

Building Parent Power

Strategies to Recruit, Equip, and Sustain Family Leadership in Early Childhood Systems

Training Purpose

This training supports early childhood professionals in building meaningful, inclusive, and sustainable family partnerships aligned with DEC Recommended Practices.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the value of family partnership in strengthening early childhood systems.
- Identify strategies and supports for recruiting and sustaining diverse family leadership.
- Develop action steps for embedding meaningful family voice and shared leadership.

DEC Recommended Practices Connections

F1: Build trusting and respectful partnerships with families.

F2: Support informed family decision-making.

F3: Use culturally and linguistically responsive practices.

F5/F6: Build family confidence, competence, and leadership capacity.

Leadership Practice L3: Develop policies and structures that support shared decision-making.

Three Conditions for Meaningful Participation

Sense of Belonging: Families feel welcomed, respected, and valued.

Competence and Confidence: Families understand systems and feel prepared to participate.

Usefulness and Shared Influence: Families know their voice matters and impacts decisions.

Relationship-Based Recruitment Strategies

- Use personal invitations and trusted relationships.
- Partner with community organizations and support groups.
- Recruit families from underserved and underrepresented communities.
- Provide materials in preferred languages.
- Explain why family voice matters in leadership and decision-making.

Supports that Sustain Family Leadership

- Flexible scheduling and hybrid participation options
- Childcare and transportation assistance
- Interpretation and translation services
- Mentoring and orientation supports
- Clear communication and accessible language
- Leadership development and co-training opportunities

Systems Reflection Questions

- Which families are least represented in leadership opportunities?
- What barriers are created by our systems?
- How do we share decision-making with families?
- How do families know their voices matter?

Action Planning

Identify one step you will take within the next 30 days to strengthen family partnership and leadership.

Please be prepared to share your action plan with the room.

Recommended Resources and Websites

- **DEC Recommended Practices:** <https://www.dec-spced.org/dec-recommended-practices>
- **DEC Families Resources:** <https://www.dec-spced.org/families>
- **DEC Family Practice Guides:** <https://ectacenter.org/decrp/type-familypracticeguides.asp>
- **ECTA Center Family Resources:** <https://ectacenter.org/topics/family/family.asp>
- **OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network:** <https://osepideasthatwork.org>
- **PTI Nebraska:** <https://pti-nebraska.org>
- **Center for Parent Information and Resources:** <https://www.parentcenterhub.org>
- **Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/parent-family-community-engagement-framework>