

# Who's Not At the Table: 3 Key Practices for Engaging Harder-To-Reach Families

*presented by*

**Parent Gauge**<sup>™</sup>

ENGAGE, MEASURE, ACT



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION



Formerly Ready4K





# Introducing Our Speakers



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# Goals for Our Time Together

1. **Create a shared understanding** of what we mean by “harder-to-reach” families
2. **Identify common barriers** to family engagement in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
3. **Learn about inclusive strategies** for making ***all*** families feel welcome and empowered to participate in their child's education.





# Agenda

- Context and Level Setting
- 3 Key Practices
  - Reflection
  - Inclusive Outreach
  - Partnership
- Breakout Groups
- Discussion
- Wrap-Up







# Context and Level Setting



# Who's not at the table?



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# “Families are not hard to reach. It may be that our services are hard to reach.”

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2020). Family Outreach Series—Strategies for Outreach to All Families: Overview (2nd ed., rev.).





# Accessibility and Inclusivity



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§1302.50 Family engagement.

§1302.13 Recruitment of children.

§1302.52 Family partnership services.



# 3 Key Practices

1

Reflection



2

Inclusive Outreach



3

Partnership







# Key Practice #1: Reflection



# Building a Reflective Practice

Process that focuses on reflection as a means of:

- Becoming more emotionally aware
- critical thinking
- problem-solving
- creating opportunities

All through the lens of reaching families that are not part of our current engagement efforts



# Reflective Practice to Identify

1

Slow Down



2

Step Back



3

Reflect





# Reflective Practice to Identify

3

Reflect



## Questions to Try:

1. Who is engaging?
2. How does that compare to the families we serve?
3. Who is missing?
4. What barriers might they be facing?



## Parent Scale



Number of Interviews: 15



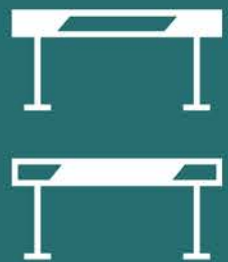
# Reflective Practice in Action



Think deeply/  
get curious



Identify who  
is missing



Identify potential  
hurdles



Collaborate



Explore adaptations  
to current  
engagement efforts



Respond



Establish regular  
reflective  
opportunities





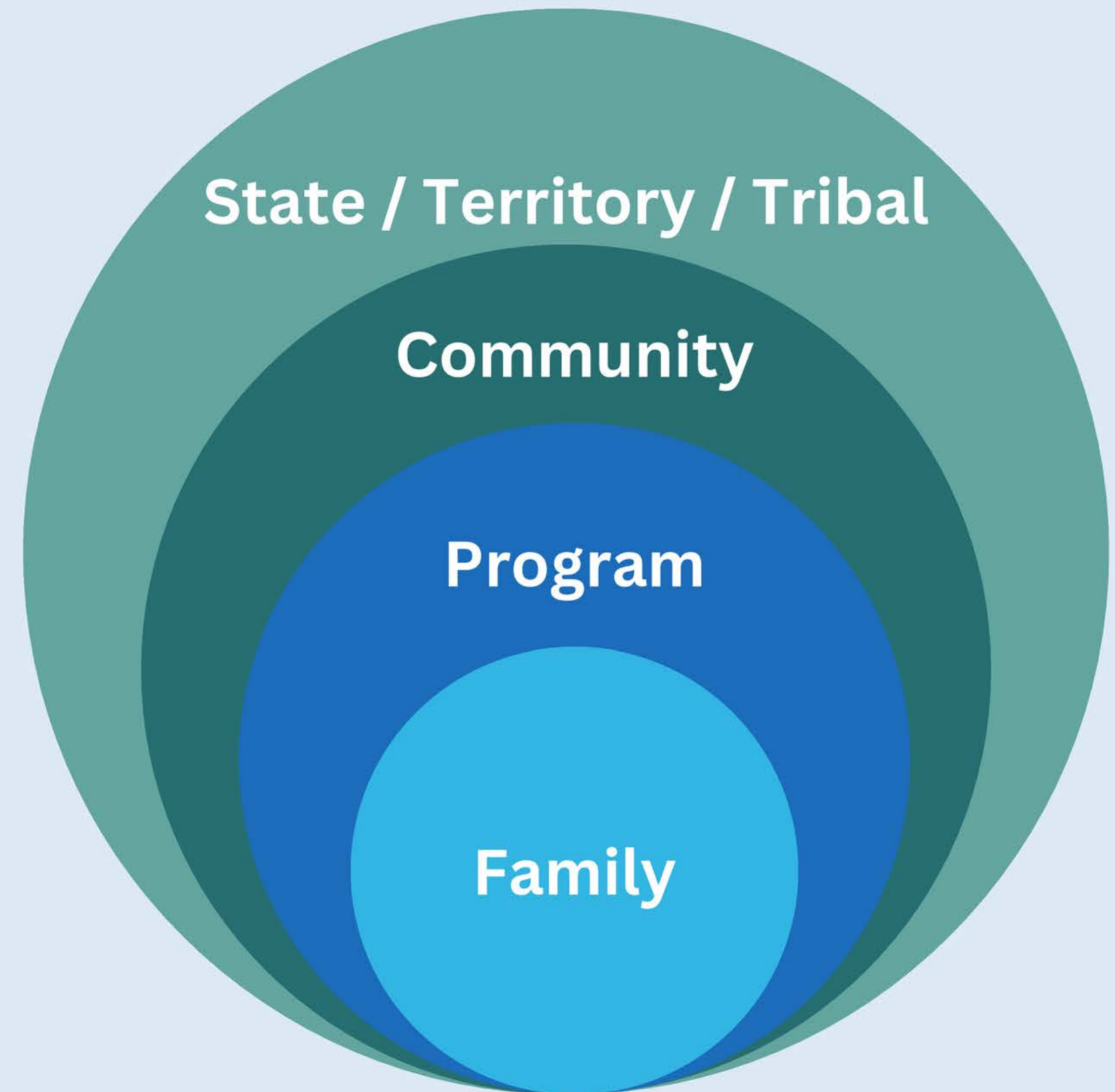
# Key Practice #2: Inclusive Outreach





# Inclusive Outreach

- Increasing awareness of available education and family support services and promoting their use
- Intentional identification and inclusion of ALL families
- Data-informed
- Culturally and linguistically responsive
- Can happen at many levels





# ***What Impacts Families' Access To and Use of Services?***

## **System and program-level factors**

- Funding
- Consistency in outreach efforts
- Staff turnover
- Program priorities
- Complicated processes
- Staff skill and capacity
- Communication channels
- Waiting lists

## **Family experiences and perceptions**

- Relevance of services
- Match with interests and needs
- Other social support
- Perceived risks and benefits
- Prior experiences
- Distrust



# Questions to Consider

- ❓ What do you already know about families' perceptions experiences, and program-level barriers they may encounter?
- ❓ How you might learn more?
- ❓ Which of these can be addressed through messaging and outreach?
- ❓ What other kinds of strategies may be effective?



**Policies and procedures**



**Staff development**



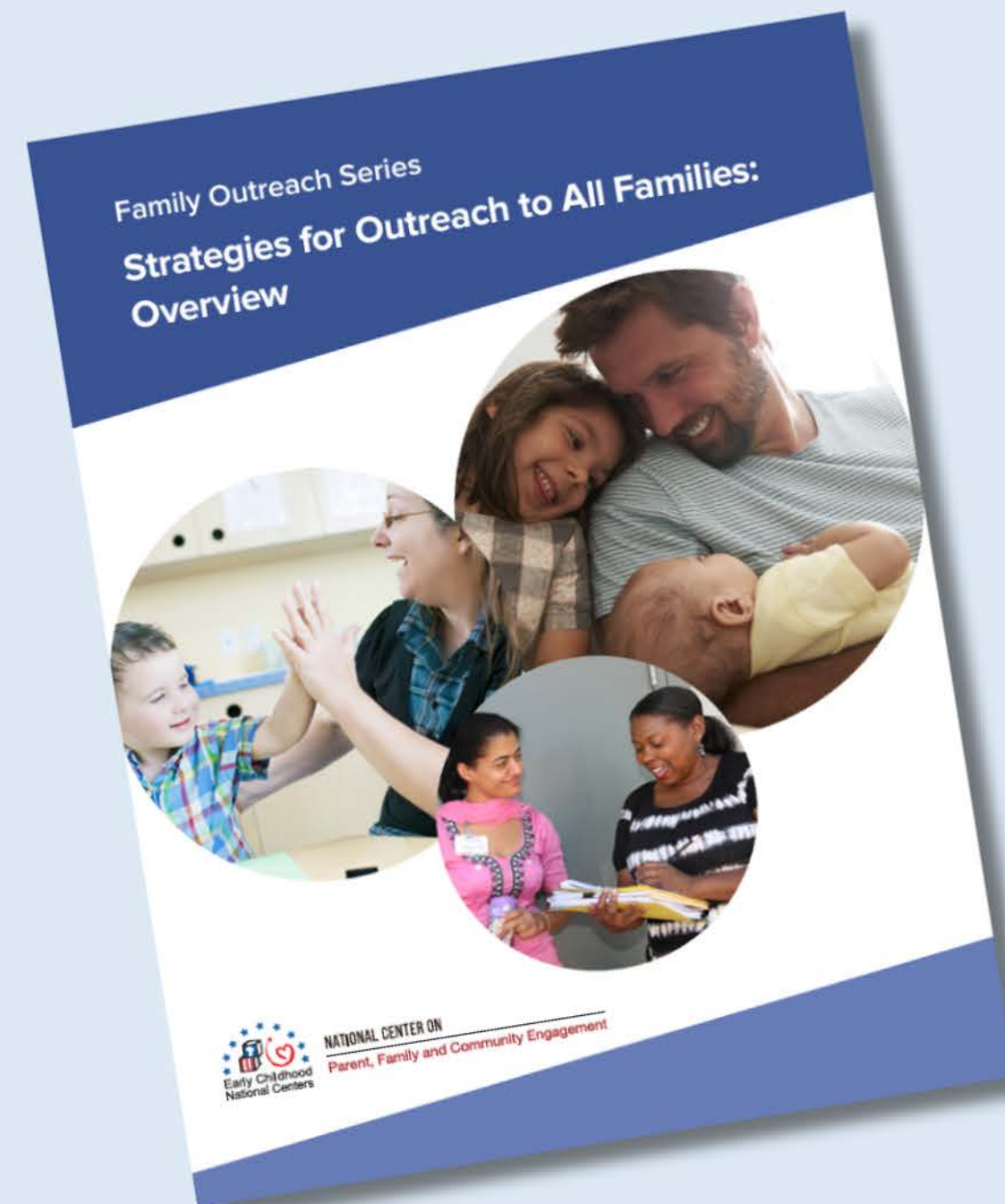
**Resource allocation  
and funding**



**Partnerships**



# Meeting Families Where They Are: Creating an Effective and Inclusive Approach to Outreach



## Research-informed Strategies for an Effective Approach to Outreach

1. Prioritize outreach, and work to build a shared understanding of outreach and its importance among staff and partners.
2. Allocate resources and funding for outreach.
3. Create a data-informed outreach plan.
4. Develop or enhance “no wrong door” and “one-stop shop” policies, procedures, and processes.
5. Dedicate staff or hire (or otherwise engage) family liaisons or parent ambassadors.
6. Find out what service features are important to families you are trying to reach, and promote matching strengths in your services.
7. Explore and respond to families’ cultural perspectives.
8. Create outreach messages that are positive and strengths-based.
9. Use consistent, plain language in outreach messages.
10. Use a variety of communication channels and media based on family preferences.



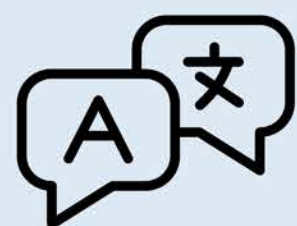
# ParentPowered Messages



Strengths-based



Third grade reading level



Culturally responsive







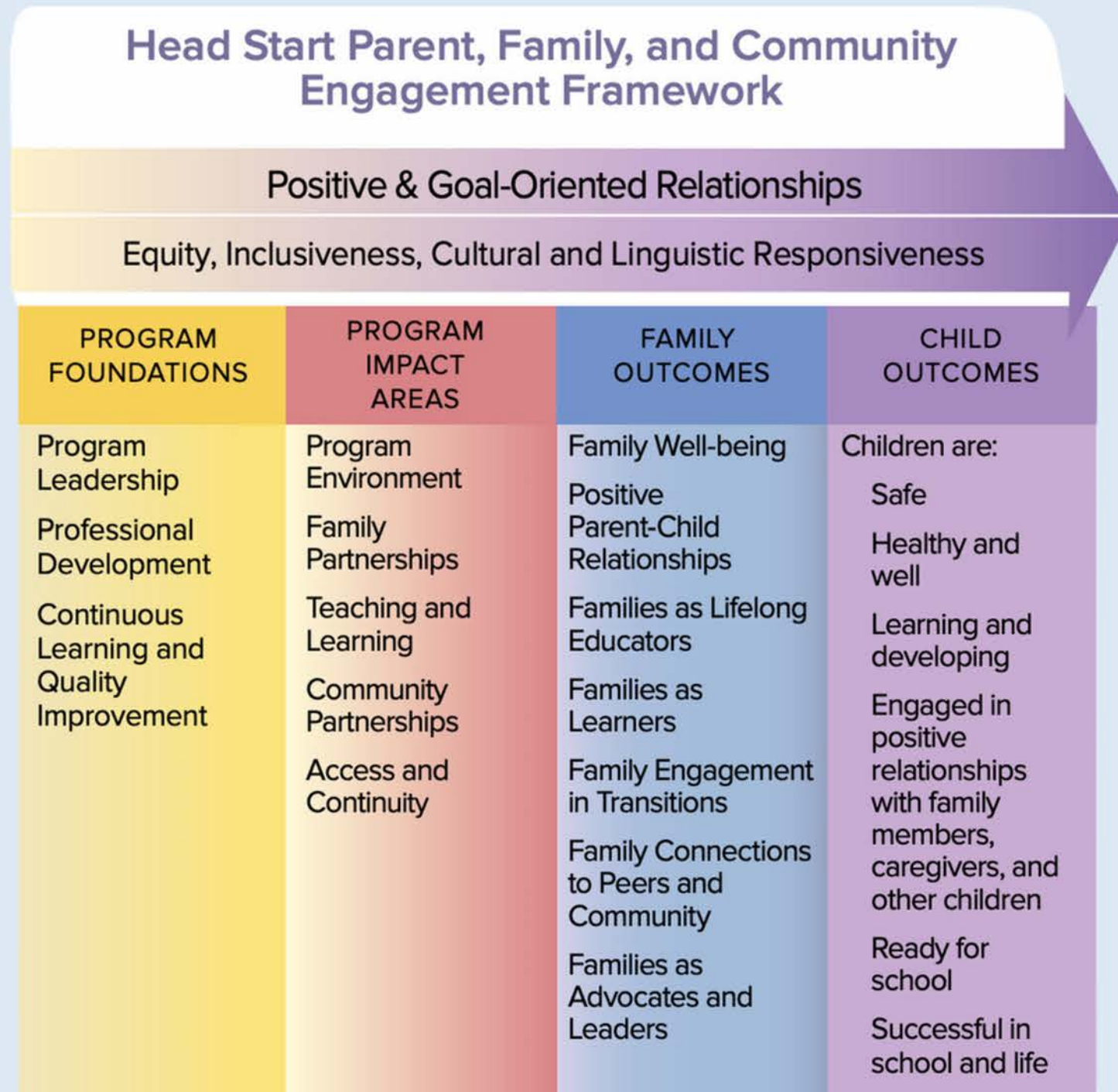
# Key Practice #3: Partnership



# Partnership

“In family partnerships, program staff and families build ongoing, reciprocal, and respectful relationships. Program staff value families’ unique expertise about their children. Staff engage in regular communication with families to understand their goals for their children and themselves and work toward those goals together.”

*-From the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework, Administration for Children and Families*







NEW

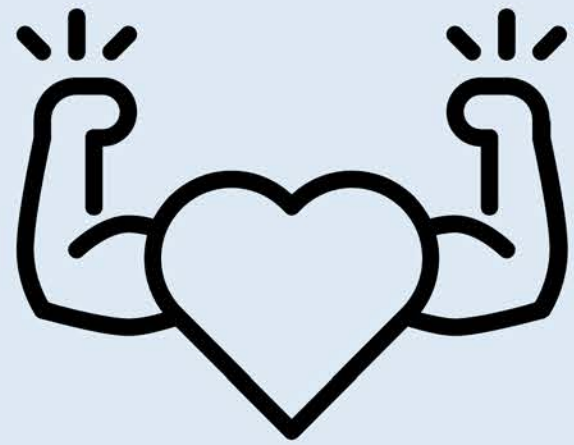
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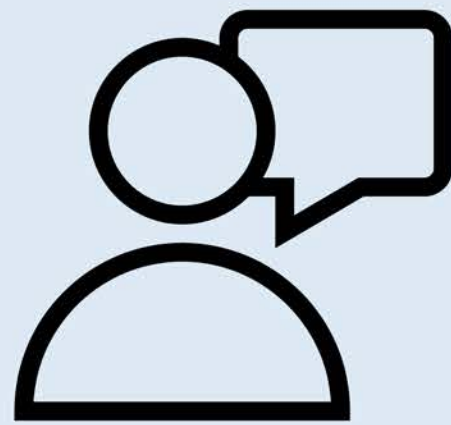
# Effective Family Partnerships are...

1



Strengths-Based

2



Responsive

3



Accessible

4



Data-Informed



# Questions for Effective Partnership



- Is this accessible?
- Is this inclusive?
- Is it doable?
- Is it strengths-based? *How does it feel?*
- Is it collaborative?



# Active Listening for Effective Partnerships

- Offer your full attention
- Show that you are listening
- Reflect back what you heard: “What I’m hearing is...”
- Remain curious (defer judgement)
- Ask open questions “Can you tell me more about...What would you like to see happen...”
- Respond appropriately (candid, open honest)







# Breakout Groups

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# Breakout Group Instructions

1. Think about the families you work with and discuss the following:

- *Who are your harder to reach families?*
- *What do you know about their strengths?*
- *What specific barriers might they be facing?*
- *How might you partner with these families?*
- *How could you reach out to them specifically?*

2. Come up with a specific strategy or set of strategies to bring them to the table.





# Large Group Discussion

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# Promising and Evidence-Based Practices and Resources



ParentPowered



Be Strong Families Cafés



Building Partnerships with Families Series



Parental Depression and Trauma Screenings



Community Block Parties



Father Engagement Programs





# Upcoming



Oct. 22 at 2pm EST

## Info Session

*Parent Gauge & ParentPowered*



Dec. 16 - 19

## Parent and Family Engagement Conference

Who's Not At the Table:  
Strategies to Engage  
Harder-To-Reach Families



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