

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems: A Sample State Scenario



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Parent, Family and Community Engagement

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For more information about this resource,
please contact us: PFCE@ECtta.info | 1-866-763-6481

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Introduction

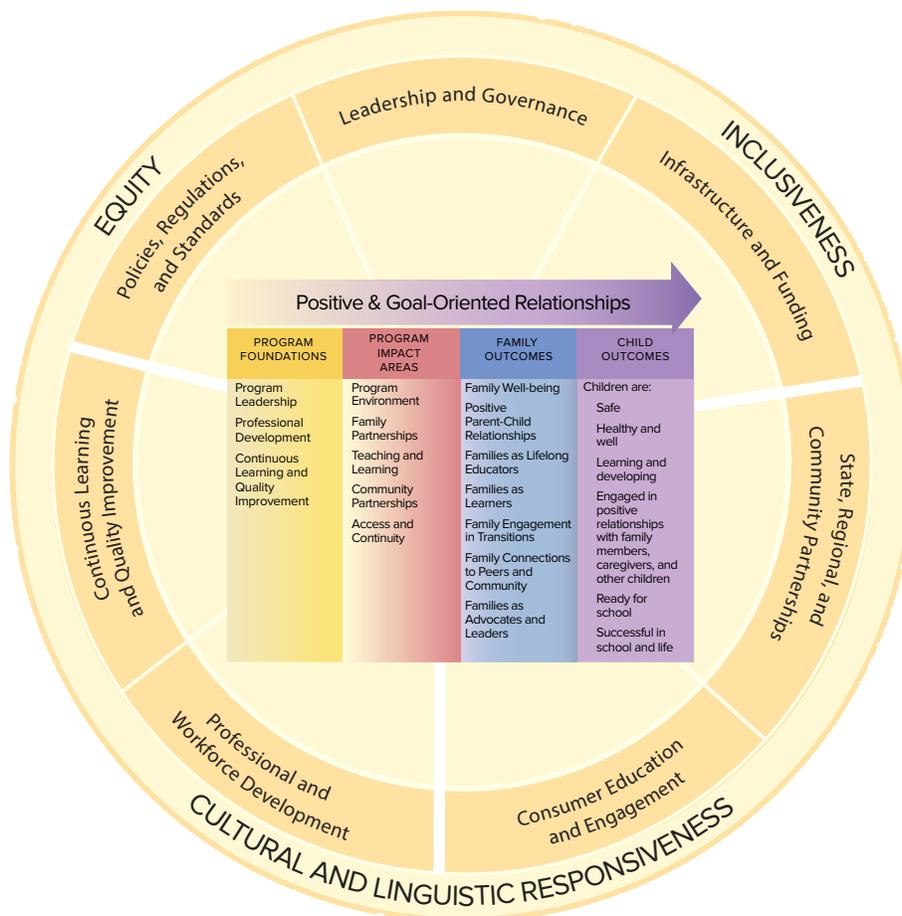
Wondering how to use the **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework for Early Childhood Systems** to support early childhood systems building?

Explore this scenario to learn about hypothetical State's efforts to develop and implement a 5-year strategic plan for family engagement for its early childhood system. State, Territory, Tribal, and community leaders and agency administrators; early childhood professionals; families; and other decision-makers may find this scenario useful to support parent, family, and community engagement to align their efforts with the Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule.

This scenario is one in a series of resources designed to support States, Territories, and Tribes in implementing the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems in their early childhood systems building efforts. (See page 11)



Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems



Using This Resource

This resource offers a hypothetical scenario intended to inspire your thinking about ways to use the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems to build and support early childhood systems. In the scenario, a State uses the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems to develop and implement a 5-year strategic plan for family engagement for its early childhood system. The scenario highlights the State's actions in all seven of the Framework's System Components. You will find key decision points and actions that contribute to a systemic approach to family engagement that strengthens child and family outcomes.

There are many ways to integrate a vision for PFCE into early childhood systems in States, Territories, and Tribes. This scenario is intended to spark ideas. It is not intended to limit your thinking about what is possible in your own State, Territory, or Tribe. The purpose of this scenario is to illustrate just one example of what this integration might look like.

In this scenario, multiple stakeholders at the State and local levels collaborate on several actions along similar timelines. The reality of limited resources and capacity may require you and other partners to focus on a narrower set of priorities in the short run and address others over time. Your State, Territory, or Tribe may also have different programs, policies, infrastructure, and stakeholders. Your goals may vary from those presented here, based on the circumstances in your State, Territory, or Tribe, and the degree of public and political will that exists to pursue systemic change.

For more examples of what States, Territories, and Tribes can do to promote PFCE in early childhood systems, see the scenarios in the **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems: Action and Implementation Guide**.

The scenario reflects the collective knowledge of research and exemplary practices from multiple stakeholders from the Administration for Children and Families' Early Childhood National Centers for Training and Technical Assistance and agency administrators from States and Tribes participating in the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement's Peer Learning Communities on Family Engagement.

The Scenario: Implementing the PFCE Framework

The State's Early Childhood Advisory Council (State Advisory Council) is committed to parent, family, and community engagement. In response, the State has adopted a common vision of PCFE intended to help children, families, and communities thrive. The State Advisory Council supports a robust network of local early childhood councils that represent stakeholders in the early care and education, health, and family support sectors. The local councils also include parent leaders who represent the diversity of families in each community. The governor and legislature of the State are moderately supportive of early childhood as a priority, although there are multiple competing demands on the State's limited budget.

Among other early childhood investments, the State funds a home visiting program and a public prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds living in communities of concentrated poverty. The State also offers flexible funding for birth-to-5 services, which the local early childhood councils administer based on an assessment of community strengths and needs.

The State Advisory Council is responsible for encouraging the local councils' efforts. It provides support and technical assistance designed to help the local councils achieve the health, education, and developmental results they expect for young children and families in their communities.



Leadership and Governance

The governor charged the State Advisory Council to develop a 5-year strategic plan for achieving positive, equitable outcomes for all young children in the State. Council leadership quickly identified PFCE engagement as a priority, essential for achieving the results they want.

The State Advisory Council made parent leaders a priority from the start. A diverse team of parent leaders was invited to participate in the strategic planning process. Parents included representatives of rural, suburban, and urban communities of concentrated poverty. Parent leaders received a stipend and reimbursement for transportation costs to support their participation in the planning meetings.

The State Advisory Council created a PFCE Committee, including parent leaders, to assess the early childhood system's current strengths and needs and develop recommendations for fostering family engagement. The committee planned to give these recommendations to the council to consider. In addition to family representatives, committee members included the:

- State Child Care Administrator
- Head Start Collaboration Office Director
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C Early Intervention and Part B Preschool Coordinators
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Administrator
- Maternal and Child Health Director
- State-funded prekindergarten program administrator
- Local early childhood council representatives

The PFCE Committee reviewed the research literature and data from the community needs assessment from across the State. Committee members surveyed parents, local early childhood councils, early childhood program and service professionals, agency staff, community partners, and other stakeholders in communities across the State. They held focus groups with parents and providers on what PFCE means to them and what they thought was most important for their children and communities.

The committee recommended that the State Advisory Council use the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems to guide the State's PFCE vision and strategic plan. They selected the seven Family Outcomes of the Framework as overarching goals and established specific measures for tracking progress on each goal. The committee members:

- Developed recommendations for actions State agencies and local early childhood councils could take to promote PFCE among staff, partners, programs, and services
- Recommended specific changes in State policy and systems (from the System Components of the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems) that support rapidly scaling up systemic, integrated, and comprehensive PFCE
- Agreed on a timeline for implementation and reporting that aligned efforts and encouraged accountability among stakeholders

Family Outcomes of the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems

- Family Well-being
- Positive Parent-Child Relationships
- Families as Lifelong Educators
- Families as Learners
- Family Engagement in Transitions
- Family Connections to Peers and Community
- Families as Advocates and Leaders

Policies, Regulations, and Standards

The PFCE Committee recommended using the eight **Key Indicators of High-Quality Family Engagement for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems** identified by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) as a guide for revising the State’s quality standards for early care and education to be more inclusive and supportive of PFCE.¹ With strong support from the State Advisory Council, the PFCE committee invited State early childhood administrators, early care and education professionals, parents, and community stakeholders to join them in a process to review and revise the existing standards.

This diverse group worked diligently over several months to discuss, revise, and vet proposed changes with their constituents and partners. As a result, the revised quality standards reflect current research and are designed to support strengths-based and culturally and linguistically responsive practice. They are applicable to center-based and family child care settings, State-funded prekindergarten programs, and IDEA Act Part B preschool special education programs. The committee also developed recommendations for how public education stakeholders might use the new standards to inform and align PFCE standards for K–3 education.

¹ For additional resources on Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, visit the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/>

The State's Division of Early Care and Education, housed within the Department of Human Services (DHS), is developing a PFCE program self-assessment tool for the different early care and education settings in the early childhood system. This tool aligns with the revised quality standards and is intended to help programs recognize and improve their own practices in engaging families and communities.

Select early education and care programs are now piloting the tool as an effective way to take stock of what they are currently doing and to develop a plan for continuous improvement. When the tool is available to all programs Statewide, the results can be aggregated to inform the State's training and technical assistance offerings on PFCE. The State is also in the process of revising its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) so that early care and education programs can earn points for conducting the self-assessment and submitting their action plans.

Key Indicators of High-Quality Family Engagement

1. Ensuring Providers' Knowledge of Child and Family Development and of Family Engagement Practices
2. Ensuring Providers' Family-Specific Knowledge
3. Fostering Positive, Two-Way Communication
4. Creating Program Environments That Encourage Family Engagement
5. 5: Providing Peer-to-Peer Activities and Other Social Networking Opportunities
6. Fostering Respect, Flexibility, and Openness to Change
7. Promoting Parents' Sense of Competence
8. Advocating for Families and Making Connections to Supports and Resources

To learn more, see the **Key Indicators of High-Quality Family Engagement for Quality Rating and Improvement Systems** at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/key-indicators-high-quality-family-engagement-quality-rating-and-improvement-systems>

Infrastructure and Funding

The State Advisory Council's PFCE committee and strategic finance committee collaborated to identify how existing resources could better fund State and local efforts to promote PFCE. This combined committee recommended:

- Using State funding to deliver joint training on the PFCE standards and practices to eligibility intake staff for child care subsidies, children's health insurance, and family support services
- Using CCDF quality improvement set-aside dollars to
 - provide training and coaching through the Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system on the new engagement standards to early care and education professionals;
 - support the roll-out of the program-level PFCE self-assessment tool; and
 - offer a series of café-style conversations for families and program staff in select communities to build common understanding of the new PFCE standards.
- Allowing local early childhood councils to use their flexible early childhood funding to compensate families for participating in local decision-making processes

Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement

The State Advisory Council developed recommendations for monitoring how, and how well, the State is successful in its PFCE efforts. The council recommended:

- Developing guidance and tools for early care and education programs, including a piloted PFCE program self-assessment and continuous improvement planning tool, as well as a PFCE observation and measurement tool
- Revising the State's QRIS so that programs could earn points for conducting the self-assessment and developing and implementing their PFCE action plans (when the piloted tools are rolled out statewide)
- Offering guidance to local early childhood councils on conducting a community needs assessment, setting goals, building partnerships, and collecting data to measure progress toward PFCE goals and outcomes
- Developing continuous feedback loops for families, early childhood professionals, and community stakeholders on the quality and accessibility of programs and services and on progress toward PFCE outcomes
- Improving the State's coordinated early childhood data system to capture and aggregate PFCE data across communities, agencies, and programs

Professional and Workforce

The State's 5-year strategic plan included a goal to support the early childhood workforce to engage families in order to improve school readiness outcomes. The State Advisory Council's Workforce and Professional Development committee gathered extensive input to inform the development of a framework and core competencies for PFCE for the roles of all early childhood care and education professional in the early childhood system. The input included:

- Examining existing workforce policies and analyzing data from the early education and care professional registry system
- Reviewing and discussing the Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement Series for early childhood professionals
- Surveying early care and education professionals (including center directors, lead teachers, assistant teachers, support staff, and family child care providers)
- Surveying professional development system stakeholders (including the State's network of trainers and professional development coaches and 2- and 4-year college partners)
- Listening to families through multiple focus groups representing the State's diverse communities

Learn more about the **Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement** series for early childhood professionals on the Early Child Learning and Knowledge Center:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement>

Using the recommendations of the Workforce and Professional Development committee, the State Advisory Council is leading a collaborative process to amend professional licensing and certification requirements for early care and education professionals to include requirements for pre-service and in-service training and coursework on the PFCE Framework and Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement. To support the implementation of the new requirements, DHS is revising its QRIS criteria to allow center-based and family child care programs to earn points for (a) completing training on the PFCE Framework and Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement; and (b) demonstrating progress toward self-identified PFCE improvement goals.

DHS operates a network of quality support specialists through a Statewide CCR&R system. DHS is training these support specialists on the elements of PFCE. The department has also amended its contract with the CCR&R to make PFCE a priority in its technical assistance offerings to early care and education programs and providers.

As a next step to fully incorporate PCFE into its workforce and professional development efforts, the State Advisory Council will map out a process and timeline to conduct strengths and needs assessments for home visiting professionals, pediatric nurse practitioners, community health center staff, child welfare case workers and administrators, and family court judges and staff. These assessments will inform recommendations for developing and implementing workforce competencies, training, and professional development for all professional roles in these sectors.

State, Regional, and Community Partnerships

As part of the 5-year strategic plan, the State Advisory Council is supporting local early childhood councils to build a shared vision of systemic, integrated, and comprehensive parent, family, and community engagement for all sectors serving young children and their families. The State Advisory Council developed a PFCE case Statement, with key messages on PFCE that local early childhood councils can use to engage stakeholders and community leaders to support their work.

The council also consulted with the local early childhood councils to identify what additional data specific to PFCE could be collected to inform local planning efforts. As well, the council convened the leadership of the local councils through a virtual network to support cross-community peer sharing.

The State Advisory Council drew on **Foundations for Excellence: A Guide for Five-Year Planning and Continuous Improvement** (2nd Edition) to develop guidance and technical assistance for local councils. Topics include effective collaboration² and training to ensure that programs and partners adopt practices that are strengths-based, goal-oriented, mutually respectful, and linguistically and culturally responsive to families in the community. The State Advisory Council also suggested language and guidance on:

- Developing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and other formal agreements that are necessary to achieve desired results among community partners, particularly within diverse communities and populations of children and families
- Providing financial incentives to support community planning and to compensate families and providers for their time and contributions to the planning process at local and program levels
- Establishing clear expectations and timelines for local councils to report on their implementation of local strategic plans and progress toward PFCE outcomes

² Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start. (2014, March). Collaboration Pyramid. Retrieved from https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/quilt_collaborationpyramid_0.pdf

Consumer Education and Engagement

The State Child Care Administrator has taken action to promote consumer education and engagement so that families can make informed decisions about their children’s care and learning—and then help to shape and guide program efforts. This action has been designed to align with the State Advisory Council’s strategic plan, the new requirements in the 2014 Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG), and the 2016 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule.

The administrator collected input from focus groups of families with differing interests and perspectives. The administrator also drew on consumer education resources from the federal Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System.

Recognizing that that the State could use many strategies to enhance its approach to consumer education and engagement, the administrator decided to begin with two actions:

- 1) Redesigning and revising content on the State’s early care and education consumer engagement website to make the site’s content clear, culturally and linguistically responsive, and easy to use. The new website now incorporates strengths-based messages for families, such as “You are the first and most important teacher for your child,” and “Families have expertise about their child and their family.” The website also offers information in multiple languages. Such features as chat, surveys, and “contact us” invitations encourage users to share information about early childhood care and education through text or social media (e.g., links to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.).
- 2) Designating a portion of the State’s CCDF quality set-aside dollars to expand a parent-to-parent peer network to include early care and education professionals. The intent of this network is to create opportunities for parents and early childhood care and education professionals to build mutually respectful relationships and learn from one another. Managed by the CCR&R agency, the shared network will provide opportunities for families to enhance their understanding of child development and hone their skills in advocating for their children. The CCR&R will consult with parents in the network and early childhood care and education professionals on how to design the expansion effort in a way that respects the needs, interests, cultures, and languages of both the parents and professiona

Learn more about consumer education and engagement, see the **Foundations for Quality: Consumer Education Series**:

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/consumer-education>

- Consumer Education Websites: A Guide to Creating a Family-Friendly Experience:
- Consumer Education Website: Self-Assessment Checklist
- Consumer Engagement: Orientation for Early Childhood and School-Age Care and Education Professionals

Implementing the PFCE Framework

Explore the PFCE Framework for Early Childhood Systems Series available on the Child Care Technical Assistance web site at <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/family-engagement-and-consumer-education>.

- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems
- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems: Assessment Workbook
- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems: Action and Implementation Guide
- Crosswalk: 2016 Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule and the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework for Early Childhood Systems

You may also use the resources mentioned in this guide to support your work to promote family engagement in your early childhood system. These include:

- Foundations for Quality: Consumer Engagement Series
<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/topics/consumer-education>
- Key Indicators of High-Quality Family Engagement:
<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/key-indicators-high-quality-family-engagement-quality-rating-and-improvement-systems>
- Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/relationship-based-competencies-support-family-engagement>
- Foundations for Excellence: A Guide for Five-Year Planning and Continuous Improvement, 2nd Edition
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/program-planning/article/foundations-excellence-guide-five-year-planning-continuous-improvement-2nd>



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