WISCONSIN FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SURVEY

Wisconsin Family & Community Partnership Survey

FINAL REPORT

OVERVIEW & SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The two Family and Community Partnership surveys (referred to as FCP surveys) were designed to help the Family and Community Partnership Project Team (Project Team) of the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) to: (1) understand the extent to which early childhood programs partner and engage with families, and (2) identify specific strategies that reinforce the principles of family engagement and community partnership. This effort reinforces Wisconsin's strong commitment to family and community partnership and is designed to align with the State's Race to the Top priorities.

The surveys are the first phase of an effort to develop a compendium of practices to be shared with early childhood programs across the state. During survey development, Project Team members observed that little was known about the extent to which early childhood programs were currently implementing strategies to promote family and community partnerships. Thus, the FCP surveys queried early childhood agencies (and collaborations) about specific activities that prior literature[1] has shown to be effective at promoting family and community partnership.

DEFINING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

For the purposes of the FCP surveys, the term "family engagement" is used rather than "family and community partnership" because family engagement is more established in the literature and can be broadly defined to include core components of family and community partnerships. The definition of family engagement described below is significantly informed by the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*.

Family engagement refers to the support for family members from agency and community stakeholders to ensure that families are given the opportunity to engage at four critical levels.

- ☐ **Level 1: Building strong relationships with children.** Families are supported in their role as their child's first and best teacher (e.g., they receive information about the importance of reading to their child every day).

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[1] Office of Head Start. (2011). *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting Family Engagement and School Readiness, from Prenatal to Age 8.* Washington, DC: US DHHS.; Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Sheldon, S. B., Simon, B. S., et al. (2008). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.; Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children.* Washington, DC: US DHHS.; Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2008). *System of Care: Bulletin for Professionals.* Washington, DC: US DHHS.; Corwin, T. (2012). *Strategies to Increase Birth Parent Engagement, Partnership, and Leadership in the Child Welfare System: A Review.* Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

☐ **Level 2: Service planning for their children.** Families participate in decisions about the services that their child receives (e.g., they receive information about the importance of quality child care and how to select quality care).

☐ **Level 3: Agency-level decision making.** Families participate in program decisions that affect their child (e.g., they are engaged in a parent council or participate in work groups about program changes).

☐ **Level 4: Community advocacy and peer-led support.** Families serve as advocates for early childhood programs within their community (e.g., they offer public comments at school board meetings or participate in community coalitions). Families are given opportunities to support and socialize with other families with young children in their communities (e.g., they have access to parent support groups, etc.).

Spanning these four levels of family engagement, the FCP surveys collected information on five major research questions:

☐ What are the specific practice strategies and approaches used to address family engagement within agencies and collaboratives?

☐ What are some of the lessons learned about family engagement strategies that programs and collaboratives could share with others embarking on similar efforts?

☐ Do programs and collaboratives approach family engagement in a way that honors and promotes the cultures and strengths of the community served?

☐ Are staff prepared and supported to promote family engagement?

☐ Are families prepared and supported to actively engage in early childhood programs and collaboratives?

☐ Is family engagement embedded in organizational goals and do agencies track progress of these goals through systematic measurement?

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual model of the FCP survey structure and how the research questions are integrated into each level of family engagement.
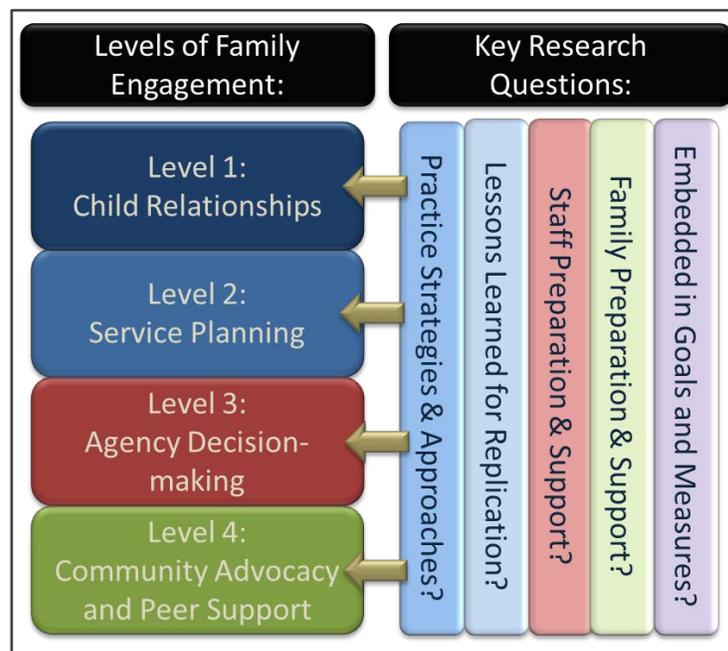

FIGURE 1: LEVELS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

METHOD & SAMPLE

The FCP surveys were delivered through a web-based survey platform (Qualtrics®). The survey items are attached in **Appendices A** and **B**. Please note, however, that the format of the appendices does not capture some of the dynamic features and formatting of the original web-based version.

The evaluation team designed two versions of the FCP survey for two distinct groups of early childhood stakeholders:

> The **FCP Agency Survey** was completed by individuals with a deep understanding of the ongoing challenges and strategies related to an agency's effort to engage families. In order to maximize the number of agencies included, in most cases, a single person responded for each agency. The agency sample included representatives from *Family Resource Center*, *home visiting programs*, *Birth-to-Three programs*, *child-care agencies*, *Head Start* and *Early Head Start* programs, and *Community Action Programs*. The evaluation team invited 156 potential agency representatives from across Wisconsin to complete this survey. The response rate was 71%, (n = 111). However, about 20 of these respondents skipped (or did not complete) more than half of the survey which reduced the functional response rate (the approximate response rate to any given question) to 58% (n = 91). The response rate was slightly above the goal of 100 respondents.

> The **FCP Collaborative Survey** was completed by representatives from community-based early childhood collaboratives. Collaborative respondents were often employees of a specific agency in addition to being a member of a collaborative, but they were directed to complete the survey on behalf of the collaborative (not their own agency). The collaborative sample included representatives from *Celebrate Children Foundation Collaborative Grantees*, *4-K Community Approach partners*, *Wisconsin Local Early Childhood Councils and Coalitions*, *the Child Care Partnership Resource and Referral Network*, the *Life Course Initiative for Healthy Families* (LIHF), and other important community collaboratives that support early childhood efforts across the state. The evaluation team invited 162 potential representatives of Early Childhood collaboratives from across Wisconsin to complete this survey. The response rate was 40% (n = 64), with a functional response rate of 25% (n = 41). This response rate fell short of the Project Team's goal of 100 respondents.

It is unclear why the collaborative survey had such a low response rate. One possibility may be that potential respondents were less familiar with the work of the ECAC because much of the sample was culled from large email distribution lists. Although there was introductory information sent along with the survey (and Project Team members also sent personal requests to several groups explaining the purpose of the survey), it is possible that potential respondents did not see how this survey connected directly with their work. Another possibility is that these individuals did not feel comfortable representing the entire collaborative. It is also possible that potential respondents felt less attached to the work of the collaborative than their own agency's work, and were therefore less willing to take the time to complete the survey.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Strengths and areas for improvement emerged from both survey samples regarding family and community partnership and family engagement.

Agencies used a variety of evidence-based models/approaches, but four emerged as the most commonly implemented— Primary Coaching Model, Head Start, Parents as Teachers, and Strengthening Families.

Agency respondents found that these EB models improved family engagement with children, guided how early childhood professionals should relate to and work with families, and guided family engagement at "higher" levels of agency work.

Most agencies had formal goals relating to family engagement and most have family-focused assessments related to family engagement. Fewer agency had agency- or staff-focused assessments about how well the agency was doing in promoting family and community partnerships.

Agencies reported conducting more activities that were focused on Level 1 (building strong relationships with children), Level 2 (service planning), and Level 4 (community advocacy and peer-led support) family engagement. Agencies reported infrequent Level 3 (agency decision-making) family engagement-focused activities.

Most respondents indicated that their program would benefit from technical assistance about how to improve family engagement.

Collaboratives identified a broad array of evidence-based models that they were aware of in their communities. Many communities offered these programs: 4-K, early childhood special education, Birth-to-Three, Head Start, and home visiting. In addition, most communities had parent-teacher organizations and parent advisory groups. Nevertheless, collaboratives were less aware of whether certain conceptual frameworks and parent/community training and outreach strategies were being implemented in their communities.

Community collaboratives included a broad array of partners and used a variety of strategies to assess community needs. Collaboratives identified that parents were missing as key partners and that funding and resource difficulties were common challenges to their work. Furthermore, collaboratives were not aware of early childhood "systems of care" as a way to guide their work and few collaboratives had formally embedded family engagement into their goals and policies.

Less than half of community collaboratives indicated that family members participated in their group. Many of these collaboratives explained that they were planning to include family members or had encountered challenges in recruiting and retaining family members.

Collaboratives offered many strategies for interagency collaboration and for engaging families in community collaborative. Akin to the agency respondents, most collaboratives were interested in technical assistance and training to promote family engagement.

Cross-cutting lessons for replication

Below is a list of themes that emerged from both quantitative and qualitative results from the agency and collaborative surveys.

- □ Relationship- and trust-building is important for engaging families at every level and critical for interagency collaboration. True engagement means more than having a family member present – it means valuing their voice.
- □ Families engaged at other levels of agency and community work are more engaged with their own services.
- □ In many community collaboratives and agencies, families are not currently engaged in programmatic or policy decisions. The programs that successfully engage families in higher-level decision making report that family perspectives are valuable to service design and program outreach.

☐ Sustained family engagement at any level requires resources and support including transportation, compensation, food, and child care.

☐ Families are most engaged when they see their contribution as meaningful – this theme arose for family engagement in services for their own children, as well as engagement in agency and collaborative decision-making.

☐ Communities and programs would benefit from technical assistance and training in multiple topics related to family engagement.

☐ Many programs and community collaboratives are in the planning or early-implementation stages of their work and would benefit from peer-learning opportunities from more mature programs.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

The remaining report presents the findings in two separate sections based on the two survey samples.

<u>Agency Survey Results</u>

Evidence-based and nationally recognized models and approaches in agency-based early childhood programs

Presence of Family and Community Partnership in Agency Mission and Goals

Family Engagement Level 1: Building Strong Relationships with Children

Family engagement Level 2: Service Planning

Family Engagement Level 3: Agency Decision-Making

Family Engagement Level 4: Community Advocacy and Peer-led Support

Lessons for Replication: Promoting Family Engagement in Agency-based Early Childhood Programs

      Broad Lessons

      Specific Lessons

Technical Assistance

<u>Collaborative Survey Results</u>

Evidence-based or nationally recognized models identified by early childhood collaborative

      Family support and education

      Family-led advocacy or support group programs

      Assessments and conceptual frameworks

      Parent and community training and outreach strategies

Characteristics of family and community collaborative

      Collaborative partnerships

      Early childhood "systems of care" guiding collaborative work

      Family engagement embedded in collaborative goals and policies

      Assessment of community needs by collaborative

Family Participation in Community Collaboratives

Lessons for Replication: Collaboration and Engaging Families in Community Collaboratives

      Successful strategies for interagency collaboration

      Successful strategies for engaging families in community collaborative

Technical Assistance

AGENCY SURVEY RESULTS

AGENCY SURVEY RESULTS

EVIDENCE-BASED AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED MODELS AND APPROACHES IN AGENCY-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

Ninety percent of respondents (n = 100) reported that their early childhood program used or was planning to use an evidence-based (EB) or nationally recognized model/approach. Respondents identified 35 distinct EB or nationally recognized models,[2] although only a few were commonly cited across multiple agency types[3] (see **Table 1**). The models/approaches varied by what type of early childhood program the respondent represented—indicating an opportunity for increased cross-fertilization of common practice components across different types of early childhood programs.

Table 1: Evidence Based Approaches Used for Early Childhood								
		Agency-Type						
Evidence-based Model	#	B3	CAP	CTF	FRC	HS/EHS	HV	CCA
Primary Coaching Model	28	■						
Head Start	21	■				■		
Parents as Teachers	13			■	■	■		
Strengthening Families	11		■		■			■
Healthy Families	7						■	
Creative curriculum	4			■	■			
WMELS	4							■
Healthier America	4						■	
Birth to 3	3	■		■				
Routine Based Interviewing	2	■						
Nurse Family Practitioner	2						■	
Natural Environment	2	■						
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation	2							■
Growing Great Kids	2				■		■	
Nurturing Parenting	2				■		■	
123 Magic	2				■			
Carolina Curriculum	1			■				
Pyramid Models	1							■
6 Ways to Assess Young Children	1							■
Developmental Profile 3	1							■
Ages and Stages	1							■

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[2] Note that approaches/models listed in Table 1 were identified by respondents as "evidence-based" or "nationally recognized"; no vetting was done by researchers to determine the quality of these programs.

[3] Agency type were pre-defined by ECAC committee members and included the following categories: (1) Birth to Three (B3); (2) Community Action Projects (CAP); (3) Children's Trust Fund Grantees (CTF); Family Resource Centers (FRC); Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS); Home Visiting (HV); Supporting Families Together-Child-Care Agencies (CCA)

Table 1: Evidence Based Approaches Used for Early Childhood

Evidence-based Model	#	B3	CAP	CTF	FRC	HS/EHS	HV	CCA
Model Work Standards	1							▓
ITERS-R	1							▓
PNCC	1	▓						
IDEA Part C	1	▓						
Wisconsin First Step	1	▓						
Parent Cafe	1				▓			
Active Parenting	1				▓			
Positive Parenting Solutions	1				▓			
Behavior Clinic CBT-Trauma Informed Care	1			▓				
Bright Horizons	1							▓
Early Childhood STEP	1				▓			
Love & Logic	1				▓			
1234 Parents	1						▓	
Portage Guide	1	▓						
Total	86							

All but two of the 90 respondents indicated that EB or nationally recognized models/approaches were specifically used to guide family engagement activities. We asked respondents to give examples of how these approaches helped guide family engagement activities. Responses fell into several categories, described below.

EB models offer tips and strategies to improve how families engage with their child. Examples included encouraging families to extend meal times together, giving family members information on child development, and providing a range of fun activities to encourage families to be together at home.

EB models provide guidance on how early childhood professionals should relate to and work with families. Examples included using strength-based, family-driven approaches, embedding new strategies into existing family routines (often cited by Birth-to-Three respondents using an approach where *coaching* occurs in the natural environment), and being flexible and creative about program standards to meet the complex needs of families. Three respondents (from Head Start or Early Head Start programs) reported that the *Family Partnership Agreement* was a helpful tool to promoting family engagement in service planning. One respondent observed the shift to more active participation in service planning by families in this way:

> *"[MY] PROGRAM HAS MOVED FROM MEDICAL MODEL/EXPERT MODEL TELLING THE FAMILY WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS TO A DISCUSSION BASED ON WHAT THE CHILD AND FAMILY DO THROUGHOUT DAYS/WEEKS AND WHAT THE CHILD AND FAMILY INTERESTS ARE. [THE] FOCUS IS ON LEARNING HOW WE CAN SUPPORT WHAT THE FAMILY IS ALREADY DOING OR WOULD LIKE TO DO AND HOW TO HELP THAT LOOK HOW THE PARENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT. THIS IS A CONTEXTUALIZED APPROACH VS. EMBEDDING THERAPY/EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES INTO THE FAMILY'S LIVES."*

EB models provide guidance on promoting family engagement at "higher" levels of agency work. Although the majority of comments focused on the promotion of family engagement at the "practice" level, some respondents described how their evidence-based model/approach helped their program embed family engagement into administrative and leadership elements of their program. For instance, some models required or encouraged families to sit on executive leadership committees, policy councils, or participate in family committees. Some respondents also indicated that their evidence-based model tracked certain measures of family engagement or required it to be integrated into the program's overall strategic plan. Notably, six respondents specifically cited the *Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework* as a valuable tool to integrate family engagement into elements of the program that go beyond practice strategies:

> *"HEAD START HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM, WORKING WITH CHILDREN AS WELL AS THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS. OUR PERFORMANCE STANDARDS REQUIRE A VARIETY OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES, INCLUDING A FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH EACH FAMILY, FAMILY VOLUNTEERING REQUIREMENTS, PARENT/FAMILY LEADERSHIP THROUGH MEMBERSHIP ON THE AGENCY'S POLICY COUNCIL, BOARD AND PARENT COMMITTEES, AND PARENT ADVOCACY. JUST THIS PAST YEAR, A NEW HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK WAS PUBLISHED, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO INSURE THAT AGENCIES ARE INTENTIONALLY PROMOTING AND MEASURING THE OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK IN THIS AREA."*
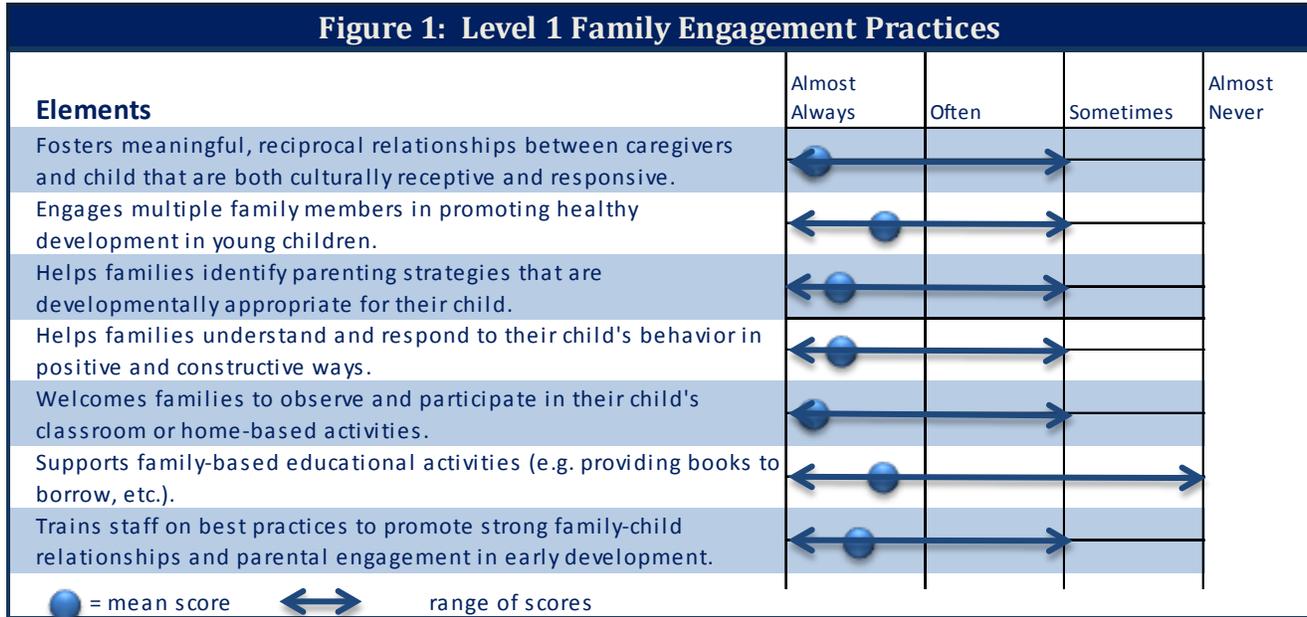
PRESENCE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP IN AGENCY MISSION AND GOALS

Almost half of respondents indicated that their agency had formal goals relating to family engagement, with another 22% reporting that their agency was planning to add these goals in the future. Additionally, respondents were asked if their agency measured progress related to family engagement. This report uses the term *family-focused assessment* to refer to measures of a family's engagement with their own child or the extent to which the family meets service expectations that are typically made through service plans and other case-level instruments. Family-focused assessments were by far the most commonly described measurement of family engagement. Less common, however, were responses that described agency- or staff-focused assessments. *Agency-* and *staff-focused assessments* of family engagement are designed to measure the extent to which the agency and staff are promoting family and community partnerships. The distinction between family-focused and agency-focused assessment is important because it is difficult to assess higher levels of family engagement without an understanding of how the agency and staff are supporting families. Together, these two types of assessment represent the bi-directional nature of family engagement within early childhood programs. The following are some examples of measurement strategies employed by agencies to assess progress of family engagement:

- □ Parents surveyed to assess their satisfaction of early childhood activities, and areas of improvement. 80% of respondents indicated that their program routinely assessed families' satisfaction with services. Forty percent also reported that these assessments included questions about whether families perceived services to be culturally competent or appropriate.

- □ Parent attendance tracked during agency events.

- □ Agency-based performance measures monitored. These measures are based on aggregated family data (often using SPHERE or other databases)

- □ External evaluations

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEVEL 1: BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Survey participants were asked the extent to which their agency addressed seven key elements of families engaging in meaningful relationships with their children. Overall, respondents felt their agencies did well in promoting family engagement at this level, as seen in more detail in **Figure 1**, below.

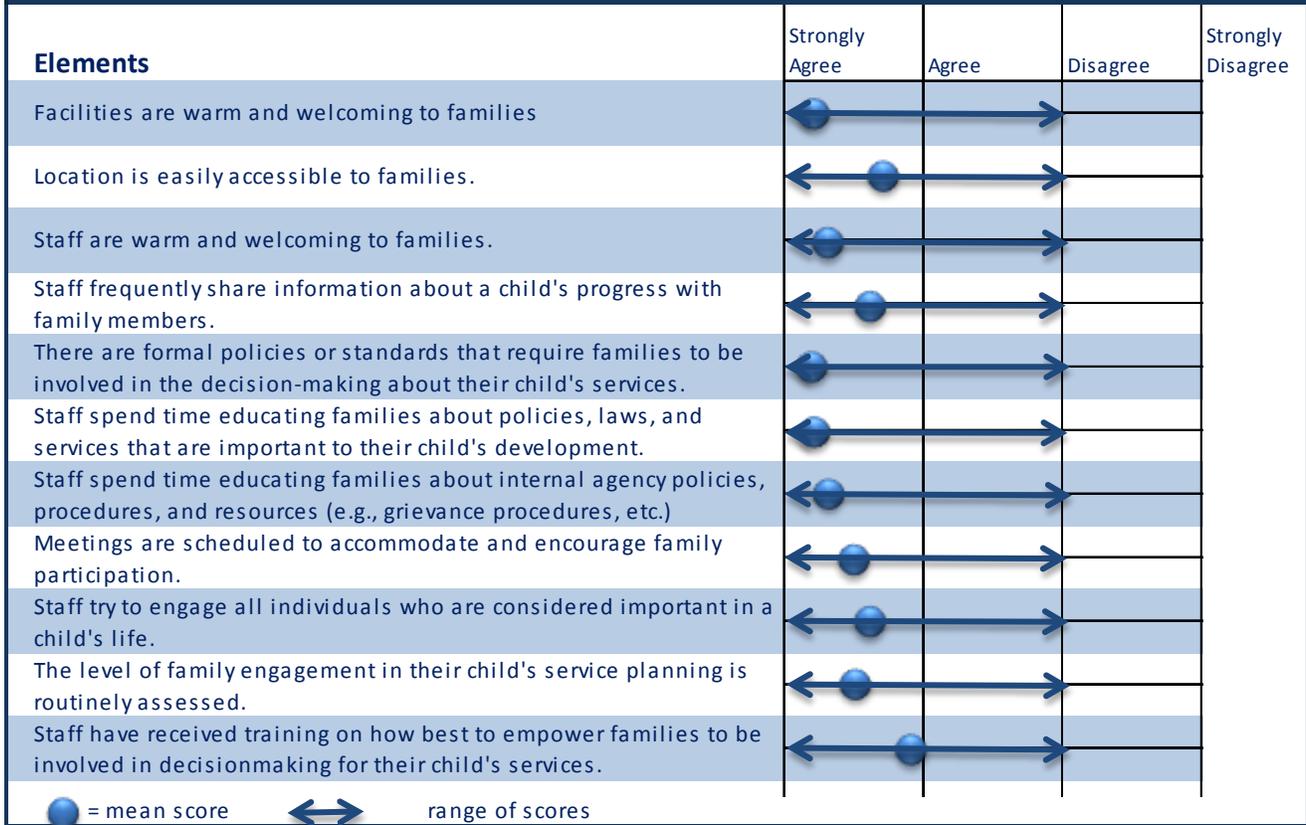| Figure 1: Level 1 Family Engagement Practices				
Elements	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never
Fosters meaningful, reciprocal relationships between caregivers and child that are both culturally receptive and responsive.				
Engages multiple family members in promoting healthy development in young children.				
Helps families identify parenting strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their child.				
Helps families understand and respond to their child's behavior in positive and constructive ways.				
Welcomes families to observe and participate in their child's classroom or home-based activities.				
Supports family-based educational activities (e.g. providing books to borrow, etc.).				
Trains staff on best practices to promote strong family-child relationships and parental engagement in early development.				
= mean score range of scores				

Respondents were asked to describe important lessons they learned while promoting family-child relationships and family engagement in the early development of children. The majority of responses emphasized the importance of building a meaningful relationship between the families and the early childhood professional. Relationship building entails the promotion of trust and and the emphasis on family-strengths. A related subset of themes emerged around staff being non-judgmental and showing respect for families and their cultures. Four respondents reflected that it can be hard for professionals, no matter how well intentioned, to truly allow services to be driven by a family's perspective and voice. The following quote describes how family-driven practice may look fundamentally different from typical early childhood service provision:

> *"THE FAMILY HAS THE ANSWERS, SHUT UP AND LISTEN. JUDGING AND GIVING LOTS OF SUGGESTIONS WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT [1] THE FAMILY WOULD LIKE, [2] HOW THE FAMILY LIVES DAY TO DAY, [3] WHAT FUN TIME IS LIKE, [OR, 4] WHAT HANGING OUT TIMES LOOK LIKE, CREATES A BARRIER BETWEEN [THE] HOME VISITOR AND THE FAMILY. COMING IN WITH CHECKLISTS AND HANDOUTS LIMITS WHAT YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT THE FAMILY - SOMETIMES YOU CAN LEARN A LOT JUST BY OBSERVING."*

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEVEL 2: SERVICE PLANNING

Agency respondents were asked about 11 elements relating to their agency's overall ability to promote family's active involvement in assessing the strengths, needs, and desired services and supports for their children. **Figure 2** displays the results, which were very positive, overall. Compared to other areas, staff training around engaging families in service planning had the lowest average rating, although 87% of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that their agency trained staff to engage families in service planning.

Figure 2: Level 2 Family Engagement Practices

Elements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Facilities are warm and welcoming to families				
Location is easily accessible to families.				
Staff are warm and welcoming to families.				
Staff frequently share information about a child's progress with family members.				
There are formal policies or standards that require families to be involved in the decision-making about their child's services.				
Staff spend time educating families about policies, laws, and services that are important to their child's development.				
Staff spend time educating families about internal agency policies, procedures, and resources (e.g., grievance procedures, etc.)				
Meetings are scheduled to accommodate and encourage family participation.				
Staff try to engage all individuals who are considered important in a child's life.				
The level of family engagement in their child's service planning is routinely assessed.				
Staff have received training on how best to empower families to be involved in decisionmaking for their child's services.				

● = mean score   ◄──► range of scores

The importance of staff training and buy-in was also a common lesson respondents learned when working to promote Level 2 family engagement. As one respondent wrote:

"REALLY TRAINING STAFF AND HIRING STAFF WHO 'BUY INTO' FAMILY ENGAGEMENT...IF THE STAFF DO NOT WANT THIS TO OCCUR IT WILL NOT HAPPEN."

As in other levels of family engagement, respondents reported that promoting strong relationships with family members was a critical part of engaging them during service planning. More specifically, respondents reported that *"MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFE"* and making families feel comfortable would help staff better understand both the needs and strengths of families as defined by the family. One respondent also emphasized that quality, *"NON-THREATENING ASSESSMENTS,"* should be integrated into family-driven service planning. Another respondent indicated that staff needed to include the perspective of a variety of caring adults who may be important to the child, including those who may not be able to be physically present during service planning.
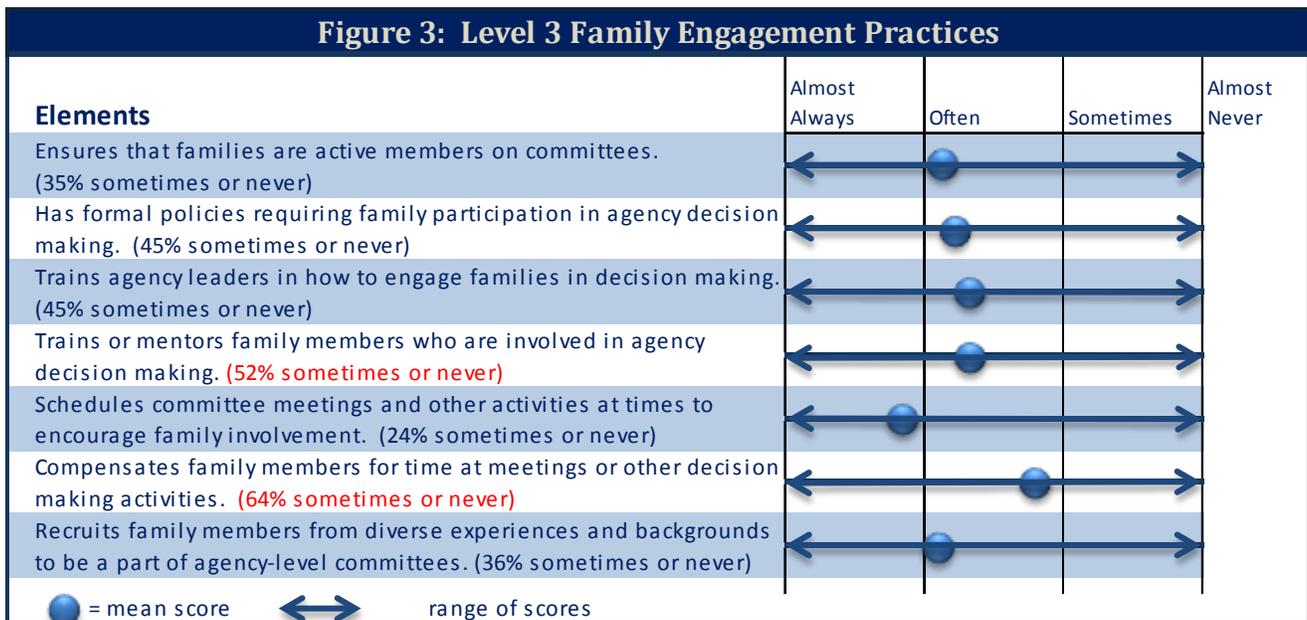
Other lessons about promoting family engagement in service planning included setting the tone early on that families should be part of the process, and taking the time to ensure that families understand both the goals of the program and the services and supports available to their child. Other respondents described that this level of family engagement was ongoing and needed to be sustained thoughtfully over time:

"FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SERVICE PLANNING IS DONE AT EVERY VISIT, PENDING THERE IS NOT AN IMMEDIATE CRISIS."

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEVEL 3: AGENCY DECISION-MAKING

In general, respondents reported less family engagement at the agency-decision-making level than any other level of family engagement. Engaging families in agency decision-making moves family engagement and partnership from the realm of individual work with children and their families to agency-wide values. When translated into action, these organizational values can signal a departure from the way many public systems and social service agencies are organized and governed.

Figure 3, below, shows responses to seven elements of Level 3 family engagement. Due to the higher number of negative ratings in this area, Figure 3 also includes the percentages of respondents reporting *sometimes* or *almost never*. Sub-analyses revealed that no type of early childhood program (Birth to Three, Home Visiting, etc.) reported consistent strengths or weaknesses in this area. Although a variety of programs reported infrequent Level 3 family engagement, often, respondents from similar types of early childhood programs reported implementing activities relating to Level 3 family engagement *often* or *almost always*. Further, the responses for these seven elements are significantly correlated with each other. For example, respondents who reported that their agencies *often* engaged in one kind of Level 3 strategy, tended to report that their agency *often* engaged in other kinds of Level 3 strategies. Together, these findings indicate a strong potential for peer-to-peer learning and mentoring to promote Level 3 family engagement in programs currently reporting challenges in this area.

Figure 3: Level 3 Family Engagement Practices

Elements	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never
Ensures that families are active members on committees. (35% sometimes or never)				
Has formal policies requiring family participation in agency decision making. (45% sometimes or never)				
Trains agency leaders in how to engage families in decision making. (45% sometimes or never)				
Trains or mentors family members who are involved in agency decision making. (52% sometimes or never)				
Schedules committee meetings and other activities at times to encourage family involvement. (24% sometimes or never)				
Compensates family members for time at meetings or other decision making activities. (64% sometimes or never)				
Recruits family members from diverse experiences and backgrounds to be a part of agency-level committees. (36% sometimes or never)				

= mean score   range of scores

Many respondents acknowledged that engaging family members in agency decision-making has been a challenge for their agency. Some pointed to specific policies, such as not being able to compensate family members for their time or to provide child care. Other respondents said that families were not interested or that families expressed interest but that their participation declined over time. Other respondents said that their programs were currently working in this area and were eager learn from successful programs.

Respondents described important benefits of family participation in agency decision-making, including that it (1) created ownership and commitment to the program, (2) enhanced the family member's confidence and skills, and (3) provided unique insight into program development and marketing materials from family members.

The following three bullets are strategies and considerations respondents described when engaging families in agency decision-making:

- Make sure family participation is meaningful. Avoid *"TOKENISM"* or *"RUBBER STAMPING."* Agency stakeholders must respect family voices and value their perspectives.
- Family members need training and coaching to make the best contributions. Compared to "professional" members, family committee members may require more ongoing communication and support. Make sure family members know the level of effort and the kinds of activities in which they will participate prior to their involvement.
- Recognize the burden required of families involved in this work. Do *"WHATEVER IT TAKES"* to facilitate meaningful engagement. Respondents reported hiring interpreters, cooking meals, and providing transportation, child care, compensation, and gift cards.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LEVEL 4: COMMUNITY ADVOCACY AND PEER-LED SUPPORT

More than 61% of respondents reported that their program offered opportunities for family-designed or family-led support groups, educational programs, or social activities. Below is the list of specific models/approaches used in Early Childhood programs:

- Parent Café
- Parent Policy Councils and parent committees (often through Head Start/Early Head Start)
- Parents as Teachers Group Connections
- Primary Coach Approach to Learning
- Growing Great Kids Curriculum
- Center-based parent committees
- The Nurturing Program (parent educational group model)
- Circle of Parents
- 24/7 DAD
- The fatherhood development curriculum
- Dr. Dad
- Partners for a Healthy Baby

Not all early childhood programs actively connected families with advocacy or social support opportunities. Eighteen percent of respondents reported that staff did not encourage families to join advocacy groups and nearly a quarter (22%) reported that staff did not encourage families to join family-led support or social groups (see **Figure 4**, below).

Figure 4: Level 4 Family Engagement Practices
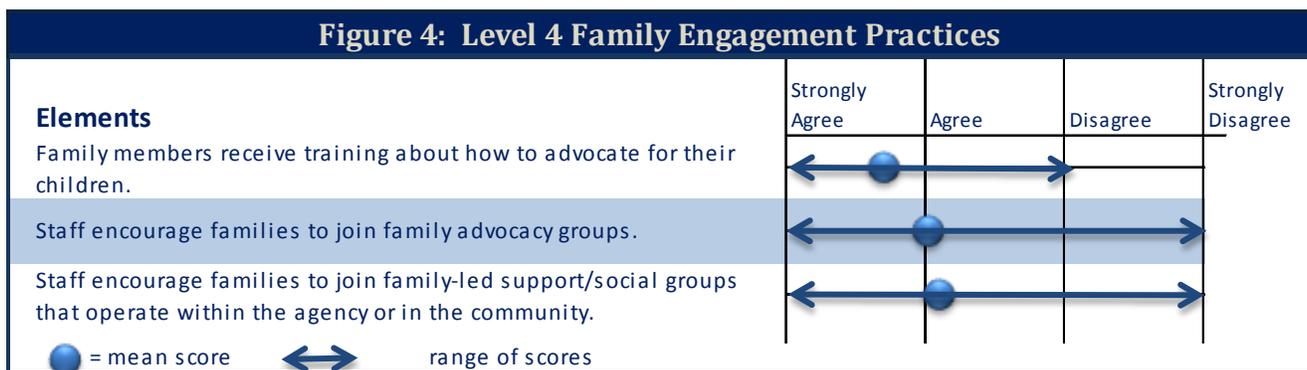
Respondents reported that opportunities for peer-led support incurred several benefits for parents including (1) empowerment, (2) reduced isolation through opportunities for positive social interactions and general fun, and (3) increased buy-in for their own child's services. Common lessons described by respondents included:

- Collaborate with other agencies that may have pre-established successful support groups. A respondent from a Birth-to-Three program hoped to connect parents to other programs that could serve families for longer periods of time (beyond age 3).
- Train family members acting as peer advocates, leaders, or co-leaders before they take on this new role.
- Encourage attendance by providing food, child care, and transportation; send reminders; schedule groups at convenient times; recruit fathers and other family members. One respondent suggested that hosting annual events (picnics, holiday celebrations) develop into traditions for families and staff that can be sustained over time.
- Ensure the groups and events are fun, positive, and provide information that families can apply directly in their homes.

LESSONS FOR REPLICATION: PROMOTING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN AGENCY-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

We asked agency respondents:

What are the two most important lessons you've learned that you would share with another agency about family engagement in agency-level decision making?

The following sections summarize the key lessons described by respondents. The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of responses that aligned with each theme.

Broad Lessons

- Don't mistake a family who is navigating complex challenges with a family who is not interested in participating in early childhood services. The complex needs of families require programs to be flexible and creative. (n = 8)
- Parents – not professionals – have the most important and longest lasting role in their children's lives. (n = 5)
- Infrastructure, support staff, and leadership are critical to the success of programs. (n = 5)
- Don't underestimate the importance of building trust and relationships when working with families. Families do well with having a single staff person working with them over time. (n = 4)
- Although many staff may be uncomfortable with the idea at first, teaming, collaboration, and problem solving with other early childhood professionals is important. (n = 4)
- For some families, taking an active role in directing services may be more challenging than a more passive role. (n = 4) Two related sub-themes:
  o Staff should go slow and help families build the skills and confidence necessary to be their own advocates.
  o Some families may still prefer a less active role in decision-making around services – refer these families to other resources as needed.
- Diversity includes a wide scope of social, ethnic, language, and cultural elements that need to be considered when tailoring early childhood services to a community or a single family. (n = 3)
- Staff and materials must be able to serve clients for whom English is a second language. (n = 3)
- Understand adult learning strategies and be patient as parents learn new skills. (n = 2)

- ☐ The wellbeing of children is fundamentally tied to the wellbeing of their parents. (n = 2)
- ☐ Staff must believe in the program model in order for it to be successful. (n = 2)
- ☐ Family engagement is more than family involvement – it is the systematic inclusion of family voices in every level of agency functioning. (n = 2)
- ☐ It is important to engage fathers and grandparents. (n = 1)
- ☐ Listen to the voices of the children served. (n = 1)

Specific Lessons

- ☐ Plan playgroups and other types of activities for families to come together. (n = 1)
- ☐ Offer free food. (n = 2)
- ☐ Provide child care during events. (n = 1)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated that their program would benefit from technical assistance. The following is a summary of specific topics identified by survey participants:

- ☐ Home-based Toolbox for community
- ☐ Working with families with disabilities
- ☐ Continuing education for staff (especially web-based)
- ☐ Training and strategies for improving family engagement, basic training on key family engagement principles and concepts
- ☐ Learning successful tips/strategies from other programs (especially in the same community)
- ☐ Recruitment and outreach for hard-to-reach populations
- ☐ More training and support for therapists (moving from medical model)
- ☐ Ways to improve measuring family engagement outcomes

COLLABORATIVE SURVEY RESULTS

COLLABORATIVE SURVEY RESULTS

EVIDENCE-BASED OR NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED MODELS IDENTIFIED BY EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATIVES

The FCP Survey for collaboratives included several sections that asked respondents to identify a variety of evidence-based (EB) or nationally recognized models/approaches that support family and community partnerships and are underway within their community. The models and approaches were divided into four discrete categories (1) family support and education program in communities; (2) family-led advocacy and support groups; (3) assessment and conceptual frameworks; and (4) community and parent training and outreach strategies. The FCP survey provided a list of common models/approaches for each category, but also asked respondents to identify other approaches/models not identified in the lists. The following sections identify the extent to which common approaches/models are operating across the state. **Appendix C** provides the list of other models and approaches identified by respondents that are not represented in the following graphs.

Family support and education

Of the 41 respondents reporting answers, nearly all respondents indicated that 4K programs, early childhood special education services, Birth-to-Three programs, Head Start, and home visiting were implemented in their communities (see **Figure 6**, below).

Figure 6: Family Support and Education Programs
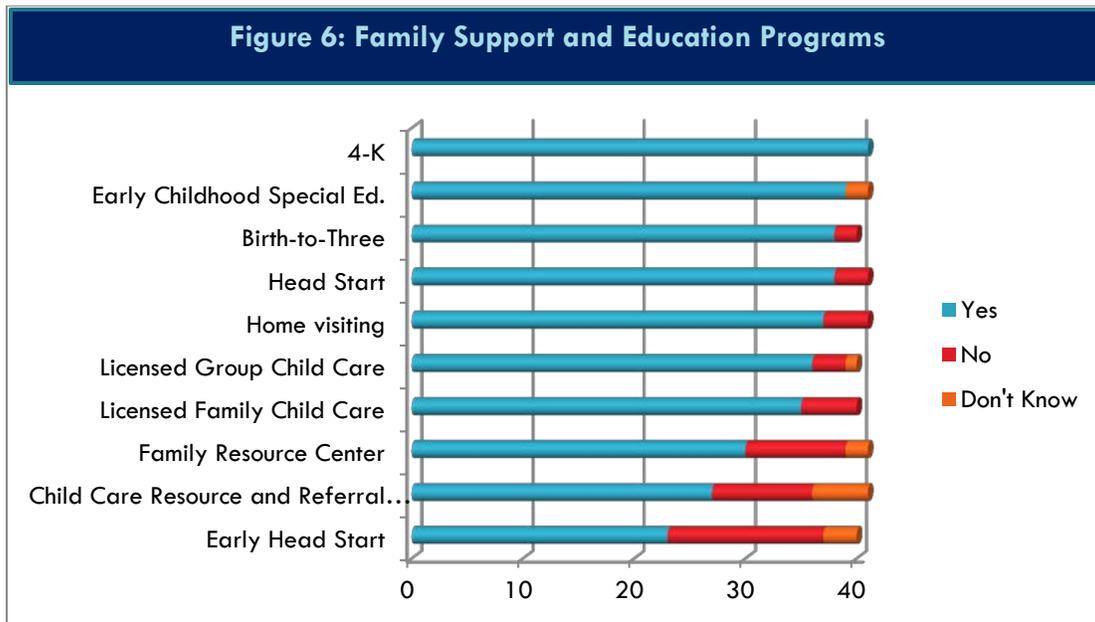
Family-led advocacy or support group programs

Parent Teach Organizations and Parent advisory groups were the most common type of family-led or co-led programs in the community. However, many respondents were unsure whether other types of family-led or co-led programs existed in their community (see **Figure 7**, below).

Figure 7: Family-led Advocacy or Support Group Programs
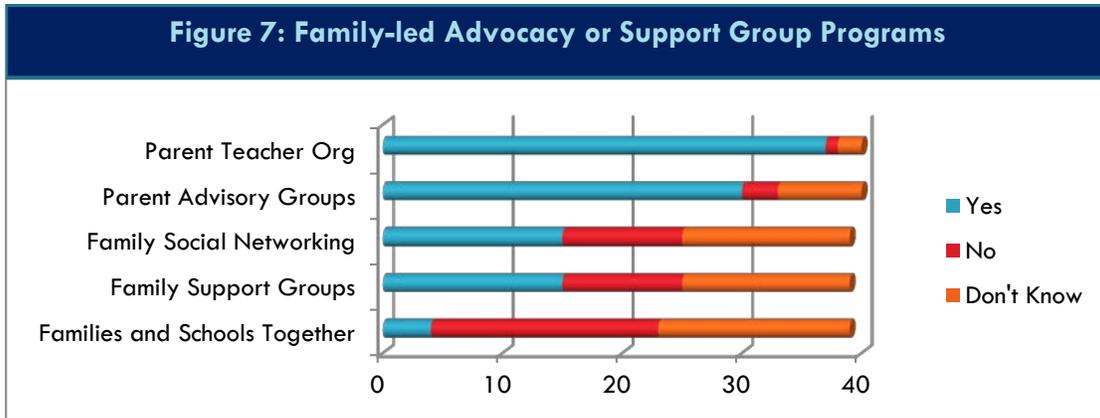
Assessments and conceptual frameworks

Head Start's Family, Parent, and Community Engagement Framework was used in many communities (see **Figure 8**, below). Nevertheless, many respondents did not know whether the assessments and/or conceptual frameworks below were being used in their community.

Figure 8: Assessments and Conceptual Frameworks
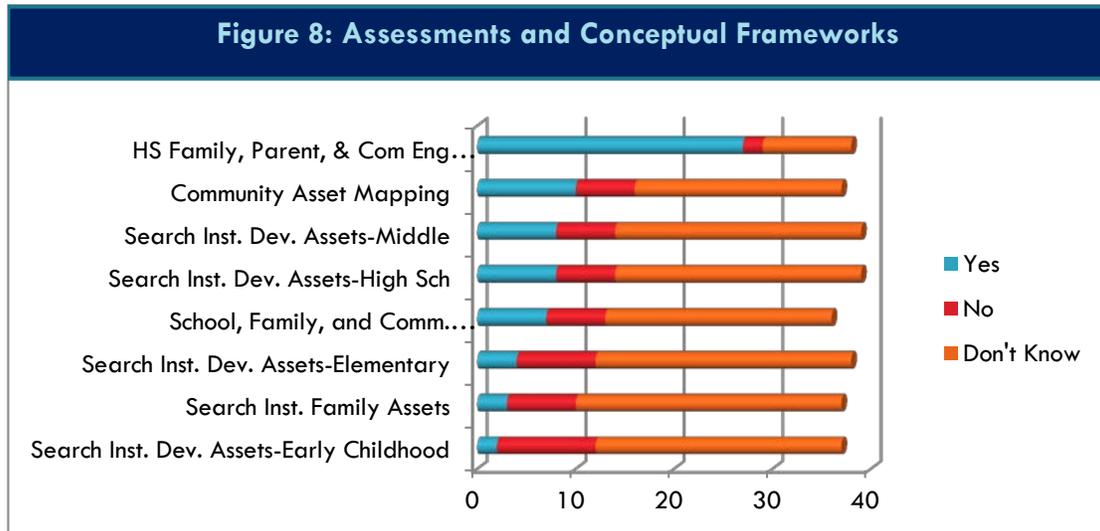
Parent and community training and outreach strategies

Although the majority of respondents were aware of community education and 4-K parent outreach efforts in their communities, many respondents did not know whether other parent and community training and outreach strategies were taking place (see **Figure 9**, below). One respondent described a comprehensive parent outreach strategy:

"We have formed a partnership with [names of two health care NPOs omitted] to assist us in delivering high quality parent outreach for our 4K families. We build a 22-hour package including classes on parenting, nutrition and healthy snacks, parent-child yoga, process art, child development, emotional communication with children, etc., and then offer the programming to all 4K families in 7 area communities. The 7 participating school districts share the cost ($200 per hour), allowing us to provide high quality, free, parent outreach programs to our 4K families at a reasonable cost to each participating district."

Figure 9: Parent & Community Training/Outreach
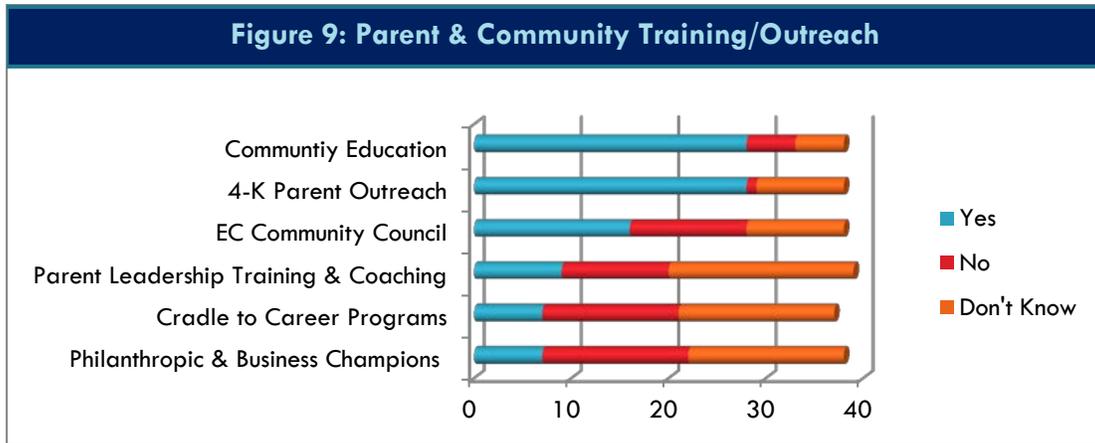
CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

Collaborative partnerships

Respondents were asked to identify community partners who were active participants in the collaborative, as well as those key partners who were missing. Due to space limitations, this report does not describe the full range of participants actively engaged, but the following bullets identify key types of organizations or stakeholders reported missing from collaboratives:

- □ Parents and parent advocacy agencies (n = 7)
- □ Health care (Hospitals, community health clinics, HMOs) (n = 5)
- □ Business leaders and councils (n = 4)
- □ Child care and preschools (especially private or parochial programs) (n = 4)
- □ Elementary schools (n = 4)
- □ Job centers, non-profits related to employment and workforce development, technical colleges (n = 2)
- □ Cradle to career (e.g., Greater Milwaukee Foundation) (n = 1)
- □ Faith-based organizations (n = 1)
- □ Mental health agencies (n=1)
- □ Public library (n=1)

Respondents also described the common challenges experienced while engaging in interagency collaboration:

- □ Funding and resource difficulties (lack of funding, potential for conflicts of interests and turf issues for partners, etc.) (n = 7)
- □ Competing demands for time (n = 7)
- □ Data sharing, reporting outcomes (n = 5)
- □ Important agency stakeholders not present – especially in governing bodies (n = 3)
- □ Changes in partner agencies (school districts shifting, agencies shutting down or downsizing) (n = 3)
- □ Understanding needs and capacity of partner organizations (n = 4)
- □ Differing missions (some may not align with collaborative) (n = 2)
- □ Maintaining complex collaborative structures (e.g., inter-county collaboratives) (n = 2)
- □ Differing federal mandates for Head Start and public schools (n = 2)
- □ Staff transitions in partner agencies (n = 1)

Several respondents, however, noted that overall their early childhood collaboratives were functioning well and had highly engaged, supportive partners. One participant wrote:

"IN THE BEGINNING WE DID A LOT OF GROUNDWORK TO FOSTER TRUST AMONG AGENCIES THROUGH NETWORKING MEETINGS, BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS, MOUS WHEN NEEDED, ETC. WE HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED SUCH DIFFICULTIES IN RECENT YEARS."

Early childhood "systems of care" guiding collaborative work

The ECAC Family and Community Partnership Project Team was interested to learn the extent to which a community's efforts to improve Early Childhood services and supports were considered a system of care. *A system of care is "A principle-guided approach to developing and sustaining systemic changes that result in improved outcomes for children and families"* (HHS, 2013). Over half of respondents had never used the term "system of care" in their collaborative. Only 18% of respondents said that "system of care" was fully integrated into their collaborative. These findings suggest that a system of care approach to early childhood services is not widely established in Wisconsin communities.

Family engagement embedded in collaborative goals and policies

Findings about the extent to which family engagement is embedded in collaborative goals and policy are mixed: Only 36% of respondents reported that their collaboratives had formally identified goals or outcomes that related to family engagement. Of the 24 collaboratives that had MOUs, nearly half included language regarding family engagement, although nearly three-quarters of the collaboratives with MOUs did not involve families in developing the MOUs. Over 80% of collaboratives that funded direct-services had language about family engagement embedded in the funding agreements or RFPs.

Assessment of community needs by collaborative

Communities relied on a number of diverse data sources to assess community needs. Many respondents reported using standardized community assessments (from United Way, UW-Extension, Head Start, etc.), while others used public data available through census or other federal agencies, and administrative data from public and private local agencies. Most respondents reported using a combination of data sources. Below is a list of the most commonly reported data sources for assessing community need:

☐ Public data (census, infant mortality, poverty data, CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System)
☐ Local administrative data from public systems (WIC, public health, homeless liaison data, school systems)
☐ Data from private/nonprofit agencies (Aurora Health Survey, hospitals)
☐ Data from child health screenings
☐ United Way community assessment
☐ UW-Extension community needs assessment and computerized family need survey
☐ Head Start community needs assessment
☐ Comprehensive Service Integration survey
☐ Community meetings for information sharing
☐ Local surveys, gap analyses, environmental scans
☐ Personal experience/anecdotes

FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

Less than half (42%, n = 16) of respondents reported that family members (parents, caregivers, other relatives, or other children) engaged as active participants in their early childhood collaborative. The 16 respondents who reported there were family members actively engaged in their collaboratives were asked to rate the extent to which 10 key family engagement strategies were being implemented within the collaborative, as shown in **Figure 10**, below.

Figure 10: Family Participation in Collaboratives
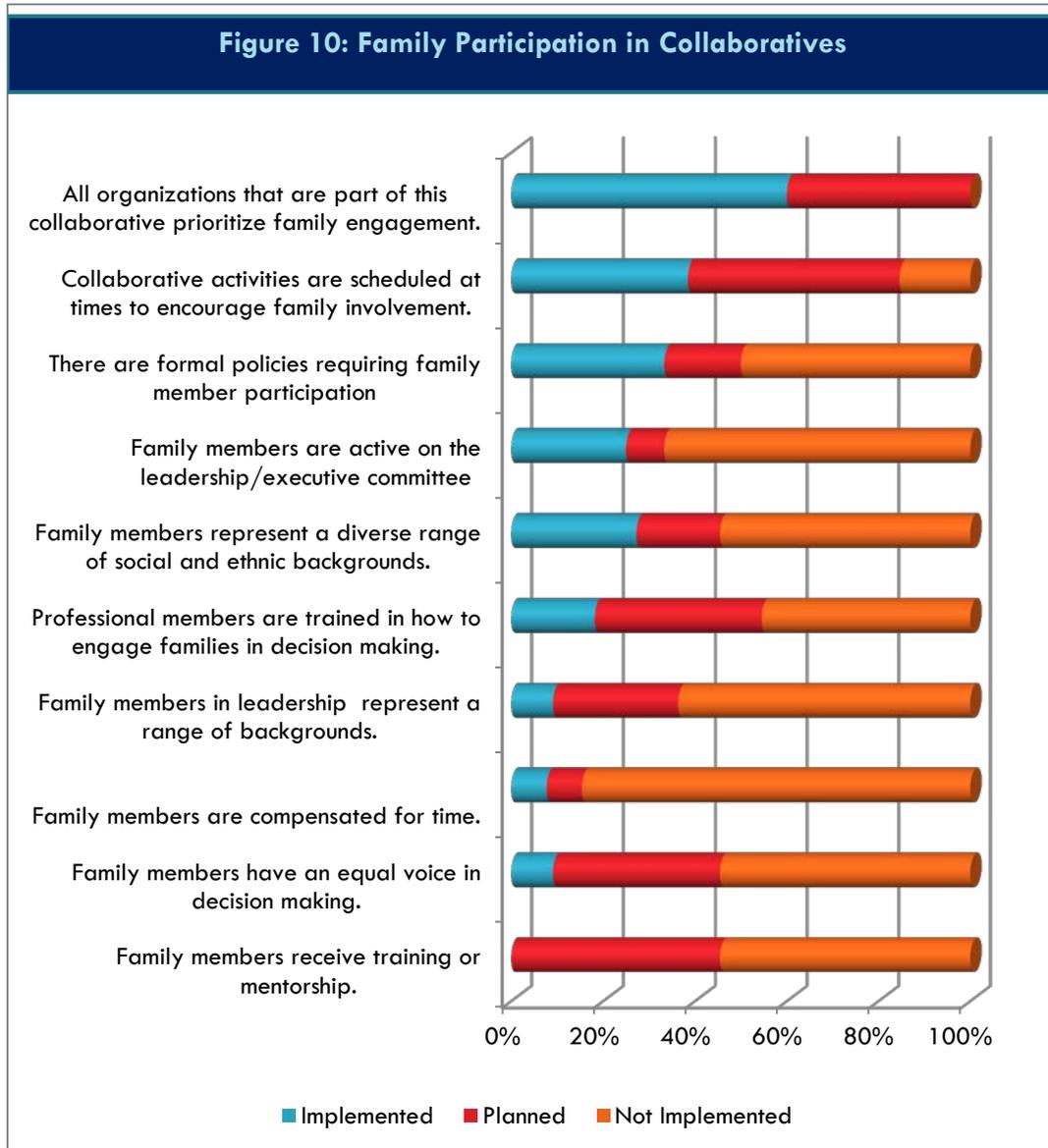
As shown in the figure above, while the commitment to family engagement is present in these community collaboratives, the quality and support for family participants leave room for improvement.

Respondents noted that families have difficulty making time to be a part of collaboratives– as one respondent observed:

"MOST PARENTS WANT TO BE INVOLVED BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND THE TIME."

Another respondent described that while some early childhood programs have well-established guidelines for family involvment, other collaborating partners "*DO NOT HAVE STRONG, CENTRALIZED ROLE FOR PARENTS.*"

Survey participants were also asked to identify supports or strategies to facilitate family involvement in collaboratives. There were few comments from respondents in this area, and many of the comments reported challenges in securing resources to improve parent involvement (e.g., paying for parents to attend meetings, etc.). The strategies mentioned included providing transportation (paying mileage, including MOUs with community partners to bus participants) and child care.

Note that these findings only represent collaboratives that have family representation – most collaboratives included in this survey did not have any family participation. We asked those respondents who reported that families were not present in collaboratives to explain why families did not participate. Almost half of the respondents who did not currently have families actively engaged in the collaborative reported that it was because they were planning to do so soon or that they had encountered challenges in recruiting and retaining family members. Other respondents said it would not be appropriate, giving reasons such as "*WE ARE NOT A DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY.*" Other survey participants acknowledged that family participation had not been a high priority for their collaborative:

> "*THIS IS FOR SURE AN AFTERTHOUGHT ON OUR PART. WE HAVE THOUGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING PARENTS, BUT HAVEN'T MADE A COMMITMENT TO IT, NOR TASKED OURSELVES WITH THE CHALLENGE OF ASKING PARENT REPRESENTATIVES TO JOIN US.*"

LESSONS FOR REPLICATION: COLLABORATION AND ENGAGING FAMILIES IN COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

Survey participants were asked the following open-ended questions:

1. What are some of the most important strategies you would share with other communities interested in starting or improving their early childhood community collaboratives?
2. What are some of the most important strategies you would share with other community collaboratives interested in engaging families?

The most common themes from these two questions are distilled below; however, the direct quotes from many respondents showed enthusiasm and depth that was difficult to capture in a synthesis. Thus, selected quotes from these two questions are reported in **Appendix D**.

Successful strategies for interagency collaboration

- ☐ Recruit key partners through building relationships and maintaining communication
- ☐ Recruit families
- ☐ Understand local needs and establish clear goals and outcomes
- ☐ Be persistent and flexible
- ☐ Start small
- ☐ Use a system of care approach
- ☐ Identify key leaders and a core group; consider shared leadership
- ☐ Reach out to business and philanthropic partners

Successful strategies for engaging families in community collaborative

- □ Provide payment and support
- □ Make participation meaningful
- □ Start with a small group of parents
- □ Be flexible and creative when reaching out to potential parent partners
- □ Build relationships and trust with parent partners
- □ Respect culture and diversity
- □ Increase community commitment to early childhood efforts

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Sixty percent of respondents said their collaborative would benefit from technical assistance and/or training to promote family engagement. Many respondents did not give specific areas of need, but said that they would benefit from general support and training. Specific topics and concerns that emerged included:

- □ Best practices, especially in the planning phase
- □ Cultural competency training for governing bodies
- □ Establishing parent involvement on collaborative leadership teams
- □ Engaging specific groups of families:
  - o Hispanic families
  - o Families with children who are younger than 4 years old (from 4-K program)

APPENDIX A:

FCP AGENCY SURVEY

Family and Community Partnership Survey
Agency Version

Introduction

We invite you to participate in the Early Childhood Advisory Committee's Family and Community Partnership (FCP) survey. The purpose of the survey is to help understand the extent to which early childhood programs partner and engage with families and to identify specific strategies that reinforce the principles of family engagement and community partnership. The findings will ultimately result in a compendium of practices, which can be shared with other early childhood programs across the state. This effort reinforces Wisconsin's strong commitment to family and community partnerships and is designed to align with the State's Race to the Top priorities.

All of your responses to the survey are confidential. Only the evaluators will have access to individual responses. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. We estimate that it will take 15 minutes to complete the survey.

I agree to participate in the FCP survey

○ Yes

○ No (You will exit the survey)

Instructions

Your responses will be automatically saved as you go. You may go back and change answers. You may also exit and re-open the survey at a later time using the web address provided in your email.

Although you may complete this survey without providing your name, we encourage you to include

your contact information at the end of the survey. This information will be helpful if your agency has resources or innovative strategies to share with other programs or if you need technical assistance. No identifying information will be known to anyone other than the evaluation team unless you agree (at the end of the survey).

Please complete the survey by **11:59 pm CT June 5, 2013**. You will be sent up to 3 reminder emails about this survey.

Definitions

For the purpose of this survey...

"**Early childhood programs**" are defined as services, supports, and community collaborative initiatives that focus on serving children prenatally through age eight.

"**Family engagement**" refers to the support for family members from agency and community stakeholders at multiple levels to ensure that families are given the opportunity to engage in…

- **Building strong relationships with children**. Families are supported in their role as their child's first and best teacher (e.g., they receive information about the importance of reading to their child every day).
- **Service planning for their children**. Families participate in decisions about the services that their child needs (e.g., they receive information about the importance of quality child care and how to select quality care).
- **Agency-level decision making**. Families participate in program decisions that impact their child(e.g., they are engaged in a parent council or participate in work groups about program changes).
- **Community advocacy**. Families serve as advocates for early childhood programs within their community(e.g., they offer public comments at school board meetings or participate in community coalitions).
- **Peer-led support**. Families are given opportunities to support and socialize with other families

with young children in their communities (e.g., they have access to parent support groups, etc.)

Introductory Questions

What is the name of your agency?

[   ]

How long has your agency offered early childhood programs? (please provide a numerical answer in years)

[   ]

Family Engagement - Introduction

Do you use one or more evidence-based or a nationally recognized model(s) or approach(es) to guide your early childhood program? Some examples include Early Head Start, Strengthening Families, Healthy Families America, Nurse Family Partnership.

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

○ In development/planning

Please identify the evidence-based or nationally recognized model(s) or approach(es) used by your early childhood program.

[   ]

Does the evidence-based or nationally recognized model(s) or approach(es) have clear guidance about family engagement practices?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Please give some examples of how this guidance has helped improve family engagement.

[   ]

Describe the lessons your program has learned about improving family engagement while implementing an evidence-based or nationally recognized early childhood model or approach.

Does your agency have formally identified goals or outcomes related to family engagement?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

○ In development/planning

Please summarize the goals/outcomes related to family engagement below.
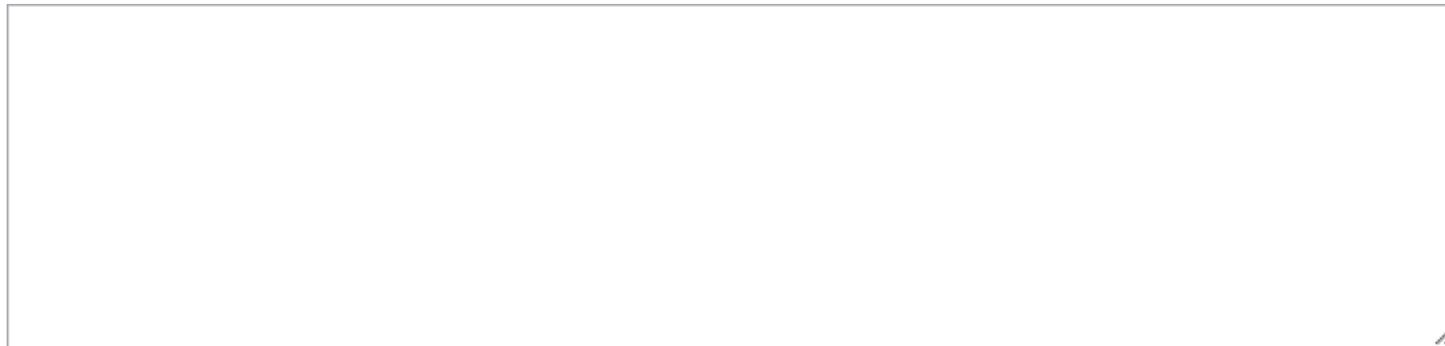
Please describe how, if at all, your agency measures progress towards goals and outcomes related to

family engagement below.

[text area]

Family engagement activities - direct services for children

Do staff at your agency work directly with families and children?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Indicate the extent to which your agency...

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Don't know or Not Applicable
Fosters meaningful, reciprocal relationships between parent/caregiver and child in a manner that is both culturally receptive and responsive.	○	○	○	○	○
Engages multiple family members in promoting	○	○	○	○	○

healthy development in young children.

Helps families identify parenting strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their child.	○	○	○	○	○
Helps families understand and respond to their child's behavior in positive and constructive ways.	○	○	○	○	○
Welcomes families to observe and participate in their child's classroom or home-based activities.	○	○	○	○	○
Supports family-based educational activities (for example, your agency may provide books to borrow, reward time families spend reading with their children, etc.).	○	○	○	○	○
Trains staff on best practices to promote strong family-child relationships and parental engagement in a child's early development.	○	○	○	○	○

What are the two most important lessons you've learned that you would share with a new program about promoting family-child relationships and family engagement in a child's early development?

Please indicate how much the following statements reflect your agency.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know or Not Applicable
Facilities are warm and welcoming to families.	○	○	○	○	○
Location is easily accessible to families.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff are warm and welcoming to families.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff frequently share information about a child's progress with family members.	○	○	○	○	○
There are formal policies or standards that require families to be involved in the decision-making about their child's services.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff spend time educating families about policies, laws, and services that are important to their child's development.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff spend time educating families about internal agency policies, procedures, and resources, such as grievance procedures, and families' rights and responsibilities.	○	○	○	○	○
Meetings are scheduled to accommodate and encourage family participation.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff try to engage all individuals who are considered important in a child's life.	○	○	○	○	○
The level of family engagement in their child's service planning is routinely assessed.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff have received training on how best to					

empower families to be involved in decision-making for their child's services.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members receive training about how to advocate for their children.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff encourage families to join family advocacy groups.	○	○	○	○	○
Staff encourage families to join family-led support or social groups (e.g., Circle of Parents, Parent Cafe, etc) that operate either within the agency or in the community.	○	○	○	○	○

Does your agency routinely assess families' satisfaction with the services and support they've received through your agency?

○ Yes - this is a standard procedure

○ Sometimes - but we do not assess in an ongoing way

○ We are planning to do this, but have not started yet

○ We do not assess family satisfaction

Does your assessment of family satisfaction also include measures regarding whether families perceive staff and/or programming to be culturally competent/appropriate?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Please describe key strategies or survey questions that you have found important and meaningful when assessing family satisfaction with agency services.

What are the two most important lessons you've learned that you would share with another agency trying to improve family engagement in service planning?

Family engagement activities - family support/advocacy

Does your agency offer opportunities for family-designed or family-led groups (e.g., support groups, educational programs, or social activities)?

○ Yes

○

No

○ Don't know

Does your agency use evidence-based or nationally recognized model(s) for family-led support/education/social groups for families? (e.g., Circle of Parents, Parents Cafe, etc.)

If yes, please name the model(s).

○ Yes

[   ]

○ No

○ Don't know

What are the two most important lessons you've learned that you would share with another agency about initiating and sustaining family-led or family-designed support groups, educational programs, or social events?

[   ]

Family engagement activities - family participation in program design

The following questions are about family engagement in agency-level decision making. For instance, this may include tasks associated with developing or improving a program or coalition's policies, practices, or governance structures.

Indicate the extent to which your agency...

	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Don't Know or Not Applicable
Ensures that families are active members on committees.	○	○	○	○	○
Has formal policies requiring family participation in agency decision making.	○	○	○	○	○
Trains agency leaders in how to engage families in decision making.	○	○	○	○	○
Trains or mentors family members who are involved in agency decision making.	○	○	○	○	○
Schedules committee meetings and other activities at times to encourage family involvement.	○	○	○	○	○
Compensates family members for time spent at meetings or other agency-related decision making activities.	○	○	○	○	○
Recruits family members who represent a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds to be a part of agency-level committees.	○	○	○	○	○

What are the two most important lessons you've learned that you would share with another agency

about family engagement in agency-level decision making?

Have you developed a parent education tool or other resources to promote family engagement that you would be willing to share with other programs? If so, please describe below and be sure to include your contact information at the end of the survey.

Would your program benefit from technical assistance and/or training to promote family engagement? If yes, please describe.

○ Yes

○ No

Are you willing to provide your contact information in case the evaluation team needs to get clarification or more detail about one of your responses?

○ Yes

○ No, thank you

Are you willing to provide your contact information to colleagues around the State to share innovative practices and strategies?

○ Yes

○ No, thank you

Your name

[   ]

Your email address and/or phone number

[   ]

APPENDIX B:

FCP COLLABORATIVE SURVEY

Family and Community Partnership Survey
Collaborative Version

Introduction

We invite you to participate in the Early Childhood Advisory Committee's Family and Community Partnership (FCP) survey. The purpose of the survey is to help understand the extent to which early childhood programs partner and engage with families and to identify specific strategies that reinforce the principles of family engagement and community partnership. The findings will ultimately result in a compendium of practices, which can be shared with other early childhood programs across the state. This effort reinforces Wisconsin's strong commitment to family and community partnerships and is designed to align with the State's Race to the Top priorities.

All of your responses to the survey are confidential. Only the evaluators will have access to individual responses. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. We estimate that the survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

I agree to participate in the FCP survey.

○ Yes

○ No (You will exit the survey)

Instructions

Your responses will be automatically saved as you go. You may go back and change answers. You may also exit and re-open the survey at a later time using the web address provided in your email.

Although you may complete this survey without providing your name, we encourage you to include your contact information at the end of the survey. This information will be helpful if your agency has resources or innovative strategies to share with other programs or if you need technical assistance. No identifying

information will be known to anyone other than the evaluation team unless you agree (at the end of the survey).

You have been selected to complete the survey as a representative of a community collaborative. Please respond from the perspective of your collaborative -- <u>not</u> the individual agency/program in which you are employed.

Please complete the survey by 11:59 pm CT June 5, 2013. You will be sent up to 3 reminder emails to complete the survey.

Definitions

For the purpose of this survey...

"**Early childhood programs**" are defined as services, supports, and community collaborative initiatives that focus on serving children prenatally through age eight.

"**Your collaborative**" refers to a formal collaborative or coalition group consisting of several agencies/partners/stakeholders.

"**Family engagement**" refers to the support from agency and community stakeholders at multiple levels given to family members to ensure that families have the opportunity to engage in…

- **Building strong relationships with children**. Families are supported in their role as their child's first and best teacher (e.g., they receive information about the importance of reading to their child every day).
- **Service planning for their children**. Families participate in decisions about the services that their child needs (e.g., they receive information about the importance of quality child care and how to select quality care).

- **Agency-level decision making**. Families participate in program decisions that impact their child (e.g., they are engaged in a parent council or participate in work groups about program changes).
- **Community advocacy**. Families serve as advocates for early childhood programs within their community (e.g., they offer public comments at school board meetings or participate in community coalitions).
- **Peer-led support**. Families are given opportunities to support and socialize with other families with young children in their communities (e.g., they have access to parent support groups, etc.).

Introductory Questions

We will be asking you about activities taking place in your community. There is no specific definition we use for community, but it should be an area that you feel you are knowledgeable about. Please select the description that best defines your "community."

○ County

[   ]

○ City or town

[   ]

○ Neighborhood

[   ]

○ Zip code or area code

[   ]

○ Other

[   ]

What is the name of your community collaborative?

[ ]

What year did the collaborative begin? Please enter 4-digit year only (e.g., 2006)

[ ]

Please identify the main goals/mission of your collaborative.

[ ]

Please list the community partners/agencies that are in your collaborative.

[ ]

Are there any important organizations or stakeholders missing from your collaborative? If so, please identify them here.
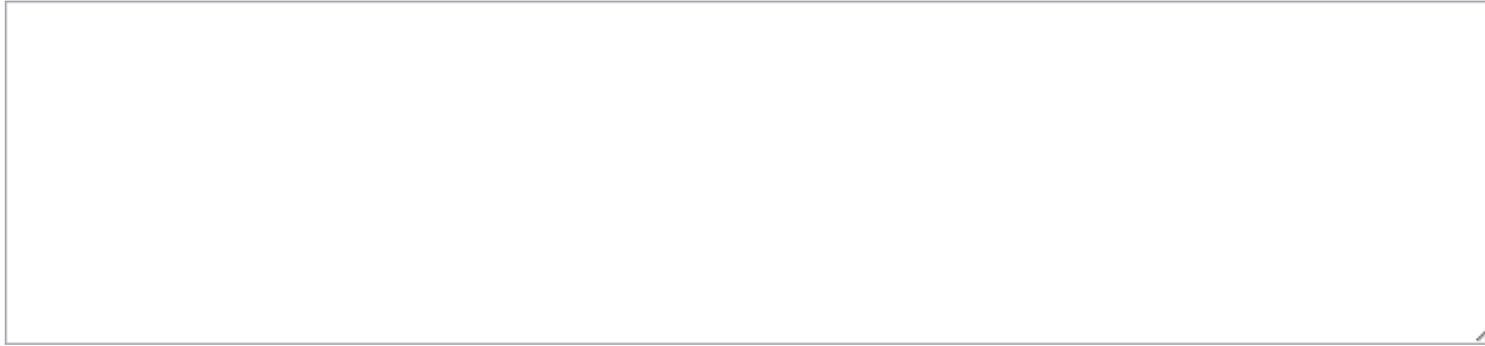
Family Support and Education Programs

Please indicate whether the following family support and education programs are used in your community.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Home visiting	○	○	○
Early Head Start	○	○	○
Head Start	○	○	○
Family Resource Center	○	○	○
Child Care Resource and Referral Agency	○	○	○
Birth-to-Three program	○	○	○
Early Childhood Special Education Services (age 3-5)	○	○	○
4-K Programs	○	○	○
Licensed Family Child Care	○	○	○
Licensed Group Child Care	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Please identify other family serving programs in your communities or briefly comment on your experiences with these programs that may be relevant to other communities.

[text box]

Family-led or Co-led Programs

Please indicate whether the following family-led programs are used in your community.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Parent Teacher Organizations	○	○	○
Families and Schools Together (FAST)	○	○	○
Parent advisory groups	○	○	○
Family support groups (e.g., Parents Anonymous, Circle of Parents, etc.)	○	○	○
Family social networking opportunities (Parent Cafe, etc.)	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Please identify other family-led programs in your communities or briefly comment on your experiences with these programs that may be relevant to other communities.

[   ]

Assessments/Conceptual Frameworks

Please indicate whether the following assessments or conceptual frameworks are used in your community.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Search Institute Developmental Assets - Early Childhood	○	○	○
Search Institute Developmental Assets - Elementary	○	○	○
Search Institute Developmental Assets - Middle School	○	○	○
Search Institute Developmental Assets - High School	○	○	○
Search Institute Family Assets	○	○	○
Head Start Family, Parent, Community, Engagement Framework	○	○	○
School, Family, and Community Partnership Model (Joyce Epstein)	○	○	○
Community Asset Mapping	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Please identify other assessments or conceptual frameworks used in your communities or briefly

comment on your experiences with these programs that may be relevant to other communities.

[text box]

Parent and Community Training and Outreach Strategies

Please indicate whether the following parent outreach and training strategies are used in your community.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Parent Leadership Training and Coaching	○	○	○
4-K Parent Outreach	○	○	○
Philanthropic and Business Champions for Early Childhood Development	○	○	○
Community Education	○	○	○
Early Childhood Community Council	○	○	○
Cradle to Career programs (e.g., STRIVE, etc.)	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Please identify other education, training, and community outreach activities used in your communities or briefly comment on your experiences with these programs that may be relevant to other communities.

To what extent does your collaborative promote a System of Care* for families needing early childhood services and supports in your community?

*A *system of care* is a principle-guided approach to developing and sustaining systemic changes that result in improved outcomes for children and families (HHS, 2013).

○ My collaborative has never used the term "System of Care."

○ My collaborative sometimes uses the term "System of Care," but it is not fully integrated into the approach of our collaborative. (System of Care principles are not used to guide the everyday work of our collaborative; collaborative members may not fully understand or agree on what it means to establish a System of Care for early childhood supports in our community.)

○ System of Care principles are fully integrated into our collaborative. (System of Care principles are used to guide the everyday work of our collaborative; collaborative members understand and agree on what it means to establish a System of Care for early childhood supports in our community.)

Family Engagement - Introduction

Does your collaborative have formally identified goals or outcomes related to family engagement?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

○ In development/planning

Please summarize your collaborative's goals/outcomes related to family engagement below.

Please describe how, if at all, your collaborative measures progress towards goals and outcomes related to family engagement.

Are there Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or other formal agreements among the collaborative

partners?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

Is there language in the formal agreements and/or MOUs regarding family engagement?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Are families engaged in developing MOUs?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

If your collaborative provides funding to other agencies for direct services, do these funding agreements/RFPs contain language about family engagement?

○ Yes

○ No

○ My collaborative does not fund direct services

○ Don't know

Describe how, if at all, your collaborative assesses the needs of families in the community or uses available information to identify families' needs (e.g., family surveys, poverty data, demographic data, etc.).

[ ]

Family engagement activities - family member participation in collaborative

Are family members (parents, caregivers, other relatives, older children, etc.) active participants in your collaborative?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

Please indicate how much the following statements reflect your collaborative.

	Not planned	Planned	Implemented within last 12 months	Well-established	Don't know
There are formal policies requiring family member participation in the collaborative.	○	○	○	○	○
The professional members of the collaborative have been trained in how to engage families in decision	○	○	○	○	○

making.

|					
Family members have an equal voice in decision making within the collaborative.	○	○	○	○	○
All organizations that are part of this collaborative prioritize family engagement.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members who are involved in this collaborative receive training or mentorship.	○	○	○	○	○
Committee meetings and other collaborative activities are scheduled at times to encourage family involvement.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members are compensated for time spent at meetings or other collaborative activities.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members who are recruited to be members of the collaborative represent a diverse range of social and ethnic backgrounds.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members are active on the leadership/executive committee of the collaborative.	○	○	○	○	○
Family members holding leadership roles represent a diverse range of social and ethnic backgrounds.	○	○	○	○	○

How do you ensure that family participation in your collaborative represents a diverse range of families that are served by early childhood programs in your community?

[ ]

What other supports (if any) are provided to facilitate family involvement in the collaborative (for example, transportation costs, childcare, etc.)?

[ ]
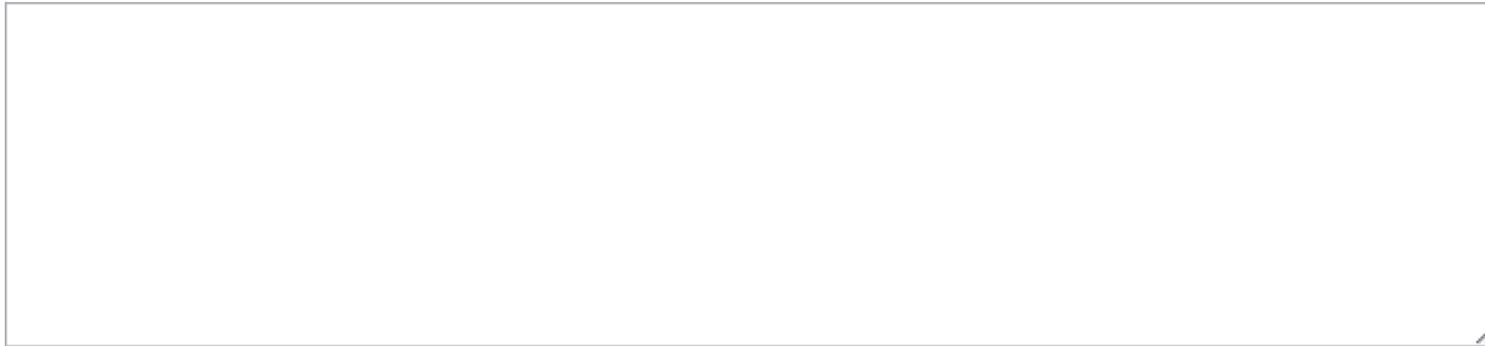
Please identify which of the following best describes why your collaborative does not include family members.

○ It would not be appropriate to have a family member involved in decision making for our community collaborative.

○ We are planning on having a family member involved in decision making for our community collaborative, but have not done so yet.

○ We have encountered challenges recruiting or retaining family members as participants in our community collaborative.

○

Other

Please provide more detail about your response as to why your collaborative does not include family members.

What are some of the challenges your collaborative has encountered in terms of inter-agency collaboration?

What are some of the most important strategies you would share with other communities interested in starting or improving their early childhood community collaboratives?

What are some of the challenges your collaborative has encountered in terms of engaging families (e.g., getting family members to serve on leadership boards, maintaining consistent communication with family members)?

What are some of the most important strategies you would share with other community collaboratives interested in engaging families?

Would your collaborative benefit from technical assistance and/or training to promote family engagement? If yes, please describe.

○ Yes

[   ]

○ No

Are you willing to provide your contact information in case the evaluation team needs to get clarification or more detail about one of your responses?

○ Yes

○ No, thank you

Are you willing to provide your contact information to colleagues around the state as we share innovative practices and strategies?

○ Yes

○ No, thank you

Your name

[   ]

Your email address and/or phone number

[   ]

APPENDIX C:
OTHER FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MODELS/STRATEGIES
IN COMMUNITIES

(FROM THE FCP COLLABORATIVE SURVEY)

OTHER FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Neighborhood House
- Health Departments, WIC programs, PNCC
- public libraries
- healthcare partners
- work force development centers
- programs with developmentally appropriate play spaces (e.g., Play and Learn, Kidz Pace)
- diversity consultants, churches, faith based organizations who foster important connections to community populations
- parent advocacy agencies
- respite care programs
- Advocacy groups with parent supports such as United Cerebral Palsy, ARC, NAMI, and special education programs within school systems
- Strengthening Families; University of Wisconsin-Extension (Family Living Agent program)
- domestic violence (e.g., Time Out Family Abuse Shelter)
- Early Childhood Special Education, Nurturing Fathers and Nurturing Parent Programs
- Pregnancy counseling programs

OTHER FAMILY-LED SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Advocacy & Skill Development

- Head Start Parent Committee and Head Start Policy Councils
- Parent Consultant Program-provides leadership development, self-advocacy skill building and systems navigation training.

Social and Support Groups

- Kidz Place Play and Learn Library Events
- MOMs groups in Hudson, River Falls, New Richmond
- Parenting with Love 'n Logic
- Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPs)
- Support groups for parents of children with disabilities
- the Running Rebels organization (provides mentorship for young Black men in high school)

OTHER ASSESSMENTS OR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
- Trauma Informed Care and Conscious Discipline
- Beloit LIHF-Community Action Plan (Assessment of existing services and gaps to address needs in the AA community)
- YRBS-Youth Risk Behavior Survey (with the support of CESA 6 personnel) every other year
- PALS (Pre-K & K) 2nd grade and up MAP testing
- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Life Course Model
- Evidence-based models being considered but not currently implemented: Born Learning, Dolly Parton's Imagination, Family Place Libraries, Raising a Reader, Reach Out and Read, Reading Is Fundamental

OTHER PARENT AND COMMUNITY TRAINING AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

- WI Family Ties and the Northeast Wisconsin Center for Children & Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (Parent training)
- Pyramid Behavior Support model (and related models)
- Ujima Service Advisory (trains and supports community residents)

APPENDIX D:
LESSONS FOR REPLICATION

(FROM THE FCP COLLABORATIVE SURVEY)

DIRECT QUOTES FROM RESPONDENTS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STRATEGIES YOU WOULD SHARE WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES INTERESTED IN STARTING OR IMPROVING THEIRY EARLY CHILDHOOD COLLABORATIVES?

Recruit Key Partners Through Building Relationships and Maintaining Communication

- Bring philanthropy and business to the table. Separately but both in the community discussion. Philanthropy is particularly able to INFLUENCE policy and strategy even more than providing funding.
- Communication is key...don't stop talking to one another and accept that not everyone will be at the table all the time. Keep them in the communication loop and when they see a chance to contribute to the effort, they will.
- Regular meetings between the teachers and staff members so that they know they are part of a team, and part of something bigger than just their classroom.
- I think the number one thing that has contributed to the success of our collaboration is mutual respect.
- Building relationships is paramount, whether it's with someone on the ground floor or at the top of the organizational chart. Working from every direction to meet people and make relationships work and get your message across is key. Sometimes it will happen just bumping into someone in a coffee shop! Oh, and don't just ask once. Sometimes it takes a half-dozen attempts for it to sink in.
- Insist on monthly staff meetings where all people involved are expected to attend and contribute to the agenda. (We have joint issues at the beginning of the agenda, and partner specific issues near the end so groups can split up if need be.) This on-gong communication has been tremendously helpful in dealing with the day-to-day issues that any collaboration needs to address.
- Keep the meetings short-no more than an hour. Encourage members to remain with the council over time by sharing leadership roles and discussing pertinent items on the short agenda when you meet.

Recruit Families

- Engage families (targeted populations) early on, in program design, implementation and evaluation. Become strategic in recruiting and engaging parents on governing bodies (provide childcare, transportation, stipends and flexible meeting times).
- A very good Parent Connection person, we have one!!

Understand Local Needs and Establish Clear Goals and Outcomes

- Do a thorough job of understanding local needs, statistics, early childhood organizations, and families.
- Determine desired outcomes and means of measurement before implementing.
- Seek assistance from organizations such as the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health to help steer the direction based on science and research so that the effort is effective.

- Cite early childhood research to support your call to action.

Be Persistent & Flexible

- Don't lose sight of your vision and continue to move forward despite challenges. Our group often uses the phrase "The answer to 'how?' is 'yes'". When faced with a challenge, it isn't a matter of "if" we are going to figure it out, it is "how."
- Be prepared to adjust strategies as time progresses.
- Don't give up!

Start Small

- Dream big but start small Bring everyone to the table and be as transparent as possible
- Start with simple ideas and then build from there. For example, we started with wrap around care for our K4 students (who only attend a half-day) and before/after care for older students. Now we host special events with shared staff, summer programs, and participate in training together.
- I would say there is no "right" way to get your foot in the door, or no "right" door, for that matter.

Use a System of Care Approach

- The system should have clear objectives and outcomes, be scalable, and not attempt to be "all things to all people."
- The overall effort should be coordinated through a central, neutral organization, supported by paid staff and active volunteers.
- There should be collaboration, service coordination and resource sharing among providers (enabling a menu of key services and non-dependence on a single provider).
- Services should be evidence- and/or research-based and draw on best practices.
- As programs are ramped up, they should not watered down. The importance of having a full continuum of services throughout childhood and adolescence should be acknowledged and recognized.
- The system should ideally be sustained by diversified funding sources, and at its core, a strong public/private partnership.

Identify Key Leaders and a Core Group. Consider Shared Leadership

- Identifying a strong leader with passion and commitment--and adequate time (and compensation) to fulfill and retain in role; sharing leadership with co-/vice chair and committee chairs, etc.
- Assemble a core group of energetic people who are committed to making a meaningful difference.

DIRECT QUOTES FROM RESPONDENTS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STRATEGIES YOU WOULD SHARE WITH OTHER COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES INTERESTED IN ENGAGING FAMILIES?

Provide payment and support
- When one council I was on was able to pay parents a stipend to attend, attendance was better. The professionals are all being paid by their agencies to attend meetings, why shouldn't parents?
- Flexible scheduling
- Make sure to schedule events at times that are convenient for families and offer childcare and food.
- Offering childcare, food, and transportation can be helpful. Our 4K program had some success in engaging families this year by offering a family activity on Saturday.

Make participation meaningful
- Families also need to perceive a value in what they participate in.
- LISTEN to the families and what they need and want. FOLLOW the families. Don't try to lead them to what you think is best for them.

Start with Small Group of Parents
- Start with a small focus group of parents and get all of their ideas first, then start the work!

Be Flexible & Creative When Reaching Out to Potential Parent Partners
- Think outside the box - coming to the parents (other advisory groups, focus groups, etc.) can work to get family input - although it's not ideal, it's better than no input at all.
- Enlist the support of programs which serve families.

Relationships and Trust Building
- Building relationships is key
- Personnel need to work over time to build and maintain trust with families.
- Some parents feel apprehensive about schools in general. Get them to attend social events involving their kids.

Culture and respect
- Develop culturally competent strategies to engage families at all levels.

Increase Community Buy-In
- To get across to the community that in order to raise a child - that yes it does "take a village." That we need to define what our community is - that we are not just existing together - but yet we are living together.