



Family Engagement

Emily Smith; Family Engagement Coordinator

What is Family Engagement?

The term family engagement can be used interchangeably with :

- Family support
- Parent encouragement
- Parent involvement
- Shared leadership
- Parent partnerships



Definition of Family Engagement

- *Family engagement is the shared responsibility of families, early education programs, schools and communities to actively promote, support, and sustain family wellbeing, healthy child development, strong family child relationships and lifelong learning for all children and families.*

Definition of Family Engagement Cont.

Authentic and effective **family engagement** is:

- **Intentional**
- **Universal**
- **Respectful**
- **Collaborative**
- **Equitable**

Barriers to Family Engagement



Listen to your instrument

- Divide into groups
- Listen for your instrument: drums, piano, organ, guitar
- What does it do individually
- What does it do with the others



Why do we need Family engagement?

- It improves services for families
- It provides opportunities for families to help programs
- It helps families feel like they can impact what happens in their child's life
- Families can be role models for other families
- Providers can meet children's needs better
- Improve quality programs
- **Families KNOW THEIR CHILDREN BEST!!!!**

How Do We Get Families Engaged?

- How would you feel if I came to your home or job and only focused on the things you were doing wrong?
- What would you do if I then asked you to join me for a meeting or an activity on another date?

Dr. Robin McWilliam states....

- Always operate on the principle that parents are doing what they think is best for their child”



Adopting a Strengths-Based Approach

- Start by viewing families through a positive lens.
- Abandon the deficit model.
- View the individual in light of her capacities, talents, competencies, visions, values, and hopes.

Key Principles to the Strength-Based Approach

- Every individual, family, group, and community has unique strengths.
- The community and early childhood program is a rich source of resources.
- Supports are based on individual priorities.
- Collaboration is an essential component of maximizing family strengths.

It's All About Relationships! It's Not About the Nail!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg>



Family Survey



Summer Transition Program Family Survey



In an effort to identify and best serve the needs of the families and children in the Summer Transition Program, we ask that you complete the following survey. The survey will assist the Transition Coach in planning activities throughout the six week program.

Parent/Guardian name: _____

Email Address: _____

Best Contact Phone Number: _____

Child name: _____

Please check any topics that would be of interest to you:

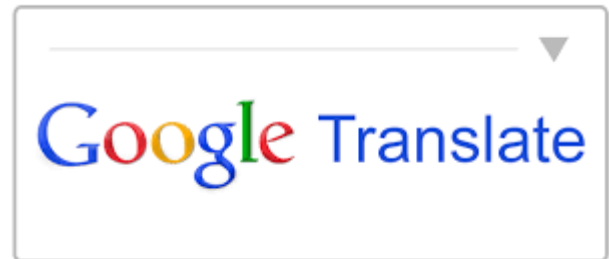
- Discipline and Parenting Workshop
- Health and Safety Workshop
- Computer Class
- Budgeting Ideas
- Parent and Child Activities to do at home
- Parent and Child Activities to do in the community
- First Aid
- Health Fair
- Developmental Stages of Children
- Community Resources
- Food and Nutrition
- How to create a family fun night on a budget
- Other: _____

Please check any areas of need for which you would like assistance:

- Housing
- Budget Counseling
- Clothing
- Education
- Employment
- After School Child Care

Communication is the KEY

- Communication plays an essential role in supporting family engagement; it is a tool that enables you to build relationships.
- Consistent, two-way communication is facilitated through multiple forms and is responsive to the linguistic preference of the family.
- Communication: convey information to families in a way they understand
- Translation and language tools (itranslate)



Bringing Families in the Program

Communication: convey information to families in a way they understand

- Blogs and websites:



- Social Media



Engaging Families Outside the Programs

- Access to resources to extend learning at home – classroom site and online sources:



Last Family Engagement Activity Idea

- Transition to Kindergarten workshop.
- Programs will receive funds to provide families to use for school supplies or spirit wear.



Community Café

- Question 1: What does meaningful Family Engagement look like to you?
- Question 2: What supports do you think are needed to have successful Family Engagement?
- Question 3: What have you done in the past or what new ideas do you have that will help you have successful Family Engagement?
- Harvest: AH HA moments. What is your take away?

Ways to Support Each Other

- Is someone interested in creating a private Facebook group for all the Summer Transition coaches to use?



Resources

- A Roadmap for Engaging Families with Young Children. Bright from the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. <http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/Families.aspx>
- The Welcoming Classroom: Building Strong Home-to-School Connections for Early Learning by Johnna Darragh Ernst, PhD.
- Erikson TEC Center: Technology in Early Childhood <http://teccenter.erikson.edu/>

Contact Information

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