Starter Toolkit, as appropriate. For example, rather than physically moving to a space, some members might feel more comfortable holding up a face, or placing a sticky note on a board to indicate agreement. For learning communities that meet virtually, members will need indicate their responses in other ways, such as over a web camera. You know your learning community best; adapt the activities to fit your learning community needs.

Using Data to Support Program Planning for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (cont)

3

Group Activity

20 minutes

The following matrix provides instructions on a series of four data exercises to be conducted in four separate meetings. You will need to refer to the *Measuring What Matters Data Exercise Series* to access the information and tables referenced.

	 Meeting 1 Data Exercise 1: Prepare	 Meeting 2 Data Exercise 2: Collect	 Meeting 3 Data Exercise 3: Aggregate & Analyze	 Meeting 4 Data Exercise 4: Use & Share
Get Ready for the Group Activity	<p>Print Table 3: <i>What Does Our Program Want to Know About Goals, Objectives, Services, and Outcomes?</i> and Table 4: <i>How Can We Track Family Participation and Progress?</i> for all members of the group.</p> <p>Recreate Table 3 and Table 4 on large poster paper to post in the room.</p>	<p>Print Table 6: <i>Aligning Current and Additional Data Collection Methods to Goals, Objectives, and Measures</i> for all members of the group.</p> <p>Recreate Table 6 on large poster paper to post in the room.</p>	<p>Print Table 3: <i>Example of Disaggregation by Family Subgroup</i> and Table 4: <i>Identifying Groups for Data Disaggregation</i> for all members of the group.</p> <p>Recreate Table 4 on large poster paper to post in the room.</p>	<p>Print Worksheet 3: <i>Who is your audience?</i> for all members of the group.</p> <p>Recreate Worksheet 3 on large poster paper to post in the room.</p>
Discuss with the Group	<p>Explain that today you will be talking about Preparing Data. Preparing data is the process of reviewing what you already know about families in your program. It is the process of considering what new questions you need to explore to improve your work with families. Preparation also involves setting goals and objectives for your PFCE work and aligning measures of effort and measures of effect to your expected outcomes. Measures of effort refer to how much programming you are offering and measures of effect refer to what difference your program is making.</p>	<p>Explain that today you will brainstorm about your program's current data collection methods related to goals and objectives. You will also think about additional data collection methods you might adopt.</p>	<p>Explain that today you will be thinking about family subgroups. Family subgroups are smaller clusters of families that might exist in your program and share certain characteristics. When analyzing and disaggregating data it is important to look at data for these smaller groups to understand whether your program influences these groups differently. As a general rule, you can say that if 25% or more of program families fall into a particular subgroup, you should include that subgroup in your disaggregation.</p>	<p>Explain that today you will be thinking about using and sharing data. Using and sharing data means relying on information—rather than hunches or anecdotes—to guide program decision-making and improvements. It also means using data to understand and convey the progress your program is making. A big portion of sharing data is thinking about what the audiences or stakeholders you want to share your data with.</p>

Group Activity (cont):

	 Meeting 1 Data Exercise 1: Prepare	 Meeting 2 Data Exercise 2: Collect	 Meeting 3 Data Exercise 3: Aggregate & Analyze	 Meeting 4 Data Exercise 4: Use & Share
Apply to Your Program	<p><i>[Note: You might move directly to step 6 if you have goals, objectives, and services already developed.]</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn to Table 3. 2. Identify one or more program goals related to expected program outcomes for families. 3. Consider SMART objectives that will help you achieve your goal(s). Think about the difference that you can make for your staff and your families. 4. Identify the services and strategies that align with or can be effective in reaching your objectives. 5. Relate your goals, objectives, and services (actions) to the expected outcomes. 6. Turn to Table 4. 7. Copy the services (actions) you wrote in Table 3. 8. Write some questions that will help you measure your program's efforts. <p>Refer to the Sunnyside program example in Table 2 for guidance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Reflect on your responses. Are you creating a balance between measures of effort and measures of effect? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn to Table 6. 2. Copy your goals, objectives, and measures of effort and measures of effect from your 5-year-plan or from Exercise 1 over to Table 6. 3. Think about what current data collection methods you have in place related to goals, objectives, expected outcomes, and measures. How are they collected? <i>Refer to Garden Street Head Start's Table 3 for guidance.</i> 4. Reflect on your chart. Think about what additional data collection methods you might need. 5. Consider how you will ensure you are collecting quality data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn to Table 3. 2. Read the example as a group and make note of the subgroups that your program serves. 3. Use Table 4 to write your own ideas of what you might find when you disaggregate PFCE data by some of the subgroups your program serves. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turn to Worksheet 3. 2. Reflect on your program and the data that your program collects or plans to collect. 3. What audiences do you share data with? 4. What data do you share with them? 5. When do you share your data? 6. In what formats do you share the information you collect?

Using Data to Support Program Planning for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (cont)

4

Group Reflection

15 minutes

The Four R Approach is a set of guiding principles for using data to partner with families in meaningful ways. The Four R's stand for: Responsible, Respectful, Relevant, and Relationship-based. At the conclusion of each learning community session, reflect on the 4 R's for each data activity. Ask yourself:

- Are we working with data responsibly?
- Are we working with data respectfully?
- Are we working with data that are relevant?
- Are we working with data to build relationships with and among families?

For more information see p. 6 of the *Measuring What Matters Series: Using Data to Support Family Progress: An Overview*

5

Share

It is important to make sure that the information about your planning is shared with staff and families in your Head Start or Early Head Start program. You might include updates about your progress via email or during ongoing meetings (e.g., parent classroom meetings, parent policy council meetings, meetings of family service workers, etc).



Be Informed: Additional Resources

See below for resources that can help you learn more about program goals, using data, and tracking family progress. These resources developed by the Office of Head Start can serve as background material for using data for program planning. You might read these resources on your own or share them with your learning community.

OHS Resources:

- National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations. (2014). *Foundations for excellence: Planning in Head Start*. Retrieved from <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/docs/planning-complete-booklet.pdf>
- Measuring What Matters Webinar Series <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/webinar-series.html>



Track Progress and Measure What Matters!

Resource Spotlight

These resources will help you learn how to use data more effectively in the context of your five-year project plans.

- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (n.d). *Measuring What Matters Series: Using Data to Support Family Progress – An Overview*. Retrieved from: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters.pdf>
- Introduction <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters-introduction.pdf>
- Exercise 1: PREPARE - Identifying PFCE Measures of Effort and Effect <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters-exercise-01.pdf>
- Exercise 2: COLLECT - Collecting Data Related to Family Outcomes <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters-exercise-02.pdf>
- Exercise 3: ANALYZE AND AGGREGATE - Dig Into Data <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters-exercise-03.pdf>
- Exercise 4: USE AND SHARE - Using PFCE Data to Tell Your Story <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-what-matters-exercise-04.pdf>
- Resource Guide <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/measuring-matters-resource-guide.pdf>

Conclusion

Congratulations! You now have a fully formed and functioning PFCE learning community! We hope you found this toolkit helpful. Keep in mind that this is just the beginning.

Through the activities in this toolkit you have:

- thoughtfully invited others to join in collaborative PFCE learning efforts,
- created trust among group members to maximize efficiency and effectiveness,
- encouraged person-centered design, putting families at the core, and emphasizing compassion,
- considered services and activities, determining if they are a good fit by asking if they are desirable, feasible, and sustainable; and
- used data in your PFCE planning.

Keep in mind that this is just the beginning. We encourage you to continue with your learning community and try out other activities as you progress in your PFCE work. Be creative!

As your learning community develops and works on new projects, be sure to share your progress with stakeholders when appropriate. Learning, collaborating with others, and engaging with new resources is at the heart of a learning community and will improve your partnerships with families and enhance child and family outcomes. We encourage you to visit the OHS Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) to find OHS resources to support your work in parent, family and community engagement.

