Family Engagement in After School Programs
May 16, 2019
Session Goals

1. Understand the importance of family engagement and our role in it.

2. Explore strategies to actively embrace the culture of the children and families served.

3. Identify key components of creating welcoming environment for families
Family Engagement is the intentional collaboration between a child’s adult caretaker and educators that effectively accelerates student learning and supports healthy development.
Engagement Means “With”

- Relationship building
- Two-way communication
- Joint decision-making
- Equality
- Respect
- Ongoing Learning
Is This Important for OSTP?

- Higher levels of program attendance and retention
- Increased program involvement
- Help kids *more* - improved academic and developmental youth outcomes
Dive Deep!

Communications Styles and Rules:
- Facial Expressions
- Gestures
- Eye Contact
- Personal Space
- Touching
- Body Language
- Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations
- Handling and Displaying of Emotion
- Tone of Voice

Notions of:
- Courtesy and Manners
- Friendship
- Leadership
- Cleanliness
- Modesty
- Beauty

Concepts of:
- Self
- Time
- Past and Future
- Fairness and Justice
- Roles related to Age, Sex, Class, Family, etc.

Attitudes toward:
- Elders
- Adolescents
- Dependents
- Rule
- Expectations
- Work
- Authority
- Cooperation vs. Competition
- Relationships with Animals
- Age
- Sin
- Death

Approaches to:
- Religion
- Courtship
- Marriage
- Raising Children
- Decision-Making
- Problem Solving
What’s In A Name?

We Are the Village

[Image of a name tag with the text "HELLO my name is"]
How do you build relationships with families in your program?
Hi-Touch & Hi-Tech Outreach

How do you communicate with families in your program?
How do you make families feel welcome in your program?
Welcoming Environment: Top 3 Considerations

1. Meaningful engagement
2. Physical environment
3. Personal attributes and attitudes of staff
Welcoming Environment Design - Activity
Next Steps

Pick

What do you need to implement one of the strategies we explored today?
THANK YOU!

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## Welcoming Environment Assessment

### Making Parents / Families Feel Welcome and Valued in Out-of-School Time Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL 1 (Basic) - Involvement Activities</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Consistently</th>
<th>What can I do individually about this?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. There are signs welcoming parents into the program space.</td>
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<td>2. There are signs or a person directing parents where to find their children within the building/program.</td>
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<td>3. Staff greet parents in a friendly, respectful manner at pick-up time. Staff can address parents by name.</td>
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<td>At family and program events, staff or volunteers greet parents in the front of the room or building when they arrive. For example there are greeters on hand.</td>
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<td>4. Staff make an effort to communicate to each parent something interesting /positive that their child did or said at least once a week.</td>
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<td>5. Program has a space where parents know that information/communication is available for them - a “Parent Comfort Corner,” a lounge, a corkboard, a table, a shoetree, etc.</td>
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<td>6. Program has community resources available for families. The area that resources are located allows for privacy and confidentiality. Resources may include: mental &amp; physical health, nutrition, housing, schools, heat, freebies, etc.</td>
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<td>7. Program hosts at least one annual open house to attract and inform new families and recognize existing ones.</td>
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<td>8. Program has a clear and concise “Parent Handbook” that explains all program policies and procedures that families need to know. Family friendly language is used, not jargon or acronyms, in all written communications to families.</td>
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<td>9. Staff phone parents to remind them of meetings and call them after to thank them or tell them that they were missed. Program personalizes written invitations and requests.</td>
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<td>During Staff Orientation the program has training on how staff can make an effort to understand and respect cultural differences, to be non-judgmental, and keep an open mind about all families.</td>
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<td>Program communicates with families constantly, using flyers, newsletters, phone calls, e-mails, welcome packets, coffee hours.</td>
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<td>Staff ask families what they want and need and really listen to their answers. Staff address all issues or concerns that parents bring up no matter how small.</td>
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<td>Staff keep parents informed of any major policy change that will affect them.</td>
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<td>Program makes on-going feedback forms available - Allows families to prioritize-to decide what activities are most important to them.</td>
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<td>If the staff doesn’t speak the languages of all families, the program uses interpreter services for communicating verbally and in writing.</td>
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<td>The program makes childcare available for younger siblings at meetings/conferences.</td>
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<td>Program offers informal social events or activities that are fun! For Example: Mom’s Night/Day Out, Family Craft Night/Day, Family Recreation Day/Night, etc.</td>
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<td>Program helps to support families’ involvement in their child’s academic and informal learning by holding events connected to their child’s learning. For example a Family Literacy Night, Science Night, Math Night, Make It and Take It Night, art walk, etc.</td>
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<td>The program cultivates volunteers and invites the larger community in to support the program. Staff invite parents to participate in program activities and/or field trips. Staff invite parents to help them locate resources to support program activities.</td>
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<td>The program publicly recognizes volunteers monthly, i.e. a program newsletter that thanks all the parents and families that have helped out the program in any way.</td>
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<td>Staff take pictures/videos of the children engaging in activities that parents can watch at the program or take home.</td>
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<td>Staff invite parents to make recordings of them reading, singing or talking and make the tapes available for children on a daily basis.</td>
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<td>Staff work with the children to plan and host a “Parent Appreciation Night/Week - Children make special badges, prizes, cook a special meal, make gifts, perform, etc.</td>
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When families are engaged in their children's education, EVERYBODY WINS!

The ACPS Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE Center) provides meaningful opportunities and resources for families to work with schools by hosting interactive workshops that support academic achievement, championing two-way communication between families and schools, and facilitating volunteerism that promotes student learning. We can't wait to see your FACE this year!

www.acps.k12.va.us/face  f / twitter: @acpsFACE
Personal Calls to Build Relationships

Meaningful relationships with families are based on mutual respect and developed overtime. When working on building working relationships it is important that we focus on family strengths and put their child and family’s goals as the center of conversation. Taking in consideration their values and appreciation for their input. This is why it is important when calling families you follow basic courtesy and be mindful of their time. Below you will find suggestions to follow when making contact with families over the phone:

How to Call or Contact Parents: Suggestions and Script

Start with an introduction of who you are and the positive point (script): "Good afternoon. I am Mr./Ms. So And So from the Oak Tree After School Program. I am calling to speak to the parents of Jessie Smith. May I speak to them, please?" After establishing that you are talking to a parent, proceed with the message.

Clearly indicate why you are calling (script). "Hi, my name is Cristina, Parent Liaison at Oak Tree After School Program. How are you today? I am calling to speak with you today about a family event at Jessie’s school and we would love for you and your family to join us. This is a science event and Ms. Johnson, his science teacher, will be demonstrating strategies on how he can practice and study at home. Are you able to come in next Wednesday from 6 to 7:30pm?"

Thank them for their time and assistance (script). "I appreciate the time you have taken for this; I can’t wait to see you next week! Have a great day!

Helpful Hints for Communicating With Parents

- Call Parent after 10:00am and no later than 7:00pm to invite them to school events.
- Do not leave messages for parents regarding behavioral issues or Special Education matters. (FERPA).
- Before calling a parent check in power school for “preferred communication language” and use language line, if necessary.
- Always ask parent if is okay to talk and if is a good time for them.
- Sound genuine and not like a robot reading from a piece of paper.
- Ask how they like school and how things are going.
- Follow-thru and respond as agreed.
- If you already have relationships with a parent say: “Hi Ms. Maria, it was so nice to see you last month. Are you able to come to our next workshop/parent chat next week”?

If you have any questions or need additional assistance please contact the ACPS Family and Community Engagement Center at 703-619-8055.
“The History of My Name” Family Interview Research

Interview a parent or other family member to learn about how you got your name. Use what you learn from your interview to answer the questions on this page. Try to answer as many of the questions below as possible. Write your answers in complete sentences.

Who picked out your name?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

How did they decide on your name? Is there a story behind your name?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Does your name have any personal or cultural meaning to your family?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Did you learn anything else that you’d like to share?

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
What Makes You Feel Welcome at Program Name!

We are committed to making our program spaces family-friendly and rolling out the welcome mat for all of our students and their family members. Please help us to better understand what makes you feel welcome in our program!

I am: circle one that best describes your relationship to the participant

Their Parent
Their Sibling
Their Grandparent

Their Caretaker
Other (Please describe)

I feel welcome when I see:

Other ways you can make me feel welcome:

Introduce me to staff
Introduce me to other families
Share good news about the program
Share good news about my participant
Speak to me in my language

Music
Food
Space
Other (Please describe)