

Family/Caregiver Engagement

	FOR Family/Caregiver	WITH Family/Caregiver	BY Family/Caregiver
Examples	Service provider initiated	OKN/committee members adopt a formal process for gathering family/caregiver opinions	Family/caregiver initiated
'What it looks like'	<p>OKN/committee members prevent and respond to issues families/caregivers are facing</p> <p>Families/caregivers are viewed as passive and/or helpless 'clients' in need of an outside intervention</p> <p>Services/programs and opportunities are short term/one-off</p> <p>OKN/committee members are viewed as experts who work 'for' families/caregivers</p> <p>Tokenism: identify projects needs and goals, implement programs, and then seek ways to involve families/caregivers</p> <p>Lower level decision making – token and seeking approval of decisions already made</p>	<p>Ongoing process of empowerment, capacity building, and action</p> <p>Nurturing assets and positive development</p> <p>Families/caregivers are viewed as active community members with the wisdom, skills and expertise to contribute to solutions</p> <p>OKN/committee members are viewed as catalyst and facilitators who work 'with' families/caregivers to help all children thrive</p> <p>Lead with their ears: listen to families/caregivers wants, dreams and desires</p> <p>Families/caregivers and OKN/committee members share decision making</p>	<p>OKN/committee members make space to adopt decisions made by families/caregivers</p> <p>Families/caregivers are engaged in meaningful volunteering opportunities</p> <p>Families/caregivers have opportunities to fill authentic leadership roles</p> <p>Families/caregivers play key role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services</p> <p>Families/caregivers are viewed as experts with wisdom, skills, and expertise to contribute to sustainable solutions</p> <p>Decisions are made by families/caregivers and accepted by OKN group</p>



Strategies for Engaging Families/Caregivers

Connecting with Families/Caregivers

- Foster and create a positive, welcoming climate in which all families/caregivers perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard
- Create and enforce policies and procedures to maximize family/caregiver engagement in services and programs
- Identify families/caregivers interest, skills and strengths – ask about their assets and use them when possible
- Collaborate with existing community partners to find families/caregivers where they are
- Connect families/caregivers to community resources that strengthen and support their social, emotional, physical and cognitive well-being
- Train committee members and provide opportunities for them to learn how to increase family/caregiver engagement

Engaging families/caregivers

- Foster and create a positive, welcoming climate in which all families/caregivers perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard
- Listen to families/caregivers wants, dreams, desires and act on them
- Involve families/caregivers in decision making
- Engage families in planning, leadership and meaningful volunteer opportunities
- Provide family/caregivers opportunities to implement services and deliver programs
- Regular and frequent communication – use a variety of communication methods i.e. social media to keep families/caregivers in the know

Sustaining the work with families/caregivers

- Ensure a welcoming climate so families/caregivers feel comfortable
- Schedule meetings and activities to match varying families/caregivers schedules
- Provide incentives i.e. food, gift cards, transportation, babysitting
- Provide translation services for non-English speaking families/caregivers
- Provide families/caregivers information related to child development and strengthen families/caregivers knowledge and skills to support their loved ones
- Reduce barriers to understanding information
- Be culturally sensitive and reflect the social and environmental aspects of the community (socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, rural/urban etc.)
- Train staff and provide opportunities for them to learn how to increase families/caregivers engagement
- Seek opportunities for financial support to enhance family/caregiver engagement



References

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