

Increasing Family Engagement

Tamara Osivwemu

CalSAC Endorsed Trainer

Citizen Schools Director of Program Training & Implementation

Independent Consultant

Let's get started

- Agenda
- Bike Rack
- Introductions



Norms

- Choose to be present and engaged in learning.
- Phone off or on vibrate.
- Avoid side bar conversations.
- Agree to disagree.
- Be aware of diversity in the group.
(culture, age, sexual orientation, privileges, gender and experience)

Agenda & Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will

- identify their attitudes towards families;
- consider how their attitudes can enhance or detract from their ability to develop positive relationships with families;
- identify one or two initiatives to improve and increase family engagement.

Key Concepts

- Staff feelings and attitudes about families can help or hinder relationships with families.
- Family members are partners.
- Program environment also contributes to interactions between staff and families.
- Families are more willing to communicate with staff **when they feel welcome and accepted** at the program.



Attitudes toward Families

Think-Pair-Share

- What do families need from you?
- What do you need from families?



Family Engagement Matters

- Research shows **positive** benefits associated with family engagement.
- Research indicates the **relationship** between family engagement and outcomes is even stronger for children from low-income families.
- Benefits include **increased** school readiness (young children) and academic achievement (school-aged youth).

Activity: Attitudes towards Families

- Strongly Agree
- Strongly Disagree

- Most parents want to know their children and youth are safe, happy, and productive, they are valued as individuals, and are well cared for in your program.
 - Many parents would like to follow up on program activities with their child/youth at home.
-
- Even though often pressed for time, most family members really want to be a part of their child/youth's lives in your program.
 - Most parents would like to know more about helping their child/youth to make friends and get along well with other people.
 - Family members have good ideas about how your program should be run.
 - When a child/youth is having difficulties in your program, most parents know what they can do to help solve the difficulties.
 - To a child/youth, a parent is the most important person in the world.

- Families are a valuable resource for program planning.
- Family members have many talents, hobbies, skills to share.
- Parents have a wealth of information to share about their child/youth's interests, talents, concerns, strengths, and needs.
- Families naturally do interesting and educationally rich activities with their children and youth in their daily routines and activities.
- Families want to greet me when they come into the program.
- My work is easier because I work with the families of the children and youth in my program.



Reflecting on Attitudes Towards Families

Reflecting on Attitudes Towards Families

- What type of partnership do **you** and **your program** have or want to have with families?
 - Take 2 minutes to reflect on your handout
- In small groups, select **one positive attitude** then brainstorm **10 actions you can implement** in your program to demonstrate that attitude.



Action Planning

Action Planning

Step 1:

- Select one action that you want to implement within your program.

Step 2:

- Develop a plan of action for implementation.

Step 3:

- Give and receive feedback from a partner. Consider:
 - Clarify and feasibility of plan
 - Additional considerations

Additional Strategies

- Provide weekly feedback about their child.
- Schedule weekly phone calls or discussions at dismissal.
- Share an account of the day (verbal or written).
- Identify a parent liaison or develop a parent group.
- Solicit parent volunteers for specific activities or special events.
- Host reoccurring parent potlucks, community service, or educational events.
- Identify home-to-school/program connections.
- Seek out ways for families to share their culture with the children.

Thank you!

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation and input your reflections for this session. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!