

EMERALD CONSULTING

PARENT MENTORSHIP PROTOCOLS

SUPPORTING FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN
THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPREHENSIVE
SYSTEM PLANNING PROCESS

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INVITATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Project staff will contact parents who have been identified as potential committee members to invite them to participate on a subcommittee. A script for these calls will be developed so that project staff can gather comparable background information on each interested parent. This information will be used to categorize participants into three support levels:

- A) Minimal Support—this level of support will be used for parents who have a great deal of experience advising programs or serving on boards and committees in a variety of capacities. This level may also be used for parents who are considered experts in the subject of their subcommittee, even if they have not served on a wide variety of advisory groups. This group of parents will be the primary source of mentors for levels B and C.
- B) Mid Level Support—this level will be used for parents who have participated in some advisory capacity in the past, but not on a regular basis. These parents may be advising on a local level but have limited state-level experience.
- C) High Level Support—this level will be used for parents who have very little or no experience serving in a program advisory capacity before. This level can also be used for parents who express reservations about participating or their ability to provide meaningful input.

These categories will enable project staff to provide differentiated levels of support for the three groups of parents.

PRE-MEETING CONTACT

Once the participants for a subcommittee are selected, project staff will send out a summary of the grant and a tip sheet for family participants. The tip sheet will provide helpful hints for parents serving in an advisory capacity. This document will be based upon materials published in *Essential Allies: Families as Advisors* and *Words of Advice: A Guidebook for Families Serving as Advisors*.

Each participant will receive a phone call before the first meeting. Calls will start with level A so that these experienced parents who will serve as mentors can be matched with parent mentees. Depending upon how many Level C parents are involved, this group may also mentor Level B parents as well. Level B parents may be paired with one another for support or may be asked to mentor parents in Level C.

A pre-meeting mailing will be sent to all parent participants, sharing with them the committee charges, stipend form and mileage forms required for reimbursement.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

The specific support activities for each group of parents will consist of:

A) Minimal Support

Level A parents will receive the pre-meeting phone call and materials as described. Project staff will talk through the committee charges with these parents and answer any questions they may ask. After a short discussion of the parents' previous experience, they will be asked to mentor a new person from level C. Staff will provide contact information for the parent mentee and request that mentors contact their mentees prior to the meeting to introduce themselves. Suggestions will be made about how to approach mentees, including setting up a meeting place to walk in to the meeting together, sharing rides, meeting for coffee prior to the first meeting, etc.

Parents at level A will receive a post meeting call to debrief about the meeting. Mentors will be asked if they have identified any needs of mentees that staff can help address.

For subsequent meetings, an email will be sent to mentors reminding them to contact mentees prior to their next meeting. Mentors without email will receive calls. The post-meeting debriefing will occur again. This cycle will repeat for subsequent meetings.

B) Mid Level Support

Parents at this level will receive the pre-meeting phone call and materials as described. Project staff will talk through the committee charges with these parents and answer any questions they may ask. Project staff will initiate discussion about the tips document and answer any questions parents have about serving in an advisory capacity. These parents will be provided with contact information for another level B parent on their group to serve as their partner. Based on the initial phone interview, another possible option is for a parent at this level to be matched with a Level A mentor, at the discretion of the staff. Staff will provide contact information for the partners and ask parents to contact their partners prior to the meeting to introduce themselves. Suggestions will be made about how to approach the buddy, including setting up a meeting place to walk in to the meeting together, sharing rides, meeting for coffee prior to the first meeting, etc.

Parents at level B will receive a post meeting call to debrief about the meeting. Any questions or concerns will be addressed by the staff and forwarded on to mentors or subcommittee facilitators as appropriate.

For subsequent meetings, these parents will receive a pre-meeting phone call to discuss the agenda and a post-meeting debriefing. They will be encouraged to contact their partners prior to each meeting as well. This cycle will repeat for subsequent meetings.

C) High Level Support

Parents at this level will receive the pre-meeting phone call and materials as described. Project staff will talk through the grant summary and the committee charges with these parents. Staff will discuss the composition of the committee and the role of parent participants. Parents will be coached about the value of parent input in the planning process. Project staff will also discuss the tips document and answer any questions these parents may ask about serving in an advisory capacity.

Parents will be informed about the mentoring process and given contact information for their mentor. Staff will advise parents that their mentor will call prior to their first meeting. Suggestions will be made about how to maximize the mentoring opportunity, including setting up a meeting place to walk in to the meeting together, sharing rides, meeting for coffee prior to the first meeting, etc.

Parents at level C will receive a post meeting call to debrief about the meeting. Any questions or concerns will be addressed by the staff and forwarded on to mentors and/or subcommittee facilitators as appropriate.

For subsequent meetings, these parents will receive a pre-meeting phone call from staff to discuss the agenda and a pre-meeting call from the mentor to touch base. Staff will make a post meeting debriefing call as well. This cycle will repeat for subsequent meetings.

FOLLOW-UP

Project staff will document feedback provided by parents during the pre-meeting and debriefing calls. Staff will not debrief parents on their own subcommittees so that parents will feel comfortable making any relevant comments about their experiences. After each round of debriefing, staff will provide relevant parent feedback to the subcommittee facilitators as needed.

EVALUATION

Upon completion of subcommittee meetings, a final debriefing call will be made to each parent participant to gather information about the subcommittee process as well as the mentorship experience. A script for these calls will be developed so that project staff can gather comparable information from each participant. Staff will document parent experiences and present this information in a final report.