



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Parent, Family and Community Engagement



Parent Leaders as Partners in Promoting Family Engagement

As a parent or family member on the Policy Council, you are part of your program's leadership. You play an important role in making decisions for all children and families in the program.

You and other parent leaders can use this tool to reflect on how your program is partnering with families using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. This resource explores each of the seven family outcomes named in the Framework. You will find examples of how families and program staff can work together to make progress toward each outcome.

You can use this resource to:

- Think about how your program partners with families to make progress toward goals
- Talk with other parents and staff about where your program can do more to partner with families
- Talk with staff about family outcomes that interest you and your family

In Head Start and Early Head Start programs, you as a parent or family member are our most important partner. Together we support children's learning and healthy development and contribute to your family's well-being. We want all children and families to be strong. We want to work with you to learn about your interests as a family. We want to know the goals you have for your children, your family, and for yourself. You know your children better than anyone—their strengths, talents, temperaments, ways of learning, challenges, and unique needs.

You know the cultures and values you want to share with your children. You also know what is important to your family, and what your family needs to achieve your goals. When you share what you know with us, we make our practices better and our programs stronger.

Together we can make a difference for families in Head Start and Early Head Start programs!

HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

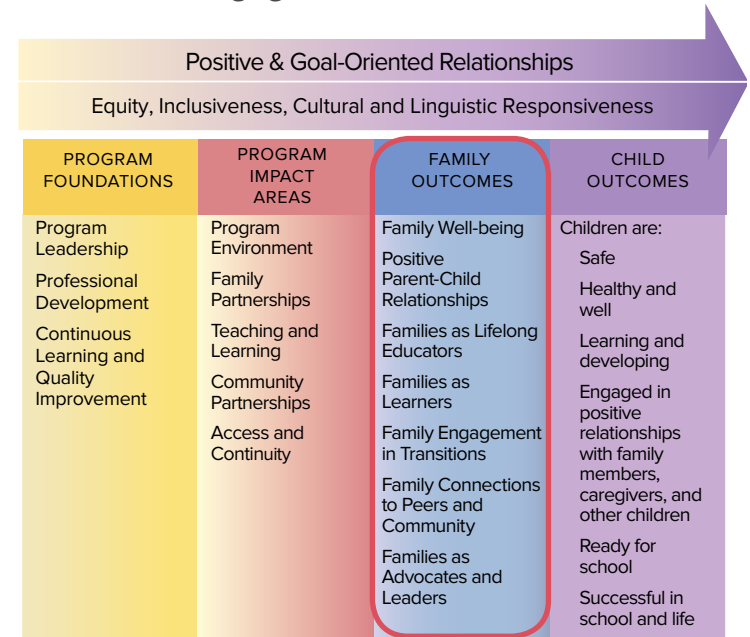
Parent and family engagement describes how Head Start and Early Head Start programs, parents, and families can work together toward the goals that families have for their children and themselves.

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a visual guide for understanding how that work happens. As you can see, the Framework includes seven Family Outcomes—or desired results for families. These outcomes connect to the goals and interests that families have for their children and themselves.

These outcomes include your relationship with your child and your role as your child’s most important teacher. Research has shown that when families are strong in these areas, children are more likely to be healthy, happy, and successful in school.

The Framework also shows the systems and services in programs that support these outcomes for families. These are called the Program Foundations and Impact Areas. They include the program’s leadership, the classroom environment, the quality of training for teachers, the strength of community partnerships, and others. When these program systems and services work well together with family and community partners, children and families benefit.

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



Related Resource

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: An Overview for Parents

You can find this resource on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. You can also ask your program’s staff for a copy.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE


This resource is organized by the seven family outcomes in the Head Start PFCE Framework. On the next seven pages, you will see the name of each outcome, a description of the outcome, and questions for you to think about and answer. See the example below.

You can use this tool to talk with other parent leaders and program staff about ways to partner with families. You can use it during a Policy Council meeting or over several meetings. Or you can use it by yourself. Take as much time as you need.

- Choose one or more of the seven family outcomes(s) described on pages 4–10 in this resource. Each page focuses on one outcome.
- Read the description of the outcome(s) you choose.
- Write your answers to the questions.
- Discuss your answers with other parent leaders and program staff.

Think about ways the Policy Council can use the Framework to help your program work with families toward their goals. What is your program doing to partner with families? What could be better? How can the program strengthen health and well-being for all families? How can the program better connect families to their peers and community organizations?

You can also share this tool with other parents and family members in the program. You can talk about what family engagement is and how they can partner with staff to make progress toward their goals.



FAMILY OUTCOME: Family Well-being

Family Outcome Name

Description: Families are safe, healthy, have opportunities for educational advancement and economic mobility, and have access to physical and mental health services, housing and food assistance, and other support services.

What this might look like: Family members are safe, healthy, and have access to support services for physical and mental health, housing and food, domestic violence prevention and response, adult education, and employment.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported your family's well-being?

Family Outcome Description

Reflection Questions

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child's program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don't Know
• Participate in program activities for families, such as cooking classes, budgeting classes, and health screenings			
• Build relationships with staff who support our goals			
• Identify our individual family strengths			



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Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported your family’s well-being?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Participate in program activities for families, such as cooking classes, budgeting classes, and health screenings			
• Build relationships with staff who support our goals			
• Identify our individual family strengths			
• Learn more about:			
o Keeping ourselves safe, including at home and in relationships			
o Finding housing and food resources in our community			
o Taking care of our physical and mental health			
o Accessing education, jobs, and job training			
o Managing our money and finances			
• Find community resources that match our family goals, interests, and needs			
• Share information with each other to strengthen family well-being			

What else does your program do to help families strengthen their well-being? What else could the program try?



FAMILY OUTCOME: Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Description: Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child’s health, development, and learning.

What this might look like: Parents have strong relationships with their children. Parents encourage their children’s interests and abilities and respond to their needs. Parents also manage their own emotions and set appropriate expectations and limits with their children.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported you in developing a positive relationship with your child?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Learn about pregnancy, prenatal health, and becoming a new mother or father			
• Learn how to keep our children healthy and safe			
• Better understand our children’s feelings, social skills, and brain development			
• Understand and respond to our children’s behavior			
• Form close bonds with our children			
• Use positive parenting practices that support our children’s healthy development			
• Share and discuss our parenting experiences			

What else does your program do to help families develop positive parent-child relationships? What else could the program try?



FAMILY OUTCOME: Families as Lifelong Educators

Description: Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.

What this might look like: Parents are their children’s first and most important teacher. Families help their child learn every day through playing, reading, talking, singing, dancing, counting, fishing, gardening, and other activities.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported you in your role as your child’s lifelong educator?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Share what we know about our children with teaching staff			
• Identify our talents and strengths as our children’s first teachers			
• Feel respected and comfortable sharing our ideas, questions, and concerns			
• Celebrate our children’s accomplishments			
• Learn more about our children’s feelings and social skills			
• Speak our home languages with our children, which helps them do better in school			
• Support our children’s learning			
• Access services that help children with disabilities or developmental delays			

What else does your program do to help families as their children’s lifelong educators? What else could the program try?

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FAMILY OUTCOME: Families as Learners

Description: Parents and families learn about their child’s personality, development, and learning style. They also advance their own learning interests through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

What this might look like: Parents and families learn about their children and their ways of learning. They also participate in learning opportunities such as adult education, job training, and parenting classes.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported you as a learner?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Identify (or be able to name) our strengths as learners			
• Identify (or be able to name) our parenting, career, and life interests			
• Learn about job training and educational opportunities that relate to our interests			
• Set learning goals that match our interests			
• Enroll in English language classes or other adult education courses			
• Enroll in courses or training programs to earn a General Equivalency Degree (GED), school certifications, or other degrees			
• Take classes that support our parenting, career, or life goals			
• Volunteer or work at our Head Start or Early Head Start program			
• Connect with other parents and families who share similar learning goals and interests			

What else does your program do to help families as learners? What else could the program try?

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FAMILY OUTCOME: Family Engagement in Transitions

Description: Parents and families encourage and advocate for their child’s learning and development as they transition to new learning environments within and between Early Head Start, Head Start, early childhood services, early elementary grades, and beyond.

What this might look like: Parents and families support their children as they move to new learning settings. They visit their child’s new setting, build relationships with new teachers, and help their child feel safe and secure in the new setting.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported your family during transitions?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Understand how changing classrooms or schools can affect children’s feelings and behaviors			
• Learn about the culture, expectations, and opportunities at our children’s new learning setting or school			
• Plan for our children’s transition to new settings or schools			
• Talk with our children to help them be ready for school			
• Learn about our legal rights for our children, including children with disabilities			
• Participate in transition activities supported by local school districts			
• Get information about parent networks and leadership opportunities at parent-teacher associations or community organizations			
• Access information about comprehensive services available at local schools to support family well-being			

What else does your program do to help families during transitions? What else could the program try?

Transitions can be small or big. Small transitions include moving from playtime to cleanup. Big transitions include moving from one classroom to another, or from an Early Head Start program to a Head Start program. The transition from a Head Start program to kindergarten is one of the biggest.

You can read the resource **Transition to Kindergarten—Your Child is Going to Kindergarten: Making the Move Together**. Look on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. You can also ask your program’s staff for a copy.



FAMILY OUTCOME: Family Connections to Peers and Community

Description: Parents and families form connections with peers, mentors, and other community members in formal or informal social networks. These networks are supportive and educational. They honor and are inclusive of families' home language and culture, and they enhance families' social well-being and community life.

What this might look like: Parents and families build strong relationships with other families and organizations in their community.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program helped you connect with other parents and community members?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child's program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don't Know
• Participate in program activities and events that bring families together			
• Share information about parenting networks and peer learning with each other			
• Share knowledge about local community organizations with each other			
• Work together to solve problems or make decisions in the program			
• Build relationships with other families in the program and community			
• Participate in shared experiences with other families			
• Volunteer in the program, in other community-based organizations, or at cultural organizations and events			

What else does your program do to help families make connections with their peers and community? What else could the program try?

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FAMILY OUTCOME: Families as Advocates and Leaders

Description: Parents and families advocate for their children and play leadership roles in Head Start and Early Head Start. They participate in decision-making, policy development, and organizing activities in communities and states to improve children’s safety, health, development, and learning experiences.

What this might look like: Parents and families speak up for their children and volunteer in the program or in their community. They serve as leaders in the program and their community. They join the Policy Council or parent committees and help programs make decisions and solve problems.

Reflection: How has your Head Start or Early Head Start program supported you in becoming a leader and advocate?

Here are some ways that programs may partner with parents and families. Does your program do any of the following?

My child’s program partners with parents and families to:	Yes	Not Yet	I Don’t Know
• Participate in the program’s parent committees and Policy Council			
• Plan activities in the program or in other community-based organizations			
• Learn about leadership and advocacy activities in the community			
• Understand our legal rights to advocate for ourselves and our children			
• Work together to solve problems and make decisions in the program			
• Connect with leaders in local parent-led networks and organizations			
• Join advocacy groups that support children, families, and communities, including children with disabilities			

What else does your program do to help families become advocates and leaders? What else could the program try?

Related Resource

You can read the **Advocacy and Leadership—Tips for Families** series to learn more about becoming an advocate and leader.

You can find this series on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. You can also ask your program’s staff for a copy.

We are interested in learning how staff and families in your Head Start or Early Head Start program work together to strengthen family outcomes. We would also like to hear your ideas for how parents can partner with programs using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. We invite you to contact us at PFCE@ecetta.info or 1-866-763-6481.

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