

Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

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Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement: A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families



Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement: A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families describes the knowledge, skills, and individual practices that family services professionals need to engage with parents and families in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. These competencies can be used in any early childhood setting that offers family services. This resource can help family services professionals build on their skills and further develop their professional practices.

These relationship-based competencies (RBCs) and examples of how they can be put into practice are provided to guide family services professionals as they build goal-directed partnerships with families. Ongoing, positive interactions and effective partnerships support the development and well-being of infants, young children, and families.

More specifically, **A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families** has been written for family services professionals including family services/support workers, family development workers/associates, family engagement specialists, family advocates, and other human service professionals who work with families and their young children. It is one of a set of four resources (see diagram below). To get the most benefit, pair this guide with **Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement: Overview for Early Childhood Professionals**. Family engagement is everyone's business.

Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

All early childhood professionals can use knowledge, skills, and practices to support family engagement. This set of resources defines the RBCs for all early childhood professionals and for those in the roles shown below.



What are the Relationship-Based Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families?

Relationship-based competencies for family services professionals are the knowledge, skills, and practices they use to engage families.

Effective family engagement practices promote goal-oriented relationships that build active partnerships. These partnerships contribute to the progress families make in reaching their goals.

Relationships with families directly impact the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE) Family Outcomes¹. These outcomes include family well-being, positive parent-child relationships, families as lifelong educators, families as learners, family engagement and transitions, family connections to peers and community, and family advocacy and leadership. These family outcomes influence children’s learning, development, health, and safety. The RBCs are relevant to family services professionals who work in Head Start and Early Head Start center-based and home-based programs.

Specific RBCs for family services professionals are listed in a set of tables in this resource. Each competency is defined and followed by a list of the knowledge, skills, and individual practices that inform professional practice. The way to use each RBC depends on the following:

- family services professional’s role in the program
- size of the program
- community in which the program is located
- strengths and challenges of individual families
- resources available to the program.

Family services professionals have the primary responsibility of addressing the family service component of these two-generational programs. They work hand-in-hand with teachers and home visitors to foster child and family well-being and are typically responsible for building partnerships with families. Family service professionals provide ongoing support as families work toward their goals. They provide extra support to families during times of particularly high stress or family crisis.

Family services professionals interface with community resources, serve as liaisons to community organizations, sit on community boards, and participate in community projects that benefit families and their children. While these job responsibilities most typically describe the work of Head Start and Early Head Start family service professionals, a number of other early childhood programs prioritize many of these practices as well.

For ease of reading, this resource refers to “professionals who work with families” as “family services professionals”.

¹ National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2013). *Interactive Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework*. U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and Office of Head Start. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/pf-ce-interactive-framework>.

Supervisors, coaches, and consultants can use these RBCs to provide reflective practice and help build family services professionals' family engagement knowledge and skills. The RBCs can guide program leaders as they develop and implement policies, infrastructure, and governance structures that support the use of the RBCs. State, district, and county child care administrators can use this resource to guide the design of policies and professional development content. (See pages 24-25 for additional guidance about using the RBCs in everyday leadership work).

Why is Family Engagement Important for Family Services Professionals?

Parent-child relationships and family well-being make a difference in children's development and well-being (Anda et al., 2006; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000). Family services professionals in early childhood programs play a critical role in helping families make progress toward their goals for their children and their family. Family-centered goals include the family's aspirations for their children's learning and development and for the family's well-being.

Each family in an early childhood program comes with strengths, experiences, and cultures that give meaning and direction to their parenting, family goals, and to their engagement in the program. Effective family engagement requires that family services professionals build trusting relationships with families and provide services that are responsive to each family's individual living situation, cultures, beliefs, values, languages, practices, and traditions. It also means taking a strengths-based perspective that identifies and builds on the abilities and positive qualities of each family.

Family services professionals who are well-trained in the relationship-based competencies are better prepared to work with families as they make positive steps toward their goals. Effective family engagement increases families' abilities to overcome risks and challenges and to be the sensitive and responsive caregivers and educators they want to be for their children (NCPFCE, 2013; 2014).



Key Terms Related to the Relationship-Based Competencies and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

A **Relationship-Based Competency**² is a set of knowledge, skills, individual practices, and other characteristics, including attributes, behaviors, and actions, that are necessary to be effective in one's family engagement work.

Professional practice is a combination of knowledge, skills, and individual practices that are measurable or observable and describe what a person needs to know and how to do the work successfully. Specifically:

- **Knowledge** refers to what early childhood professionals need to know.
- **Skills** refer to what early childhood professionals need to apply their knowledge.
- **Individual practices** include key examples of what early childhood professionals do.

Family engagement is an interactive process through which family services professionals, early childhood (EC) providers, and other EC professionals, 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. At the program level, family engagement involves parents' engagement with their children and with providers as they work together toward the goals that families choose for themselves and their children. EC providers work together with families, other professionals, and community partners in ways that promote equity, inclusiveness, and cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

Parent and family. These terms are used interchangeably throughout this document. The terms may be viewed differently from the lenses of different cultures. However, the use of **parent** and **family** refers to all adults who interact with early childhood programs and systems in support of children in their care. This would include biological, adoptive, and foster parents and step-parents, grandparents and other caregiving kin, and legal and informal guardians. This could also include parents who do not live with the child. When practicing relationship-based family engagement, professionals should keep in mind that families also include siblings, cousins, and other family members living in the household.

Strengths-based perspective.³ An approach to working with families that focuses on their interests, abilities, motivations, and resources. Instead of focusing on problems and needs, a strengths-based point of view sees families as agents capable of making their own change as they work to achieve their goals. Early childhood professionals who use a strengths-based approach support families as they realize their own potential.

² U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (n.d.). *Assessment and selection: Competencies*. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/competencies/>; Office of Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Establishing a competency-based management framework*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/human-resources/article/establishing-competency-based-management-framework>

³ Saleebey, D. (2009). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

How Do Family Services Professionals Engage with Families?

Family services professionals play an important role in supporting family well-being. No matter what type of program they work in, family services professionals have at least one thing in common: they need to know about programs and supports offered at federal, state, and local levels to promote family health, safety, education, and financial capability. They play an important role as they work with families to connect to these resources.



Family services professionals help families identify their strengths and available resources to work toward their goals for their children’s development and the family’s well-being. They also help families identify resources that may be available in their family, social network, neighborhood, or community; these may include parent-led organizations and resources centers.

Positive relationships—based on an understanding of the hopes, dreams, values, customs, and beliefs of each family—are the foundation of program-family partnerships and support family well-being. Close communication and collaboration among families, family services professionals, early childhood teachers, and home visitors allow for continuity between home and early care and education environments. Family services professionals can ease transitions between these settings and provide opportunities to coordinate child and family services.

When trust develops between family services professionals and families, it becomes easier to build ties among the program, home, and community resources that support parents. These relationships encourage families to stay involved in early childhood programs, resulting in greater continuity for both families and programs. Family services professionals partner with families to reach their short- and long-term goals.

A Special Note to Supervisors and Administrators

Family engagement requires both time and a commitment to working with families. It is important for family services professionals to work in an environment that values relationships and assigns manageable workloads that provide staff and families adequate time to get to know one another and work toward family goals. This is, in part, why guidelines are created to specify the maximum size of caseloads for family services professionals.

Research shows that large caseloads limit professionals’ ability to offer services that work for each family. Large caseloads also lead to high rates of staff burnout and turnover (Boston Children’s Hospital, 2012; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016; Social Work Policy Institute, 2010). When family services professionals have manageable workloads, they have time to engage with families and learn about each family’s experiences and cultures. They also stay in their positions longer and are

better able to address challenges that arise. These benefits lead to more positive outcomes for both children and their families.

Key Terms Related to Professional Development

Coaching.⁴ A form of professional development in which an individual with knowledge and experience in the skill being coached enters into a partnership with a professional. The coaching professional observes the professional's work, encourages reflection, offers feedback, and supports goal-setting to help the professional master and implement effective practices.

Organizational culture.⁵ The shared assumptions, beliefs, values, and goals that guide staff interactions and the functioning of an organization.

Parallel process. The process that occurs when an individual's behaviors and practices are similar to the behaviors, practices, or interactions of others working in parallel. It is also the process that occurs when similar practices are mirrored in different parts of an organization, community, or system.

Professional boundaries.⁶ The limits of professional responsibility and role. The RBCs encourage positive relationships with families. Boundaries identify the lines to be respected and not to be crossed in interactions with others. Early childhood professionals carefully consider the difference between personal and professional relationships and turn to supervisors for guidance and support in assessing their relationships with families. Ethical guidelines about relationship boundaries are offered by various early childhood education, home visiting, and family services organizations.

Reflective practice.⁷ Taking time to think about what has happened, what is happening, and what should happen next. Reflection informs our professional practice and improves our ability to communicate with children and families, colleagues, and professionals more effectively.

Reflective supervision.⁸ A collaborative relationship to support professional growth. Supervisors facilitate reflection by the professionals by offering time for dialogue about performance and by asking them to evaluate themselves. The process of reflective supervision helps identify professionals' strengths and challenges, and it addresses their needs for training or support.

⁴ The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2014). *Practice-based coaching: Collaborative partnerships*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/pbc-handout.pdf>

⁵ Heathfield, S. M. (2016). *Culture: Your environment for people at work*. Retrieved from The Balance: <https://www.thebalance.com/culture-your-environment-for-people-at-work-1918809>

⁶ Early Head Start National Resource Center. (n.d.). *Professional boundaries in work with expectant families and infants and toddlers and their families*. Retrieved from: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/professional-boundaries-materials.pdf>

⁷ National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2017). *Parent, family, and community engagement professional development guide: Reflective practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pdguide>

⁸ Office of Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Tips on becoming a reflective supervisor and a reflective supervisee*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/human-resources/article/tips-becoming-reflective-supervisor-reflective-supervisee>

Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

The RBCs guide professional practice that supports and extends family engagement efforts. Individual competencies may be used differently, depending on the strengths, interests, and challenges of families and resources within the program and community.

Professionals can strengthen their abilities to use the RBCs through daily work with children, families, and colleagues, reflective practice and supervision, and professional development opportunities. The RBCs are most effective when professionals and programs have an ongoing commitment to family engagement practices that are responsive to each family’s cultures and languages.

RELATIONSHIP-BASED COMPETENCIES TO SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	
COMPETENCY	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships	Engages in mutually respectful, positive, goal-oriented partnerships with families to promote positive child and family outcomes
2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships	Respects and responds to the cultures, languages, values, and family structures of each family
3. Family Well-Being and Families as Learners	Supports families’ reflections on and planning for their safety, health, education, well-being, and life goals
4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators	Partners with families to build strong parent-child relationships and supports parents as the first and lifelong educators of their children
5. Family Connections to Peers and Community	Works with families to strengthen their support networks and connections with other parents and community members who can address families’ strengths, interests, and challenges
6. Family Access to Community Resources	Supports families’ use of community resources to make progress toward positive child and family outcomes
7. Leadership and Advocacy	Works alongside parents to build on their strengths as advocates for their families and as leaders in the program and community
8. Coordinated, Integrated, and Comprehensive Services	Works with other professionals and agencies to support coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive services for families across the organization, community, and system
9. Data-Driven Services and Continuous Improvement	Collects information with families and reflects with them to inform goal-setting, planning, and implementation to effect progress and outcomes for families, children, programs, and communities
10. Professional Growth	Shows professionalism and participates actively in opportunities for ongoing professional development related to family engagement

Relationship-Based Competencies for Family Service Professionals

1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships

Engages in mutually respectful, positive, goal-oriented partnerships with families to promote positive child and family outcomes

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands effective relationship-building practices with parents, families, children, and professionals Understands the importance of cultures and languages when working with all families and their children Understands the importance of working in partnership with families by sharing planning and decision-making to support children’s learning and development and family well-being Understands the need to get to know each family Understands the importance of positive relationships between families and family services professionals to identify, encourage, and celebrate family well-being and children’s development and learning Is familiar with professional ethical standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands effective relationship-building practices with parents, families, children, and professionals Understands the importance of cultures and languages when working with all children, families, and professionals Understands the specific competencies, goals, and processes for family services professionals working with families in early childhood settings Understands how reflection and being respectful of family services professionals supports their respectful partnerships with families and other professionals (parallel process) Understands the importance of supporting the well-being of family services professionals, including helping them identify support services (for example, physical health and mental health) if needed Knows professional ethical standards and how to share them with family services professionals
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps families feel welcome and connected to the program, including specific outreach to families experiencing challenges and adversities Helps families feel safe and respected by building mutually trusting relationships over time Shows respect for each family’s cultures, values, and life situation Uses effective, responsive communication skills with families. Examples include paying attention to both verbal and nonverbal messages, listening carefully without interrupting, and repeating what the other person said to make sure she or he is understood. Creates opportunities for parents to identify their goals for their children and themselves and regularly follows up on progress. Examples include learning, parent-child interactions, health and mental health, nutrition, safety, family literacy, bi-lingual or multi-lingual abilities, financial literacy, and basic needs. Adjusts plans, approaches, and services to meet each family’s unique needs Reflects on interactions and experiences with families to enhance skills on an ongoing basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides family services professionals to enhance their ability to help families feel welcome and connected to the program Models use of the relationship-based competencies in working with other professionals through collaborative and respectful relationships (parallel process) Uses active listening skills that demonstrate cultural sensitivity and openness to feedback from family services professionals Uses reflective practices in coaching and supervision to support family services professionals’ work and their relationships with families Creates opportunities for staff to identify goals and develop professional development plans and follows up on progress regularly Guides family services professionals as they build relationship-based competencies Provides structured opportunities for family services professionals to learn from individual families and other professionals to enhance their work with families

1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships, cont.

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes all families, promoting and valuing diversity across family structures, cultures, languages, perspectives, and values • Helps families feel comfortable sharing information • Creates time for open communication with families • Meets with families when they first enroll in the program to learn about each family’s situation and goals • Contacts all primary caregivers (parents, grandparents, and others) in the child’s life when possible to develop ongoing relationships • Works with each family to develop and support plans to meet family goals that describe the family’s strengths, resources, challenges, and needs • Reviews the family’s goals and progress toward their goals with the family regularly • Acts in ways that are consistent with professional ethical standards for family services professionals 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides family services professionals to welcome all families, promoting and valuing diversity across family structures, cultures, languages, perspectives, and values • Helps family services professionals contribute in meaningful ways to families’ goals for themselves and their children • Coaches family services professionals in reflective listening and other communication skills that are culturally responsive • Orients new family services professionals to the philosophy, services, and organizational culture of the program that support positive, goal-oriented relationships • Helps family services professionals develop strong, positive, and effective relationships with families, including families experiencing crises • Offers training for family services professionals about the relationship-based competencies including goal-setting and planning with families • Coaches family services professionals in reflective listening and other communication skills that are culturally responsive <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a positive organizational culture and climate that promotes relationship-based practices and staff wellness • Provides professional development opportunities that increase staff knowledge and skill at integrating families’ cultures, values, and traditions into daily practices throughout the organization • Enacts procedures and policies that provide time for daily communication between professionals and parents • Enacts policies, to the extent possible, that support family services professionals to work with the same family over time • Ensures that all family services professionals understand their responsibilities and priorities • Ensures that all family services professionals and managers know how and where to get additional support for families as needed from others in the program or community • Ensures that program-wide services respond to strengths, challenges, and needs of families in the community • Limits caseloads so professionals can individualize support for families and strengthen family well-being • Provides guidance to family services professionals about policies, guidelines, procedures, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and professional ethical standards • Ensures that all program policies adhere to professional ethical standards

2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships

Respects and responds to the cultures, languages, values, and family structures of each family

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that each family has unique strengths and resilience • Understands how families' cultures influence caregiving practices and shape family life and children's early development • Understands and respects variations in families' cultures, experiences, expectations, and child-rearing beliefs and practices • Understands one's own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases to increase self-awareness about how they may affect work with families and their children • Knows that despite best efforts from everyone, there may be misunderstandings due to different cultural beliefs, values, and viewpoints and knows how to navigate these misunderstandings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views professionals and families as having unique strengths and resilience with diverse values, temperaments, and learning styles • Understands how families' cultures influence caregiving, children's development, family life, and relationships between family services professionals and parents • Understands and respects variations in families' cultures, languages, experiences, expectations, and child-rearing beliefs and practices • Understands one's own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases and how they may affect work with families and their children
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds positive relationships with each family • Reflects on one's own beliefs, values, experiences, ethics, and biases to increase self-awareness • Seeks information about the strengths, cultures, languages, beliefs, values, and circumstances of each family • Engages in relationships that are responsive to families' cultures, languages, and values • Shows respect for the contributions of home languages and cultures to create shared understandings • Discusses with families that the purpose of learning about each family's traditions, living situation, cultures, languages, and values is to enhance relationships with families and better support them in reaching their goals • Develops skills to engage in cross-cultural conversations that respect families' beliefs, opinions, and caregiving practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds positive and supportive relationships with each family services professional • Identifies and reflects on personal values, experiences, ethics, and biases and uses this information to become more self-aware and more effective in working with a wide range of individuals. Considers issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, cultures, educational and ability level, and/or socio-economic class. • Shows respectful interest in learning about the cultures and languages of professionals and families • Engages family services professionals in regular discussions about each family's traditions, living situation, cultures, languages, and values to better support relationships between families and their children • Creates opportunities for family services professionals to reflect on personal values, beliefs, experiences, ethics, and biases that may arise when working with families • Creates opportunities for family services professionals to problem solve instances in which they feel that family cultural beliefs differ from program policies

2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships, cont.

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a variety of communication strategies to reach families • Uses approaches with parents that show sensitivity and respect for their cultures and languages • Communicates with families in their home languages, to the extent possible, or arranges for an interpreter, as needed, to communicate fully and effectively • Provides recruitment, intake, orientation, and informational materials to families that are welcoming and responsive to different cultures and languages • Welcomes conversations about parenting and family cultures, languages, values, experiences, ethics, and strengths • Seeks information or consultation about specific cultural values and practices when necessary 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers training and coaching to increase family services professionals' skills for engaging in culturally and linguistically responsive relationships with families • Offers training and coaching to support use of a variety of communication strategies to reach families • Ensures that family services professionals speak with families in their preferred language and use skilled interpreters when that is not possible • Shares reflections with family services professionals about one's own strengths and limitations • Seeks information or consultation about specific cultural values and practices when necessary <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcomes all families, promoting and valuing diversity across family structures, cultures, languages, perspectives, and values • Works with program management to ensure that the program shows respect for families' languages and cultures • Integrates different cultural perspectives into policies and procedures and shares with family services professionals • Provides professional development and self-care opportunities that increase self-awareness and responsiveness to families • Ensures budget allocation for resources to support home language learning in the program (for example, interpreters, translators, web-based technology, and materials)



3. Family Well-Being and Families as Learners

Supports families’ reflections on and planning for their safety, health, education, well-being, and life goals

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows how to recognize family resilience, strengths and resources, and unique gifts and talents, and what families already do to maintain family well-being and cope with challenges • Understands that children’s healthy development is related to family well-being and family goals for themselves and their children • Knows the signs of depression, trauma, substance use, homelessness, domestic violence, child maltreatment, food insecurity, mental illness, and other challenges to family well-being • Knows about laws and regulations that support and protect families and their children • Knows what steps to take and who to talk with if child or family safety may be threatened • Knows about resources in the community to support families’ safety, health, mental health, financial stability, economic mobility, and educational growth, and asks others for referral information when needed • Understands the importance of asking for support from their supervisor or colleagues about issues that are beyond their current professional skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows how to help family services professionals recognize family resilience, strengths and resources, and unique gifts and talents, and to recognize what families already do to maintain family well-being and cope with challenges • Recognizes the emotional effects on family services professionals who are working with families experiencing trauma, depression, substance use disorders, other mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence, food insecurity, and other challenges to family well-being • Knows that all family services professionals need current information about laws and regulations to support and protect families and their children • Understands what steps family services professionals need to take to ensure that children and families are safe when their safety may be threatened • Knows about resources in the community that can help family services professionals support families’ safety, health, mental health, financial stability, economic mobility, and educational growth • Understands ways that family services professionals can offer assistance to families coping with stress and daily challenges
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies information about families’ strengths, talents, cultures, languages, aspirations, resources, challenges, needs, and goals to work with families • Uses a supportive and non-judgmental approach to talk with parents about difficult or sensitive topics • Recognizes the importance of taking time for self-care, for one’s own well-being and for others, especially when supporting families in crisis • Expresses kindness, warmth, and compassion when families are overwhelmed by demanding challenges, trauma, or stress • Seeks support from their supervisor or colleagues about how to be successful in conversations that are difficult to have with families • Provides information about and connects families with community and cultural resources that offer opportunities to use and build on their strengths, and to support child and family safety, financial literacy, economic mobility, educational growth, health, and other aspects of family well-being • Works with families in a collaborative goal-setting process (for example, Family Partnership Process) to identify their goals and available resources and to plan steps toward achieving their goals • Works with families to identify opportunities for education, training, and employment to advance family economic mobility • Talks with families about indicators of healthy relationships and identifies related social supports and other resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites family services professionals to identify their own strengths, gifts, resources, and social supports that help them cope with work challenges • Works with family services professionals to enhance their skills in crisis management • Offers training and coaching for family services professionals about how to effectively support families in crisis while maintaining self-care, and adjusting workloads and work conditions when possible • Builds connections between program and community networks that provide families with opportunities to use and build on their strengths and offer services that families identify as needed to support their safety, economic mobility, health, nutrition, and other aspects of family well-being • Supports family services professionals in ongoing learning about community resources • Helps family services professionals when they need to work with families about issues that are beyond their current professional skills and knowledge • Models skills that prevent and address conflict among professionals in the program and between professionals and families • Monitors and addresses family services professionals’ stress when working with families who are experiencing serious challenges • Maintains a current list of program or community resources for families in the program • Works with family services professionals to identify available opportunities for families related to education, training, and employment

3. Family Well-Being and Families as Learners, cont.

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checks in with families regularly to see how they are doing • Talks with parents about their well-being and short- and long-term goals and offers resources or referrals if appropriate • Shares information about, and connects families with, community and cultural resources that support family safety, economic mobility, educational growth, health, and family well-being • Follows up with families to check if resources or referrals were helpful • Consults with their supervisor, coach, or colleagues about appropriate resources or referrals to share with families experiencing serious challenges • Links parents to training opportunities to support their progress toward their education and career • Follow policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice 	<p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements clear policies regarding the safety and well-being of children, families, and professionals • Ensures that all family services professionals are trained about mandated reporting procedures, how to work with families when child or family safety may be threatened, and how to report suspected abuse or neglect • Ensures that family services professionals have time to complete required forms and meet reporting requirements • Establishes policies to ensure coaching and/or reflective supervision for all family services professionals, especially those working with families in crisis • Ensures that family services professionals adhere to program policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical standards in work to promote family well-being and families as learners



4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators

Partners with families to build strong parent-child relationships and supports parents as the first and lifelong educators of their children

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that children’s early family relationships serve as a foundation for later development and learning Understands prenatal development and healthy pregnancy behaviors Understands that families’ cultures, languages, and history shape the way that parents raise their children and the way that family members relate to each other Understands the value of focusing on a child’s developmental strengths—what children can do—and what parents already do to foster growth, and uses these strengths as a foundation for communication with families Understands the value of focusing on family strengths—what families already do to build strong parent-child relationships, and supports each family member’s development and learning Knows about resources to support families of children who are learning more than one language, have exceptional potential, and/or have specific needs including behaviors considered challenging, disability, or developmental delay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that children’s early family relationships serve as a foundation for later development and learning Understands prenatal development and healthy pregnancy behaviors Understands that families’ cultures, languages, and history shape the way that parents raise their children and the way that family members relate to each other Understands the value of focusing on child development strengths—what children can do and what parents and professionals already do with them—to promote effective communication about children’s development Understands the value of focusing on family strengths—what families already do to build parent-child relationships—and supports each family member’s development and learning Understands human development, especially the central role of parent-child relationships in social-emotional development from childhood to adulthood Knows about resources to support families of children who are learning more than one language, have exceptional potential, and/or have specific needs including behaviors considered challenging, disability, or developmental delay
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports children’s attachment and relationships with their parents and other caregivers Communicates with families about child progress in ways that deepen trust and build relationships with families Focuses on child and family strengths in discussions with parents about their children Communicates with parents about transitions that might be challenging for their child and works with parents to develop strategies that can help their child Guides and connects parents with resources to address developmental concerns, including how to manage challenging child behaviors in positive, developmentally appropriate, inclusive ways Partners with parents and other program professionals or experts to identify and support ongoing learning opportunities for parents to enjoy with their children at home and in the community Engages actively with families in interactions with their children when children are present Listens to concerns and supports positive anticipation and preparation in expectant families Talks with families about their opportunities to support school readiness Supports and/or offers parenting education opportunities for parents that fit well with the child’s cultures, gender, and age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports family services professionals in building skills to promote positive parent-child interactions Offers training and coaching to enhance family services professionals’ skills for supporting parent-child relationships and families as lifelong educators Engages in a process to identify and implement parenting opportunities that fit with the family’s strengths, cultures, and caregiving practices Compiles resources to support families of children who are learning more than one language, have exceptional potential, and/or have specific needs including challenging behaviors, disability, or developmental delay

4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators, cont.

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages actively with families in responsive, language-rich interactions in ways that are culturally responsive Encourages parents to observe, participate, and volunteer in the program Individualizes family learning resources and informational materials to each family's unique experiences, languages, and cultures Supports parents' ability to identify and respond to children's emotions, communication, interests, and basic needs by providing time for parent to respond to child when meeting with family services professional Develops strong relationships with community child care, preschools, and public schools to support positive transitions and future parent-school partnerships Supports successful transitions by providing families with appropriate information, training, and connections to future early care, intervention, and educational settings and kindergarten Supports expectant families in positive health practices and in planning for their baby Welcomes opportunities to connect with other professionals who work with families 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with family services professionals to partner with parents as they set goals for themselves and as they make plans to work toward those goals Offers training and coaching for family services professionals about how adults learn and change and for professionals and families about parenting behaviors that support child development and learning Guides family services professionals in reflective practice about their work to support parent-child relationships in ways that are culturally responsive Works with program management and family services professionals to ensure that families have information about their children's progress Works with program leadership and family services professionals to ensure that families drive the development of goals for their children (including participation in the Individual Family Service Plan [IFSP]⁹ and Individualized Educational Plan [IEP]¹⁰) Works with family services professionals to develop steps to support transitions of all families and their children to and from other early learning settings or to kindergarten <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that schedules of family services professionals provide adequate time to work with families Creates procedures that ensure child progress data is meaningful and understandable and is shared regularly Connects family services professionals with resources to support families of children who are learning more than one language, have exceptional potential, and/or have specific needs including challenging behaviors, disability, or developmental delay Ensures budget allocation for resources to engage parents in supporting child development (for example, web-based technology, materials, transportation)

⁹ A written plan for early intervention services for an infant or toddler, age 0–3 years, with an identified disability. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, Office of Special Education Programs. Individualized Family Service Plan. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/idea/part-c/model-form-ifsp.pdf>)

¹⁰ A written education plan for each child age 3–21 who receives special education and related services. (U.S. Department of Education. A Guide to the Individualized Education Program. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>)

5. Family Connections to Peers and Community

Works with families to strengthen their support networks and connections with other parents and community members who can address families' strengths, interests, and challenges

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the importance of social support networks for families, especially for those who may be isolated Knows the resources available in the community and early childhood field that may support families' strengths, interests, and challenges Understands how facilitation skills for parent and family groups can support positive interactions and learning between parents Understands how positive parenting skills and practices support children's development and well-being Understands the importance of learning from families' experiences related to community resources to increase knowledge about beneficial and effective services for families and their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the importance of social support networks for professionals and families Knows the resources and opportunities available in the community for both professionals and families Knows and shares effective strategies for facilitating social interactions among parents
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages families to identify, develop, and use informal and formal social support networks. Examples include family-led organizations, family support networks, neighborhood groups, faith/spiritual communities, civic organizations, and other social groups. Identifies common and individual interests, and strengths and challenges of parents, and uses that information to plan activities and group learning opportunities Teaches adults effectively in one-to-one and group situations Uses group facilitation skills to lead parenting group work effectively Coordinates training, educational, and parenting skill opportunities for parents. Examples include adult education, life skills, parenting curriculum, family literacy, and employment training. Creates educational opportunities for parents and expectant families to learn about the importance of healthy relationships and social support networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides family services professionals regular peer learning opportunities to share ideas and enhance practice Trains and coaches family services professionals on facilitation skills to lead parenting group work effectively Provides opportunities for family services professionals to learn about, understand, and engage with the services offered by community organizations and to build relationships with community peers and leaders
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for families to get to know one another through program events. Examples include family nights, potluck dinners, and field trips. Partners with parents in planning stages of programming so that they can share their skills, cultures, and other talents at group gatherings Encourages parents to contribute, volunteer, and collaborate in the program and community Connects families with resources and events available in the community. Examples include recreational facilities, libraries, museums, parks and other outdoor activity resources, and civic organizations. 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes awareness of community groups, learning, and volunteer opportunities for families Shares information about community educational resources and events with family services professionals Helps to promote communication and coordination among community agencies Uses effective group facilitation in meetings with staff and community partners <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes parents as active participants and leaders in training and decision-making groups so they can share knowledge, skills, cultures, languages, and talents Enacts program policies that allow family services professionals to implement and evaluate family group events Ensures resource allocation for costs of approved peer-to-peer networking activities for professionals and families

6. Family Access to Community Resources

Supports families' use of community resources to make progress toward positive child and family outcomes

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that families and family networks offer social support and are resources for other families Knows about local social services and community resources available to families including how to access information that addresses unique goals and needs. Examples include health, mental health, nutrition, parenting, financial literacy, education, enrichment, recreation, job training, and employment Understands how to partner with families to identify which local services and resources best match family interests, cultures, languages, values, needs, and goals Understands the importance of learning from families' experiences related to community resources to increase knowledge about beneficial and effective services for families and their children Understands when to ask their supervisor, coach, experts, or peers for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that families and family networks offer social support and are community resources for other families Learns regularly about community resources that offer services to enhance family well-being and children's learning and development Understands how to help family services professionals partner with families to match community and program resources with family strengths, interests, challenges, and goals
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners with families to identify services and resources that might be helpful in reaching their goals Supports families' use of services and resources to meet family goals Recognizes when immediate assistance or support is needed for a family, especially when there are signs of possible developmental delays or family concerns related to food insecurity, family and child safety, environmental toxins (for example, lead in the water supply or building), or a need for emergency shelter Supports partnerships with schools and community service providers to serve families more effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers or participates in professional development community events to promote connections between community organizations and family services professionals Offers training and coaching to support family services professionals to recognize and address situations where immediate assistance or support is needed for the family Provides appropriate supervision when family services professionals need support to respond to challenging situations Builds relationships with schools and community service professionals to serve families in more comprehensive ways
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds with information and support to families' expressed strengths, interests, challenges, or needs about the services in the community that can help them reach their goals Checks in with families regularly to ask if they are receiving services that meet their expressed interests, challenges, and needs Serves as a liaison to initiate referrals and ensures follow through to confirm that services are beneficial and effective within the program and with community agencies Establishes relationships with community partners that are productive and proactive Acts as the family's connection to program and community services as needed. Examples include meeting with health, mental health, child development, and child welfare professionals together. Consults with their supervisor, coach, experts, or peers to find information to address family challenges, needs, and goals when necessary 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops strong relationships with community, state, and/or national groups to support family services professionals' work with families Provides opportunities for representatives of trusted community organizations to meet and present information about their services to family services professionals and families. Examples include libraries, food banks, and transportation. Reviews family services professionals' practices in linking families with community services, when their role requires it, as part of ongoing reflective supervision <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enacts policies that support family services professionals' and/or supervisors' time to build and nurture relationships with community partners Exercises leadership to advocate for resources in the community that meet families' expressed interests or needs Uses community assessment data and families' feedback to form relationships with community agencies and improve access to resources Evaluates effectiveness of community partnerships specifically to guide and support involvement of family services professionals

7. Leadership and Advocacy

Works alongside parents to build on their strengths as advocates for their families and as leaders in the program and community

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes that parents lead, make decisions, and advocate for their interests and may have experiences in formal leadership and advocacy roles Understands the importance of working together with parents in problem-solving and reaching solutions Is aware of advocacy and leadership opportunities for parents in the program and community Understands the barriers that may impede a family's ability to exercise their power and advocate effectively (for example, in the IEP and IFSP process) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands how professionals can support parent leadership and advocacy in the program and the community Knows what changes are needed in the program to uplift parent advocacy and leadership Understands the barriers that may impede a family's ability to exercise their power and advocate effectively (for example, in the IEP and IFSP process)
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes families in decision-making, planning, implementing, and evaluating change at different levels of the organization Listens to families' ideas and encourages them to move their ideas forward Encourages parents to participate in leadership and advocacy opportunities that exist in the program and community Supports families in developing skills and confidence to be effective leaders and advocates for their children Encourages parents to work together to advance changes they wish to see in the program, community, or at the state level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports family services professionals in developing skills and confidence to be effective leaders and advocates so they can support families as leaders and advocates (parallel process) Offers skills-based training for family services professionals in engaging and supporting families to be leaders and advocates in the program and community
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works with families to plan how to advocate for their children's development and family well-being in other early childhood and family services settings Encourages parents to volunteer in the program and the community Partners with families to identify opportunities in the program or community that promote parent leadership and advocacy and welcome parent input. Examples include Head Start Policy Council, parent committees, local and state early childhood advisory boards, health services advisory boards, and agency boards for input. 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds opportunity for parent input, advocacy, and leadership into all aspects of the program Promotes opportunities for parent advocacy, input, and volunteering into all aspects of programming Invites families to share their experiences serving on parent committees or in program governance Shares input from families with program management about the effectiveness of policy councils and parent committees <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides resources to enable families to participate in program decision-making and governance. Examples include stipends, child care, transportation, and food. Enacts policies and processes that engage families in planning, implementing, and evaluating change at the program level as part of program decision-making and governance Prioritizes community partnerships that support pathways for parent leadership and advocacy, such as family-led organizations or family support networks Trains staff to work with parent advocates and parents in leadership roles

8. Coordinated, Integrated, and Comprehensive Services

Works with other professionals and agencies to support coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive services for families across the organization, community, and system

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the importance of family services professionals coordinating with other professionals about child health and development, mental health, educational, social, and other services Knows the resources and systems available in the community and how a family can access services needed to advance their strengths and talents or address their concerns and needs Is aware of and understands policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands how the roles of all professionals support coordinated, systemic, integrated, and comprehensive family engagement to promote child development and family well-being Knows the professionals, resources, and systems available in their program and community, and how a family can access the comprehensive services needed to advance their strengths and talents and address their challenges and needs Understands policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses with families the importance of coordinating health, social, and educational services for supporting children’s ongoing learning and development and family well-being Reaches out to other professionals to facilitate coordination and integration of services for families Partners with their supervisor, parents, staff, and other experts or peers to find information when needed Builds relationships with schools and community service providers to serve families more effectively Supports families’ capacity to communicate effectively with other service providers Shares only information with parental consent within programs and with outside agencies that will improve services for children and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offers training and coaching about outreach and partnering with professionals to facilitate coordination and integration of services for families. Examples include teachers, consultants, other family services professionals, or experts in the community. Ensures that family services professionals are aware of and comply with policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice Ensures that family services professionals share only information with parental consent within programs and with outside agencies to improve services for children and families
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers families to services in the community Obtains permission from families before sharing confidential information with other service professionals and respects families’ wishes if they choose not to share information Shares only essential, relevant information about families with colleagues and other professionals Connects and collaborates with community partners who can play a role in supporting families to reach their goals Follows up with families and professionals to support the effective delivery of community services Works effectively with other professionals, including teachers and home visitors who work with families and their children Coordinates with families and other professionals, especially those offering services to children, such as early interventionists or infant mental health practitioners Contributes to the process of collecting and compiling information and resources to support families’ safety, health, mental health, financial stability, economic mobility, and educational growth Integrates policies, guidelines, and expectations to protect the confidentiality and privacy of families 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares information about services in the program and community with family services professionals. Examples include health, mental health, special needs, and child development. Helps ensure that coordination happens at all levels in the program <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a positive organizational culture and climate that promotes coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive services Enacts policies that provide time for family services professionals to build partnerships with agencies and programs that provide services to families and their children Enacts policies that provide time for family services professionals to participate in multi-agency team planning meetings to coordinate support for families and their children Ensures information about resources and opportunities in the community are compiled and available to support families’ and staff safety, health, mental health, financial stability, economic mobility, and educational growth Shares aggregated information about groups of children and families that facilitates communication among professionals within and outside the organization in order to improve service delivery Ensures that policies, guidelines, and expectations are in place to protect the confidentiality and privacy of families related to coordinated, integrated, and comprehensive services

9. Data Driven Services and Continuous Improvement

Collects information with families and reflects with them to inform goal-setting, planning, and implementation to effect progress and outcomes for families, children, programs, and communities

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands effective ways to talk with families about individual child progress • Understands effective ways to talk with families about family well-being, goal-setting, and family assessment and progress • Understands the importance of using data for setting and marking progress toward one’s own professional development and program-level goals • Understands policies and procedures for securing family input for continuous program improvement • Understands how to partner with parents to share and use information to improve services • Understands program policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the importance of supporting family services professionals in using data for ongoing child assessment and ways to share data with families • Understands the importance of supporting family services professionals in using data for ongoing family assessment, goal-setting, and progress, and ways to share data with families • Understands the importance of supporting family services professionals in using data for setting and marking progress toward professional and program-level goals • Understands the policies and procedures for engaging families in continuous program improvement and the specific role of family services professionals in these processes • Understands how to partner with family services professionals, parents, and families to share and use information to improve program services • Knows how the program’s information management systems can be used to inform planning and goal-setting for parent, family, and community engagement for individual families and the program • Understands policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical practice in using data for continuous program improvement
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins teachers in engaging parents in discussions about individual child progress and development and implications for current and future planning, including when developmental issues or concerns arise • Asks each family about what they know and feel is important to share about their family and their child, as well as the program and their community • Engages families as active participants in collecting and analyzing information to enhance and individualize services (for example, through surveys, observation, or other information from families) • Applies information about child development and family well-being to individualize services, decision-making, and practices • Stores, retrieves, and uses information for planning purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers training and mentoring about how to partner with teachers to discuss child progress and development and implications for current and future planning with parents, especially when developmental issues or concerns arise • Ensures that data collected with families and about program quality are meaningful and used to help professionals and families work to reach family goals • Provides materials, training, and coaching to enable family services professionals to prepare and accurately use tools to collect, analyze, and share information with families (for example, through surveys, observation, or information from their ideas and experiences) • Guides family services professionals in using research along with information about child development and family well-being to reflect on their practices and change their approach when necessary • Ensures that data collected with families and about program quality is meaningful and used to help professionals and families work to reach family goals • Encourages family services professionals to engage families in the preparation, collection, analysis, and use of information • Assists family services professionals in accurately interpreting information collected about children, families, and services • Uses ongoing program monitoring and review when working with families to collect, aggregate, and analyze data about family engagement and child and family services

9. Data Driven Services and Continuous Improvement, cont.

Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
<p>PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners with families in gathering information about children’s development and about family context including values, cultures, and languages Expects and responds to emotions that surface while discussing child development and well-being Tracks information about parent and family progress over time to guide planning, individualization, and communication with parents Asks for parents’ reflection and feedback about the family support they are receiving and uses the information to guide planning and approach to services Develops, shares, and collects evaluations and feedback forms during workshops, meetings, and other activities for parents and families Uses findings from participant feedback to revise the design of workshops, meetings, and other group activities for parents and expectant families Uses consistent record keeping and reporting practices to track individual family and program progress Maintains the policies, guidelines, and expectations that are in place to protect the confidentiality and privacy of families 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses data with family services professionals about family outcomes for coaching and reflective supervision Trains family services professionals to prepare and use data collection tools (for example, surveys, interviews, observation, and child assessment tools) and to analyze and use information gathered Works with program leaders and family services professionals to ensure that families have information about their child’s progress that is understandable and meaningful <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates and implements program policy defining the role of family engagement in continuous program learning and improvement Shares data related to family engagement with program staff to improve program systems and services Reviews and analyzes program data to develop ideas for program improvement in partnership with program staff and family representatives Shares information from program data sources with stakeholders. Examples include teachers and child care providers, other family services professionals, parents, Policy Council, and community partners. Ensures that program policies, guidelines, and expectations are in place related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical standards in using data for continuous improvement



10. Professional Growth

Shows professionalism and participates actively in opportunities for ongoing professional development related to family engagement

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the importance of ongoing reflective practice (self-reflection) to enhance work with families • Understands the importance of ongoing coaching and reflective supervision for personal and professional growth • Understands the importance of healthy self-care habits for one's own well-being and to enhance the ability to build responsive relationships with families and their children • Understands the importance of ongoing professional development related to engaging families • Understands that children's learning, development, and health is ongoing and is essential to share with families as part of the engagement process • Understands legal and professional ethical standards related to confidentiality and privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows the importance of, and techniques for, reflective practice and supervision, and coaching • Understands the importance of healthy self-care habits for one's own well-being and to enhance the ability to build responsive relationships with others, and knows the benefits of modeling this to support family services professionals' self-care efforts • Understands the importance of facilitating family services professionals' development to support professional growth on an ongoing basis • Understands legal and professional ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality and privacy and how to help family services professionals apply these standards to their work with families
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in reflective practice (self-reflection) to gain insights to enhance one's work with families and their children • Asks for help when needed • Maintains healthy self-care habits for one's own well-being and to enhance the ability to build responsive relationships with others • Seeks opportunities to learn and apply new knowledge about strengths-based, culturally and linguistically responsive family engagement • Uses information learned through formal and informal professional development to enhance practices for engaging families in children's learning and supporting family well-being • Maintains professional boundaries with other family services professionals, teachers and child care providers, families, and children • Maintains professional boundaries by recognizing any tendencies to do things for families which can interfere with each family's efforts to determine their own goals and develop their own capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to one's own professional development by setting goals to strengthen knowledge and understanding of supervision practices • Maintains and models healthy self-care habits for one's own well-being and to enhance the ability to build responsive relationships with others • Uses coaching and reflective supervision techniques with family services professionals • Works with family services professionals to understand the connection between self-care and the ability to build effective and rewarding relationships with families and colleagues • Recognizes and builds on family services professionals' strengths and helps them to set goals and create professional development plans • Communicates expectations and tracks progress toward family service professionals' goals through interactions and written materials. Examples include using job descriptions, initial orientation, supervision, professional development plans, and regular performance evaluations. • Helps family services professionals build networks by connecting with the broader community of professionals who work with families and their children • Works with family services professionals about professional boundaries, including those that support family's efforts to determine their own goals and develop their own capacities • Maintains and models professional boundaries with family services professionals, families, and children

10. Professional Growth, cont.

	Family Services Professionals	Supervisors of Family Services Professionals
PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in reflective supervision to gain new insight and knowledge about working with families and their children • Creates and follows through on individual professional development plans to strengthen professional practice related to family engagement • Tracks progress toward one's own professional development plans for advancement with their supervisor or coach • Participates in peer learning opportunities to share ideas and enhance practice • Advocates for advances in family engagement practices in the program and community, and in the field of early childhood 	<p>SUPERVISORY PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and offers a professional development program for family services professionals designed to enhance knowledge and skill development over time • Ensures family services professionals have opportunities to advance through training or educational experiences • Provides regular coaching and/or reflective supervision to family services professionals to advance family engagement • Partners with family services professionals to identify accomplishments, strengths, challenges, needs, and goals, specifying activities for growth and indicators of improvement • Provides family services professionals regular peer learning opportunities to share ideas and enhance practice • Creates opportunities for family services professionals to enhance their skills in assessing, referring, and supporting families <p>LEADERSHIP PRACTICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures protected time for coaching and reflective supervision in family services professionals' and supervisors' work schedules • Enacts policies and resources to support family services professionals to meet the goals of their individualized professional development plans • Communicates with family services professionals about performance-based pathways for advancement and career ladder opportunities • Ensures that all staff members receive the support they need to address personal mental health concerns or excess stress • Ensures that family services professionals know how to apply program policies, guidelines, and expectations related to confidentiality, privacy, and ethical standards to their work



How Can Early Childhood Professionals Use the Relationship-Based Competencies for Family Services Professionals?

All early childhood professionals can integrate the RBCs for family services professionals into their work with families and children. The RBCs can guide the work of supervisors, program leaders, consultants, coaches, and specialists who support center-based and home-based programs. The RBCs can support state and county administrators and institutions of higher education that help prepare early childhood professionals for careers working with children and families. See examples below of how to use the RBCs for family services professionals.

Family services professionals can:

- Become familiar with the **RBCs to Support Family Engagement Overview** and the **RBCs For Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families**
- Consider those RBCs they feel confident about, those they need more information about, and those they need time to practice
- Talk and reflect with a supervisor, coach, mentor, or peer support network about training needs and areas of professional practice to develop now and in the future
- Look for professional development opportunities through the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care Training and Technical Assistance, state infant mental health associations, the National Association of Social Workers, community colleges and universities, other human service programs in their community, websites and webinars, books, videos, and other resources. (See the National Center resources, including the Credentialing and Degree Databases for Head Start Staff Who Work with Families and other resources on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) and the Child Care Technical Assistance (CCTA) website).
- Practice the RBCs during everyday encounters with parents. Examples include intake/enrollment, developing family partnerships, supporting parent goal-setting and implementation, making and following up on referrals, sending and responding to messages, facilitating parent meetings, preparing parents for policy councils, conferences, and home visits, and making time for reflective practice about applying the RBCs in encounters with families.

Supervisors, coaches, and consultants who support professionals who work with families can:

- Become familiar with both the family services professional RBCs as well as the RBCs for supervisors
- Talk with family services professionals about the RBCs
- Provide opportunities for family services professionals to use an individualized self-assessment and discuss the results with them as part of their individual supervision
- Create professional development opportunities or connect family services professionals to existing opportunities that will help them develop a better understanding of the RBCs and learn more skills to support their professional practice
- Identify resources available for family services professionals to continue learning about the RBCs

How Can Early Childhood Professionals Use the Relationship-Based Competencies for Family Services Professionals?, cont.

- Most importantly, engage in coaching and reflective supervision. Use everyday encounters with family services professionals as a positive, intentional opportunity to create a parallel process. Model ways of reflecting and relating that family services professionals can use in their interactions with families.

Program leaders who oversee programs that serve children and families can:

- Establish policies that contribute to a program climate in which RBCs are part of everyday practices with families and family services professionals
- Structure program services and staffing patterns to maintain manageable caseloads that provide time for family services professionals to implement the RBCs
- Support supervisors' development and use of the RBCs for supervision
- Plan budgets, create protected time, and offer other resources to facilitate professional development of the RBCs
- Look for opportunities to collaborate with other professionals, programs, and organizations to learn more about the RBCs

Head Start and Early Head Start, state, district, and county child care administrators who oversee early childhood programs, early intervention programs, child and family policy, and workforce development initiatives that include family services professionals can:

- Become familiar with the **RBCs for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families**
- Ensure alignment between the RBCs and state guidance, licensing, and workforce credentialing requirements
- Provide professional development opportunities for family services professionals at all levels, including community, state, regional, and national T/TA networks, to learn about and apply the RBCs to their everyday work
- Use the RBCs to influence policy and fiscal conversations at the state and federal levels

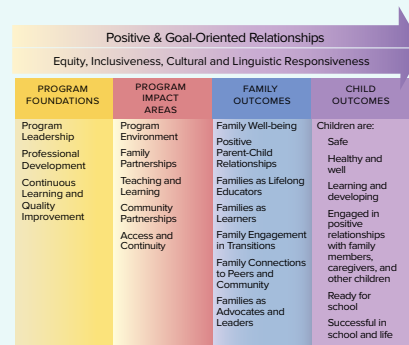
Higher education and professional associations that train or credential family services professionals can:

- Share information at conferences, workshops, and professional learning communities to motivate family services professionals to use RBCs in their everyday work with families and their children
- Apply the RBCs as guides for developing and refining certification and/or credentialing programming for family services professionals
- Develop and refine curricula for professional preparation, pre-service training, and in-service training based on current RBCs, family engagement research, and practical applications for working in a diverse society
- Conduct research to evaluate RBCs in response to training and in relation to family engagement and child and family outcomes
- Develop and use measures of RBCs and family engagement outcomes to direct training content

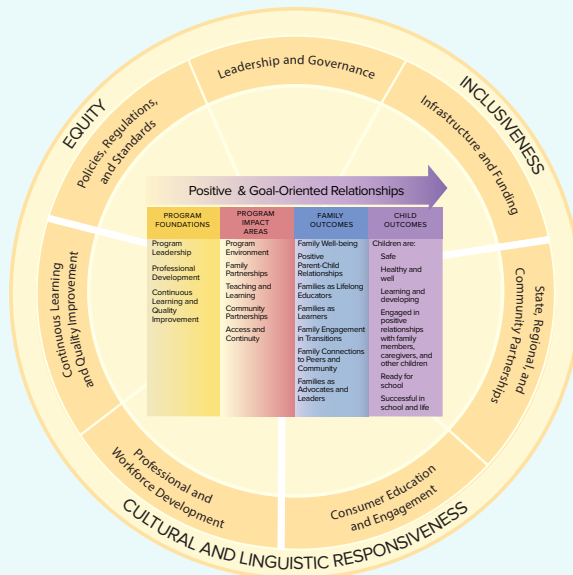
Relationship-Based Competencies and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework

The RBCs are a critical tool for use in implementing the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems. The PFCE Framework is a visual guide for understanding how professionals, programs, and systems can work together to promote positive, enduring outcomes for children, families, and communities.

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems



Relationship-based Competencies and the PFCE Framework

If you are focused on strengthening family engagement, the PFCE Framework is a road map to guide you. As you explore the RBCs, it may be helpful to see how they relate to the PFCE Framework’s Elements and Outcomes. The table below highlights the most relevant and immediate connections between the RBCs and the PFCE Framework. As you apply the RBCs to your professional practice, you may find different or additional connections that are more specific to your work.

Relationship-Based Competencies	PFCE Framework Elements								Family Outcomes						
	Program Foundations			Program Impact Areas											
	Program Leadership	Professional Development	Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement	Program Environment	Family Partnerships	Teaching and Learning	Community Partnerships	Access and Continuity	Family Well-being	Positive Parent-Child Relationships	Families as Lifelong Educators	Families as Learners	Family Engagement and Transitions	Family Connections to Peers and Communities	Families as Advocates and Leaders
1. Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3. Family Well-Being and Families as Learners	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x			
4. Parent-Child Relationships and Families as Lifelong Educators	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x		x		x
5. Family Connections to Peers and Community	x	x	x		x		x	x	x			x		x	x
6. Family Access to Community Resources	x	x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
7. Leadership and Advocacy	x	x	x		x		x	x						x	x
8. Coordinated, Integrated, and Comprehensive Services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9. Data-Driven Services and Continuous Improvement	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
10. Professional Growth	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Related Head Start Program Performance Standards

§ 1301.3 (b) Policy council and public committee; Composition

§ 1301.4 (a-b) Parent committees

§ 1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs, and resources

§ 1302.16 Attendance

§ 1302.17 Suspension and expulsion

§ 1302.30 Purpose

§ 1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment

§ 1302.33 Child screenings and assessment

§ 1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services

§ 1302.35 Education in home-based programs

§ 1302.36 Tribal language preservation and revitalization

§ 1302.41 Collaboration and communication with parents

§ 1302.42 (a-c) Child health status and care

§ 1302.44 (a)(2)(viii) Child nutrition, promote breastfeeding

§ 1302.45 Child mental health and social and emotional well-being

§ 1302.46 Family support services for health, nutrition and mental health

§ 1302.47 (b)(4) Safety Training (5) Safety practices

§ 1302.50 Family engagement

§ 1302.51 Parent activities to promote child learning and development

§ 1302.52 Family partnership services

§ 1302.53 Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs

§ 1302.61 (b-c) Additional services for children [with disabilities]

§ 1302.62 Additional services for parents

§ 1302.63 (c) Coordination and collaboration with the local agency responsible for implementing IDEA [parent request for IFSP or IEP]

§ 1302.70 (a-c) Transitions from Early Head Start

§ 1302.71 (b-c) Transitions from Head Start to kindergarten

§ 1302.72 Transitions between programs

§ 1302.80 Enrolled pregnant women

§ 1302.81 Prenatal and postpartum information, education, and services

Related Head Start Program Performance Standards, cont.

§ 1302.82 Family partnership services for enrolled pregnant women

§ 1302.90 (b-d) Personnel policies

§ 1302.91 (d-e) Staff qualifications and competency requirements

§ 1302.92 (a-c) Training and professional development

§ 1302.101 (b) Management system: Coordinated approaches

§ 1302.102 Achieving program goals

§ 1302.103 Implementation of program performance standards

§ 1304.11 (b)(2) Basis for determining whether a Head Start agency will be subject to an open competition

§ 1304.20 (c) Selection among applicants

§ 1304.41 (a) Head Start Fellows program [qualifications]

Related 2016 Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule Requirements

§ 98.1 Purposes

§ 98.15 Assurances and certifications

§ 98.16 Plan provisions

§ 98.18 Approval and disapproval of Plans and Plan amendments

§ 98.30 Parental choice

§ 98.31 Parental access

§ 98.32 Parental complaints

§ 98.33 Consumer and provider education

§ 98.41 Health and safety requirements

§ 98.44 Training and professional development

§ 98.46 Priority for child care services

§ 98.51 Services for children experiencing homelessness

§ 98.52 Child care resource and referral system

§ 98.53 Activities to improve the quality of child care

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Related Resources

Explore these related resources on the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) and Child Care Technical Assistance (CCTA) website:

- Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework
- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems
- Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement:
 - Overview for Early Childhood Professionals
 - A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Families
 - A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Work with Children in Group Settings
 - A Guide for Early Childhood Professionals Who Make Home Visits
- Measuring What Matters: Using Data to Support Family Progress



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