Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit

Cyndi La Marca Lessner and Karina Cortés Hudack
Maryland State Department of Education
**THE MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT GOALS**

- Family Well-Being
- Promote Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Support Parents as Life-Long Educators
- Support Educational Aspirations of the Family
- Support Engagement in Transition
- Connect Family to Peers and Community
- Create Advocates and Leader

**STRATEGIES**

**PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS**

- Leadership
- Professional Development

**PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS**

- Environment
- Family Partnerships
- Teaching and Learning
- Community Partnerships

---

*The Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework* puts forth a set of common goals for family engagement to be used across the Maryland early childhood system and within individual early care and education programs. These goals are realized by implementing family engagement strategies that focus on foundational areas like leadership and professional development as well as strategies that focus on the "points of impact" in early care and education settings. The successful implementation of the strategies promotes positive school readiness outcomes.
Supporting the Framework

- MD EXCELS Levels for Family Engagement
  - Increasing Ways and Amounts
  - Technical assistance through the Maryland State Department of Education and Regional Child Care Resource Centers
- Prekindergarten
  - New state funded and federally funded prekindergarten/preschool development programs required to adopt Framework
## Parent Involvement Becomes Family Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program/school leadership develops a statement on home-school partnership.</td>
<td>Families and program/school leadership come together to develop a statement on family engagement, define goals for the year related to the statement, brainstorm activities/events that can be implemented to achieve the goals, create a work plan, and form a group of family members and school representatives to carry out the work, including additional families along the way. Together, families and program/school leadership reflect on what is working and what needs to be changed to further grow family engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate in program/school events and activities offered by the program/school.</td>
<td>Families — in partnership with early childhood educators and program leadership — co-create opportunities for families to support their children’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents attend parent-teacher conferences where they receive reports about their child’s progress.</td>
<td>Early childhood educator’s visit one-on-one with families to get to know the child and families, inquire about the goals the family has for the child, and develop a portfolio that travels between home and program at key intervals to update and record milestones. Families also participate in parent-teacher conferences, where they both receive and share information about their child and strategies for how any challenges will be addressed both by home and program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A designated staff person is assigned as the parent-liaison and is responsible for outreach to parents.</td>
<td>All staff are trained in family engagement strategies and are provided with support and guidance so they can most effectively engage families in ways that benefit the child, family, and the program/school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs and schools are primary consumers of data on children.</td>
<td>Families are regular consumers of data about their children and receive information for what they can do to support learning as a result of the data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kellogg Foundation Grant Outcomes

- Service providers will better recognize and meet family needs
- Parents are informed and engaged in children’s learning
- Parents will experience a diminished sense of social isolation
Family Engagement Toolkit
Family Engagement Toolkit

- Sections
  - Introduction and Involvement to Engagement
  - Seven Goals
  - Special topics impacting early childhood educators
  - Effective Practices
  - Self – Assessment
  - Resources
Next Steps

- To improve school readiness of vulnerable children by **improving** family engagement practices and **supporting** service providers to better recognize and meet families' needs.
  - Training and Technical Assistance resources
  - Informational Hub
  - Family Engagement Summit
  - Library Early Learning Communities
Next Steps

- To improve parent leadership and advocacy skills helping parents to be more informed and engaged in children’s learning and experience a diminished sense of isolation.
  - Expansion of Ready Rosie
  - Parent Leadership Training Institute

- To support and improve other states in the development of statewide family engagement practices.
  - State Consortium on Family Engagement
Resources

- https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/family-engagement/ (English Family Engagement website)
- https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/family-engagement/es/ (Spanish Family Engagement website)
- https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/onlineTraining/programCategory.cfm?ottype_id=38 (English training modules)
- https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/onlineTraining/programCategory.cfm?ottype_id=39 (Spanish training modules)
- http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/family-engagement-toolkit (Toolkit)
Resources

- Training and technical assistance resources to support Framework under guidance of Coalition
  - Web-based training modules (service providers and parents) [https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/training/onlinetraining.cfm](https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/training/onlinetraining.cfm)
  - Parent Pages – [https://theinstitutestage.umaryland.edu/family-engagement](https://theinstitutestage.umaryland.edu/family-engagement)
  - Family Engagement Toolkit - [http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/family-engagement-toolkit](http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/family-engagement-toolkit)
Resources

- [https://www.readyrosie.com/](https://www.readyrosie.com/) (ReadyRosie)
- [https://www.wkkf.org/](https://www.wkkf.org/) (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)
- [http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/](http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/) (MSDE/DECD)
Questions and/or Comments

Other things may change, but we start and end with Family.
The Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework: Maryland’s Vision for Engaging Families with Young Children

Cyndi La Marca Lessner
Maryland State Department of Education
cynthia.lessner@maryland.gov

Karina Cortés Hudack
Maryland State Department of Education
karina.hudack@maryland.gov