Black Family Voice Project

The process and early findings

Kimberly Walker, MSW
Paula Steinke, SOAR Director
WELCOME TO A BLACK FAMILY VOICE PROJECT LISTENING SESSION
The Questions

1. What is family, to you?
2. What are three things you know about early learning?
3. Who helps you take care of your children (the children in your household)?
4. What are/were some of your concerns as a parent/guardian in preparing your child for kindergarten?
5. How are you preparing (did you prepare) you child for kindergarten?
6. In a perfect world ...
Introduction

• Paula Steinke - SOAR Director
• Kimberly Walker - SOAR Early Learning Collaboration Manager
Who is SOAR?

SOAR’s mission is to elevate community voice to influence policies and practices that impact children, youth and families.

We do this by:

• convening coalitions
• aligning strategies
• engaging communities in partnership
• developing family and youth leadership through strength-based approaches
Community = Power

What is community to you?

Take care of each other.

How can we build on our strengths to transform our communities?

We have the power to help every person we touch.

What are the strengths unseen?

What about us?

"Living in a multicultural world is not just about understanding others. It is about making sure others understand you. Wisdom must be built and it must be shared."

"We are those good stories that need to be told, that need to be heard."

"Don't let yesterday's failures become barriers..."
Collective Impact

Washington State Department of Early Learning

United Way

ONE AMERICA With Justice for All FORMERLY HATE FREE ZONE

early learning Action Alliance

Many Minds COLLABORATIVE

King County

BEST STARTS FOR KIDS School's Out Washington

Child Care RESOURCES Giving every child a great start

THRIVE WASHINGTON

Public Health Seattle & King County

Washington State Association of HEAD START & ECEAP

Youth Development Executives of King County

The ROAD MAP PROJECT Supported by CCER

Opportunity Youth United

pseSD

Seattle Human Services Coalition

“An Assertive and Unified Voice Helping People Shape Public Policy to Meet Basic Human Needs in Seattle and King County, Washington.”

Community Café Cafés Comunitarios
**WHO?** The King County Early Learning Coalition is a community of early learning stakeholders with diverse perspectives, educational experiences, and cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

**WHAT?** Advocate collectively on local, regional, and state policies and procedures to build an early learning system that is responsive to community concerns and issues.

Support state-to-local communication and collaboration.

**WHY?** Eliminate inequities within the early learning system that perpetuate the education opportunity gap.
Family Engagement through Family Voice

Goals

• Increase the power of family voice to shape local, regional and state level policy.
• Support a foundation of authentic family engagement at the community level.
• Engage and support parents and caregivers as lifelong advocates for their children.
Community-Based Participatory Research

- A process that engages those who are most affected by a community issue to conduct research on and analyze an issue with the goal of devising strategies to resolve it.

- Two year commitment:
  - Engage partners, invite families
  - Pose strength-based questions
  - Listen and collect their stories
  - Identify common themes

- Return to the same families to share our findings: Did we get it right?
- Co-create messages and proposals for solutions
- Form advocacy and action groups
Benefits of Community-Based Participatory Research

- People will speak more freely to peers than to strangers.
- Researchers who are members of the community know the history and relationships surrounding an issue, and can place it in context.
- People experiencing an issue know what’s important to them about it - what it effects, what parts of their lives it touches.
- Findings may receive more community support, because community members know that the research was conducted by people in similar circumstances.
- Citizens can take more control of
- Community voices come to be viewed differently be professionals and those in positions of power.
Black Family Voice Project

• The why?
Key Question

• How are Black families preparing their/our children for kindergarten?
Our Process - Internal Reflection

• Is the project doable?
  • SOAR did not have historical context of focusing on the Black Community.
  • Will the community trust us to hear their stories?
Our Process - Getting General Permission

• We reached out to 34 key Black leaders in King County.
  • Shared our vision for the project.
  • Asked for their opinion.
  • Asked for their support and direction to who else we should reach out to.
• Intentional effort was made to reach out to historical Black leadership in King County.
Our Process - Reaching Out

- African American Task Force
- King County Kinship Collaboration
- Black Faith Leaders
- Renton Youth and Family Services
- Southwest Youth and Family Services
- Open Arms Perinatal Services
- Black Community Organizers
- Black Family Gathering Coalition
- Child Care Resources
- The Breakfast Group
- Mahogany Moms
- Atlantic Street Center
- Odessa Brown Clinic
- Black Educators
- NAACP
- Center for Human Services
- Black Civic Leaders
The Listening Sessions

The call to families!
Stipend!
Dinner or Lunch!
Community partnerships!
The Questions

- **BLACK FAMILY VOICE PROJECT 2017**
- Name: __________________________ Date of Birth ____________________________
- City of Home ____________________ of Work _____________ of Community ________________
- You agree to be filmed and your image used for the purpose of the Black Family Voice Project education to the general public locally and nationally, please sign your name: ____________________________
- Home state: _______________ Years of Living in WA __________________________________
- Married ________________ Single ________________________________
- Number of children birthed _____ Number of children raised __________________________
- Number of children under 5 ________________________________
- Your Occupation: _______________________________________________
The Questions

QUESTIONS:

What is family, to you?

What are 3 things you know about early learning?

When did you first hear about developmental screenings? Or have you not?

Have you allowed your child to be developmentally screened and if so, what did it look like?

How would you describe the time in your life when your child was in the birth to 5 years of age? What was happening?

Who is your support system of care for your children or the children in your household? Currently or when they were babies to 5 years of age?

If using a license system of care, how did you hear about it?

Have you or did you attend classes like Mommy & Me, Play & Learn or Love & Logic? Classes that help you relate with your child and help them develop their social skills?

What are or were some of your concerns as a Black parent/guardian in preparing the child in your care for kindergarten?

How did you prepare your child for kindergarten? What type of activities?

What would the ultimate/perfect world look like for you and your family to have all that they need to successfully prepare the children in your family for kindergarten?
Early Findings.

Our Black families:

Prefer a trusted family member or trusted individual who they consider family to take care of their children.

Found paying for child care to be a burden and did not have adequate support via government assistance. Also found qualifying for child care government assistance to be challenging if they were getting better job opportunities.

Fear they are sending their children into a harmful system that was not created for their children to be successful.

Fearful of the inaccurate negative labeling of their children which may lead to unfair treatment within their school culture.
Black Families Perfect World...

Unbiased supportive safety net of educators and administrators.

Black educators in Early Learning.

Black children being seen as a gift and not a defiant problem.

We are a village of people learning, loving and educating. We are preparing our children, ourselves, we know the truth about who we are and we are walking in it.
The Documentary

Founder & CEO Kakela Hall
For more information

Kimberly Walker, MSW - SOAR Early Learning Collaboration Manager
Phone: 206-336-6927 - Kimberly@childrenandyouth.org

Paula Steinke - SOAR Director
Phone: 206-323-2396 - Paula@childrenandyouth.org