
FRIENDS National Resource Center for CBCAP

June 20, 2011
Presentation Overview

• What is parent engagement?
• What is the purpose and benefits of parent engagement?
• What does it look like?
• Why is it important to parents?
• How will it help meet my outcomes?
• What resources are available?
LET’S GET ON THE SAME PAGE …

PARENT:

- Biological parent
- **Any adult** who is in the primary **caregiver** in a child or adolescent’s life

- Examples:
  - Grandparent raising a grandchild
  - Any relative (aunt, uncle) who is the primary caregiver
  - Adoptive parent
  - Foster parent
  - Any non-relative caregiver
PRACTITIONER

• A staff member, employed by an agency, who is involved in providing services for parents, children or families

• A person we would normally consider a professional

Examples:
• Principal, teacher
• Social worker
• Home Visitor
• Counselor, family support worker
Note:

Practitioners may be parents themselves but for our purposes they do not represent the needs and perspectives of parents to an agency or organization.
“Simply put, the meaningful inclusion of parents in family support policy and program development is good business. How else can practitioners, who rarely walk in the same shoes as the families they seek to support, fully grasp the true nature of family needs and devise the most culturally appropriate strategies to address them? ...”

Cynthia Savage, CEO Circle of Parents
Parent Leader:

A parent who is...

• committed to making positive changes in their family & community

• representing the needs and perspectives of parents to an agency
The term “Parent leadership” may encompass:

- Family support
- Parent encouragement
- Parent engagement
- Parent involvement
- Shared leadership
Continuum of Parent Leadership

- Engagement
- Involvement
- Empowerment
What Does It Mean?

• Involvement refers to the actions parents and families take to support their own children.

• Engagement refers to parents and families working with providers on the broader goals of the organization/program by providing input and serving on decision-making committees.

• Empowerment, refers to parents and families having actual ownership of the program. Rather than responding to what the program wants, empowered parents and families work as full partners with the organization, sharing decision making in all aspects.

• All three kinds of support are important.
Art’s Clip
Shared Leadership

Occurs when parents & practitioners share responsibility, expertise & experience in making decisions that affect families & communities.
Principles of Shared Leadership:

– Parents /professionals are equal partners
– No one has all of the solutions
– Mutual respect, trust and open-mindedness
– Collective action based upon shared vision, ownership & accountability
– Consensus building vs. democratic process
Parent Engagement Strategies used by EBHV sites

• Client satisfaction surveys
• Working Alliance Inventory to measure strength of alliance between client and clinician
• Use of strengths-based, solutions-focused strategies to identify individual motivation for participation and family goals
• Baby Bootcamp for new fathers instructed by veteran fathers. Offers basic skills on feeding, diapering, burping and male support
Strategies Being used, con’t

• A community café to garner input
• Working to include parents on advisory boards
• Developing advocacy training for parents
• Parents speaking at graduations and legislative meetings
• Teen clients convene discussion groups hosted at schools and informal gatherings
WHY DO WE NEED PARENT INVOLVEMENT?
Why do we need parent involvement?

Research supports parent involvement as a way to create stronger families and more effective organizations.
Why do we need parent involvement?

Because it fosters commitment not compliance.
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families
• Improves services for own family
• Provides opportunity to effect meaningful change
• Feels good to make a contribution
• Increases confidence in ability to effect change
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

• Holds providers accountable to families
• Provides opportunities to network with other families and providers
• Builds knowledge and skills
• Models community involvement and empowerment for own children and family
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

• Creates less passive recipients of care and services
• Makes things better for other families
• Opens doors for employment
• Creates a sense of belonging
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

- Offers a sense of accomplishment
- Increases sense of personal power
- Offers leadership role models for other families
- Prevents child abuse and neglect
Benefits of Parent Involvement

For Providers, Programs, Agencies and Communities

• Enhances relationships between families and providers
• Increases responsiveness to family-identified needs
• Improves the quality of programs and services
• Keeps program relevant and realistic
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Providers, Programs, Agencies, Communities cont.

- Increases visibility of and respect for program in the community
- Develops a fresh perspective on how services should be delivered
- Increases empathy and understanding for families
- Shares responsibility
- Increases providers’ efficiency and cost effectiveness
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Providers, Programs, Agencies, Communities cont.

- Improves ability to accomplish mission
- Increases appreciation of various cultures
- Contributes to the stability of the community
- Prevents child abuse and neglect
Roles for Parents

- Members of task forces
- Board members
- Co-trainers for staff development
- Paid program staff
- Mentors for other families
- Grant reviewers
- Participants in needs assessment process
- Reviewers of written materials
- Community advocates
- Participants in focus groups
- Members of hiring committees
- Fund raisers
- Participants at conferences and working meetings
- Participants in quality improvement initiatives
- Public speaker
Practitioner roles

- Mentor
- Coach
- Leading from “the side” (with the explicit permission form the parent) and supporting parents as they develop confidence in their leadership abilities
- Providing appropriate articles and other resources to build the skills and knowledge of parents
- Arranging for parents to attend formal and informal training sessions
- Providing positive feedback and constructive criticism to parents that will encourage further participation and will provide concrete ideas for increasing their leadership expertise
- Looking for opportunities to involve parents in traditional and non-traditional ways in agency initiatives
- Helping others in your agency understand and embrace the principles and benefits to implementing parent engagement initiatives
Involving Parents takes:

• Time, resources and patience
• An organization-wide commitment
• An understanding and acceptance of the impact parents can have on their children, family, and community
REFLECTIONS
Table Discussions

In helping your program achieve shared leadership:

- What implementation issues do you anticipate or are you currently experiencing with adding parent engagement/parent leadership components to your Evidence-based model?

Examples:

- **Readiness factors** – identifying the need for staff and management readiness to make this adaptation

- **Challenges for implementation** – recruiting parents, training of staff and parents, roles and expectations, evaluating effectiveness

- **Concerns about adding an adaptation to your model** – fidelity issues; does this affect any core components

- **Training and Technical Assistance to help your program achieve Shared Leadership** – Parent Leadership 101; Self-assessments
Table Discussions

Think about time(s) when you learned something from a parent.

• What did you learn about yourself and the parent?
• How did that help you in your role of working with the parent?
• How did that help you grow as a professional?
• How do these types of experiences help us to foster commitment, not compliance towards involvement and shared leadership?
Discussion
FRIENDS Training and TA Resources

• Meaningful Parent Leadership Guidebook-One per site
• Connect with CBCAP State Lead to join in CoP Trainings offered in your state
• Work with PLAT 3 trained parents in state
• Peer Review Tool
• Parent Leadership Self-Assessment
• Individualized webinars and consultation

• FRIENDS website www.friendsnrc.org
• Network for Action Strategic Project
It's all engagement!
Questions and Answers
Contact Us

To Request Training or Technical Assistance:

- ACF Federal Project Officer
- FRIENDS TTA Coordinators
  Valerie Collins Russell, TTA Supervisor
  Casandra Firman
  Alicia Luckie
  Mary Jo Alimena Caruso
  Edi Winkle