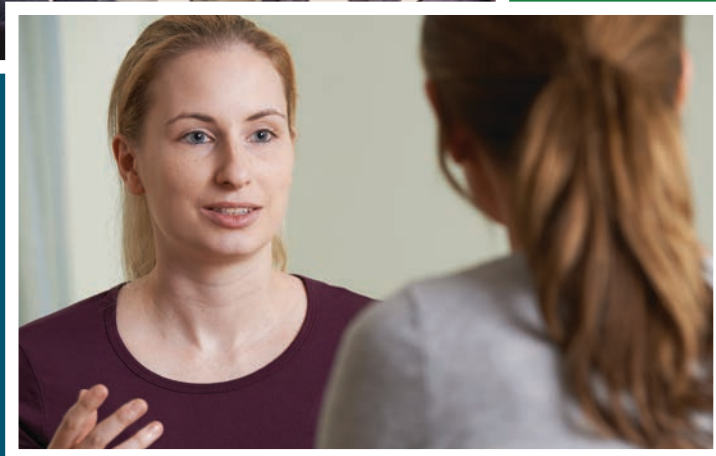


# Parent Partner Program Navigator

Designing and Implementing Parent Partner  
Programs in Child Welfare



Capacity Building  
CENTER FOR STATES

The Parent Partner Navigator was created by the Capacity Building Center for States through a partnership of family consultants and staff with support from the Children's Bureau.

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# Introduction and Definitions

Child welfare agencies across the country are turning to parent partner programs as a powerful approach in their efforts to change the way they work with families. Through these programs, parents with experience in child welfare provide mentoring and support to other parents who are entering the system. The Parent Partner Program Navigator guides child welfare administrators, staff, and parent leaders through key components of designing and implementing successful parent partner programs. Developed collaboratively with experienced parent partners and program coordinators, the Navigator offers guidance and capacity building resources based on research, practice experience, and implementation science.

## Using the Navigator

The Navigator charts the course of program development and can help those new to parent partner programs avoid common “hazards.” You will find information and resources in the following four domains:

- Assessing needs, readiness, and capacity
- Program design
- Program management
- Engagement and partnership building

Each domain area includes multiple components with background information, guidance, and links to related resources and tools. The components are designed to provide a concise, high-level introduction to the various aspects of parent partner program design and implementation.

States and jurisdictions just beginning the design and implementation process are encouraged to begin with assessing their needs and work their way through the remainder of the Navigator’s components; others with existing programs may focus on specific areas of interest. While presented sequentially, you may need to “loop back” to earlier components as your program progresses.

## Definitions

A few definitions before getting started:

- **Family engagement** — A family-centered and strengths-based approach to partnering with families in making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes.
- **Family empowerment** — The act of engaging, involving, and lifting up the voice of families throughout all areas in child welfare. This is the process of encouraging families to take an active role in participating with a child welfare agency. Family members share their knowledge to improve outcomes for children and families and support the enhancement of agency operations.
- **Family leaders** — Parents, including birth, adoptive, foster, and kinship, who have experience in the child welfare system and who want to use that experience and the power of their voices to improve outcomes for children and families.
- **Parent partners** — Fathers, mothers, and other adults in a parenting role with prior child welfare experience who are selected and trained to provide peer-to-peer support to parents currently involved with the system. Some programs call them parent partners, while others call them family partners, parent advocates, family allies, or parent mentors.

- **Field leaders** — Child welfare professionals who provide services to children and families and have shown interest and leadership in family engagement and empowerment activities.
- **Theory of change** — A tool for illustrating how programs or initiatives will yield desired results. Theories of change identify assumptions and show pathways between activities and outcomes.

# Domain 1: Assessing Needs, Readiness, and Capacity

Parent partners are fathers and mothers with prior child welfare experience who have been successful in overcoming significant obstacles in their own lives and who are ready to support other parents. Parent partner programs match these experienced parents with parents new to child welfare to provide peer-to-peer support and mentoring. Parent partners also support the integration of family voice into child welfare policies and practices.

Building a successful parent partner program begins with focusing on the needs of families and acknowledging the benefits that parent partners offer in advancing meaningful family engagement and empowerment. While this sets the course toward the final “destination,” there is important preliminary work to be done before moving forward. This domain will help guide you through important early steps: (1) conducting a readiness assessment to inform plans for capacity building and (2) developing a theory of change that supports a shared vision for how and why desired change is expected to occur.

## Domain 1 includes the following components:

- **Component 1: Focusing on the Needs of Families and the Power of Partnerships**
- **Component 2: Assessing Readiness**
- **Component 3: Building Capacity to Partner**
- **Component 4: Creating a Theory of Change**

## Component 1: Focusing on the Needs of Families and the Power of Partnerships

Family engagement is increasingly recognized as the foundation of effective child welfare casework and an essential element in service delivery. Parent partner programs can be a powerful strategy for overcoming common challenges to family engagement, focusing on family strengths and needs, and contributing to positive outcomes for children and families.

### Engaging Families Through Partnerships

Parents entering child welfare are often fearful and angry. Many feel they are not truly included in decision-making processes and that their most urgent needs for help are not addressed.<sup>1</sup> Because of their shared experience of child welfare involvement, parent partners are uniquely positioned to engage parents new to the system by:

- Reaching out to parents and gaining their trust
- Linking parents to needed services and resources
- Providing emotional support and reducing parents' feelings of isolation
- Lessening parents' fears and countering beliefs that the system is "out to get them"
- Offering parents encouragement in their capacity to change and inspiring hope through a positive example

### Supporting Caseworkers

Parent partners support the efforts of caseworkers who are often balancing large caseloads of complex cases and feeling the pressures of legislative mandates and limited agency resources. Parent partners support caseworkers by:

- Providing a framework for partnerships to focus on family strengths and needs
- Bridging the gap between the agency and parents by clarifying agency concerns about child safety and case requirements
- Helping parents understand how to work with their caseworker and others involved in their case and find their way through complex processes

By gaining parents' trust, parent partner programs also strengthen other ongoing agency family engagement initiatives (such as family group decision-making or solution-based casework) that sometimes falter without parent buy in.

### Improving Child Welfare Outcomes

Findings from research (see resources below) suggest that parent partner programs hold promise for improving outcomes for children and families. In particular, the program's processes of early engagement, peer-to-peer mentoring, reducing social isolation, and linking parents to services may contribute to improvements in timely family reunification. An outcome study of a parent partner program in Contra Costa County, CA, found that family reunification within one year was four times as likely in families where parents were served by parent partners as compared with families who were provided services by the county before the program's implementation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marcenko, M., Brown, R., DeVoy, P. R., & Conway, D. (2010). Engaging parents: Innovative approaches in child welfare. *Protecting Children*, 25(1), 23–34.

<sup>2</sup> Berrick, J. D., Cohen, E., & Anthony, E. (2011). Partnering with parents: Promising approaches to improve reunification outcomes for children in foster care. *Journal of Family Strengths*, 11(1). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol11/iss1/14>

## Providing a Family Voice at the System Level

Parent partners not only provide support at the case level but also strengthen family empowerment and leadership at the system level. Parent partners serve on advisory committees, contribute to policy development, co-facilitate trainings, and serve as speakers at events. Such activities help child welfare agencies recognize parents' expertise on family needs and overcome the old child welfare paradigm of seeing families solely as service recipients.

## Shifting Agency Culture and Climate

Parent partner programs can have a profound influence on agency culture and climate. The presence of parent partners working together with child welfare staff creates a shift in the ways staff perceive and relate to families. Parent partners embody a powerful and compelling vision of what authentic partnership between families and child welfare can look like.

## Related Resources

### Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

*Protecting Children*, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

### Exploring the Benefits of Parent Partner Mentoring Program in Child Welfare

Leake, Longworth-Reed, Williams, & Potter (2012)

*Journal of Family Strengths*, 12(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=jfs>

### Partnering with Parents: Promising Approaches to Improve Reunification for Children in Foster Care

Berrick, Cohen, & Anthony (2011)

*Journal of Family Strengths*, 11(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=jfs>



## Component 2: Assessing Readiness

Organizational readiness for a change process is essential to the successful design and implementation of a new program or practice. The Parent Partner Program Readiness Assessment Tool can help you assess the readiness of your child welfare agency for a parent partner program.

### Organizational Readiness

“Readiness” refers to the extent to which an organization is both willing and able to implement change, in particular, a new program or practice. When readiness is present, staff are more likely to accept changes, take leadership in implementing those changes, and remain resilient when facing obstacles or setbacks.<sup>3</sup> Readiness is both a process and a condition that changes over time and needs to be assessed at the individual and organizational level.

When implementing a new program, three aspects of readiness are important to consider:

- Motivation of the people within the organization to adopt the change (reflected in values, attitudes, and commitment)
- General organizational capacities (such as a clear organizational structure or an established training system)
- Program-specific capacities (such as a parent partner steering committee or a training academy for parent partners)

### Readiness Assessment Tool

The Readiness Assessment Tool (see page 11) presents a matrix with 34 readiness items that reflect essential capacities for successful design and implementation of a parent partner program. These items reflect the three aspects of readiness: motivation, overall agency readiness, and program-specific readiness. The items also cut across the five capacity building domains identified by the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative: resources, infrastructure, knowledge and skills, culture and climate, and engagement and partnership (see <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/about/>).

Each matrix item is rated on a scale of 1 to 5 reflecting the degree to which it is “in place” within the agency. With each administration, an agency may obtain up to a total of 170 points (optimal readiness). A lower rating should not be viewed as an indication that the agency cannot successfully implement a parent partner program, but rather should point to specific areas that may need capacity building.

### Tool Administration

The Readiness Assessment Tool has four sections to be completed:

- Demographic/background information
- Matrix of readiness items with rating scale and areas for related notes
- A checklist of potential barriers to designing, implementing, or sustaining the program
- Comments and recommendations

The Readiness Assessment Tool can be completed by child welfare administrators, field leaders (and other staff), family leaders, and design teams to help assess their agency’s readiness for a parent partner program. Administering the tool to a diverse group of stakeholders at a select point in time can provide

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<sup>3</sup> Weiner, B. J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science*, (4)67. Retrieved from <http://www.implementationscience.com/content/4/1/67>

insight into different perspectives. In addition, by administering the tool at intervals over the course of implementation, changes can be monitored over time.

Note that not everyone who completes the tool will have knowledge about every item. Agency staff or family leaders can rate the matrix items they are familiar with and indicate “NA” (not applicable) for those items they do not have enough information to score.

## **Tool Use**

Findings from the completed matrices, listed barriers, and recommendations can be used by program teams to do the following:

- Assess readiness to design and implement a parent partner program
- Build a shared understanding of the agency’s current status and needs
- Identify and prioritize capacity building activities
- Guide improvements in existing parent partner programs
- Document trends in readiness over time

# Parent Partner Program Readiness Assessment Tool

A Matrix to Assess Existing Capacity and Capacity Building Needs

## Part I: Demographic/Background Information

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Project Scale (statewide, county, other): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rater Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role/Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Measurement Timeframe: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Readiness Items and Rating Scale

### Rating Scale Anchors:

This readiness item....

Rating of 1 = has not been considered or is absent at present

Rating of 2 = is being discussed and a plan to develop may emerge

Rating of 3 = is a recognized need and solutions are under development

Rating of 4 = is in place and seemingly adequate

Rating of 5 = is in place and has previously supported a change process

Rating of NA = is not needed for the planned parent partner program or is not applicable to the individual who is rating

Readiness Item	Rating	Notes
1. Agency leadership sees the parent partner program has value and is an effective family engagement and empowerment strategy.		
2. Staff see the parent partner program as an effective family engagement and empowerment strategy.		
3. Family leaders see the parent partner program as an effective response to the need for peer-to-peer support in our State or jurisdiction.		
4. The parent partner program is consistent with the existing agency culture (main values, beliefs, and attitudes).		
5. The parent partner program is consistent with the needs of families involved with the child welfare system.		
6. The parent partner program can be implemented by the agency.		
7. Agency and project leadership are working together with family leaders to plan and implement the parent partner program.		

Readiness Item	Rating	Notes
8. Agency leadership regards the parent partner program as a priority.		
9. Agency culture and climate support the inclusion of parents as partners.		
10. Agency leadership has skills and commitment to negotiate the adaptive challenges associated with the project.		
11. Field staff are open to the program and having parent partners work side by side with them.		
12. The agency has an organizational structure that will support the parent partner program.		
13. The agency has a process to address the changes to policies, practices, and procedures that might be needed to successfully design and implement the program.		
14. Agency leadership and family leaders have reviewed data on the need for peer-to-peer support.		
15. The agency has developed a theory of change to guide program design and implementation.		
16. Family leaders and/or parent partners contributed to the theory of change.		
17. The vision and goals for the parent partner program are defined and align with the agency's mission, beliefs, values, and guiding principles.		
18. Family leaders and/or parent partners were included in developing the vision and goals.		
19. Project leads are open to learning and helping others learn the values and skills to implement the parent partner program.		
20. Training systems can support training and coaching as needed at all levels (leadership, supervisor, staff, and parent partners).		
21. The agency has ways to communicate with staff about the parent partner program, goals, outcomes, and changes over time.		
22. Agency leadership provides project leads and staff with authority and time needed to implement the parent partner program.		
23. Funding resources have been identified to support the parent partner program.		

Readiness Item	Rating	Notes
24. A team has been charged with designing and implementing the parent partner program.		
25. The agency has selected a program model.		
26. The agency is partnering with the Capacity Building Center for States or another provider to build capacity in this area.		
27. The agency has built a diverse steering committee that includes family leaders to provide program oversight.		
28. The agency has a recruitment plan for parent partners.		
29. The agency has a pool of family leaders from which to draw candidates to serve as parent partners.		
30. The agency has a training academy to provide foundational and ongoing training for parent partners.		
31. The agency has developed or adopted a role description for parent partners clearly describing roles and responsibilities.		
32. The agency has created a supervision and coaching system to provide oversight and support to parent partners.		
33. The agency has developed a sustainability plan to ensure that the program can be continued and possibly expanded over time.		
34. The agency has developed an evaluation plan to assess program impact.		

### Part III: Barriers Checklist

Identify any barriers or challenges at the time of the rating that may affect current readiness to design, implement, and sustain or improve a parent partner program. (Check all that apply.)

- Project staff turnover
- Leadership change
- Agency staff turnover
- Financial constraints
- Agency policies
- Lack of clear plans
- Lack of sufficient time of the project lead
- Scheduling conflicts
- High staff caseloads
- Conflicting expectations
- Unexpected event or crisis
- Resistance from child welfare staff
- Resistance by court personnel
- Resistance by other community stakeholders
- Resistance by private service providers
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part IV: Comments and Recommendations

Enter any additional comments on current readiness to design, implement, or sustain a parent partner program and recommendations for moving forward:

## Component 3: Building Capacity to Partner

Most child welfare agencies and systems will need to build capacity to successfully provide peer-to-peer support to parents. The Readiness Assessment Tool in Component 2 can point you to specific areas of capacity building needs. You will need to carefully plan how to build both the agency's capacity to partner with families and the parents' capacity to partner with the agency.

### **Building Agency Capacity to Partner with Families**

Building agency capacity to partner with families may focus on varied issues from addressing staff reluctance to acknowledge families as partners to establishing an infrastructure that supports ongoing partnerships. Steps to begin the process may include:

- Allocating resources to build an infrastructure to support family leaders and staff in their work to build strong partnerships
- Forming a design team (see Component 5)
- Listening to families about potential approaches for bringing parents with system experience to serve as mentors and coaches
- Creating a “safe space” for parents and staff to meet, share experiences, and learn how to authentically partner in a very intentional way
- Developing plans and oversight for recruitment and selection of parent partners and related problem solving (see Component 7)
- Supporting change in the culture and climate of the child welfare system through use of a strategic communication plan that highlights the value of parents' voices and how they can assist the system by engaging families

### **Building Family Capacity to Partner with the System**

For parents, the journey from being a service recipient to becoming a family leader and then developing the competencies to serve as a parent partner can be complicated and requires appropriate supports. Capacity building steps may include:

- Building a strong and diverse pool of family leaders that matches the population served
- Providing training for parent partners on the child welfare system, family needs, and self-care so they can effectively provide peer-to-peer mentoring (see Component 9)
- Preparing parent partners to deliver presentations and sit at policy tables
- Allocating needed resources (for example, cell phones or vehicles, as appropriate) to support parent partners in completing their assigned tasks
- Providing ongoing supervision, coaching, and supports to parent partners (see Component 15)

## Building Relationships

At the core of a parent partner program are relationships between parent partners and parents and between parent partners and agency staff. Several established approaches assist States with building authentic relationships between parents and workers. These include, for example, Casey Family Program's Better Together Workshops, Annie E. Casey Foundation's Building a Better Future curriculum, community cafes, and other participatory methods. The common underlying theme across these approaches is gaining an understanding of each other's perspectives and establishing respect for the different roles each individual represents in the system.

## Related Resources

### Capacity Building

#### Building Agency Capacity for Family Involvement in Child Welfare

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/BuildingAgencyCapacity.pdf>

#### Building Family Capacity for Family Involvement in Child Welfare

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/BuildingFamilyCapacity.pdf>

#### Capacity Building Overview Factsheet

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative (2015)

[Link](#)

[https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/100460.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27BASIC+ph+is+%27%27Child+Welfare+Capacity+Building+Collaborative+\[Overview+Factsheet\]%27%27%27%29&upp=0&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&rpp=25&r=1&m=1](https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/100460.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27BASIC+ph+is+%27%27Child+Welfare+Capacity+Building+Collaborative+[Overview+Factsheet]%27%27%27%29&upp=0&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&rpp=25&r=1&m=1)

### Relationship Building

#### Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships

Casey Family Programs and National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

<http://www.ctfalliance.org/images/about/Better%20Together%20Outline.pdf>

#### Building a Better Future Program

Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://www.aecf.org/>

#### Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

#### Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy

Capacity Building Center for States (2016)

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov>



## Component 4: Creating a Theory of Change

The process of designing and implementing a parent partner program includes collective work to establish why and how this program leads to changes on both a micro (personal) level and macro (system) level. This work involves the development of a theory of change and logic model.

### Theory of Change Definition

According to Harvard's Center on The Developing Child, a theory of change is a "detailed hypothesis about specific changes we expect will result from implementing a new strategy. Carefully articulated theories of change provide roadmaps, which can continue to be refined and tested, for guiding decisions about program design and evaluation."<sup>4</sup>

### Parent Partner Program Overarching Theory of Change

Parent partner programs are guided by the overarching theory that the system must focus on building parent capacities to attain better child welfare outcomes and improve the lives of children, youth, and families. By providing peer-to-peer support, agencies will help parents overcome anger, fears, and hopelessness and engage in services sooner. This early engagement in services will help parents gain the skills, insights, and capacities to keep their children safe, which will result in more timely family reunification and enhance well-being of children and their families.

### Questions That Guide Theory of Change Development

The following questions can serve as a guide in developing a theory of change tailored to your jurisdiction:

1. Who are you seeking to influence or benefit? (target population)
2. What benefits are you seeking to achieve? (results)
3. When will you achieve them? (time period)
4. How will you and others make this happen? (activities, strategies, resources)
5. Where and under what circumstances will you do your work? (context)
6. Why do you believe your theory will prove true? (assumptions)

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<sup>4</sup> Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. Theories of change. [website] <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/key-concepts/theories-of-change/>

## “So That” Chains

“So that” chains can be helpful in involving stakeholders in a collective effort to spell out the theory of change. Such chains create connections between activities, assumptions, and outcomes by showing that something is done “so that” something else will happen.<sup>5</sup> See box below for a sample “So That” chain for a parent partner program.

### Sample “SO THAT” Chain<sup>6</sup> for Parent Partner Program

#### Strategy

Build capacity to provide peer-to-peer support to parents in the child welfare system

#### So That

Parents entering child welfare are matched with a peer parent partner who can offer emotional support and help them understand how the system works

#### So That

Parents new to the system feel supported and more quickly overcome fears or anger

#### So That

Parents see the system as a resource and support to them and their families

#### So That

Consensus is reached on how to work better together

#### So That

Caseworkers, parent partners, and birth families are working toward one goal with a shared understanding of the challenges and what can help

#### So That

Resources and services are matched to meet the needs of the family

#### So That

Parents engage in services and specific changes to achieve case goals

#### So That

There are positive changes in the lives of vulnerable children and families involved in child welfare

#### So That

Children and youth are reunited with their families in a quick and safe manner

Bring together a group of stakeholders—including parents and agency staff from multiple levels—to create a similar chain tailored to your agency and program. These efforts contribute to a shared vision for a guiding theory of change and support buy in to the program.

<sup>5</sup> See Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2004). Theory of change: A practical tool for action, results, and learning. <http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/>

<sup>6</sup> Based on approach from Annie E. Casey Foundation and Organizational Research Services. (2004). Theory of change: A practical tool for action, results, and learning. Retrieved from: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/>

## Logic Models

A logic model is another way to represent the hypothesis that peer-to-peer support can have a positive impact on child welfare outcomes. A logic model can simplify the theory of change and provide a snapshot of program inputs, activities, outputs (immediate concrete results), short-term outcomes (such as changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors), and long-term outcomes (such as improvements in safety, permanency, and child and family well-being).

**Build your own logic model with the Logic Model Builder developed by FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and Child Welfare Information Gateway, available at:**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/effectiveness/logic-model/>

## Related Resources

**Center for Theory of Change [website]**

<http://www.theoryofchange.org/>

**Getting Started: A Self-Directed Guide to Outcome Map Development**

Gienapp, Resiman, & Stachowiak (2009)

Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services

<http://orsimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Getting-Started-Guide-FINAL-10-7-14.pdf>

**Key Concepts Theories of Change [website]**

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/key-concepts/theories-of-change/>

**Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models**

Funnell & Rogers (2011)

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470478578.html>

**Suggested Guidelines for Creating a Theory of Change**

Farmelo (2015)

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

<http://www.hewlett.org/sites/default/files/TOC%20guide%20v%20%20Mar%2011%202015.pdf>

**Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results, and Learning**

Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services (2004)

<http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/>

# Domain 2: Program Design

After assessing needs, designing a capacity building plan, and creating a theory of change, the program development process continues with program design. This domain begins with the development of a design team that will help guide the following activities. You and your design team will focus on the specifics of what a parent partner program should look like to meet State and local needs. Considerations will include selecting a program model; deciding how parent partners will be recruited, selected, and trained; and setting up an infrastructure to support the peer-to-peer support process. As you design your program, give special consideration to how you can promote cultural responsiveness and advance peer-to-peer support among fathers as well as mothers.

## Domain 2 includes the following components:

- **Component 5: Forming a Design Team**
- **Component 6: Selecting a Parent Partner Program Model**
- **Component 7: Recruiting and Selecting Parent Partners**
- **Component 8: Developing and Communicating Clear Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Component 9: Training Parent Partners**
- **Component 10: Facilitating the Peer-to-Peer Support Process**
- **Component 11: Promoting Cultural Responsiveness**
- **Component 12: Advancing Peer-to-Peer Support Among Fathers**

## Component 5: Forming a Design Team

A design team is convened to plan the new program, guide the change process, and begin to promote buy in across the agency.

### Design Team Membership

The design team should bring together varied perspectives that contribute to the design and development of a parent partner program. Design teams are intended to break down traditional hierarchical decision-making that occurs from the top down and instead adopt a team approach focused on shared decision-making.

Design team members should include:

- Family leaders
- Child welfare agency staff from all levels (administrators, managers, supervisors, caseworkers)
- Representatives from related systems (courts, mental health, probation, family violence programs)
- Community partners and service providers
- Other “champions” of the parent partner concept

### Design Team Functions

The design team will be empowered to select a program design and program components that best meet the needs of the agency and the families it serves. While each design team may operate differently, some common tasks might include:

- Conducting a readiness assessment (Component 2)
- Developing work plans to build agency and family capacity for the program, as needed
- Researching and selecting a parent partner program model that fits the agency’s needs (Component 6)
- Communicating the vision, goals, and core values of a parent partner program
- Developing a plan for recruiting and selecting parent partners (Component 7)
- Aligning the program with the agency’s mission and key initiatives
- Developing a communication plan to introduce the new program and raise awareness of its objectives and the theory of change
- Promoting cultural responsiveness within the program (Component 11)

### Related Resources

#### Design Team Manual

Butler Institute for Families (2013)

[https://ncwwi.org/files/Org\\_Environment/Design-Team-Manual.pdf](https://ncwwi.org/files/Org_Environment/Design-Team-Manual.pdf)

## Component 6: Selecting a Parent Partner Program Model

Although all parent partner program models provide peer-to-peer support, they differ in who employs the parent partners and other characteristics. This component provides an overview of three program models that have been adopted in the field: parent partners as child welfare agency staff, parent partners contracted by nonprofit organizations, and parent partners as legal aid staff.

### Parent Partners as Child Welfare Agency Staff

In this model, parent partners are hired by the child welfare agency. As staff, parent partners help support other agency staff by exploring service options tailored to parents' needs, encouraging staff to be family centered, and engaging families. Deeply imbedded in all decision-making processes, parent partners encourage staff to use practices that reflect respect for families' voices and choices. This model facilitates the matching of parent partners with parents entering child welfare and needing support.

**Benefits** of integrating parent partners in the child welfare agency include the following:

- Parent partners have opportunities to learn more about current child welfare practices, how caseworkers are working with families, and expectations for the families.
- Families begin to engage with their child welfare caseworker because they see their parent partner working in collaboration with agency staff.
- Families experience hope when being served by a parent partner who has successfully navigated the system and is now in this new role as a staff member.
- Caseworker perceptions of and behaviors toward families often improve as they build relationships with parent partners.

**Challenges** of this model include the following:

- Families may view parent partners as a part of a system working against them, which can create barriers between the parent partner and the parent needing support.
- Parent partners may experience pressure from agency staff for information that parents have shared with them.
- Many States and jurisdictions have policies in place preventing child welfare agencies from hiring people who have a criminal history or are in the child abuse registry (although some States may be able to address this through independent contractor processes).

**State example:** New Hampshire

### Parent Partners Contracted by Nonprofit Organizations

In some States, the child welfare agency contracts with a nonprofit organization to implement a parent partner program. Parent partners are either employed or contracted by the nonprofit organization, which implements processes for building relationships between the child welfare workers and the parent partners. Parent partners are compensated for their work with parents, including attending family team meetings, court hearings, and one-on-one meetings. Parent partners also sit at child welfare decision-making tables and create relationships with child welfare administrators, agency workers, service providers, court personnel, and community representatives.

**Benefits** of contracting parent partners through a nonprofit organization include the following:

- Parent partners are not directly associated with the child welfare agency and, as such, are able to engage families easily.
- Parent partners understand the child welfare system and assist families with engaging with workers, attorneys, and service providers to ensure successful outcomes.
- Parent partners do not report to caseworkers or write court reports.

**Challenges** of this model include the following:

- The physical separation between child welfare workers and parent partners may make communication more difficult.
- Parent partners may not be up to date on current child welfare practices and may miss opportunities to open doors for parents they support.
- Issues of trust, “turf,” or control may emerge between agency staff and parent partners hired by another organization.

**State examples:** Iowa and Maine

### **Parent Partners as Legal Aid Staff**

In this program model, parent partners are employed by a legal aid agency and work side by side with that agency's staff. It is a comprehensive approach to addressing the legal and child protection issues that families face with the goal of preventing or ending a child's placement in foster care. Under this model, a multidisciplinary team is created consisting of attorneys, social workers, and parent partners. This model helps address the needs of families who have legal problems that put their children at risk for out-of-home placement and may not have resources to pay for legal services.

**Benefits** of parent partners as legal aid staff include:

- Parent partners in the legal field are protected by attorney/client confidentiality.
- Training provided by judicial staff to parent partners may position them to support families around court and legal processes.
- Parent partners in the legal field are able to advocate in court with the assistance of the attorney.

**Challenges** of this model include:

- Parent partners can be perceived as having an adversarial role with the child welfare agency.
- Parent partners might be subject to testifying and creating documents for the court.

**State examples:** Washington State

### **Related Resources**

**From the Courthouse to the Statehouse: Parents as Partners in Child Welfare**

Rauber (2009)

[http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_the\\_law/parentrepresentation/from\\_courthouse\\_to\\_statehouse.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center_on_children_and_the_law/parentrepresentation/from_courthouse_to_statehouse.authcheckdam.pdf)

**Parent Partner Programs for Families Involved in the Child Welfare System [website]**

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/parent-partner-programs-for-families-involved-in-the-child-welfare-system/>

## Component 7: Recruiting and Selecting Parent Partners

Not all parents with child welfare experience can be effective parent partners. To build a pool of diverse and competent parent partners, create standardized processes for recruitment, eligibility, and selection during the program design phase.

### Recruitment

There are various approaches to the recruitment and selection of parent partners. Some programs advertise the role broadly as they would any other position within their organization. Other agencies ask their staff to recommend parents for the role and then invite them to apply for the position. Still other agencies develop a program structure to recruit parents as family leaders. In these agencies, parents start initially as a parent leader and serve in various roles as committee members, training partners, practice advisors, and team members. After serving the agency in these roles for a while, these parents may be engaged to provide peer-to-peer support to other parents.

Regardless of which recruitment strategy the agency adopts, the agency needs to ask:

- Who will be included in the pool of parent partner candidates?
- How will the agency reach potential candidates?
- What criteria will be used to select the best candidates in a consistent manner?

### Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria must match family needs. Since peer-to-peer support is based on the shared experience of the family and the mentor, parent partners must have had experience with the child welfare system and understand the complex needs of families entering child welfare. Eligible candidates should have resolved their own issues related to child welfare involvement and currently have healthy and stable family situations. In addition, parent partners must possess personal qualities that promote partnerships and professional conduct. See box below for more detailed information on eligibility criteria.



## Criteria used by existing parent partner programs vary, yet often include the following:

### Experience with Child Welfare and Current Stability

- Candidates have a healthy and stable family situation with no current child welfare involvement for safety issues.
- Candidates' involvement with the child welfare agency has ended and they
  - Have been reunited with their children for at least 1 year, OR
  - Have had at least 1 year to resolve issues related to termination of parental rights or another permanency decision that did not involve reunification
- There is clear evidence that issues resulting from an out-of-home placement or termination of parental rights have been resolved and that the parent is in a place where he or she can provide effective peer support to others.
- Candidates who were noncustodial parents have had experience related to working with the child welfare system and are able to assist other noncustodial parents.
- Candidates whose cases involved substance disorders have been substance free for at least 1 year; some programs require 18 or 24 months of sustained sobriety.

### Availability and Commitment

- Candidates can commit to the required tasks.
- Candidates are available to engage and routinely meet parents assigned to them for peer support.
- Candidates are able to attend regular team meetings and co-facilitate groups.

### Skills and Qualities

- Candidates have demonstrated personal qualities that promote collaboration and partnerships with the child welfare system such as integrity, good listening skills, ability to empathize, and a positive attitude.
- Candidates have demonstrated appropriate behaviors consistent with professional conduct and commit to sustain such professionalism at all times.
- Candidates are comfortable in sharing their own child welfare experience but have insight to share it only when it can help the other parent.
- Candidates have demonstrated commitment to the safety and well-being of children and are willing to embrace the mission of the agency.
- Candidates understand the requirements of a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect.

## Selection

The selection of family leaders to serve as parent partners is essentially a human resources function. Some parent partners will become agency employees while others will be contractors. In either case, selection should be based on workforce development best practices and may include the following steps:

- Develop a standardized application process and interview tool.

- Convene an interview team, which may include a parent partner program coordinator, agency staff, a family leader, an existing parent partner, and/or family consultant, as available.
- Develop clear selection criteria and follow a structured selection process. This will help lessen bias and ensure that the best candidates are selected.
- Encourage support for candidates from field staff who know them best. Ask candidates to get letters of support from agency staff who previously worked with them. If field staff indicate that they are unable to recommend a parent for the role, this may be a “red flag.”
- Be up front with parents about the position’s responsibilities, and clearly explain the expectations and job requirements. Two approaches to building appropriate job expectations are realistic job previews (short videos that present a balanced view of the position) and job shadowing (brief opportunities for a prospective candidate to watch an existing parent partner do her or his job).
- Explore how candidates have resolved any trauma or stress resulting from their child welfare experience, especially in cases that resulted in termination of parental rights. A parent who is still grieving his or her loss may use the parent partner role to inappropriately conduct advocacy work. Such practice can harm other parents.
- Assess each candidate’s level of insight, knowledge, and understanding of the peer-to-peer support process.
- Assess candidates’ skills and competencies in working with other parents. It is easier to assess competencies in engaging other parents when the candidate has been a family leader within the agency serving on committees, as a training partner, or some other role.
- Assess capacity for empathy toward others and the capacity to use one’s own story and experience to support others.

## Related Resources

### Parent Partner Job Description

Contra Costa County, CA (2004)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf)

### Sample Family Partner Role Description

Parents Anonymous Inc. (2011)

<https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/leadershiptools/Sample%20Family%20Partner%20Role%20Description.pdf>

### What Does It Take to Be a Parent Partner? [Video]

Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

### Qualifications for Wraparound Family Partners

National Wraparound Initiative Family Partner Task Force (2013)

<http://nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/qualifications-for-family-partners.pdf>

## Component 8: Developing and Communicating Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Clearly defining and communicating the roles and responsibilities of parent partners will create shared expectations for how the parent partner will support families and the child welfare agency.

### Parent Partner Role Description

Your program will need to create a clear parent partner role description. States, jurisdictions, and community-based agencies have their own ways of structuring roles for staff and should follow the same steps in structuring this role as they would other positions. This may include consulting with the agency's human resources department. In general, job descriptions include the following:

- A clear statement of the purpose and function of the parent partner role
- Duties and responsibilities
- Desired core competencies
- Desired qualifications and selection criteria

Some job descriptions also include information about how to apply for the role, the selection process, and where the role fits in the organizational structure. Parent partner role descriptions may distinguish between primary roles (peer-to-peer support) and secondary roles (providing the family voice).

### Primary Role: Peer-to-Peer Support

The primary role of a parent partner is to provide peer-to-peer support to parents currently involved in child welfare. Parent partners typically are matched to parents as soon as possible after the removal of a child. Programs try to match the pair according to similar experiences that brought them to the attention of the child welfare agency as well as the cultural and ethnic background and language needs of the family. Parent partners provide support and inspire parents by providing a sense of hope. They also provide all or some of the following services:

- Attend court hearings and family team meetings with the family
- Assist the parents with learning to advocate appropriately for themselves
- Connect the family with community resources
- Assist the family with understanding child welfare and court processes and how to navigate successfully
- Encourage honesty and accountability
- Encourage family engagement with workers, programs, courts, and others

### Secondary Role: Providing the Parent Voice

The secondary role of the parent partner is to incorporate the parent voice in child welfare policy and practice development. The parent partners should sit at decision-making tables, serve on boards, and participate in teams throughout the child welfare system, courts, and community. The parent voice is critical to developing policies and practices that meet family needs. Throughout this process, relationships are built between parents and representatives across the system. As a result, a parent partner program is organically promoted. To not overburden parent partners, a balance needs to be achieved between mentoring and providing system support.

## Specifying What Is NOT Part of the Parent Partner Role

It is important to be very clear not only about what parent partners will do but also the things that parent partners should not do. The parent partners' role of helping parents should not be confused with that of the caseworker. Some role descriptions outline activities that are not part of the parent partner role, such as:

- Taking on the role of the caseworker
- Supervising visits between parents and children
- Doing assigned tasks "for" the parent
- Providing housing or financial help to the parent
- Taking an adversarial advocacy stance

## Ongoing Support and Reinforcement of Roles

Parent partners, just like anyone else in the helping profession, need routine supervision to help them understand their role and responsibilities, engage in self-reflective practice, and assess their ability to maintain professional boundaries. For more information on supervision, see Component 15.

## Related Resources

### Parent Partner Job Description

Contra Costa County, CA (2004)

[https://childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/CA\\_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf](https://childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/CA_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf)

### Parent Partner Role Description, Jacksonville System of Care Initiative

Jacksonville, FL (ND)

[http://www.fofjax.org/images/Parent\\_Partner\\_Description.pdf](http://www.fofjax.org/images/Parent_Partner_Description.pdf)

### Sample Family Partner Role Description

Parents Anonymous Inc. (2001)

<https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/leadershiptools/Sample%20Family%20Partner%20Role%20Description.pdf>

### Wraparound Parent Partner Role Description

National Wraparound Initiative (ND)

[https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/docs/Wraparound20100427\\_RoleDescription.pdf](https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/docs/Wraparound20100427_RoleDescription.pdf)

## Component 9: Training Parent Partners

Becoming a parent partner represents a significant shift in roles from being a service recipient to a mentor. Training and professional development opportunities that build knowledge, skills, and competencies among parent partners will foster success in their new roles.

### Core Training for Parent Partners

Each parent partner program's design should include a core training (sometimes called a training academy) and other professional development opportunities for parent partners. Foundational training is critical before parent partners begin work with other parents. In particular, they must be provided with training on the peer-to-peer support process, the mandates and operation of the child welfare system, and rights and responsibilities of families involved in the system. They should also have opportunities to develop the leadership and communication skills that will enable them to engage other parents effectively and serve as equal partners with agency staff on decision-making bodies.

Administrators and field leaders may consider including parent partners in the core training offered to child welfare agency staff. This can be a cost-effective strategy to provide training and professional development opportunities for parent partners. Such training not only provides parent partners with instruction on the child welfare system, but also offers valuable opportunities for parent partners and agency staff to discuss their experiences and better understand each other's viewpoints.

Agencies can draw from existing trainings in the field (see related resources below), or they can develop their own curricula. Trainings can vary in duration, with some as intensive as 60 hours. Parent partner training commonly covers the following core domain areas:

- Strengths-based service delivery
- The child welfare system
- The role of the parent partner
- The peer-to-peer support process
- Family team meetings
- Court processes
- Drug and alcohol use/abuse
- Mental health and domestic violence
- Confidentiality
- Mandated reporting
- Presentation and communication skills
- Participation in policy making
- Setting boundaries
- Crisis management
- Self-care

## Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy

The Capacity Building Center for States' Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy (FELA) is designed to provide training for child welfare agency staff and family leaders, including those interested in serving as parent partners. FELA's parent partner e-learning module builds knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Effective peer-to-peer support to families
- Roles and responsibilities of parent partners
- Mentoring skills
- Ethics, professionalism, and confidentiality
- Working with parents from diverse cultural backgrounds and with varying needs

Access FELA through CapLEARN (<https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>), the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative's learning center.

## Related Resources

### Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships

Casey Family Programs and National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds  
<http://www.ctfalliance.org/images/about/Better%20Together%20Outline.pdf>

### Building a Better Future Program

Annie E. Casey Foundation  
<http://www.aecf.org/>

### Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

### Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy

Capacity Building Center for States (2016)  
<https://learn.childwelfare.gov>

## Component 10: Facilitating the Peer-to-Peer Support Process

At the core of a parent partner program is a relationship-based intervention that requires building trust and meeting parents “where they are.” This component provides an overview of core areas for support, varied roles of parent partners, typical activities, and key steps in building peer-to-peer support processes.

### Core Areas of Support

Parent partners are carefully selected for their abilities to quickly connect with parents, build trust, and provide them with effective mentoring, coaching, and supports. Parent partners typically offer parents four types of support:

- Emotional support and encouragement
- Hands-on concrete help (for example, assistance with signing up for services, finding transportation, planning for child care, or getting organized)
- Assistance with setting goals and action steps to work toward family reunification
- Information on and modeling of safe parenting (setting limits, nurturing, making safe choices, and fostering healthy child development)

### Varied Roles of Parent Partners

Parent partners play different roles in their interactions with parents:

- **Ally** — Provide immediate support and validation to parents with the goal of instilling hope and helping parents cope with their feelings related to child welfare involvement.
- **Motivator and change facilitator** — Offer motivation and encourage positive changes.
- **Role model** — Demonstrate how to safely parent children and how to effectively work with child welfare and court processes.
- **Adviser and coach** — Share knowledge of what works in reunification efforts, help problem-solve and figure out next steps, and provide guidance on the work ahead.
- **Listener-observer** — Serve as eyes and ears in family team meetings to observe as the family engagement work unfolds.
- **Barrier buster** — Identify challenges faced by parents and support parents in bringing such challenges to the attention of child welfare agency staff for discussion and resolution.
- **Bridge builder** — Encourage parent engagement efforts at the local agency level and support program and policy changes at the system level.
- **Practice advisor** — Serve as consultants to agency staff on specific cases and practice needs.

### Examples of Partnership Activities

In their varied roles, parent partners will participate in a wide range of activities to support families, such as:

- Reaching out to parents to offer support
- Meeting parents at a place of their choosing (preferably at the parent’s home) to listen to their concerns and provide them guidance on the way things work in the system
- Attending family team meetings, at the request of the parents

- Attending court proceedings, at the request of the parents
- Going with the parent to an AA meeting, if the parent finds this helpful
- Going with the parent to meet service providers in the community
- Providing parent support following a parent-child visit

## Key Steps in the Delivery of the Peer-to-Peer Process

To enable parent partners to carry out the peer-to-peer process, the program must develop a supportive infrastructure that reflects five key steps:

- 1. Selecting and training a pool of skilled parent partners.** Parent partners are carefully selected based on their success in changing their behaviors or conditions that jeopardized the safety of their children, their demonstrated leadership skills, and their capacity to work cooperatively with others within the public agency. They must also demonstrate an ability to make a shift from focusing on themselves to supporting another parent in a positive manner. Recruiting a diverse pool of parent partners and properly training them on the peer-to-peer support model are essential to early capacity building. (See also Component 7.)
- 2. Identifying parents to receive support and properly matching them with a parent partner.** While matching may seem simple, it is a complex step that requires careful attention. Program leaders need to be trained on the art of effective matching to maximize the positive impact of peer-to-peer support. In general, parents are referred for voluntary participation by field staff, usually a caseworker. Parents are selected on the basis of their needs and readiness to make the most of peer-to-peer support. Such readiness is evidenced by willingness to work with the parent partner and to maintain a positive relationship with their children. The availability of a parent partner able to meet their family's specific needs is also considered.
- 3. Establishing a working alliance.** The third step begins when the parent partner connects with the parent needing support and begins to form a working alliance. Parent partners connect with parents by phone or face-to-face immediately following the referral. Following the initial contact, the assigned parent partner meets with the parent to build consensus on how they will work together. Some programs emphasize the voluntary nature of this relationship and do not require a "plan" or written agreement, while other programs call for a simple and focused "plan of action." This plan spells out the needs of the parent, the goals to be achieved, and the specific tasks to be undertaken by the parent and the parent partner. The parent partner and parent decide on a schedule for contact and prioritize their tasks.
- 4. Providing peer-to-peer support.** Parent partners work with parents to address their needs and challenges around any aspect of their case. Parents new to the child welfare system may need emotional support and an orientation on how the system works; parents already engaged in services may need support with concrete needs such as budgeting, safety planning, child development, or discipline. The tailored plan of action may specify that the parent partner will work with the parent to find safe housing, get mental health care, or conduct a job search, for example. In most program models, parent partners are expected to show parents how to work productively with child welfare staff. Parent partners may also focus on helping parents develop a healthy support system. Some programs require parent partners to document their activities with the family and keep a file of the plan of action, meeting notes, observations, and/or feedback from the parent and caseworker. Other programs emphasize the voluntary nature of the intervention and do not expect any form of documentation.



**5. Defining the parent partner role after services are completed.** Some programs encourage that the partnership relationships continue after a child welfare case has closed to help parents sustain a supportive social network. Other programs emphasize the need for boundaries and may discourage ongoing contact. Common to all programs is the need for clarity regarding appropriate closure. Most programs outline the need for a program coordinator or agency staff to assist the parent partner in proper closure, ensuring that the working agreement between the parent partner and a parent is completed successfully.

Parent partner policies and guidelines should include guidance on each of the above steps.

## **Related Resources**

### **Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare**

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

*Protecting Children*, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

### **Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents**

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

### **Parent Engagement/Mentoring Models in Washington State**

Partners for Our Children (2010)

[http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/reports/parent-engagementmentoring-models-washington-state\\_\\_](http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/reports/parent-engagementmentoring-models-washington-state__)

## Component 11: Promoting Cultural Responsiveness

In a culturally responsive environment, knowledge of a family's culture strengthens supportive interactions. Parent partner programs can promote cultural responsiveness.

### Cultural Responsiveness Defined

Cultural responsiveness reflects the idea that as we work with a family, we need to identify and nurture that family's unique cultural strengths, beliefs, and practices.<sup>7</sup> Culturally responsive practice goes beyond cultural competency and being aware of cultural differences to proactively supporting families in the context of their culture.

### Structuring a Parent Partner Program to Be Culturally Responsive

From the start, parent partner programs need to integrate cultural considerations into recruitment, hiring, and training plans. The diversity of parent partners should reflect the diversity of the population served by the agency. Parent partners need to be brought into the program and trained in a culturally responsive manner. Further, they need training that helps them to be culturally sensitive to the families they support. In particular, this means understanding how a family's culture and customs may play a role in how the families interact with the child welfare system. To the extent possible, parent partners should be matched with other families based on language needs and cultural background.

### How Parent Partners Can Advance the Agency's Cultural Responsiveness

Parent partners can help advance the agency's cultural responsiveness through their dual roles of educator and "bridge" to services, for example:

- **Parent partners help connect parents with culturally appropriate services** that meet their specific needs.
- **Parent partners act as "cultural translators"** and provide insight and training to child welfare professionals, helping them understand families' cultures, values, and perspectives.
- **Parent partners can work with Spanish-speaking Latino families** in their native language and break down language barriers. With sensitivity that families may have fears of the legal system, parent partners can support these families in advancing their case plans.
- **Parent partners can support African American families** with guidance from someone who understands the system and has been successful in overcoming obstacles. African American parent partners may help reduce racial biases and disparities in the system that can contribute to disproportionality (overrepresentation) of African American children in child welfare.
- **Parent partners can help Native families** by connecting them with Tribal authorities to gain a better understanding of available services and their rights under the Indian Child Welfare Act — a Federal law that provides standards for placing American Indian children with American Indian families in foster and adoptive homes. Parent partners also provide families with emotional support through child welfare processes and offer resource referrals.

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<sup>7</sup> LaLiberte, T., Crudo, T., Ombisa Skallet, H., & Day, P. (Eds.). (2015, Winter). CW360°: Culturally responsive child welfare practice. St. Paul, MN: Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota. P.2. Retrieved from <http://casw.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CW360-Winter2015.pdf>

- **Parent partners can help immigrant families** bolstered by an understanding of how adapting to a new cultural may affect families.
- **Parent partners can support birth parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or questioning (LGBTQ)** in a culturally responsive manner. They also can support families in understanding their LGBTQ teenagers and working through any difficulties to create a stronger family unit.

## Related Resources

### Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Practice

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (2015)

<http://casw.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CW360-Winter2015.pdf>

### Cultural Responsiveness Training Tool

National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

<http://friendsnrc.org/activities-that-support-collaboration/cultural-responsiveness>

### Cultural Competence [website]

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/cultural/>

## **Component 12:**

### **Advancing Peer-to-Peer Support Among Fathers**

Traditionally, child welfare agencies have not effectively involved fathers in their efforts to address safety, permanency, and well-being. With the growing recognition of the important role fathers play in a child's healthy development, today's child welfare agencies are searching for strategies to more effectively engage fathers and paternal family members in ways that benefit children; parent partner programs can be designed to be such a strategy.

#### **Fathers as Parent Partners**

Parent partners can match fathers with child welfare experience to provide peer-to-peer support to other fathers who are new to the system. These fathers often have not had a positive role model and may have grown up without their own father. Parent partners can support fathers in dealing with this void and addressing related emotions.

Connecting fathers with parent partners can help increase their engagement with services. Fathers often struggle with asking for and/or accepting services from a system that is female dominated. Fathers serving as parent partners are selected because of the successes they have experienced in overcoming obstacles and changing behaviors that compromised the safety of their children. Because of their shared experience and expertise, these fathers are uniquely positioned to reach out to fathers new to the system, gain their trust, help them work with the system, and access needed services. In some programs, male parent partners provide peer-to-peer support not only to fathers, but also to mothers.

#### **Shifts in Culture and Climate**

Investing time, energy, and resources to attract, select, and train fathers with system experience to serve as parent partners can be beneficial. Fathers in the role of parent partners can serve as a resource to agency staff by providing valuable information on effective strategies for overcoming barriers to father engagement. The presence of these fathers in leadership roles within child welfare will help create changes in the agency's culture and climate. As agency staff stop seeing fathers as "absent" and begin to view them as a resource and allies in keeping children safe, their perceptions and behaviors toward fathers will change.

#### **Training**

As discussed in Component 9, training is a critical part of preparing parent partners to provide peer-to-peer support. Training should be designed to reflect fathers' learning styles and needs. Fathers as parent partners benefit from two types of training. The first is joint training of child welfare staff and fathers to discuss child welfare issues and challenges specific to fathers, the system legacy of bias toward mothers in cases of child protection, child welfare legislation and mandates, foster care, and fathers' rights. The second training for fathers should focus on their role as providers of peer-to-peer support and address effective mentoring, work ethics, boundaries, and accessing services.

#### **Matching Guidelines**

Each program should develop guidelines for matching parent partners with parents. Parents' needs and preferences will differ. For example, some fathers respond better to receiving peer-to-peer support from other fathers, while some prefer support from a female. Best practice suggests that agencies take a case-by-case approach and carefully match fathers with the right person to meet their needs.

## Strategies for Positive Father Engagement

The following are additional strategies for promoting father engagement:

- Assess agency climate, culture, and practices toward fathers.
- Define what is meant by “positively engage fathers” for your parent partner program.
- Create a plan to build capacity in this area.
- Build an infrastructure that supports agency staff and parent leaders to improve practices involving fathers.
- Provide training to fathers to prepare them for serving as parent partners.
- Provide training for agency staff on how to positively engage fathers.
- Revise policies for bias against fathers and incorporate language that reflects working with both fathers and mothers.
- Engage community partners in dialogue on how to change culture and practices toward fathers.
- Build a service array that is gender informed and responsive to the unique needs of fathers.

## Related Resources

### Change Initiative Exemplar Resources Summary: Father Engagement in Child Welfare

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (2010)

[http://ncwwi.org/files/Father\\_Engagement\\_in\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Summary\\_Information.pdf](http://ncwwi.org/files/Father_Engagement_in_Child_Welfare_Summary_Information.pdf)

### Fatherhood Resources [website]

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/fatherhood/>

### National Fatherhood Initiative [website]

<http://www.fatherhood.org/>

# Domain 3: Program Management

This domain moves out of the design phase and into key aspects of program management for a parent partner program. The domain presents a high-level overview of important considerations for program leadership and oversight, policies and procedures, supervision and coaching, funding, and compensation. The final components underscore the importance of planning early for evaluating outcomes and sustaining the program.

## Domain 3 includes the following components:

- **Component 13: Establishing Program Leadership and Oversight**
- **Component 14: Developing Policies and Procedures**
- **Component 15: Supervising, Coaching, and Supporting Parent Partners**
- **Component 16: Funding the Program**
- **Component 17: Providing Compensation for Parent Partners**
- **Component 18: Building Evidence Through Evaluation**
- **Component 19: Promoting Sustainability**

**Additional guidance on day-to-day program operations can be found in the Parent Partner Program Manual: Sample Policies and Procedures.**

## Component 13: Establishing Program Leadership and Oversight

Effective implementation of a parent partner program requires a cohesive oversight structure with several levels. Many programs create an organizational structure that includes the support of the following: a steering committee, program administrator, program coordinator, lead parent partner, clinician, and a network of field leaders and champions.

### Parent Partner Steering Committee

Once the program design phase is completed and the agency is ready to implement, agency leaders should convene a steering committee. Members of the design team (see Component 5) are good candidates to join the steering committee. Steering committees should have strong representation from family leaders, child welfare staff at multiple levels (administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers), program “champions,” and community service providers (providers of substance abuse treatment and mental health and domestic violence services).

The steering committee will have two primary functions: (1) providing program oversight and advising on key decisions and (2) promoting the program, its mission, and core strategies. Other responsibilities may include:

- Communicating the program vision, mission, and goals and setting the program’s direction
- Creating a work plan with clear objectives and defining strategies to reach program goals
- Ensuring that program and agency priorities and goals are aligned
- Identifying job descriptions, compensation rates, training, and supports for parent partners
- Developing communication strategies
- Other aspects of program implementation

Typically, steering committees meet regularly (every other month or at other agreed on intervals) and follow a structured agenda to decide on key issues and address program needs.

### Program Administrator

The presence of a child welfare administrator actively involved in both the design and implementation of the parent partner program will signal to agency staff that this is an agency priority and will contribute to gaining buy in. Agency administrators can help ensure that the parent partner program is aligned with and integrated into the overall agency operations. In addition, an administrator can promote timely progress in implementation processes by approving next steps or bringing recommended action items to the attention of agency senior leadership and management. Administrators who are respected in their agencies for their work advancing family engagement and empowerment are strong candidates for this role.

### Parent Partner Program Coordinator

The parent partner program coordinator should have strong organizational skills, be a respected family empowerment leader, and understand parent partners’ coaching and supervision needs. The coordinator has many responsibilities, including overseeing the recruitment, selection, training, and supervision of parent partners. She or he is also responsible for helping parent partners understand how effective peer-to-peer support works and how to prevent burnout. The coordinator should be trained to support parent partners in working with parents with different experiences and needs and dealing with boundary issues and emotional responses to the parents’ experience. The coordinator takes the lead in facilitating the

matching process, assigning tasks to parent partners, selecting partners for policy or decision-making boards, and approving invoices and compensation. The coordinator also oversees the collection and monitoring of program data and ensuring fidelity to the program model.

## **Lead Parent Partner**

Lead parent partners can support parent partners and coordinators. They model the expectations for newly hired parent partners and serve as mentors and coaches by allowing parent partners to “shadow” them during field work. They also assist coordinators with maintaining paperwork and conducting other tasks. They may represent the program at events and, in doing so, model public speaking qualities for new parent partners. Lead parent partners may offer additional support and guidance within the program infrastructure.

## **Clinician**

Some parent partner programs incorporate a clinician as part of their staff. This professional, a masters-level practitioner with relevant clinical training, typically meets with parent partners each month to address healthy boundaries, self-care, triggers, and case review, particularly in challenging cases. The clinician is also available to work with parent partners on an individual basis, as needed, on issues related to their home life, sobriety, trauma, grieving, and self-sufficiency.

## **Related Resources**

### **Improving Organizational Management and Development Toolkit [website]**

Community Toolbox

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/improve-organizational-management-and-development>

### **Parent Partner Program Coordinator Interview Questions**

Contra Costa County, CA (2004)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_ParentPartnerInterviewQuestions.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_ParentPartnerInterviewQuestions.pdf)

### **What to Look for in a Parent Partner Program Coordinator: Musings from a Coordinator**

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/WhattoLookforinaParentPartnerCoordinator.pdf>



## Component 14: Developing Policies and Procedures

Comprehensive policies and procedures provide program staff with a framework for understanding organizational expectations, roles and responsibilities, and day-to-day program operations. They also offer guidance on how to manage challenging situations.

### Policy and Procedure Focus Areas

Policies and procedures for a parent partner program may address the following:

- Roles and responsibilities (also covered in job descriptions)
- Recruitment and selection procedures (see Component 7)
- Parent partner interactions with families
- Parent partner interactions with agency staff
- Code of conduct and professional boundaries
- Supervision (see Component 15)
- Performance reviews
- Compensation and benefits (see Component 17)
- Invoicing procedures
- Identifying, reporting, and managing conflicts of interest
- Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect
- Agency practice guidelines

### Considerations

As you develop your parent partner program policies and procedures, consider the following. Parent partners may be interacting with agency staff who may only know them through a prior case. They may be working with colleagues who do not fully understand or support the role of parent partners. Parent partners may be working as mentors to individuals who are experiencing many of the same things they had experienced such as domestic violence, substance abuse, or poverty. Parent partners are learning on the job. With clearly written policies and procedures, coupled with supportive supervision, parent partners can navigate this new territory.

In addition, clear policies and procedures can encourage and standardize parent partner practices within the agency and provide partners and frontline staff with a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities, and agency expectations for working with parent partners. When developing policies and procedures, it will be important to consider where new policies will be affected by higher level policies or State legislation. Involvement of stakeholders at all levels (family leaders, parent partners, youth, frontline workers, administrators) should be encouraged to strengthen the policy development process.

The Systems of Care Online Policy Action Guide can guide you through key aspects of developing internal policies — from understanding the process and who should be involved to drafting policies and planning outreach, implementation, and assessment strategies. Available at:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/pag/internal/>

## Related Resources

### Systems of Care Policy Action Guide

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011) <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/pag/>

### Systems of Care Policy Toolkit

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2009)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/soctoolkits/policy/>

## Component 15: Supervising, Coaching, and Supporting Parent Partners

To support parent partners in their new roles, they need supervision and support that is consistent, responsive, and individualized. When developing a supervision protocol for a parent partner program, think about the staffing and structure needed to provide effective supervision in each of three domains: administrative, educational, and clinical.

### Administrative Supervision

Administrative supervision provides parent partners with a framework for understanding their roles and responsibilities within the child welfare agency. Supervisors create a “bridge” between agency administration and frontline workers. Administrative supervision provides parent partners with a clear understanding of the mission and vision of the child welfare agency. Supervisors instruct parent partners on agency operations and how to get things done. The supervisor and parent partners work together to incorporate agency policies and procedures into daily practice. They address topics such as professional conduct, reporting responsibilities, safety, confidentiality, privacy protocols, and documentation requirements.

### Educational Supervision

Educational supervision is critical to the professional growth and development of parent partners. Supervisors educate their supervisees on policies, procedures, and protocols and monitor compliance. While parent partners bring a great deal of personal experience and perspective to their work, they benefit from opportunities to broaden their sphere of knowledge. Through educational supervision, the supervisor and parent partner can develop an individualized learning plan tailored to the parent partners’ needs and identify relevant professional development opportunities.

### Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision provides parent partners with the support they need to effectively work with families. The life experiences that make parent partners effective in their role can also create challenges for parent partners. Parent partners may be in substance abuse recovery or they may have a significant history of trauma. They may work with families whose issues closely parallel their own experiences. The clinical supervisor and parent partners work together to design a safety plan, identify potential trauma triggers, and develop strategies to manage these triggers in the field. They also work together to identify self-care tools and coping strategies the parent partners can use to manage the stress inherent in child welfare work.

### Related Resources

#### Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision

National Association of Social Workers, Association of Social Work Boards (2013)  
<http://www.naswdc.org/practice/naswstandards/supervisionstandards2013.pdf>

#### Building a Model and Framework for Child Welfare Supervision

Hess, Kanak, & Atkins (2009)  
National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning &  
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement  
<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/BuildingAModelandFrameworkforCWSupervision.pdf>

#### Strengthening Child Welfare Supervision

*Child Welfare Matters*, 1-5  
National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. (2007, Fall)  
<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/cwmatters6.pdf>

## Component 16: Funding the Program

To develop, implement, and sustain a parent partner program, there must be resources to secure the infrastructure. Funding will be needed to support the ongoing administration of the program, compensation of parent partners, training, supplies, and office space.

### Budget Components

A parent partner steering committee should assist with developing the budget and establishing a concrete plan to support the program. The overarching budgetary goal is to ensure support of parent partners while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Following are key budget components:

- **Parent partner compensation** — Parent partners should be compensated for the work they do, including mentoring parents, participating on policy boards, and making presentations on behalf of the program. In some instances, parent partners are subcontracted at first and later become employees, at which time benefits will have to be paid. In addition, budgets should reflect reimbursement to parent partners for expenses associated with making phone calls and attending meetings, trainings, and conference presentations, including mileage and other transportation costs.
- **Program coordinator and/or lead parent partner compensation** — To ensure an appropriate level of support for parent partners, funds will need to be allocated for a program coordinator and for lead parent partners. This compensation often represents a sizable portion of the budget.
- **Training, peer support, and meeting costs** — The budget will need to reflect essential professional development activities provided to parent partners through training, support sessions, and other meetings. Partnerships with community service providers (for example, substance abuse treatment providers and mental health services) and child welfare training academies may enable training support that can reduce costs in this area.
- **Administrative costs** — These costs represent the funds needed to support agency accountability, accreditation, and quality assurance.
- **Office space, vehicles, and supplies** — Expenses for office space will vary, depending on arrangements for where the program is physically located (within a child welfare agency, within a nonprofit organization, within a legal aid office, or other) and in-kind donations. Since not all parent partners have reliable vehicles, some programs make agency vehicles available to support home visits.

### Funding Resources

Funding for parent partner programs may come from the child welfare agency or from other sources, including:

- **Community partnerships and collaborations** — Community organizations and service providers may be able to assist with in-kind donations, training delivery, office space, or meeting rooms.
- **National organizations and foundations** — Several national organizations and initiatives support the parent voice in child welfare—Casey Family Programs and Annie E. Casey Foundation, among others. Parent partner programs are considered a promising practice and therefore are eligible for grants that support such initiatives.

- **Federal and State grants** — The Children’s Bureau and other Federal agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services support service delivery for families and communities through various funding streams, including discretionary grant programs. Explore Federal and State funding opportunities that align with your program’s objectives and services.

A sustainability plan should always be included when creating a budget and an implementation plan to ensure the sustained success of the program.

## Related Resources

### Funding [website]

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/funding/>

### Funding Permanency Services: A Guide to Leveraging Federal, State and Local Dollars

Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/funding/program-areas/permanency/>

## Component 17: Providing Compensation for Parent Partners

Parent partners offer child welfare agencies valuable experience and expertise and should be paid for their contributions to promoting family well-being, family reunification, and other positive outcomes for children and families.

### Compensated Activities

Parent partners should be compensated for all time spent on activities associated with peer-to-peer mentoring, including meeting with parents, attending court, connecting families to community resources, participating in family team meetings, and communicating with families via texts, emails, and phone calls. They also should be compensated for trainings, conferences, committee meetings, or presentations they participate in. In addition, expenses and mileage incurred should be reimbursed.

### Considerations and Approaches

Parent partners' compensation should be reflective of their contributions. Compensation and reimbursement provide family members with the resources many need to serve as peer mentors and advocates. Compensation rates should also reflect the cost of living in their communities, which will be particularly important for partners transitioning to self-sufficiency. Note, however, that for some parent partners who receive public assistance, payments may negatively impact their eligibility for such benefits.

In addition to compensation, programs should consider parent partner eligibility for other benefits such as educational support and health care, as appropriate. Assistance with child care may help ensure their family's needs are being met while parent partners are providing services.

Programs may structure compensation in different ways. Some programs provide compensation on a service basis (that is, specific payments for each training, family team meeting, etc.). Others provide payment on a case basis with consideration of the amount of time typically spent with families in different case situations.

Providing parent partner compensation can often present challenges for child welfare agencies and may require creative strategies. Some public agencies have restrictions related to hiring staff whose names appear in a State child abuse central registry and/or have a criminal background. To avoid conflicts with hiring policies, some agencies form arrangements with parent partners as independent contractors or develop partnerships with a nonprofit organization that hires the parent partner.

### Funding Sources

Programs use varied funding streams to support parent partner programs and compensate parent partners. Funding sources vary across programs and include:

- Foundation or nonprofit program support
- Grant programs
- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) funds
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program funds
- Title IV-E waiver funding
- Various State funding sources (services for child welfare, health, and mental health and substance abuse treatment)

While it may be necessary to use short-term funding sources for specified periods, it is important for program administrators to plan for long-term support of parent partners.

## Component 18: Building Evidence Through Evaluation

Evaluation and strategic use of data will help programs build evidence of effectiveness and continually improve peer-to-peer service delivery. Planning for data collection and evaluation should start in the program's design phase along with the development of a program logic model.

### Existing Evidence Base

Some research (see resources below) has shown that peer-to-peer support in child welfare is a promising strategy to support family reunification and achieve other positive outcomes for children and families. For example, an evaluation of a parent partner program in Contra Costa County, CA, found that approximately 60 percent of children whose parents were paired with parent partners reunited with their parents within 12 months of removal, compared to 26 percent of children whose parents did not have parent partners. The study also found that participating parents described the services as beneficial and particularly valued the elements of shared experience, communication, and support.<sup>8</sup>

### Building the Evidence Base

More work is needed to continue building the evidence base for parent partner programs. Programs can work collaboratively with capacity building centers, universities, and researchers to:

- Implement peer-to-peer support programs aimed at improving child and family outcomes
- Use an implementation science framework to guide capacity building activities
- Assess the fidelity of implementation to the parent partner model
- Evaluate program outcomes and impact
- Assess potential cost savings through parent partner programs
- Disseminate findings to spread knowledge about effective practices

### Evaluating Implementation and Outcomes

Evaluation helps us learn whether a program is being implemented as intended and whether it is achieving desired results. Evaluation planning begins with development of a theory of change and logic model (see Component 4), which illustrate assumptions about the links between program activities and expected outcomes.

Evaluation plans should reflect consideration of the following questions:

- What data need to be collected to assess whether the program was implemented as planned?
- What are the program's desired short-term outcomes (for example, changes in parents' knowledge of how the child welfare system works, reduced social isolation, and access to community services)? How can they be measured?
- What are the program's desired long-term outcomes (for example, timely family reunification, child safety, permanency)? How can they be measured?
- How will we know that changes in outcomes are a result of the parent partner program activities?
- How will data be collected, analyzed, and shared?

While developing evaluation plans and assessing findings, program administrators, key stakeholders (including parent leaders and staff), and evaluators should discuss the various factors that might affect

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony, E., Berrick, J.D., Cohen, E., & Wilder, E. (2009). *Partnering with parents: Promising approaches to improve reunification outcomes for children in foster care*. Berkeley, CA: Center for Social Services Research, University of California at Berkeley. Retrieved from [http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new\\_research.html](http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new_research.html)

evaluation findings. For example, are there other family engagement innovations or grant projects being introduced in the same area that might contribute to improvements in outcomes? Are there external influences (such as budget cuts or increases in caseworker workloads) that might negatively impact outcomes? Efforts should be made to carefully document evaluation approaches, consider external influences, and understand the specific effects of your parent partner program on identified outcomes.

## **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Programs are encouraged to use data to continuously adjust and improve implementation strategies. Through a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, a program identifies, describes, and analyzes strengths and problems and then tests, learns from, and revises solutions. CQI reflects a learning culture embedded in the agency and program. Through deliberate and effective use of data, CQI can contribute to improved services that can lead to improved outcomes.

In addition, data and evaluation findings can be powerful tools for gaining buy in and securing ongoing funding support.

## **Related Resources**

### **Parent Partner Program Studies**

#### **Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare**

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

*Protecting Children*, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

#### **Exploring the Benefits of Parent Partner Mentoring Program in Child Welfare**

Leake, Longworth-Reed, Williams, Potter (2012)

*Journal of Family Strengths*, 12(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=jfs>

#### **Partnering with Parents: Promising Approaches to Improve Reunification Outcomes for Children in Foster Care**

Anthony, Berrick, Cohen, Wilder (2009)

Center for Social Services Research, University of California Berkeley

[http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new\\_research.html](http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new_research.html)

#### **Parent Partner Programs for Families Involved in the Child Welfare System: [website]**

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/parent-partner-programs-for-families-involved-in-the-child-welfare-system/>

### **Evaluation and CQI Resources**

#### **A Framework to Design, Test, Spread and Sustain Effective Practices in Child Welfare**

Child Welfare Research & Evaluation Framework Workgroup (2014)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/capacity/program-evaluation/virtual-summit/framework>

#### **Evaluation Toolkit [website]**

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

<http://www.friendsnrc.org/evaluation-toolkit>

#### **CQI Training Academy: Foundations of Continuous Quality Improvement [online training]**

Capacity Building Center for States

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>



## Component 19: Promoting Sustainability

Program sustainability refers to the ability to support a program, its operations, and benefits over time. Planning for program sustainability must begin from the program's earliest days.

### Importance of Program Sustainability

Agencies across the country have struggled with sustaining family engagement programs once the initial "seed funding" is gone. When funding dries up, programs risk losing advancements in practices, service provision, and positive outcomes for children and families. The resources to develop and implement these programs are lost. When programs suddenly end, family leaders and program champions become discouraged and are less likely to support other innovative programs and change initiatives. To maintain parent partner programs and their benefits, program designers and administrators must position their initiatives with a long-term perspective.

### Factors Impacting Sustainability

Researchers have identified several different conceptual models for assessing program sustainability, including the Sustainability Planning Model and the Program Institutionalization Model.<sup>9</sup> Key factors that contribute to sustainability, identified across models, include:

- Organizational "fit"
- Stable funding
- Active program champions
- Ongoing strategic planning
- Established partnerships
- Strategic communication to secure support
- Capacity building to strengthen program evaluation, CQI, and innovation

Although funding plays a key role in sustainability, it is not the only factor that affects sustainability. Equally important is the program's ability to demonstrate positive and cost-effective results.

### Strategies to Ensure Program Sustainability

Consider the following strategies to ensure sustainability of your parent partner program:

- Integrate the parent partner program within the core business of the agency (for example, align the program with the agency's practice model or identify the program as a family engagement strategy in the agency's 5-year child and family services plan).
- Leverage funds from multiple sources, including Federal sources, State funds, private foundations, and community partners.
- Develop fiscal oversight and adopt cost-effective practices and strategies.
- Ensure fidelity to the program model through ongoing training, oversight, and fidelity assessments.
- Build capacity for ongoing innovation and program adaptation to meet the changing needs of families.
- Engage community partners.
- Communicate broadly the benefits and value the program brings to families and the agency.

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<sup>9</sup> See Altarum Institute. (2009). Literature review: *Defining sustainability of Federal programs based on the experience of the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health Multidisciplinary Health Models for Women*. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health.

## Measuring Program Sustainability

To help assess your program's capacity for sustainability and to develop a sustainability plan, the Washington University of St. Louis' Center for Public Health Systems Science offers the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool (<https://sustaintool.org/>). This tool includes questions on eight core domains: environmental support, funding stability, partnerships, organizational capacity, evaluation, program adaptation, communication, and strategic planning.

## Related Resources

### Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation

Volume 5: Full Implementation (Includes Sustainability Planning Tool)

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide\\_vol5\\_full\\_implementation.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol5_full_implementation.pdf)

### Literature Review: Defining Sustainability of Federal Programs Based on the Experiences of the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health's Multidisciplinary Health Models for Women

Altarum Institute (2009)

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/federal-report/sustainabilityreview-060109.pdf>

### Program Sustainability Assessment Tool

Washington University of St. Louis, Center for Public Health Systems Science (2012)

<https://sustaintool.org/>

### Sustaining the Work or Initiative

Community Tool Box (2015)

Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/sustaining-work-or-initiative>

### Using Local Evaluation Data for Sustainability [PowerPoint]

Contra Costa County (ND)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_UsingDataforSustainability.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_UsingDataforSustainability.pdf)

# Domain 4: Engagement and Partnerships

Engagement and partnerships are critical elements to a successful parent partner program. This domain first examines the internal dynamics of adaptive leadership and parent leadership and the partnerships between agency and family leaders. It then explores external partnerships that can support your design and implementation efforts, including networking with other parent partner programs and engagement of community partners, legislators, and the broader community.

## Domain 4 includes the following components:

- **Component 20: Transforming the System Through Adaptive Leadership and Parent Leadership**
- **Component 21: Sharing Across Parent Partner Programs**
- **Component 22: Engaging Community Partners**
- **Component 23: Partnering to Develop Legislation**
- **Component 24: Strategic Sharing and Messaging**

## Component 20:

### Transforming the System Through Adaptive Leadership and Parent Leadership

The fundamental shift from seeing families as service recipients to including them as partners and mentors requires adaptive leadership and a strong, shared commitment to family empowerment and leadership.

#### Adaptive Leadership in Child Welfare

Developed by Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky at Harvard University, adaptive leadership is a framework to help organizations adapt to major changes when there are no clear answers.<sup>10</sup> Adaptive leadership requires careful examination of the underlying issues and mobilization of a tailored approach to change. It teaches leaders to tackle change through a process of confronting the existing way of doing things and identifying technical and adaptive challenges.

- **Technical challenges** are often solved through additional information or expertise. To increase parent involvement, a technical response may include offering staff training on family engagement or providing families with brochures on engagement opportunities.
- **Adaptive challenges** require change at the core of what people are doing, feeling, and thinking. To increase parent involvement, an adaptive response requires promoting attitudes that value families.

#### Role of Parent Leaders in Transforming Child Welfare

Parent leaders — fathers, mothers, and other adult caregivers with experience in child welfare who want to use that experience to improve outcomes for children and families — have knowledge and expertise not found elsewhere among agency staff. Through parent partner programs, parent leaders can share their experience and expertise with other parents. When parent leaders are invited to sit at decision-making tables and other stakeholders truly listen to them, they can help direct the agency toward new solutions to ongoing challenges.

#### Strategies for Promoting Parent Leadership and Meaningful Partnerships

Meaningful partnerships with parents don't happen without some effort; they require ongoing capacity building. Agency and parent leaders can take deliberate steps to build an infrastructure and culture and climate that supports parents as leaders:

- Create a compelling, shared vision.
- Communicate strong expectations for parents to serve as leaders in child welfare.
- Adopt a leadership continuum that reflect different areas of strength.
- Assess the agency culture and climate and examine data to identify barriers and facilitators.
- Empower family leaders and field leaders to co-create a strategic plan outlining goals for family empowerment and leadership, strategies, and measures.
- Include parent leaders in decision-making efforts, including the development and implementation of the parent partner program.
- Align and integrate the parent partner program into the agencies' core business.
- Respond to challenges in a thoughtful and timely manner.
- Mobilize field leaders and community partners to create champions that will serve as motivators and advocates of change.

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<sup>10</sup>Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

## Related Resources

### **Adaptive Leadership: Practical Application**

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute [Webinar Video]

<https://vimeo.com/75431320>

### **Impacting Sustainable Change within the Child Welfare System**

Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy [Training Module]

Capacity Building Center for States (2016)

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>

### **Maine's Community Partnership for Protecting Children**

<http://www.cppcmaine.org/parents-partners>

## Component 21: Sharing Across Parent Partner Programs

Administrators and managers of parent partner programs across the country can learn from each other through peer networking and peer matching. Colleagues who have “been there” are a great resource for sharing lessons learned and discussing strategies for overcoming common challenges.

### Peer Networking

Peer networking provides opportunities for the exchange of ideas and group learning among individuals with common interests and challenges. Peer networks facilitate information sharing, dissemination of best practices, and discussion of new programs and implementation experiences. Peer networking can be accomplished through a wide variety of in-person or virtual activities, including webinars, discussion boards, e-learning, conference calls, and group discussions.

Parent partner program leaders can network with their peers through the Capacity Building Center for States' Family Leaders in Child Welfare Constituency Group. For more information, email [capacityinfo@icfi.com](mailto:capacityinfo@icfi.com).

### Peer Matching

Peer matching offers a more structured opportunity for colleagues from one State or jurisdiction that has experience implementing a program or strategy to help another State or jurisdiction that is just starting the process. Organizers develop a process to pair peers who have common interests with the goal of building relationships and exchanging practical information and credible strategies.

### Principles

Productive peer networking and peer matching rely on developing trust, rapport, and engagement among participants. Keeping interactions solution focused and adaptive to changing needs will support sustainability of these partnerships.

### Related Resources

Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://www.aecf.org/>

Birth Parent National Network

<http://www.bpnn.ctfalliance.org/>

Capacity Building Center for States' Family Leaders in Child Welfare Constituency Group

<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/providing-services/constituency/>

Casey Family Programs

<http://www.casey.org/>

National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds

<http://www.ctfalliance.org/index.htm>

## Component 22: Engaging Community Partners

Community partners can become invaluable allies in the design and ongoing operation of a parent partner program.

### Engagement of Community Partners

Community partners should be brought “on board” in the design phase with selected community leaders recruited onto the design team and later onto the steering committee. Be prepared to spend time finding the right partners willing to commit to the program and engaging them in meaningful ways.

Potential community partners may represent:

- Courts
- Health and mental health services
- Behavioral health/substance use treatment services
- Domestic violence services
- Parent support groups
- Housing
- Faith community
- Community-based organizations
- Local businesses
- Universities and community colleges

### Leveraging Community Partnerships

Community partners can support parent partner programs at the case and program levels. At the case level, parent partners cultivate relationships and build knowledge of community services that will support their efforts to provide referrals to the parents they mentor and improve access to needed services. Parent partners help link parents to supportive community networks; as a result, they promote social connections, a protective factor in preventing child abuse and neglect.

At the program level, community partners support training and professional development activities for the parent partners. They may be able to provide in-kind donations of office space or supplies for trainings and meetings. In addition, local university researchers can support data collection, assessment, and evaluation activities.

### Related Resources

#### Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children: Lessons, Opportunities, and Challenges

Center for the Study of Social Policy (2006)

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/community-partnerships-for-the-protection-of-children>

#### Engaging Communities to Support Families [website]

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/famcentered/communities/>

## Component 23: Partnering to Develop Legislation

Enacting legislation on parent engagement and peer-to-peer support can help ensure that they become a State priority and that funds are allocated to support lasting change. Legislation refers to a State statute or Federal law enacted by a legislative body, such as a State's general assembly or Congress.

### Breaking New Ground with Parent Partner Legislation

Washington is the first State in the nation to enact legislation establishing a parent partner program in child welfare. Washington's law specifies funding for parent mentoring activities and evaluation of those activities. Read the Parents for Parents Program legislation enacted by the Washington State Assembly and signed into law on July 24, 2015: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5486-S2.SL.pdf>

### Advancing a Legislative Initiative to Support Parent Partner Programs

While legislation can provide strong support for family engagement and empowerment, the process to develop new legislation can be quite complex and lengthy. Collaboration with legislators, service providers, and families served by child welfare is an important part of the process. Data collection and evaluation findings from existing programs helps demonstrate the effectiveness of parent partner programs to legislators.

The Systems of Care Policy Action Guide can guide you through key aspects of a legislative initiative—from understanding the legislative process and who should be involved to developing drafts and planning implementation. This capacity building tool supports the process of identifying and advancing a range of policy strategies to improve child welfare systems and practices.

### Related Resources

#### Laws & Policies [website]

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/>

#### Systems of Care Policy Action Guide [online tool]

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/pag/>



## Component 24: Strategic Sharing and Messaging

Through strategic sharing and messaging, parent partners can help “change the conversation” about families involved in child welfare.

### Strategic Sharing

Parent partners often start their leadership journey by sharing their child welfare experiences in a storytelling form. Stories are powerful and memorable. They bring a human face to parents who have been involved in child welfare. They also can challenge common assumptions and inspire audiences.

Strategic sharing involves telling life stories in a way that is meaningful to audiences and respectful of the parent sharing the information. Such sharing requires decisions about the purpose of sharing a personal story, which details to share, and how to “claim” the story’s meaning.<sup>11</sup> When done effectively, the parent’s voice can be heard, the audience connects to the message, and the parent’s privacy and well-being are protected.

### Strategic Messaging

Parent partners can be important agents in shifting perceptions about parents involved with child welfare. All too often, the images and messages sent about parents who receive child welfare services are negative and focus on failure. Through thoughtful communication about parents’ successes, parent partners can convey more positive images and begin to reshape perceptions.

Parent partner programs may benefit from learning more about communication approaches that challenge widely held views. One such approach is Strategic Frame Analysis, developed by the FrameWorks Institute (see <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/>). Based on research on how people think and communicate, Strategic Frame Analysis offers a systematic approach to analyzing current perceptions and strategically “reframing.” The Institute defines reframing as “changing the context of the message exchange so that different interpretations and outcomes become visible.”<sup>12</sup> For parent partner programs, this may require examining existing negative images, assumptions, and stereotypes about parents involved in child welfare and offering a new “lens” that builds greater understanding of these parents’ experiences, strengths, and potential for change.

Such approaches can help parent partner programs “message” their program in a compelling way. Effective communication strategies can help motivate agencies and communities to transform practices, policies, and partnerships and, ultimately, to collectively support parents’ abilities to protect and nurture their children.

### Related Resources

#### Parent Partner Personal Stories

Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care Resources (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

#### Strategic Frame Analysis

FrameWorks Institute

<http://sfa.frameworksinstitute.org>

#### Strategic Sharing: Telling Your Story in a Way That Is Meaningful, Effective, and Safe

Casey Family Programs and Foster Care Alumni of America (2008)

[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf)

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<sup>11</sup> Casey Family Programs and Foster Care Alumni of America. (2008). Strategic sharing: Telling your story in a way that is meaningful, effective, and safe. Retrieved from: [http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> FrameWorks Institute. (2009). Changing the public conversation on social problems: A beginners’ guide to strategic analysis. [E-workshop, slide 35]. Retrieved from <http://sfa.frameworksinstitute.org/>

# Tools and Resources

Many tools, sample program materials, manuals, and other resources are presented throughout the Parent Partner Program Navigator. Some of these resources have been created and tested by existing parent partner programs across the nation and others have been created by the Center for States to support program design and implementation. We encourage you to explore and adapt these resources to meet your program's specific needs.

## Assessing Needs, Resources, and Capacity

### Readiness Assessment Tool

(see Component 2, page 11)

### Building Agency Capacity for Family Involvement in Child Welfare

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/BuildingAgencyCapacity.pdf>

### Building Family Capacity for Family Involvement in Child Welfare

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/BuildingFamilyCapacity.pdf>

### Capacity Building Overview Factsheet

Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative (2015)

[https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/100460.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27BASIC+ph+is+%27%27Child+Welfare+Capacity+Building+Collaborative+\[Overview+Factsheet\]%27%27%27%29&upp=0&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&rpp=25&r=1&m=1](https://library.childwelfare.gov/cwig/ws/library/docs/capacity/Blob/100460.pdf?w=NATIVE%28%27BASIC+ph+is+%27%27Child+Welfare+Capacity+Building+Collaborative+[Overview+Factsheet]%27%27%27%29&upp=0&order=native%28%27year%2FDescend%27%29&rpp=25&r=1&m=1)

### Center for Theory of Change [website]

<http://www.theoryofchange.org/>

### Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

Protecting Children, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

### Exploring the Benefits of a Parent Partner Mentoring Program in Child Welfare Leake, Longworth-Reed, Williams, Potter (2012)

Journal of Family Strengths, 12(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=jfs>

### Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

### Getting Started: A Self-Directed Guide to Outcome Map Development

Gienapp, Resiman, & Stachowiak (2009)

Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services

<http://orsimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Getting-Started-Guide-FINAL-10-7-14.pdf>

## **Partnering with Parents: Promising Approaches to Improve Reunification for Children in Foster Care**

Berrick, Cohen, & Anthony (2011)

*Journal of Family Strengths*, 11(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=jfs>

## **Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models**

Funnell & Rogers (2011)

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470478578.html>

## **Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results, and Learning**

Annie E. Casey Foundation & Organizational Research Services (2004)

<http://www.aecf.org/resources/theory-of-change/>

## **Program Design**

### **Better Together: Building Blocks to Successful Partnerships**

Casey Family Programs and National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds

<http://www.ctfalliance.org/images/about/Better%20Together%20Outline.pdf>

### **Building a Better Future Program**

Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://www.aecf.org/>

### **Change Initiative Exemplar Resources Summary: Father Engagement in Child Welfare**

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (2010)

[http://ncwwi.org/files/Father\\_Engagement\\_in\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Summary\\_Information.pdf](http://ncwwi.org/files/Father_Engagement_in_Child_Welfare_Summary_Information.pdf)

### **Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Practice**

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (2015)

<http://cascw.umn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/CW360-Winter2015.pdf>

### **Cultural Responsiveness Training Tool**

National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

<http://friendsnrc.org/activities-that-support-collaboration/cultural-responsiveness>

### **Design Team Manual**

Butler Institute for Families (2013)

[https://ncwwi.org/files/Org\\_Environment/Design-Team-Manual.pdf](https://ncwwi.org/files/Org_Environment/Design-Team-Manual.pdf)

### **Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare**

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

*Protecting Children*, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

### **Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy**

Capacity Building Center for States (2016)

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov>

### **Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series: Parents Helping Parents**

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

### **Fatherhood Resources [website]**

Child Welfare Information Gateway`

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/fatherhood/>

### **From the Courthouse to the Statehouse: Parents as Partners in Child Welfare**

Rauber (2009)

[http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_the\\_law/parentrepresentation/from\\_courthouse\\_to\\_statehouse.authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center_on_children_and_the_law/parentrepresentation/from_courthouse_to_statehouse.authcheckdam.pdf)

### **National Fatherhood Initiative [website]**

<http://www.fatherhood.org/>

### **National Wraparound Initiative**

Wraparound Parent Partner Role Description

[https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/docs/Wraparound20100427\\_RoleDescription.pdf](https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/docs/Wraparound20100427_RoleDescription.pdf)

### **Parent Engagement/Mentoring Models in Washington State**

Partners for Our Children (2010)

<http://partnersforourchildren.org/resources/reports/parent-engagementmentoring-models-washington-state>

### **Parent Partner Job Description**

Contra Costa County, CA (2004)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_ParentPartnerJobDescription.pdf)

### **Parent Partner Role Description, Jacksonville System of Care Initiative**

Jacksonville, FL

[http://www.fofjax.org/images/Parent\\_Partner\\_Description.pdf](http://www.fofjax.org/images/Parent_Partner_Description.pdf)

### **Parent Partner Programs for Families Involved in the Child Welfare System [website]**

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/parent-partner-programs-for-families-involved-in-the-child-welfare-system/>

### **Sample Family Partner Role Description**

Parents Anonymous Inc. (2001)

<https://www.strengthening-families.org/cpec/leadershiptools/Sample%20Family%20Partner%20Role%20Description.pdf>

### **Qualifications for Wraparound Family Partners**

National Wraparound Initiative Family Partner Task Force (2013)

<http://nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/qualifications-for-family-partners.pdf>

## **Program Management**

### **Parent Partner Program Manual**

Capacity Building Center for States [Forthcoming]

### **A Framework to Design, Test, Spread and Sustain Effective Practices in Child Welfare**

Child Welfare Research & Evaluation Framework Workgroup (2014)

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/capacity/program-evaluation/virtual-summit/framework>

### **Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision**

National Association of Social Workers, Association of Social Work Boards (2013)

<http://www.naswdc.org/practice/naswstandards/supervisionstandards2013.pdf>

### **Building a Model and Framework for Child Welfare Supervision**

Hess, Kanak, & Atkins (2009)

National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning &

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement

<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/BuildingAModelandFrameworkforCWSupervision.pdf>

### **CQI Training Academy: Foundations of Continuous Quality Improvement**

Capacity Building Center for States

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>

### **Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare**

Marcenko, Brown, DeVoy, & Conway (2010)

*Protecting Children*, 25(1)

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/kb/bppub/engaging-parents-innovative.pdf>

### **Evaluation Toolkit [website]**

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

<http://www.friendsnrc.org/evaluation-toolkit>

### **Exploring the Benefits of a Parent Partner Mentoring Program in Child Welfare**

Leake, Longworth-Reed, Williams, Potter (2012)

*Journal of Family Strengths*, 12(1)

<http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1147&context=jfs>

### **Funding [website]**

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/funding/>

### **Funding Permanency Services: A Guide to Leveraging Federal, State and Local Dollars**

Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/funding/program-areas/permanency/>

### **Guide to Developing, Implementing, and Assessing an Innovation**

Volume 5: Full Implementation (Includes Sustainability Planning Tool)

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project (2016)

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide\\_vol5\\_full\\_implementation.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol5_full_implementation.pdf)

### **Improving Organizational Management and Development Toolkit**

Community Toolbox

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/improve-organizational-management-and-development>

### **Literature Review: Defining Sustainability of Federal Programs Based on the Experiences of the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health's Multidisciplinary Health Models for Women**

Altarum Institute (2009)

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/federal-report/sustainabilityreview-060109.pdf>

## Parent Partner Program Coordinator Interview Questions

Contra Costa County, CA (2004)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_ParentPartnerInterviewQuestions.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_ParentPartnerInterviewQuestions.pdf)

## Parent Partner Programs for Families Involved in the Child Welfare System: [website]

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/parent-partner-programs-for-families-involved-in-the-child-welfare-system/>

## Partnering with Parents: Promising Approaches to Improve Reunification Outcomes for Children in Foster Care

Anthony, Berrick, Cohen, & Wilder (2009)

Center for Social Services Research, University of California Berkeley

[http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new\\_research.html](http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/new_research.html)

## Program Sustainability Assessment Tool

Washington University of St. Louis, Center for Public Health Systems Science (2012)

<https://sustaintool.org/>

## Strengthening Child Welfare Supervision

*Child Welfare Matters*, 1-5

National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. (2007, Fall)

<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/cwmatters6.pdf>

## Sustaining the Work or Initiative

Community Tool Box (2015)

Work Group for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/sustaining-work-or-initiative>

## Systems of Care Policy Action Guide

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/pag/>

## Systems of Care Policy Toolkit

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2009)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/soctoolkits/policy/#phase=pre-planning>

## Using Local Evaluation Data for Sustainability [PowerPoint]

Contra Costa County (ND)

[https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA\\_UsingDataforSustainability.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/CA_UsingDataforSustainability.pdf)

## What to Look for in a Parent Partner Program Coordinator: Musings from a Coordinator

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care (2011)

<https://childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/WhattoLookforinaParentPartnerCoordinator.pdf>

## Engagement and Partnerships

### Adaptive Leadership: Practical Application

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute [Webinar Video]

<https://vimeo.com/75431320>

**Annie E. Casey Foundation**

<http://www.aecf.org/>

**Birth Parent National Network**

<http://www.bpnn.ctfalliance.org/>

**Capacity Building Center for States' Family Leaders in Child Welfare Constituency Group**

<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/providing-services/constituency/>

**Casey Family Programs**

<http://www.casey.org/>

**Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children: Lessons, Opportunities, and Challenges**

Center for the Study of Social Policy (2006)

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/community-partnerships-for-the-protection-of-children>

**Engaging Communities to Support Families [website]**

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/famcentered/communities/>

**Impacting Sustainable Change within the Child Welfare System**

Family Empowerment and Leadership Academy [Training Module]

Capacity Building Center for States (2016)

<https://learn.childwelfare.gov/>

**Laws & Policies [website]**

Child Welfare Information Gateway

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/>

**Maine's Community Partnership for Protecting Children**

<http://www.cppcmaine.org/parents-partners>

**National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds**

<http://www.ctfalliance.org/index.htm>

**Parent Partner Personal Stories**

Family Engagement in Child Welfare Video Series

National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems of Care Resources (2011)

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/familyvideos/#parentsHelp>

**Strategic Frame Analysis**

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**Strategic Sharing: Telling Your Story in a Way That Is Meaningful, Effective, and Safe**

Casey Family Programs and Foster Care Alumni of America (2008)

[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/download/StrategicSharing.pdf)