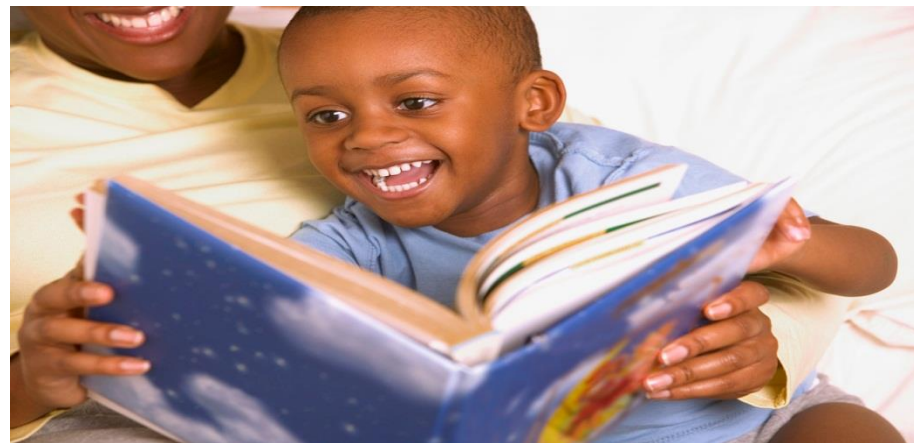


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



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WHAT DOES 40 YEARS OF RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING:

- Very powerful predictor of school and life success
- Important anywhere, anytime, not only at school but at home, in the community, afterschool, and during the summer
- Important from birth through secondary school and beyond
- Not an event but an ongoing process
- Lower among families impacted by income, racial, and ethnic inequities and immigrant status
- Drops off after early childhood
- FE during the transition to school is especially important for families impacted by inequities



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EDUCATION = SCHOOLS?

RIGHT OR WRONG?



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THE EDUCATION PROBLEM

- The dominant assumption behind much of current education policy and practice is that K-12 schools are the only places where and when children learn – this assumption is wrong
- Research indicates that economically and otherwise disadvantaged children have less access to out of school learning opportunities and this substantially undermines their learning and school success.



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**RESEARCH SHOWS
LEARNING = FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AN ARRAY OF COMMUNITY LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDING AFTERSCHOOL, SUMMER PROGRAMS,
DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING, AND OTHER COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

- Effective Schools
- Supportive Families
- Early Childhood Services
- Health and Social Services
- Out-of-School and Summer Learning
- Libraries
- Arts and Cultural Institutions
- Colleges and Universities
- Others???



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FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: TOWARD A SHARED AND RESEARCH-BASED DEFINITION

- The proposed definition reflects the fact that families play significant roles in supporting their children's learning, guiding their children through a complex school system, and as strong advocates for their children and for effective early childhood, school, afterschool and other learning supports.



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BEYOND RANDOM ACTS: BUILDING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Shared responsibility of families, early childhood programs, schools and communities to promote children's learning and development
- Continuous from birth through the school years
- Across multiple contexts for engagement – home, early childhood programs, school, afterschool, summer programs, digital media, and the community.



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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN A COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING FRAMEWORK: MARCUS & MARIA

- From birth through high school and beyond – “Cradle to career”
- Cuts across and reinforces learning in multiple settings
- Centers on a sense of shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies commit to reaching out to engage families and families commit to active support for learning
- Provides support at key transition, points



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REFRAMING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT...

From an individual parent's or teacher's "job"

- To a shared responsibility

From random acts

- To systemic approaches from cradle to career

From events

- To results-driven

From add-on services

- To purposeful connections to learning

From compliance

- To focus on learning, improvement, accountability, and innovation

From limited data

- To transparent data systems



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UNIVERSAL STARTING ASSUMPTION FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

All Families want what is best for their children. Early Childhood family engagement helps build the relationships and create “demand parents” that children, schools and communities need.



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CO-CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:

- Respond to families' interests and needs
- Engage in dialogue with families
- Build on family values and funds of knowledge
- Train and involve families in community and school leadership to build family engagement and support children's learning.
- Outreach, Outreach, Outreach



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LESSONS LEARNED FROM FAMILY ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- Ongoing two-way communication and partnership on behalf of the child
- Builds from family strengths and respects and benefits from racial, cultural and other forms of diversity
- Support for learning activities at home, in early childhood programs, at school and in the community
- Access to family supports and safety net programs
- Staff trained in family engagement
- Outreach, Outreach, Outreach



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FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY & PRACTICE

MEANINGFUL AND EFFECTIVE PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND BEYOND

SYSTEMIC

PFCE interacts with other components of an early childhood program to achieve its goals.

Program leadership sets ambitious goals for PFCE and management systems support all staff to build strong relationships with families and communities.

INTEGRATED

PFCE is embedded in the daily practices of early childhood programs.

Families are part of a welcoming, culturally and linguistically respectful environment. They learn about, observe and participate in children's learning and developmental activities to support school readiness in home and center-based settings.

COMPREHENSIVE

PFCE builds on the interests and needs of children and families.

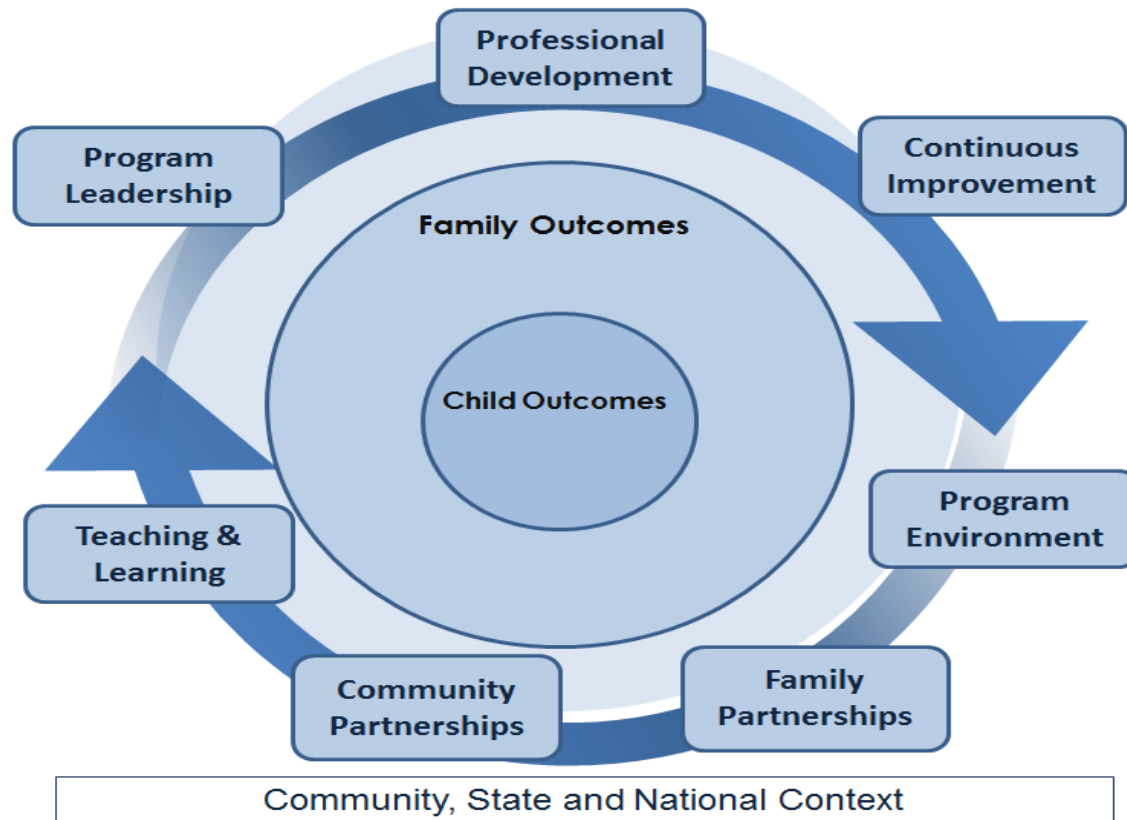
Together, staff and families identify resources to attain family and child outcomes.

Partnerships with communities and schools promote access to peer networks, services, and leadership opportunities and support school transition.



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HEAD START: SYSTEMIC, INTEGRATED, AND COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AT AN ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL



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THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL (AGES 3-8)

- A powerful time to implement the new definition, engage diverse families and leverage the necessary changes for systemic and sustained family engagement
- Evidence: Family engagement in early childhood programs and in the transition to school, when done intentionally as a shared responsibility, are related to more positive outcomes, especially for children of families facing inequities
- Transition is a strategic and manageable point to come together and create a cross organizational family engagement plan.



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FAMILIES IMPACTED BY INEQUITIES LACK OPPORTUNITIES TO CO-CREATE SUSTAINED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE TRANSITION

- Opportunity to reduce systemic barriers including deficit perspectives about families
- Opportunity to share actionable information about anywhere, anytime learning and engage families in and out of school
- Opportunities for family leadership in developing and evaluating transition policies
- Potential to reverse decrease in family engagement at school entry and build a sustained family engagement pathway



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PROFESSIONAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT TOOLS AND RESOURCES

- Dissemination, evaluation, and sharing effective practices, programs, and systemic engagement efforts
- Teaching Cases
- Parent/Teacher Conference and Data Tip-sheets
- Parent Universities



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Why are there not more systemic efforts to build family engagement pathways to support children's learning and development at home, at school, and in the community?



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THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL BARRIERS TO FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS

- Lack of public understanding and belief it will make a difference, despite the research
- Power, control and turf issues, especially in an economic downturn
- Siloed funding and advocacy preventing systemic approaches
- Lack of infrastructure: training, technical assistance and professional development
- Lack of Monitoring, Assessment and Accountability



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MOVING AHEAD

- Public and Private investments and partnerships
- Investment in strategic evaluations and networked improvement communities
- Supporting community change, documenting and lifting it up globally
- Investments in professional development and the evaluation of it
- Careful advocacy and positioning family engagement as one of but not the only contribution to children's school and life success



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