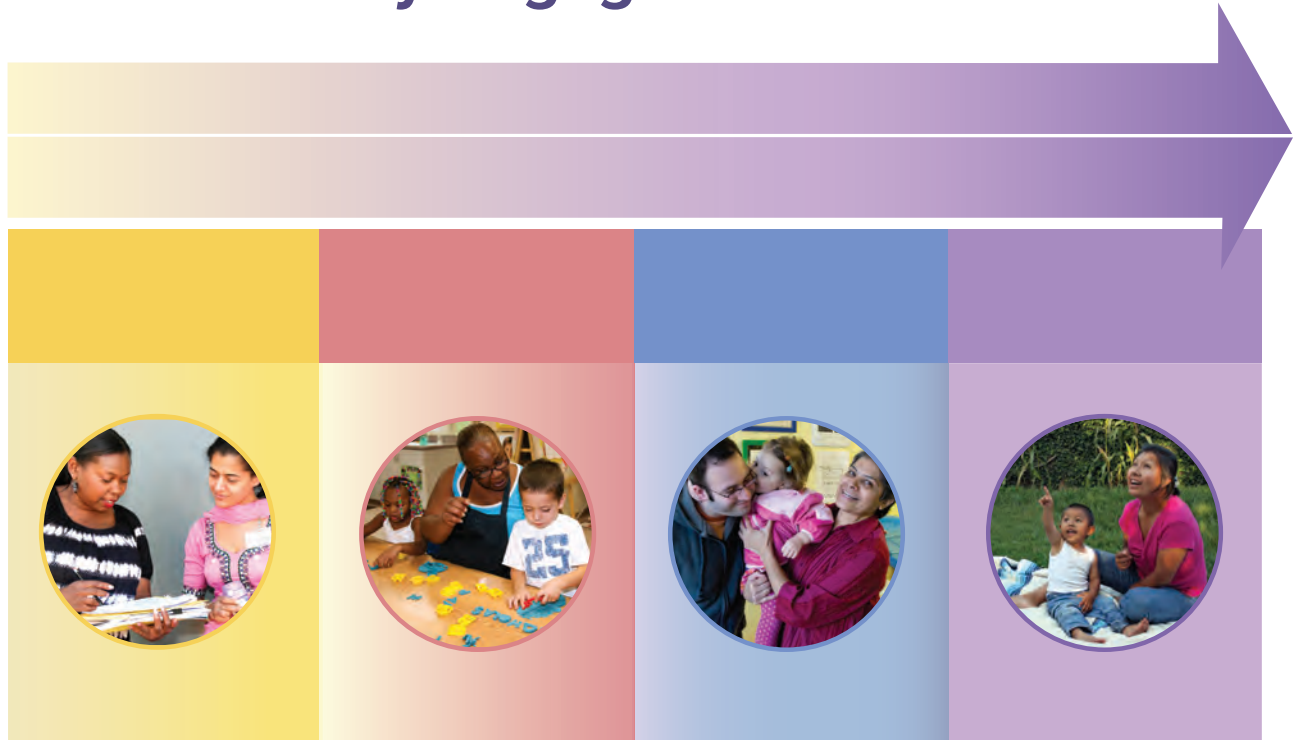


# Strategies for Implementing the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



NATIONAL CENTER ON  
Parent, Family and Community Engagement

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## INTRODUCTION

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We are pleased to offer this resource to help you implement the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework.

The PFCE Framework is an organizational guide for collaboration among families and Head Start and Early Head Start programs, staff, and community service providers to promote positive, enduring outcomes for children and families.

The PFCE Framework promotes systemic, integrated, and comprehensive approaches to family engagement in line with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

We designed this resource to recognize and value the role that each of you play in partnering with diverse families to promote positive child and family outcomes. Family engagement is a shared responsibility. PFCE is everyone's business.

### Purpose of This Resource

You can use this resource to explore strategies for making progress toward positive outcomes for children and families. These strategies can be used for five-year planning, program design and management, continuous learning and improvement activities, professional development for staff, and program governance. You can also apply these examples of strategies for better coordination and service delivery.

The examples in this resource are drawn from and build on family engagement strategies that programs already use to address the interests and needs of families and to build on their strengths. These strategies may also spark your own creative ideas for ways to implement the PFCE Framework in your program.

### Defining Family Engagement

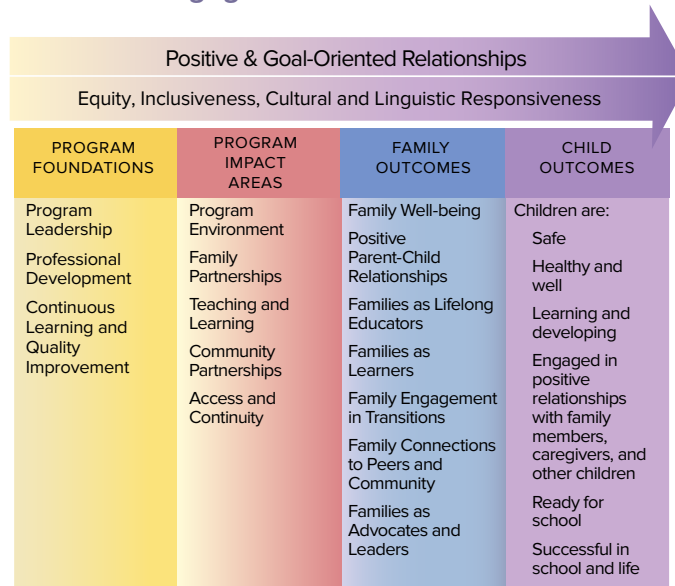
Family engagement is an interactive process through which program staff, family members, and their children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and professionals that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement means doing with—not doing to or for—families. Staff work together with families, other professionals, and community partners in ways that promote equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness.



# HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Head Start PFCE Framework describes the program elements—Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas—in early childhood programs that can work together to positively influence child and family outcomes. The Framework identifies equity, inclusiveness, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and positive goal-oriented relationships as important drivers for these outcomes.

## Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



Programs and families are more likely to make progress toward family outcomes when the program elements are coordinated. While all of the family outcomes are relevant for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, they may not all be relevant for each family. Each family’s experience in Head Start and Early Head Start is uniquely determined by the family’s own interests, cultures, strengths, and needs and by the goals they set for themselves and their children. Families and programs work together toward these goals by deciding on meaningful opportunities, recognizing barriers, and measuring progress.

### Parent and Family

In this resource, *parent* and *family* refer to all adults who interact with early childhood systems in support of their child, including biological, adoptive, and foster parents, pregnant women and expectant families, grandparents, legal and informal guardians, and adult siblings.

## HOW THIS RESOURCE IS ORGANIZED

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You will find examples of strategies that programs and families can use to make progress toward each of the seven family outcomes in the Head Start PFCE Framework. These strategies are intended to promote culturally and linguistically responsive practices that support equity and inclusiveness. Strategies are not exhaustive and should not to be considered a substitute for the HSPPS.

We have identified strategies for implementing each of the Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas. You will see that families are included whenever possible as active partners in implementing these strategies.

The strategies in this resource are organized into two categories: strategies for all family outcomes and strategies for each of the seven family outcomes.

### **Strategies for All Family Outcomes**

Program leaders, staff, and families can use these strategies to promote progress in all or several of the family outcomes in the PFCE Framework. Whether you choose to implement strategies to affect all seven outcomes or a select group of outcomes will depend upon your program.

### **Strategies for Each of the Seven Family Outcomes**

Program leaders, staff, and families can use these strategies to make progress toward each of the seven family outcomes identified in the PFCE Framework.

For each outcome, you will find:

- The definition of the outcome
- Examples of strategies for each of the Program Foundations
- Examples of strategies for each of the Program Impact Areas
- Examples of progress for parents and families

Coordinating a strategy across two or more relevant Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas can enhance that strategy's positive effects for children, families, and staff.

Some of the Program Leadership strategies for all family outcomes are repeated to emphasize their importance for each individual family outcome.

## A SPECIAL NOTE FOR PROGRAM LEADERS

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Head Start and Early Head Start program directors and other leaders, managers, and parent leaders set expectations and model effective PFCE practice for family engagement. They ensure that program policies, procedures, and practices (such as hiring) actively promote PFCE in line with the HSPPS. These program goals support effective, long-term strategic planning and service delivery to strengthen family outcomes over the five-year project period.

Leaders promote collaboration across program services and multidisciplinary teams to ensure responsive and coordinated approaches to making progress toward both family and program goals. They also ensure collaboration with community partners to address family goals, strengths, interests, and needs.

Leaders advocate for the inclusion of diverse family voices at all levels of the program, including in formal decision-making groups, such as Parent Committees and Policy Councils. Leaders support efforts to partner with families in ways that are culturally and linguistically responsive and promote equity and inclusiveness.

Leaders monitor activities in all of the Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas, and work with staff to make changes when needed to ensure that the activities are mutually reinforcing. Leaders ensure that program staff are using data to inform decision-making and to track progress toward program and family goals.



# STRATEGIES FOR ALL FAMILY OUTCOMES

This table shows examples of strategies that can be broadly applied and that generally promote all seven family outcomes.

Program Foundations	Family Well-being	Parent-Child Relationship	Families as Lifelong Educators	Families as Learners	Family Engagement in Transitions	Family Connections to Peers and Community	Families as Advocates and Leaders
<b>Program Leadership</b>	<p>Leaders ensure policies, systems, supports, and structures are in place to inform family and staff about program goals (for any goals that are set) to support effective long-term strategic planning and implementation within the five-year project period.</p> <p>Leaders promote collaboration across content areas and multidisciplinary teams to ensure responsive and coordinated approaches to make progress toward both family and program goals.</p>						
<b>Professional Development</b>	<p>Leaders create and maintain professional development systems that promote positive, goal-oriented relationships, cultural responsiveness, reflective practice, and workforce development with the intention of supporting child, family, program, and community growth.</p> <p>Program staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers are required to comply with program confidentiality policies and professional ethical standards.</p>						
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<p>Leaders analyze and use program self-assessment and community assessment data to set strategic long-term goals for the provision of family and community engagement program services.</p> <p>Leaders include families and community partners in assessing and monitoring progress toward each program goal.</p>						
Program Impact Areas	Family Well-being	Parent-Child Relationship	Families as Lifelong Educators	Families as Learners	Family Engagement in Transitions	Family Connections to Peers and Community	Families as Advocates and Leaders
<b>Program Environment</b>	<p>Program staff reflect on daily practice and experience to enhance self-awareness and to build relationships with families.</p> <p>All staff welcome, honor, and support all family structures, sizes, and arrangements, and the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds of families.</p> <p>Leaders and program staff create family-friendly spaces with pictures and materials that affirm and welcome all families.</p>						
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<p>Families and staff seek opportunities to build strong, mutually respectful relationships with families and to partner to set meaningful goals.</p> <p>Program staff use the family partnership process as a tool for relationship-building and as a basis for goal-setting and ongoing individualized family services.</p>						
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<p>Families and program staff consistently participate in positive, goal-oriented relationships to support children's learning and development.</p> <p>Families and staff engage in sharing what they each know and learn about their child, while acknowledging parents' primary role as their child's first teacher.</p> <p>Program staff and families share strategies to support children's learning at home, in the program, and in the community. These strategies respect families' cultures and affirm their home language(s).</p>						
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<p>Program staff and families engage diverse community members and organizations as partners to help address the goals and needs of families.</p> <p>Program staff link families with meaningful support networks and peer-to-peer group and volunteer opportunities in the community.</p>						
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<p>Leaders engage former and current families to understand better how families' experience community support for each outcome.</p>						



# STRATEGIES FOR EACH OF THE SEVEN FAMILY OUTCOMES

Consider these examples of strategies for each of the seven family outcomes. As you focus on implementing the strategies to make progress toward each outcome, keep in mind the strategies for all outcomes (see page 5).

## 1. Family Well-Being

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.

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

#### Program Leadership

- Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to strengthen family well-being through professional development, continuous learning and quality improvement, and community partnerships.
- Leaders promote the use of relevant data about family well-being from the community assessment and other sources to inform goal-setting, five-year plans, and service delivery for the program.
- Leaders guide staff through implementation to support family and program progress when five-year program goals are set in the outcome area of family well-being.
- Leaders ensure coordination and promote teamwork across program systems and service areas. They support:
  - Health managers joining families and teachers for discussions about the meaning of a child's behavior
  - Mental health providers with appropriate credentials and experience serving as resources for staff and program service areas specific to family well-being
  - Family services and classroom staff working together and with families to understand and address a child's behaviors that may be related to challenges the family is facing
- Leaders allocate resources and funding to ensure that staff members have appropriate training, coaching, supervision, and manageable caseloads to support family well-being.
- Leaders build relationships that honor the cultures and languages spoken by families and staff in the program.
- Leaders develop and maintain effective partnerships with community leaders and organizations. These partnerships help ensure families have access to physical and mental health services, housing and food assistance, financial counseling, job preparation, safety, and other family support services.
- Leaders offer space at their facilities or at partnering agencies for parent and neighborhood discussion groups and for shared activities to recruit and enroll children and families in programs and services.



## 1. Family Well-Being, cont.

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.

<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff reflect on their daily practice and personal experiences to increase their self-awareness and the effectiveness of their skills to build relationships with families.</li><li>• Through supervision, coaching, and/or training, program staff have opportunities to build their knowledge and skills about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Supporting families' efforts to set and pursue their goals in areas such as education, financial literacy and stability, economic mobility, housing stability, and safety</li><li>◦ Having respectful and sensitive conversations with families while maintaining confidentiality and professional boundaries</li><li>◦ Using relationship-based competencies and strategies to partner with families</li><li>◦ Applying Head Start's Multicultural Principles to inform work with families and children</li><li>◦ Using community and program data to enhance provision of services to families</li><li>◦ Understanding adversities that can impact family well-being. These adversities may include parental depression, trauma, alcohol or substance use or misuse, homelessness, domestic violence, child maltreatment, food insecurity, mental illness, social isolation, and other challenges that may be associated with poverty.</li></ul></li><li>• Program staff learn about adult mental health; child development, health, and mental health; and developmental screening. Staff also learn about and use strengths-based strategies to partner with families to support their children and family's health and development.</li><li>• Program staff learn about available resources and services to strengthen family financial well-being, housing stability, and physical and mental health and to address safety and related challenges.</li><li>• Program staff develop skills to build and maintain effective partnerships with community partners and agencies. Staff use these partnerships to foster family well-being for all families, including families experiencing adversities.</li></ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff and families use child, family, program, and community data to understand family and community strengths, interests, needs, and any emerging trends.</li><li>• Programs use data sources to track the progress families and the program are making toward program goals for family well-being (if identified as a goal in the program's five-year plan).</li><li>• Program staff and families identify opportunities for program improvement. They analyze data to assess the availability and quality of services that support health, mental health, and family well-being. They may review individual and program-wide family successes, effective staff practices, and referral processes.</li><li>• Family services staff, home visitors, family child care providers, teachers, health services staff, program staff and managers, and mental health consultants participate in discussions about the effect of family adversities on children's learning and development in ways that are respectful of families.</li></ul>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff welcome and value families and communicate respect for the structures, cultures, and languages spoken by families.</li><li>• Program staff create and maintain inclusive, welcoming spaces and classrooms, with pictures and materials that reflect all families in the program and community.</li><li>• Forms, information, and books are available in families' home languages and at their literacy levels.</li><li>• Program staff initiate and engage in responsive and respectful relationships with mothers, fathers, and other family members. Staff show interest in learning about each family's cultures, languages, unique strengths, concerns, interests, hopes, values, and needs.</li><li>• Program staff share and post information about opportunities for employment, job training, apprenticeships, internships, and English language instruction.</li><li>• Program staff and fathers work together to identify opportunities of interest in all program options.</li><li>• Program staff partner with pregnant women and expectant families, acknowledging that family engagement practices may look different for expectant families.</li></ul>

## 1. Family Well-Being, cont.

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.

<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use the family partnership process for ongoing relationship-building and as a foundation for setting goals, individualizing family services, and providing follow up.</li><li>• Program staff conduct goal-oriented home visits to build relationships with families and to identify and support each family's interests and needs through the family partnership process. Teachers join when possible.</li><li>• Program staff communicate with families in their preferred language(s) and use interpretation services when possible.</li><li>• Program staff ensure that families have timely information and resources about the services available through the program and in the community.</li><li>• Program staff and families identify, access, and use community resources that promote the interests of the families in the program, and they collaborate to address any barriers to access.</li><li>• Program staff and families work together to complete forms that may be required by health care providers and programs and agencies that provide benefits, school districts, or child welfare agencies.</li><li>• Program staff offer training and information for families about health, health literacy, mental health, and self-care as well as about setting and pursuing their family goals.</li></ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family services staff, home visitors, family child care providers, teachers, and families work as a team to develop and learn about the goals that families identify for their children. Together they share information about child development, safety, health and mental health, oral care, breastfeeding, nutrition, and developmental screenings.</li><li>• Family services staff, home visitors, family child care providers, teachers, health managers, program staff and managers, and mental health consultants participate in discussions about the effect of family adversities on children's learning and development in ways that are respectful of families.</li><li>• Program staff observe and ask about children's learning experiences at home and in the community to identify strengths.</li></ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use community and program assessment data, and they develop agreements with community partners in order to provide services to strengthen family well-being.</li><li>• Program staff partner with community agencies and promote opportunities to address families' goals and interests for financial well-being and educational advancement.</li><li>• Staff make referrals to families for services, proactively connecting families and community partners when possible (for example, using warm handoffs and follow up). Staff make plans with families about using referrals.</li><li>• Program staff work with local child welfare, domestic violence, or crime victim support services agencies to help children and families experiencing violence.</li><li>• Program staff follow up with families, other program staff, referral sources, community partners, and service agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of services designed to strengthen family well-being.</li><li>• Program staff join and participate in community meetings and local initiatives to enhance the capacity of programs to respond to the strengths, interests, and needs of families.</li></ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programs use community assessment data to prioritize enrollment of families with the greatest need, including families experiencing homelessness or domestic violence, and children who are in foster care.</li><li>• Program staff develop and proactively implement systems and a recruitment plan to ensure that community demographics are reflected in the program's enrollment data.</li><li>• Program staff work with local community partners and service agencies to identify, recruit, and enroll families from the community.</li><li>• Program staff and parent leaders offer new families an orientation that highlights the opportunities in the program to strengthen family well-being. Staff and parent leaders emphasize the importance of regular attendance and participation in home visits and socializations.</li><li>• Program staff and parent leaders review attendance data to identify ways to best partner with families to address any challenges and improve attendance.</li></ul>

## 1. Family Well-Being, cont

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.

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Have considered the benefits of participating in different program services and/or activities (e.g., have enrolled and/or are participating in different program services and/or activities).
- Developed relationships with staff that are helpful in supporting the goals they have established for themselves and their children.
- Identified their individual family strengths and supports to cope with challenges and overcome adversities.
- Gained knowledge, skills, and experience to address family-specific goals, interests, and needs related to:
  - Safety (including domestic violence prevention and response)
  - Housing and food stability
  - Health and mental health
  - Education, employment, and job-skills development
  - Financial well-being and financial capability
- Learned about and accessed resources and systems of support that meet their goals, interests, and needs.
- Reflected on and shared information and available resources with other parents to support family well-being.
- Gained expertise in partnering with staff to gather and review data to improve the program.

Programs may use several data sources related to family well-being. Examples include community assessments, program self-assessment tools and related surveys, aggregate family partnership process data, aggregate family-related program data, attendance reporting, meeting notes, summaries of discussions with current and former Head Start and Early Head Start families, data from other service providers, and any other ways to understand community and family goals, strengths, interests, supports, and needs.

Examples of community partners that support family well-being include local social service providers, health care clinics, hospitals and other health care providers, home visiting services, food and housing assistance, early intervention, mental health and wellness programs, adult education and job training programs, workforce development initiatives, cultural organizations, programs for refugees and immigrants, faith-based communities, shelters, and programs that support families experiencing violence (including domestic violence prevention and response), alcohol or substance use or misuse, or other challenges to family well-being.

## 2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships

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

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to strengthen positive parent-child relationships. Leaders accomplish this through professional development, continuous learning and quality improvement, family and community partnerships, and program communications.</li><li>• Leaders ensure that relevant data from the community assessment and other sources are used to inform program goal-setting and five-year plans to strengthen parent-child relationships.</li><li>• Leaders guide staff through implementation to support families and family progress when five-year program goals are set in this outcome area.</li><li>• Leaders promote the use of coordinated approaches and teamwork across systems and services for program service delivery and continuous improvement in support of positive parent-child relationships.</li><li>• Leaders engage community organizations and families to help identify parenting curricula that support the development of warm and nurturing relationships, and (b) are culturally and linguistically responsive.</li><li>• Leaders allocate resources and funding to ensure that staff members are prepared to select and implement parenting curricula through training, coaching, and supervision.</li></ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff learn about a wide range of approaches to raising children. They engage in self-reflection with, and receive guidance from, other staff and leaders on their practice and perspectives about raising children.</li><li>• Through supervision, coaching, and/or training, program staff have opportunities to build their knowledge and skills about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Child development and parent-child interactions, including the role of temperament and family cultures</li><li>◦ Caregiving practices for all families, including pregnant women and expectant families, new mothers and fathers, young parents, and families of children with an identified disability or developmental delay</li><li>◦ Mental health and wellness and the effect of excess stress and adverse experiences on parent-child relationships (such as the effects of homelessness and substance use or misuse)</li><li>◦ The importance of home languages to promote the development of a positive cultural and individual identity for all children and their families</li><li>◦ Communication styles and relationship-building with parents, including practices for engaging pregnant women and expectant families</li><li>◦ Strategies for supporting families' efforts to set and pursue their goals for their children</li><li>◦ Strategies for supporting fathers and grandparents raising children and others who are part of nontraditional family structures</li><li>◦ Partnering with families in ways that promote equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness</li></ul></li><li>• Staff members receive appropriate training, coaching, supervision, and supports to select and implement parenting curricula.</li></ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use data from community and program assessment tools, related surveys, observation, and ongoing conversations with families to better understand family roles, caregiving practices and cultures, and social supports.</li><li>• Program staff analyze and use data to enhance program practice and services to support family well-being, in line with any related program goals and five-year plans.</li><li>• Program staff gather and analyze data from parent meetings or parenting curriculum meetings to improve program services for children and families.</li><li>• Program staff and families collect and use information to select, implement, and evaluate a parenting curriculum. Evaluation efforts include methods of testing and refining the delivery of program services over time.</li></ul>

## 2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships, cont.

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

<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff welcome each family and share observations of positive interactions between family members and their child. Examples include what families say and do during everyday routines, including at drop off, at reunions at the end of the day, and during home visits.</li><li>• Program staff respect and support parent-child relationships in ways that value families' cultures, languages, and structures. Program staff also recognize diverse influences on caregiving practices and family development.</li><li>• Photographs, posters, and other materials displayed or available in the program show examples of positive interactions between families and children.</li><li>• Program staff welcome fathers in many ways, including by displaying images, providing books, and sharing stories that reflect strong relationships between fathers and their children.</li><li>• Program staff work to build strengths-based relationships with families that focus on family resilience and resources, and on what families already do to build strong parent-child relationships. Staff work with each family to develop and support plans to seek help for challenges that may interfere with these positive relationships.</li><li>• Program staff provide opportunities for parents to reflect on and share parenting information and ideas with each other.</li></ul>
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use the family partnership process to learn about families' cultures, caregiving practices, and parenting goals.</li><li>• During home visits with pregnant women and expectant families, program staff offer families opportunities to learn about expectant parenting, prenatal health, and their developing roles as new parents and caregivers. Staff ask about families' interests and questions. Staff recognize that family engagement practices may look different for pregnant women and expectant families.</li><li>• Program staff support the efforts of mothers, fathers, and other family members to connect with their child at all ages and stages of development and during periods of developmental change. Program staff foster strong co-parenting relationships, and are responsive to each family's unique structure and situation.</li><li>• Program staff foster meaningful, reciprocal relationships between each parent and child in ways that are responsive to and respectful of families' cultures and languages.</li><li>• Program staff and families seek support from other program staff, managers, mental health consultants, and community partners when there are challenges with the parent-child relationship that may require additional services and supports.</li><li>• Program staff maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries when engaging with families to enhance warm, nurturing, and positive parent-child relationships.</li></ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff partner with families at the program and during home visits to learn about their child's development and learning, acknowledging the importance of nurturing relationships.</li><li>• Program staff learn from families about children's verbal and nonverbal cues and signals in ways that help them understand and respond to children's behavior.</li><li>• Program staff encourage meaningful, reciprocal relationships between parents and their children in ways that are both culturally and linguistically receptive and responsive.</li><li>• Program staff use family practices as much as possible at the program to ensure continuity of care and to reinforce quality parent-child practices.</li><li>• Families and program staff talk about the importance of home and heritage language(s) for child development and learning.</li></ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use community assessment data and develop agreements with community partners that support positive parent-child relationships.</li><li>• Program staff partner with community and family-led organizations to address the strengths and needs of families experiencing adversities.</li><li>• Program staff link families with community organizations and agencies to offer access to parenting resources that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds, strengths, and needs of all families.</li><li>• Program staff follow up with families, referral sources, and community partners to evaluate how helpful and effective program services are in supporting parents' relationships with their children.</li></ul>

## 2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships, cont.

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

### Access & Continuity

- Program staff work with all families, including pregnant women, expectant families, and families with children who have a disability or an identified developmental delay. Programs prioritize serving families with the greatest need, including those experiencing homelessness, involved in child welfare, and facing other challenges.
- Program staff conduct outreach that emphasizes the role of Head Start and Early Head Start in nurturing parent-child relationships.
- Program staff develop and carry out plans to recruit and enroll families, collaborating with community partners that work to strengthen positive parent-child relationships.
- Program staff and families work together to identify predictable and consistent routines and supports that help children attend school regularly. Program staff use family practices as much as possible at the program for continuity of care.
- Program staff and parent leaders ensure that parent handbooks offer information about parenting resources and the importance of secure attachment in the parent-child relationship.

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Gained knowledge and experience about expectant parenting and prenatal health, their developing role as new parents, and/or their roles as new mothers and fathers.
- Learned new ways to ensure the health and safety of their child.
- Gained knowledge about their children's social, emotional, and cognitive development in the context of community and culture, building on their expertise as parents.
- Learned new ways to understand and respond to their child's behavior.
- Learned about parenting resources and the importance of secure attachment in the parent-child relationship.
- Used positive parenting practices that support the stages of their child's development.
- Reflected on and may have shared parenting experiences, practices, and new strategies.

Parents and other family members have a broad range of knowledge, feelings, beliefs, and expectations that can influence their child's experience in the program. These include:

- The child's temperament, health history, and behavior at home
- Family expectations, hopes, and fears about the child's future
- Family cultures and culturally rooted beliefs about child-rearing and caregiving practices
- Parents' experiences of school and beliefs about their role in relation to professionals

### 3. Families as Lifelong Educators

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

#### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to support families as their children’s lifelong educators through professional development, continuous learning and quality improvement, and family and community partnerships.</li><li>• Leaders ensure the use of relevant data from the community assessment and other sources to inform goal-setting and five-year plans to enhance parents’ participation in their children’s learning.</li><li>• Leaders guide staff through implementation to support family and program progress when five-year program goals are set in this outcome area.</li><li>• Leaders promote coordinated approaches and teamwork across systems and services to address the importance of families as lifelong educators.</li><li>• Leaders allocate resources and funding to ensure that staff members have the appropriate training, coaching, and effective supervision they need to partner with diverse families and affirm the role of family members as the lifelong teachers of their children.</li><li>• Leaders ensure that staff and families have opportunities to share knowledge and experiences about children in the program with each other and to review ongoing child assessment data. Leaders ensure that appropriate data systems are in place for sharing data in accessible formats for families.</li><li>• Leaders collaborate with other early childhood development agencies, local school districts, and other community partners to promote the role of families as their children’s lifelong educators.</li><li>• Leaders and staff develop data-sharing agreements with local school districts to track children’s progress and learning through third grade.</li></ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff engage in reflective practice and reflective supervision to promote the value of parental expertise.</li><li>• Through supervision, coaching, and/or training, program staff have opportunities to build their knowledge and skills about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Children’s learning and development, and the importance of developmental screening</li><li>◦ Observing, guiding, and promoting everyday learning for all children, recognizing their strengths and learning preferences</li><li>◦ Recognizing and engaging parents’ and families’ strengths and expertise to support their children’s learning and development</li><li>◦ Supporting children who are dual language or multilingual learners</li><li>◦ Supporting families’ efforts to set and pursue their goals for their children</li><li>◦ Supporting parents’ advocacy for children who have disabilities or suspected delays and knowledge of their rights under federal and state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</li><li>◦ Applying Head Start’s Multicultural Principles in work with children and families</li></ul></li><li>• Program staff learn about how to use child assessment data and family goals to support parents’ role as their child’s first and lifelong educators. Staff learn about sharing ongoing assessment data with families and soliciting parent observations.</li><li>• Program staff receive training and support about choosing learning materials and resources to offer to families for use at home and in the community.</li></ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff gather and analyze data from the family partnership process and parent surveys to learn about families’ cultural values, traditions, roles, expectations, goals, and concerns for their children. Staff use this information to partner with families in ways that support engagement in their children’s learning.</li><li>• Program staff and families discuss children’s progress regularly in order to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Understand how their children learn</li><li>◦ Incorporate families’ learning goals for their children</li><li>◦ Recognize parents’ successes in their role as their children’s first and most important educators</li><li>◦ Identify opportunities to partner to support their children’s learning</li></ul></li><li>• Program staff develop formats and ways to share ongoing child assessment data that are understandable and meaningful to families.</li></ul>



### 3. Families as Lifelong Educators, cont.

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

<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff use child assessment and parent observation data to strengthen program practices that promote parents' participation in their children's learning.</li> <li>• Program staff follow up with families, other program staff, referral sources, and community partners to evaluate the helpfulness and effectiveness of program services.</li> <li>• Program staff collaborate with school district staff to gather and analyze data that show children's progress through third grade.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff welcome families to observe and participate in their child's learning activities in the classroom, at home, and in the community.</li> <li>• Fathers are included in parent-child learning activities at the program and during home visits. Staff, fathers, and father figures partner to identify opportunities to participate in ways that are of interest to fathers.</li> <li>• Program staff offer resources and information about family learning and literacy activities in families' home language(s) for all program options.</li> <li>• Programs post pictures of parents and children learning together at home, in the program, and in the community.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff share community resources with families to enhance their children's learning and development.</li> <li>• Program staff use the family partnership process as a tool for ongoing relationship-building and a basis for supporting any goals families have for their children's learning and development.</li> <li>• Program staff and families share information about community resources and services for children with an identified disability or developmental delay.</li> <li>• Staff and parents work together to complete forms that may be required by early intervention programs, schools, other early childhood programs, or other service providers.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff partner with families in learning about their child's unique learning preferences, strengths, and needs, while acknowledging families' primary role as their child's first and lifelong educator.</li> <li>• Staff and families share information and observations about their children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, and discuss practices that support child outcomes as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).</li> <li>• Program staff and families observe, gather, share, and use child assessment and parent observation data regularly to inform children's continued learning at home, in the program, and in the community.</li> <li>• Staff and families work as a team to support the goals that families identify for their children, including goals for children who may need early intervention services.</li> <li>• Program staff talk with families about the importance of home language(s) and strategies for supporting children who are dual or multilingual learners.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff review community assessment data to identify and develop community partnerships to engage families in their children's learning.</li> <li>• Program staff encourage families, whenever possible, to use community resources that are culturally and linguistically responsive and that support their role as their child's first educator.</li> <li>• Program staff partner with cultural organizations to enhance the program's capacity to be culturally and linguistically responsive to families' interests and children's learning.</li> <li>• Program staff share information and resources about educational programs and community organizations with families at the program and during home visits.</li> <li>• Program staff work with community partners to support families' role as lifelong educators. These partners may include early intervention programs, local school districts, other early childhood development programs, libraries, museums, cultural organizations, and parks or any community resource that supports learning for young children and their families.</li> </ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff seek families' input during the recruitment and enrollment process to assess children's strengths and needs and to plan for individualized services.</li> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders offer all families an orientation about Head Start and Early Head Start that emphasizes each family's role in their children's learning and healthy development.</li> <li>• Program staff share information with families about the importance of consistent attendance and participation in home visits and socializations for children's learning.</li> </ul>

### 3. Families as Lifelong Educators, cont.

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

#### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

##### Parents and Families:

- Shared their knowledge of their children with staff to inform teaching and learning.
- Identified their talents and strengths as parents and as the first educators of their children.
- Felt respected and valued by staff and felt comfortable expressing ideas, questions, and concerns.
- Enjoyed and celebrated their child’s learning and developmental accomplishments.
- Learned more about the social-emotional development of their infants and toddlers.
- Learned about the value of home language(s) for children’s development and long-term academic success (for parents of dual language and multilingual learners).
- Partnered with teachers, assistant teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers and used different approaches in the program, home, and/or community that support the essential learning outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).
- Learned about options for accessing services and supports to address their family’s goals and interests to support their child’s learning, development, or behavior, including options related to a disability or a developmental delay.
- Gained confidence and competence in voicing, acting on, and pursuing lifelong learning goals for their children.



## 4. Families as Learners

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.

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to promote family learning through professional development, continuous learning and quality improvement, and community partnerships.</li><li>• Leaders guide staff through implementation to support family and program progress when five-year program goals are set in the area of family learning, using community and program assessment data.</li><li>• Leaders ensure that data are used to identify and analyze the learning interests and needs of families so that leaders can provide relevant and effective opportunities for families in the program and in the community.</li><li>• Leaders allocate resources and funding to ensure that staff members have appropriate training, coaching, effective supervision, and manageable caseloads to partner with families to support their parenting, educational, career, financial, or life goals.</li><li>• Leaders support families as learners by partnering with community organizations that offer resources to advance families’ learning interests.</li><li>• Leaders allocate resources and funding to plan and implement a parenting curriculum and parenting groups that support family learning.</li></ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff engage in reflective practice using adult learning theory to better understand their own learning preferences and the learning preferences of families.</li><li>• Through supervision, coaching, and/or training, program staff have opportunities to build their knowledge and skills about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Children’s development, temperament, learning preferences, interests, and personality</li><li>◦ Principles of adult learning</li><li>◦ Adult education and training opportunities</li><li>◦ Partnering with parents to support their learning goals and interests through employment and educational and other opportunities</li><li>◦ The importance of culture and language in child and family development</li></ul></li><li>• Program staff and families learn about onsite and online educational resources and training opportunities for family members through community, state, and national organizations.</li><li>• Program staff and families create a list or database of their skills and expertise. The information is available to support learning opportunities for each other and for members of the community.</li></ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff review data to track the progress that individual families make toward their learning goals.</li><li>• Program staff analyze and use data to enhance program practice and services to support family learning, in line with any related program goals and five-year plans.</li><li>• Program staff share with community partners aggregate information about families’ learning interests to enhance family access to adult education and training.</li><li>• Program staff follow up with families and community agencies about the referral process and the effectiveness of the services in adult education and training settings.</li></ul>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff respect and support the efforts of families to explore their learning interests.</li><li>• Program staff provide timely notice of family learning opportunities during home visits and at the program.</li><li>• Program staff offer information in the home language(s) spoken by families in a way that is responsive to families’ expressed learning interests and needs.</li><li>• Program staff create opportunities for families to connect with other families in the program or community that are working toward similar learning and educational goals.</li></ul>
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use the family partnership process as a tool for ongoing relationship-building and as a basis for advancing the family’s own learning interests and goals.</li><li>• Program staff support the learning goals of families by inviting them to volunteer or apply for jobs in the program that relate to their employment goals or career interests.</li><li>• Program staff facilitate families’ participation in parenting classes, informational meetings, and training events. Staff arrange for transportation, child care, food, and interpreters if needed.</li></ul>

## 4. Families as Learners, cont.

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.

<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff promote family literacy activities; involve children, siblings, and adult family members; and include opportunities for families who speak more than one language.</li><li>• Program staff and families share information about family learning and how to support children's learning at home and in the classroom, the program, and the community.</li><li>• Programs and families learn together about children's learning, development, and behavior through conversations and parenting programs.</li><li>• Programs partner with families with children who have an identified disability or developmental delay as families learn about the child's challenges, treatment resources, and available services and as they build their knowledge and skills to advocate for their child.</li></ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program leaders and staff form partnerships with adult educators, training organizations, and local employers. These partnerships reflect the languages, heritages, and cultures of the families and staff in the program and in the larger community.</li><li>• Program staff partner with educational institutions that provide continuity of education and training through career ladders, certificate and degree programs, apprenticeships, and internships.</li><li>• Program staff encourage families to use community resources such as libraries, museums, and digital or online resources that provide opportunities to explore their family's learning interests.</li><li>• Program staff participate in community meetings and initiatives that enhance the program's capacity to partner with families for their own educational and economic advancement.</li><li>• Program staff follow up with families, other program staff, referral sources, and community partners to evaluate whether or not services are helpful and effective.</li></ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff share outreach information and resources with families about the benefits of participating in Head Start and Early Head Start programs, including the opportunities for family learning.</li><li>• Program staff learn about each family's unique beliefs, life goals, experiences, and educational interests during the intake and enrollment process.</li><li>• Staff develop a partnership with the local Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) office to enroll children of parents who are engaged in job training, work, or educational activities.</li></ul>

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Identified their strengths as learners, and reflected on their parenting, career, and life interests.
- Learned about experiences, training, and educational opportunities that relate to their interests.
- Set learning goals that aligned with their interests and career aspirations.
- Enrolled in courses or training programs to earn a General Equivalency Degree (GED), certifications, and/or other degrees.
- Participated in learning experiences that supported their parenting, career, or life goals.
- Considered goals related to volunteer and employment options with Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Connected with other parents who share similar learning goals and interests.

Programs may consider resources for adult education and training available in their community or online. These may include programs that offer the GED, family literacy programs, English language instruction, certifications and degrees, job training and preparation, apprenticeships and internships, and parenting education.

Examples of community organizations that address family learning include adult education programs, local colleges and universities, job preparation and employment training programs, workforce development organizations, libraries and museums, social service agencies, public benefits programs, family-led organizations and networks, cultural organizations, and faith-based organizations.

## 5. Family Engagement in Transitions

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.

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to facilitate planning and collaboration for seamless transitions for children and families between learning settings.</li><li>• Leaders ensure that community and program data are used to inform goal-setting, five-year planning, and continuous improvement to support families’ transitions to new learning settings.</li><li>• Leaders guide staff through implementation to support family and program progress when program goals are set in this outcome area.</li><li>• Leaders partner with families, local schools, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and other early childhood settings and community organizations to plan for transitions.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Leaders collaborate with all stakeholders involved to ensure effective planning and communication that results in a seamless transition for the child and the family.</li><li>◦ Leaders ensure that transition teams are culturally and linguistically responsive and have the expertise to carry out transition plans and activities that are meaningful and understandable to everyone.</li></ul></li><li>• Leaders allocate resources and funding for shared training and meetings with families, program staff, and professionals in new learning settings and other agencies. Resources may include space, transportation, interpretation, food, and child care services.</li><li>• Leaders develop data-sharing agreements to facilitate the transition for children and families to kindergarten and to track children’s progress and learning in kindergarten through third grade.</li></ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through supervision, coaching, and/or training, program staff have opportunities to build their knowledge and skills about:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Promoting strong, positive, goal-oriented relationships among families, Head Start and Early Head Start staff, and professionals in the new setting</li><li>◦ Developing individualized transition plans for all children and families</li><li>◦ Partnering with staff at the receiving schools, school districts, other early education programs and social service organizations, Head Start, and Early Head Start, including developing data-sharing agreements</li><li>◦ Supporting parents’ advocacy for their children and knowledge of their rights under federal and state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</li><li>◦ Collaborating and solving problems when there are differing perspectives between families and program or school staff</li><li>◦ Adhering to ethical standards, confidentiality, privacy, and professional boundaries to guide discussions and data-sharing during transitions</li></ul></li><li>• Program staff learn about local school districts to gain an understanding of shared goals, operational differences, priorities, requirements, and learning expectations.</li><li>• Program staff conduct shared planning and training sessions across Head Start, Early Head Start, school districts, and other stakeholders, where appropriate. Topics for the training may include information about transitions between Early Head Start and Head Start programs, Head Start and the receiving schools, strategies for partnering with all families in inclusive and responsive ways, kindergarten readiness, curricula, child assessment, and the importance of recognizing and fostering children’s home and heritage languages.</li></ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff gather data from discussions with families, the family partnership process, and parent surveys to understand families’ goals, hopes, and cultural values and expectations for their children’s transition into new learning settings.</li><li>• Program staff collect and share information with families and community members to enhance family access to services and opportunities that can support their transition to new settings.</li><li>• Program staff regularly review and use child progress data to provide the most relevant and effective opportunities and services to families as they prepare for and transition to new settings.</li><li>• Program staff and community organizations develop data-sharing agreements to support transitions for children with identified disabilities or developmental delays and their families with parental consent and as permitted by law.</li><li>• Program staff collect, analyze, and share data from program assessment tools, related surveys, and program practices with families and receiving school staff to strengthen transition practices and partnerships.</li><li>• Program staff follow up with families, other program staff, staff in the new learning setting or school, and community partners to evaluate the effectiveness of services to support transitions.</li></ul>

## 5. Family Engagement in Transitions, cont.

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.

<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff invite families to observe their children learning in the classroom and to share experiences from home. These opportunities can help families begin conversations with teachers and staff in new learning settings.</li> <li>• Staff facilitate families’ participation at meetings and informational sessions to help families understand the process of their children’s transition to new learning settings. Staff arrange for transportation, child care, interpretation services, food, and other supports if needed to promote participation.</li> <li>• Program staff create opportunities for families to connect with other families in the program or community who have children of similar age transitioning to new learning settings, or who have done so recently.</li> <li>• Throughout the program year, staff highlight for families the importance of preparing for the transition to kindergarten.</li> </ul>
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff use the family partnership process as a tool to (a) encourage families to participate actively in children’s transitions to new learning settings, and (b) learn about families’ goals for their children’s learning and development.</li> <li>• Program staff and families partner to understand how families and children experience transitions, and how they can provide both academic and social-emotional support for children during these times.</li> <li>• Program staff provide families with information, training, and connections to future educational settings to help facilitate the transition process for families and children.</li> <li>• Program staff ensure that families know about their rights under federal and state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</li> <li>• Program staff provide opportunities for children, families, future teachers, and school staff to meet and begin to build positive, trusting relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff and families talk together about how children communicate and their verbal and nonverbal cues and signals. They also discuss the children’s learning preferences and personalities with the new program or school staff.</li> <li>• Program staff consistently connect with families to discuss child assessment and observations parents have about their child’s strengths and challenges. Staff encourage parents to initiate and participate in similar discussions with teachers and staff in the receiving school or program.</li> <li>• Program staff individualize transition activities for each child, recognizing their cultures, language(s), developmental level, and abilities. They provide additional and timely support to children and families, as needed.</li> <li>• Program staff share information with staff in the new learning setting about the importance of recognizing and fostering children’s home and heritage languages.</li> <li>• Program staff work with local education agencies (LEAs) and programs to ensure that information about the receiving school or program is provided in families’ home languages and literacy levels.</li> <li>• Program staff ensure that families know about their local public school programs to support dual language and multilingual learners’ transition into schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff establish collaborative relationships, partnerships, communications, and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with other early childhood programs, LEAs, schools, early intervention organizations, and other community organizations to prepare for transitions and to support children’s continued learning and development in the new setting.</li> <li>• Staff and parent leaders work with receiving schools to learn what families might expect of K–12 instruction and share parent expectations. Programs, local schools, and parent leaders can partner to offer shared training about effective communication and partnership between parents and teachers.</li> <li>• Program staff communicate with families about the health information required for a child transitioning to a new setting. If the child has a health care or learning need, staff and parents inform the nurse, health staff, or special education director in the new setting.</li> <li>• Program staff and families partner with after-school or “out-of-school” organizations in the community to ensure children’s physical, mental, and emotional health needs are met as children transition from Early Head Start or Head Start to a new learning setting.</li> <li>• Program staff coordinate with other Head Start and Early Head Start and early childhood programs, LEAs, and receiving schools to support effective transitions for children and families who move out of the community.</li> </ul>

## 5. Family Engagement in Transitions, cont.

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.

<b>Community Partnerships, cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff seek community partners that can help provide family support services for families who transition from the program.</li><li>• Leaders and program staff develop data-sharing agreements with local school districts to track children’s progress and learning in kindergarten through third grade.</li></ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programs highlight the importance of school readiness and preparation for transitions in their recruitment and outreach to prospective parents.</li><li>• Program staff work with LEAs, early intervention programs, social service agencies, public benefits programs, and other health and wellness providers to identify groups of children eligible for Head Start who are not enrolled in state pre-K, or who are receiving early intervention services.</li><li>• Programs partner with LEA homelessness liaisons to enroll younger siblings of school-age children experiencing homelessness.</li></ul>

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Gained understanding of the social and emotional impacts of transitions on children.
- Learned about their role in creating continuity for children during transition, including to kindergarten.
- Learned about the culture, expectations, and opportunities of their child’s future early childhood setting or school.
- Anticipated and recognized their child’s needs during times of change and transition to early childhood programs and school settings.
- Learned about how everyday interactions with preschool children are opportunities to promote school readiness as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).
- Learned about their rights under federal and state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Built upon their strengths as leaders and advocates through participation in transition activities supported by the program and the school districts.
- Accessed information about existing local parent-to-parent organizations, family peer networks, and parent-initiated school-community efforts in order to support seamless transitions and to continue in leadership roles in new settings.

For children and families, transitions include changing or moving:

- From prenatal to postnatal services
- To new service options—for example, for children with identified disabilities and/or developmental delays, moving from early intervention to special education services
- To a new program, learning setting, or circumstance. Examples include
  - to a new classroom or program, such as from home to family child care or to Early Head Start, from Early Head Start to Head Start, or from Head Start to kindergarten;
  - to a new home or shelter;
  - to a new home visitor or teacher;
  - to after-school care following part-day options; and/or
  - to a new community. These children and families may include migrant and seasonal workers, military families, new immigrants and refugees, children in foster care, and families experiencing homelessness.

## 6. Family Connections to Peers and Community

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.

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place to facilitate planning and to create opportunities for families to connect to formal and informal social networks.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure program staff are able to facilitate opportunities and group activities for parents to develop relationships with their peers. Leaders allocate resources and funding for these activities when feasible.</li> <li>• Leaders guide staff implementation and support family and program progress toward any program goals set in this outcome area, using community assessment and program data.</li> <li>• Leaders and program staff ensure that the program offers a parenting curriculum and parenting groups to offer parents opportunities to learn about children's learning and development, to share information with other families, and to support each other.</li> <li>• Leaders form community partnerships to link families with meaningful support networks. These networks may include cultural organizations, faith-based communities, family-led organizations, peer-to-peer groups, learning communities, and support groups.</li> <li>• Leaders offer space for parent and neighborhood discussion groups, with arrangements for interpretation services, transportation, child care, food, and other supports.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure that the program has policies and established protocols related to privacy, confidentiality, and the appropriate use of social media.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and families participate in training and workshops that address the benefits of social and professional connections with peers and other community members.</li> <li>• Staff and parent leaders learn and receive guidance about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Identifying social networks for parents of young children</li> <li>◦ Developing and supporting peer networks for families in the program and community</li> <li>◦ Developing and strengthening facilitation skills for meetings and group activities. Activities may include training, support groups, parenting sessions, socializations, mentoring programs, or community referrals.</li> <li>◦ Effective communication, group decision-making, and problem-solving skills</li> <li>◦ Peer mentoring and coaching</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Staff and families have opportunities to learn and share about existing social networks for families with young children within the local, state, and national community.</li> <li>• Staff and families share information about existing local parent-to-parent organizations, family-led peer networks, and school-community efforts initiated by parents.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders use data to identify and map social networks in the local community, region, or state.</li> <li>• Program staff use community assessment and program data, and conversations with families to understand the opportunities and challenges related to building relationships among families in the community. Other data sources may include the family partnership process, family surveys, and notes from meetings with community partners.</li> <li>• Program staff analyze and use information to enhance program practices and to track progress toward any program goals related to strengthening parent connections to peers and the community.</li> <li>• Program staff use data to guide the selection, implementation, and evaluation of parenting curriculum, including efforts to test and refine the delivery of the program over time.</li> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders connect with parents and gather data to evaluate how well the program is addressing their goals, interests, and expectations.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders identify opportunities for families to connect and share information with other families who have children of similar age, common interests, and shared activities in the program and in the community.</li> <li>• Program staff and families share timely information about informal and formal networks and mentoring opportunities in the program and community.</li> <li>• Programs partner with community organizations to offer group classes for pregnant women and expectant families, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other family members who are working towards similar learning and educational goals. Classes may address parenting, family literacy, life skills, employment, money management, and English language proficiency.</li> <li>• Families have opportunities to participate in support and advocacy groups with other parents, including those of children with an identified disability or developmental delay.</li> </ul>



## 6. Family Connections to Peers and Community, cont.

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 wellbeing and community life.

<b>Program Environment, cont.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff provide space and resources, as necessary, for events led by parents and for parents.</li><li>• Program staff encourage parents and families to learn from each other.</li><li>• Program staff use safe, protected social media platforms to connect peers with each other and with community resources, in line with program protocols.</li></ul>
<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use the family partnership process to learn about families' formal and informal networks for support, information, and learning. Together, staff and families explore families' interests in forming or renewing social connections.</li><li>• Program staff link parents to support groups, educational programs, parenting classes, and other activities where they can celebrate successes and share concerns.</li><li>• Program staff and parent leaders create events and celebrations to connect pregnant women and expectant families, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other caregiving family members for peer support.</li><li>• Program staff support families' interests and goals by offering volunteer opportunities in the program that build skills and encourage peer-to-peer connections.</li><li>• Program staff, fathers, and father figures partner to identify opportunities of interest to fathers.</li><li>• Program staff promote parent connections through community activities and events. These may include health fairs, cultural celebrations, family literacy events, school board meetings, training, neighborhood meetings, and information sessions for new immigrants and refugees.</li></ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff and parent leaders facilitate peer discussions, workshops, and training events where parents can share their successes, concerns, and aspirations for their children's learning and development in a safe and supportive environment.</li><li>• Program staff provide space and resources for regularly scheduled socializations and group activities in the classroom and encourage communication among families.</li><li>• Program staff and families participate in group activities, training, parenting sessions, mentoring programs, community-based support groups, and events that address families' common interests and concerns.</li></ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff collaborate with community organizations that offer opportunities for families to address shared goals and aspirations, including those for economic mobility and educational advancement.</li><li>• Families participate and volunteer in community activities and outreach events to form connections with other families and to access resources. Community activities and outreach events include health fairs, cultural celebrations, family literacy events, school board meetings, and information sessions for new immigrants and refugees.</li><li>• Program staff and families encourage community partners to participate in program activities, including Policy Council and Health Services Advisory Committee.</li></ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff develop plans for outreach and recruitment, working with community organizations and family-led networks that bring families with young children together. Staff and parent leaders sponsor outreach events with family networks or parent-led organizations.</li><li>• Program staff and families offer all families an orientation about Head Start and Early Head Start that highlights opportunities to connect with peers in the program and in the community.</li></ul>

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Connected with other parents and families to exchange knowledge and resources.
- Engaged in problem-solving and decision-making with staff and other parents and families.
- Experienced the personal value of relationships, connections, and involvement in the program and community.
- Developed a sense of self-efficacy through parent-to-parent experiences that support mothers, fathers, and other parenting caregivers in their relationships with one another.
- Gained a sense of accomplishment through the validation that comes with shared, peer-to-peer experiences.
- Volunteered in the program or in other community-based organizations.

## 7. Families as Advocates and Leaders

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.

### Examples of Strategies for Program Progress

<b>Program Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders ensure that policies, systems, supports, and resources are in place for families to participate in program governance (e.g., Policy Council and Parent Committees) and other opportunities to contribute to program planning and oversight.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure the use of relevant community assessment and program data to inform any program goals and five-year plans that promote family advocacy and leadership.</li> <li>• Leaders guide staff through implementation to support family and program progress for any program goals set in the outcome area of family advocacy and leadership.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure that program staff and families work together to build relationships that support families’ leadership and advocacy skills. Leaders also ensure that program staff and families have access to relevant training.</li> <li>• Leaders ensure that Parent Committees and Policy Council meetings have time on the agenda for families to share their thoughts and ideas for supporting and improving program and community services.</li> <li>• Leaders allocate resources and funds for advocacy and leadership training for staff and families, including parents of children with an identified disability or developmental delay.</li> <li>• Program leaders develop relationships with local cultural organizations and invite representatives to participate in program activities to support parent leadership.</li> <li>• Program leaders and staff invite community advocates and leaders to participate in and co-sponsor advocacy and leadership training.</li> <li>• Leaders advocate for opportunities for parents to take leadership roles in community organizations and initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff engage in reflective practice to learn about family members as advocates and leaders for their children’s development and for their families.</li> <li>• Program staff and families work together to create a shared understanding of how to partner and collaborate with each other to build advocacy and leadership skills.</li> <li>• Program staff participate in training and receive coaching to build their knowledge and skills about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Becoming leaders and advocates</li> <li>◦ Offering mentoring and coaching</li> <li>◦ Using multicultural principles</li> <li>◦ Communicating, making decisions collaboratively, negotiating, and facilitating meetings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Program staff offer mentor-coach training for former Head Start and Early Head Start families, elders, and service providers in the community to serve as mentors and supports for parent leadership development.</li> <li>• Program leaders and staff invite community advocates and leaders to play an active role in the professional development of Head Start and Early Head Start staff and families and to co-sponsor advocacy and leadership training.</li> <li>• Parent leaders and staff organize and participate in training to enhance leadership, communication, and advocacy skills to build awareness of issues important to families.</li> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders support families in learning about their rights under federal and state laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Learning &amp; Quality Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff gather and analyze data from the family partnership process and from conversations with parents and families about their experiences with leadership activities in the program and in the community.</li> <li>• Program staff analyze and use information to enhance program practices and to track progress toward any program goals related to strengthening parent leadership, if identified in the program’s five-year plan.</li> <li>• Program staff and families use data to understand and address opportunities and challenges for parent advocates and leaders in the program and community.</li> <li>• Program staff and families offer and lead skill-building opportunities and peer mentoring and coaching.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and families work together to create a shared understanding of how to partner and collaborate with each other in ways that enable families to recognize themselves as advocates and leaders.</li> <li>• Leaders partner with family members in program governance (e.g., Policy Council and Parent Committee).</li> <li>• Staff and parent leaders post and distribute information about existing parent-to-parent organizations, family peer networks, and parent-led quality improvement and school-community partnerships.</li> <li>• Program staff and parent leaders work together to identify opportunities for parent leadership and advocacy beyond the program, including future transitions from the program.</li> </ul>

## 7. Families as Advocates and Leaders, cont.

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.

<b>Family Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff use the family partnership process to identify families’ potential interests, skills, experiences, and goals related to leadership and advocacy.</li><li>• Program staff share information about parent leadership activities in the program, including the Policy Council or Parent Committees, and in the community or state.</li><li>• Program staff and families learn together about effective ways to advocate for their children and families, and for community issues that concern parents. Examples include leading a community event, speaking at community or school board meetings, serving as a community board member, and participating in efforts to influence legislative agendas.</li></ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff welcome and encourage families in their efforts to advocate for their children’s learning in the program and in the community.</li><li>• Program staff and families share information about advocating for early intervention services.</li><li>• Program staff ensure that families know about their rights under federal and state laws—such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—to support families’ advocacy for themselves and their children.</li><li>• Program staff create opportunities for parents with children with an identified disability or developmental delay to serve as a resource for other families.</li><li>• Program staff and families prepare for transitions and discuss ways to advocate for their children in new educational settings.</li><li>• Program staff and families together meet with teachers and staff in the new learning setting to share information about the child in the families’ language of choice, where possible. They identify parent leadership opportunities in the new educational setting.</li><li>• Programs and families share information about families’ roles and successes as leaders and advocates with receiving schools, LEAs, and relevant community educational services. An example is information about early intervention services that families have found and used.</li></ul>
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program staff promote opportunities for families to connect with leaders in local parent-led organizations—for example, early intervention advocacy groups, parent-school organizations, and parent organizations.</li><li>• Program leaders, staff, and families work together to build relationships with community organizations and resources that offer opportunities for family leadership and advocacy.</li><li>• Program leaders and staff invite community advocates and leaders to play an active role in the professional development of Head Start and Early Head Start staff and families and to co-sponsor advocacy and leadership training.</li><li>• Program staff and families partner with advocacy groups that create opportunities and address issues on behalf of children, families, and communities, including children with an identified disability or developmental delay.</li><li>• Staff, families, and program leaders identify ways to continue family leadership and advocacy after transitioning from the program.</li><li>• Programs communicate with community agencies and LEAs about family leadership and advocacy opportunities in Head Start and Early Head Start in order to promote continued parent leadership in new settings.</li></ul>
<b>Access &amp; Continuity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent leaders partner with program staff to plan and support enrollment and outreach events.</li><li>• Parent leaders provide guidance to modify ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) policies and procedures and to identify issues that may affect enrollment or attendance.</li><li>• Parent leaders offer guidance to program staff for outreach to families that are experiencing homelessness, social isolation, and other challenges that may stem from poverty and other adversities.</li><li>• Program staff sponsor outreach activities with parent leadership organizations that advocate for families with children with an identified disability or developmental delay.</li><li>• Program staff and parent leaders highlight opportunities for leadership and advocacy during orientations for new families.</li></ul>

## 7. Families as Advocates and Leaders, cont.

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.

### Examples of Progress—Parent and Family Perspectives

#### Parents and Families:

- Built upon their strengths as leaders and/or advocates and participated in program-supported activities, such as advocacy and leadership training, Parent Committees, and Policy Council.
- Learned about opportunities to engage in leadership and/or advocacy activities in the program and in the community (e.g., Policy Council and Parent Committees).
- Accessed information about existing parent-to-parent organizations, family peer networks, and/or parent-school-community efforts to identify leadership opportunities while in the program and as their children transition into kindergarten.
- Developed an awareness of their rights under federal and state laws—such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—in order to advocate for themselves and their children.
- Engaged in problem-solving and decision-making with staff and other parents and families.
- Connected with leaders in local parent-led organizations—for example, early intervention advocacy groups, parent-school organizations, and parent organizations.
- Partnered with advocacy groups that create opportunities and address issues on behalf of children, families, and communities, including children with an identified disability or developmental delay.
- Identified ways to continue family leadership and advocacy after transitioning from the program.

Examples of community organizations that offer opportunities for family leadership and advocacy include family-led organizations, neighborhood watch and other community associations, parent-school organizations, cultural organizations, faith-based initiatives, food banks, farmers’ markets, and mental health and other support groups.



## Related Resources

Find these related resources on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website:

- Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework
- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
- Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement
- Revisiting and Updating the Multicultural Principles for Head Start Programs Serving Children Ages Birth to Five
- Measuring What Matters Overview and Exercises in Data Management

Partnering with families is essential to systemic efforts in early childhood development to bring about positive and enduring change for children and families. We are interested in your ideas and examples of ways to partner with families using the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.

We invite you to contact us: [PFCE@ecetta.info](mailto:PFCE@ecetta.info) | 1-866-763-6481.





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Parent, Family and Community Engagement