

Defining Parent and Family Engagement: Recent efforts to define and measure family- provider relationships

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FE/FSC Literature Review: Purposes

- 1) Identify common practices in successful family-provider relationships
- 2) Explore associations between these relational practices and child, family, and provider outcomes
- 3) Provide a framework and evidence to support the development of future measures

In this presentation, we will provide an overview of practices that were associated with positive child and family outcomes.

FE/FSC Literature Review: Methodology

Literature from the fields of health, mental health, social work, family systems, early care and education, and K-12

Literature was selected for the review based on the following criteria:

- Date of publication (2000-2010, with exceptions made for seminal work)
- Relevance of content
- Representativeness of the various disciplines
- Literature that detailed specific family-provider relational practices, and/or the association between positive relational practices and child, family, or provider outcomes were prioritized

Practices Associated with Child Outcomes: Children's Emotional Wellbeing

- Stable, trustworthy family-provider relationship
- Positive communication between providers and parents
- Validation and empathy for parents' experiences
- Providing information to parents in order to:
 - Improve parenting and problem solving
 - Help parents reframe issues and acknowledge children's achievements
- Advocating for parents

Practices Associated with Child Outcomes: Cognitive/Academic Skills

- Individualized services
- Collaborative relationships between parents and children
- Supporting parenting practices through responsive encouragement, warmth, and engaging the parent with the child in the home
- Integrating services to support parents through early care and education settings
- Engaging families through family education activities and monthly parent workshops
- Father sensitivity training, father support groups, volunteer opportunities for fathers in the classroom, and father-child recreational activities

Practices Associated with Child Outcomes: Social Skills

- Enhancing parent skills through strengths-based parent involvement interventions
- Interventions related to family engagement
- Service integration
- Strengths-based, solution-focused services
- Inclusiveness of fathers
- Services that are empowering, collaborative, and sensitive to families' culture and language

Practices Associated with Family Outcomes

Parental Engagement in Services/School-Based Settings:

- Interventions that are:
 - Strengths-based
 - Built on the foundation of an ongoing relationship with regular communication
 - Inclusive of family members during goal setting and problem solving
 - Respectful of families' cultural backgrounds/practices
 - Delivered in the families' home language
- Interventions that:
 - Include parent skill development in classroom interventions
 - Offer integrated services for parents through early childhood settings
 - Support families' needs through concrete assistance such as providing referrals or coordinating services

Practices Associated with Family Outcomes

Improved Self-Efficacy/Confidence of Parents:

- One-on-one support using a family-centered care model to increase the confidence and problem-solving capacity of parents
- Provider empowerment of families and supportiveness towards families
- Integrating services for families with a high degree of stress

Improved Mental Health among Parents:

- Making facilities more family-centered
- Establishing social networks for families
- Integrating services (mental health and substance abuse) into early childhood programs

Practices Associated with Family Outcomes

Enhanced Parent-Child Relationships:

- Interventions and programs using the family-centered care model
- Integrating services for parents into early care and education programs
- Engaging parents in the children's learning
- Strengths-based, solution-focused, family systems interventions
- Father engagement programs
- Interventions that:
 - Engage parents through a trustworthy, stable, validating relationship with the provider
 - Enhance parenting, personal adaptation, and communication skills through workshops and/or in-home services
 - Individualize services
 - Emphasize parent competencies
 - Post culturally-relevant materials in the home
 - Include extended family members

Overview of an Ongoing Effort to Define and Measure Family-Provider Relationships

- Family-Provider Relationship Quality project
 - Ongoing project (2010-2014) of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation and the Office of Head Start
 - **Purpose:** Development of a measure of provider practices that facilitates a positive family-provider relationship and ultimately positive outcomes for children and families.
 - Both parent and provider perspectives will be captured.
 - Measure will be applicable across all types of early care and education settings.
 - Measure will include emphasis on attitudes, knowledge, and practices as well as an environmental checklist.
 - Measure may be used for Head Start monitoring; it may also be used as part of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems' quality assessments.