

# Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement

A Toolkit for Parents  
and Community Partners



COMMISSIONED BY FIRST 5 LA  
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## Acknowledgements

Along with lessons learned from programs implemented across the nation, this toolkit features parent engagement approaches and strategies that are utilized by parents and partners involved with First 5 LA's Partnerships For Families initiative.

**First 5 LA** is dedicated to ensuring that all young children throughout Los Angeles County are raised in nurturing environments where they are healthy, eager to learn, and able to reach their full potential. To accomplish these outcomes, it has invested more than \$699 million in grants, programs, and initiatives.

**Partnerships For Families (PFF)** is a five-year First 5 LA initiative that was launched in 2005 to provide voluntary child abuse prevention services to pregnant women and families with young children. PFF encourages the development of community networks of services and supports that can help parents nurture their children and also manage stress before it escalates. Rather than engaging parents solely as recipients of assistance, PFF aims to join with them as full partners in defining and achieving goals within their own families and communities.

The collective wisdom and contributions of parents, staff, and community partners working in support of PFF were instrumental to this toolkit's development. Their commitment to uplifting parent engagement as essential to improving outcomes for young children and their families – not just for PFF, but for all efforts to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of systems to families – guided this project from start to finish.

### About the author

**The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)** works to secure equal opportunities and better futures for all children and families, especially those most often left behind. At the center of this vision is a commitment to ensure that:

- Children are healthy
- Children enter school ready to learn and are prepared to succeed
- Youth are prepared to succeed as adults
- Children grow up in safe, supportive and economically successful families
- Communities have the resources and opportunities families need to succeed

To achieve these results, CSSP improves public policies, systems and communities by building protective factors, reducing risk factors and creating opportunities that contribute to well-being and economic success.

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# I. Toolkit Overview

## Purpose of the Toolkit

The Toolkit is a quick and easy guide to help support and sustain parent engagement. It provides how to's for implementing three powerful strategies communities can use to maintain and grow parent engagement work that is already underway: Creating a Parent Engagement 1) Roadmap, 2) Checklist and 3) Support Network.

## How to Use The Toolkit

This toolkit includes information, examples, and helpful questions that parents and community partners can draw from as they jointly develop engagement strategies that reflect their unique priorities and communities.

It includes the following sections:

### Section I.

**Toolkit Overview** Purpose and organization of the toolkit.

### Section II.

**Background** Defines parent engagement and sustainability, including what success looks like.

### Section III.

**Building and Sustaining Parent Engagement** Describes how and why the Parent Engagement Roadmap, Checklist and Support Network sustainability strategies were created. Introduces key parent engagement concepts and questions to help guide strategy development.

### Section IV.

**Achieving Success: Guide for Creating Your Own Strategies**

Provides information, examples, and questions to help you create your own Parent Engagement Roadmap, Checklist and Support Network.

### Section V.

**Toolkit Resources** List of source documents and recommended tools that provide a more detailed explanation of information presented.



“ The way you approach someone about getting involved or offering help can turn them on or off. [As a parent] when someone has an attitude that they're above me, it's tough to take. I appreciate situations where people can relate more as equals and it's consistent because that's the culture. ”

## II. Background

### What is Parent Engagement?

Parent engagement is an overarching principle and approach for involving families in decisions about themselves, their children, services, and their communities. It includes a wide array of activities, such as:

- Direct relationships with service providers
- Mutual support shared among parents
- Advocacy by parents on behalf of their families
- Decision-making and advisory roles in agencies
- Leadership in the community

For public, private, and grassroots organizations committed to community building efforts, parent and family engagement helps ensure buy-in for shared goals and strategies. Just as importantly, community networks of support are strongest when built by and with engaged parents and other residents.

### What do we mean by sustainability?

Sustainability is defined as the capacity to keep an action or process going. The strategies discussed in this toolkit are intended to support the ongoing development, existence and growth of parent engagement activities in communities agencies and networks, both as a part of and also independent of funded initiatives.

“Parents come out when they feel welcome...that sense of I’m being respected, appreciated and acknowledged as an important part of a group or activity.”

### Why is it important to maintain, build and support parent engagement?

- Parent engagement strategies help parents to develop new capacities, skills, and knowledge they can use again and again to strengthen their families and communities.
- The most effective service systems and community initiatives are guided by what parents say they need to be stronger and better parents, and by a commitment to obtaining regular feedback from families about programs and services.
- It is important to maintain the commitments and momentum of parents who have invested the time to organize themselves and make a positive difference. Engaged and empowered parents can work together to continue implementing strategies that strengthen families long after an initiative has ended.

### What does success look like?

Parents are working with one another, agencies, and community partners to continue strengthening programs, neighborhoods and families in a variety of they have chosen for themselves. This includes:

- Parents helping to organize and lead family and community initiatives.
- Agencies and community groups turning to parents for their input, expertise, and guidance in program planning and policy development.
- Parents regularly engaging in community and agency decisions about their children.

## III. Sustaining and Improving Parent Engagement

### How did this effort come about?

Local parents, agency liaisons, and community partners came together for two interactive forums in December 2009 and August 2010 to share their experiences and successes with parent engagement. Their approaches, strategies and lessons learned were also documented in two 2010 publications:

1. A PFF **Parent Engagement Celebration Luncheon Summary Report** that includes recommendations for expanding local efforts to engage parents as full partners in ongoing community initiatives; and
2. The PFF Case Study, entitled **Stories and Lessons from Los Angeles Communities**, which identified the critical need for the continuation of parent engagement strategies and supports established by local PFF Collaboratives.

In addition to PFF representatives, forum participants included parents affiliated with the Department of Children and Family Services' **Parents in Partnership** (PIP) program. Through PIP, Parent Partners who have been through the child welfare system help other newly involved parents work toward their goal of reunifying or maintaining their family. They serve as advocates who help parents to understand their rights within the system and also help to keep lines of communication open between families and service providers.

During the August 2010 forum, parents, agencies and partners agreed on three sustainability strategies as the way to maintain, build, and support parent engagement more broadly: **1) Create a Parent Engagement Roadmap, 2) Develop a Parent Engagement Checklist, and 3) Establish a Parent Engagement Support Network.** They also defined the benefits of each.

“ You have to listen really to what parents have to offer. Asking them to share their interests and abilities and to contribute helps them know you are somebody who appreciates them. Everybody has something to offer – even if it’s drawing from all the positive things they do for their spouses or children they may not talk about – and that’s a very different perspective because it’s not based on need. ”

### STRATEGY #1

Develop a **ROADMAP** to guide agencies and communities so that the most effective parent engagement strategies are utilized in programs, initiatives, and collaboratives.

#### Why Create a Roadmap?

A Roadmap defines what a group believes is most important to achieving its goals, including the values and principles that guide its decisions and actions. Having a Parent Engagement Roadmap – that is defined by parents and partners – helps communities and organizations establish a consistent set of standards and a defined path to success.

#### What We’ve Learned from Experience...

Successful parent engagement efforts are guided by the belief that parents are capable of setting and accomplishing their goals, learning new behaviors, and identifying the help they need to do so. They also recognize and value parents for their unique strengths and experiences, regardless of circumstance.

Rather than adhering to old notions that services “fix” those who need help and support, practitioners engage parents as respected partners working toward goals defined by families.

#### Why Local Parents and Partners Chose This Strategy...

- “A Road Map will help guide us and it will also help others to understand what we’re about and the goals we want to achieve.”
- “It will help parents better understand why parent engagement matters and how to participate at whatever level is best for them.”

“ We really try to accommodate not just the language barrier, but also the childcare and, if possible, the transportation and food. Those are biggies that really do make a difference when inviting parents to show up. ”

## STRATEGY #2

Create a **CHECKLIST** to help agencies and communities assess the effectiveness of parent engagement strategies.

#### Why Develop a Checklist?

A Checklist helps parents and partners assess how well they are doing in following their Roadmap. Self assessments (using a Checklist) allow groups to measure progress achieved toward parent engagement goals and also see how well the strategies they are implementing align with their core values and principles.

#### What We’ve Learned from Experience...

Defining specific outcomes that parent engagement work is expected to bring about, including improvements in family-and community well-being or service systems, will enable partners to determine if and when they are successful. Checklists can also be used by groups to define areas of strength and needed improvement based on progress achieved. Routinely assessing a group’s activities is an effective way to keep parent engagement efforts on track.

#### Why Local Parents and Partners Chose This Strategy...

- “This tool can provide checkpoints to help us see how we’re doing.”
- “We can use what we learn from the Checklist to create a plan for doing better.”

“ Getting information I can really use for myself and my kids is a big incentive to participate. Even a calendar that lists all of the different free events at the library or other resources in the community is a big help because it saves me the time it would take to look all that up. ”

## STRATEGY #3

Establish a parent engagement **SUPPORT NETWORK** so that programs, initiatives, and community can help each other to achieve success.



### Why Establish a Parent Engagement Support Network?

It creates the opportunity for groups interested in developing effective parent engagement strategies to learn from each other, both within and across communities. A support network allows them to share strategies and successes, and to build knowledge that helps improve their work. It also encourages parents and partners to share what is or is not working well in a way that supports the development of new ideas and strategies. Instead of looking for problems that need to be fixed, people develop options for action.

### What We've Learned from Experience...

Peer support networks are effective because people learn best when they can compare their own experiences and work to what others are doing in a respectful, trusting environment. It enables parents and partners to combine the knowledge they have from multiple areas so that they can work together to create community solutions more easily and quickly. Peer networking also increases the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the sources of information and help available in communities. By connecting diverse groups of families, agencies, and community members, they expand the perspectives and “voices” that are engaged in assisting and learning from each other. Furthermore, they help people develop a new sense of what is possible beyond their own experiences while equipping them with the knowledge and relationships they need to take action on behalf of families.

“First impressions mean a lot. As a parent, I appreciate when groups really focus on making their activities enjoyable. Otherwise, you lose interest.”

### Why Local Parents and Partners Chose This Strategy...

- “It will increase shared understanding across communities about what really keeps parents involved.”
- “The more communities learn from each other, the more their ‘toolbox’ of parent engagement options grows and they can avoid doing what didn’t work elsewhere.”
- “Agencies and parents across communities could consult with each other about common challenges.”
- “Partners would be better able to build on engagement strategies used throughout the region, including how they complement each other and can be connected.”

After these three sustainability strategies were identified, a volunteer planning group of local partners was formed to help guide their development and implementation. During a September 2010 planning meeting, group members devised a plan to conduct conversations with parents and agency partners in order to define the essential elements of each strategy. Quotes and highlights from those conversations are documented as examples in **Section IV: Achieving Success: Guide for Creating Your Own Strategies**.

## IV. Achieving Success: Guide for Creating Your Own Strategies

### ➔ STRATEGY #1 CREATING A PARENT ENGAGEMENT ROADMAP

<p><b>What is a Roadmap?</b></p> 	<p>A Roadmap is a guide for agencies and communities that lays out basic beliefs, goals, and practices that specify how the group will work together to support parent engagement. It defines what a network of parents and agency partners believe is most important in a parent engagement strategy.</p> <p>In addition, a Roadmap outlines the steps groups can follow to achieve parent engagement goals, allowing them to plan how they want to move forward or improve what they are already doing.</p>
<p><b>Example</b></p>	<p>The <b>Roadmap</b> may establish a standard that all parent engagement activities are planned with and led by parents. This preferred practice might be based on a belief that parents know best what they and other parents need and that parents are also talented, capable leaders who have valuable experience and wisdom to share.</p>
<p><b>How this strategy helps</b></p>	<p>Having a <b>Parent Engagement Roadmap</b> – that is agreed to by parents and partners—can help communities establish a set of standards to aim for and build upon. It helps stakeholder groups agree on where they want to go, decide how they want to get there, and stay on course.</p>

“ Two of our long-standing Parent Café groups have now become Neighborhood Action Councils. With the parent cafés, they started out sharing their experiences and learning from each other about what it takes to keep their families strong. The strong bonds and relationships parents formed at the cafés kept them coming back again and again. Then, as their comfort, confidence and awareness of building protective factors grew, the group focus broadened to improving their neighborhood and schools. Now they’re learning how to approach city council members and public officials to advocate for the things they want...so they’re not just a group of parents supporting each other; they’re a force for change in the community. ”

## A Roadmap Guide

Here are some examples of core values, principles and strategies that others have found helpful in their efforts to engage parents and keep them engaged. If you agree with some or all, you might want to include them in your Roadmap along with any new ones you may come up with on your own.

### Elements of Successful Parent Engagement Strategies

- 1. A welcoming environment:** Both community gathering places and the behavior of partners reflect open, and family-friendly environments that are non-threatening and nonjudgmental.
  - Create safe spaces for families to gather, socialize and engage with each other through the hosting of family nights, back-to-school events and holiday celebrations.
- 2. Focus on strengths and self-empowerment:** Parents are viewed as powerful forces capable of changing not only their lives, but also entire neighborhoods. Effective engagement is based on democratic principles of self-determination, citizen voice, and participatory decision-making.
  - Work with parents as partners and leaders by valuing the contributions that they can make and designing engagement activities to find out what parents want.
  - Use knowledge and information to help parents realize their power, and create opportunities for them to help each other. Parents appreciate activities designed to help them to learn how to improve their relationships with their children, experience individual growth, and build leadership skills.
- 3. Focus on results:** Clear, jointly defined outcomes are continually reviewed to determine if engagement goals are being achieved and results are meeting parents' needs. This type of ongoing assessment provides an opportunity to make improvements, if necessary.
- 4. A learning approach:** Engagement strategies can be adapted as experience demonstrates what does and doesn't work well.
  - Listen to parents' points of view about parent engagement and make the effort to learn from them what they think will work best. Very importantly, seek their input on how to increase the number of parents who participate to ensure better relationships with other parents.
  - Support parents and workers learning together and find ways to better understand how they can achieve goals set by families.
- 5. Respect for individual experiences, views and cultures:** Treat parents with dignity and incorporate an awareness of their culture, heritage, language(s), and customs in the services and supports that are offered to them.
- 6. Network building:** Create opportunities for all parents to develop new, mutually supportive relationships and social connections.
  - Create opportunities for parents to support other parents through parent mentoring and other in-home support activities. Other examples include parent advocacy groups that provide peer help and direction when needed.
- 7. Sustained engagement:** Embrace parent engagement as an integral part of ongoing planning and decision-making.
  - Provide a variety of parent engagement activities that allow parents to increase and deepen their participation as their interest and skills grow.

**8. Community-driven:** Ensure that engagement activities are based on community-defined priorities and reflect what parents believe is important.

- Offer parent education programs and activities that engage parents in learning about topics they say would be interesting and helpful.

**9. Inclusiveness:** Make every effort to ensure that engaged parents and partners reflect the diversity of community members.



## Developing Your Own Parent Engagement Roadmap: Helpful Questions for Parents and Partners

### Crafting Your Message

1. How would creating a Parent Engagement Roadmap benefit your work and community? (What difference would it make for you, your group/organization, and families?)
2. How would your Roadmap be used (for trainings, planning, reviews, or other purposes)?

### Defining What Is Most Important

3. Looking at the guide on page 8, what core values and strategies would you recommend for your Roadmap?
4. Are there any other elements not listed that you would add?

### What's Your Plan of Action?

5. What kinds of goals and strategies would you choose to implement your Roadmap elements?
6. How would you define success? What would it look like?
7. What can you do together with parents and partners to finish and implement the Roadmap? How will you obtain their input and buy in?
8. What materials and support will you need to help explain the Roadmap to others and encourage their participation in its development?

## Community Voices:

**“We started with outreach to school districts. It made sense to go where parents already were, to a familiar place where they could meet on their terms in comfortable surroundings. It also worked well because we could piggy back on after school child care as a support to parents, which really helped cut down our own program costs.”**

**“Parents really like to be recognized. Keeping track of their accomplishments and contributions is very important, so we find ways to acknowledge them and encourage their momentum.”**

**“It is important that parents feel free to try new things and not be judged, even if they don't succeed. Even if you make a mistake, you're still learning. That's what building the confidence to try new things is all about, and before you know it, parents see a whole new world ahead of them.”**

## Charting a Course: A Parent Engagement Roadmap Tool

You can copy or print this template to fill out with parents and partners when developing updating your group's Roadmap. A pdf copy of this toolkit can be downloaded for printing at [www.cssp.org/growingandsustainingparentengagementtoolkit](http://www.cssp.org/growingandsustainingparentengagementtoolkit).

Name of Group/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Location \_\_\_\_\_ Project \_\_\_\_\_

- Goals/Results We Want to Achieve:** What will be different when more parents are engaged in our community efforts? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What do we believe about the value and importance of engaging parents? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What do we believe about the roles parents can and/or should play in our community efforts? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is there anything we need to do differently or better to engage more parents and keep them engaged? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What actions can we take to uphold our values and achieve our goals?

ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	WHO WILL HELP
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

## Achieving Success: Guide for Creating Your Own Strategies

### ➔ STRATEGY #2 CREATING A PARENT ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

<p><b>What is a Checklist?</b></p>	<p>A Checklist is a self-assessment tool groups can use to review how well they are doing with following the Parent Engagement Roadmap.</p>
<p><b>Examples</b></p> 	<p>Building on the previous Roadmap standard that all <b>parent engagement activities are planned with and led by parents</b>, a Checklist might include the following question:</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being all and 1 being none), what score would you give your group when asked whether all parent engagement activities are planned and led by parents?</p> <p>Or, if the Roadmap included a value that <b>parent engagement activities are located in the community</b>, the Checklist might ask groups to assess how they are doing by asking:</p> <p>Of the parent engagement activities you sponsor, how successful has your group been with finding ways to host activities in multiple community-based venues? Please rate your assessment on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being very successful, 1 being not so successful yet).</p>
<p><b>How this strategy helps</b></p>	<p><b>A Parent Engagement Checklist</b> allows you to check your own progress and determine what may need to be done differently or better to achieve parent engagement goals.</p>



## Developing Your Own Parent Engagement Checklist: Key Questions for Parent and Partners

**NOTE:** Before completing the questions, make sure to complete the Parent Engagement Roadmap section on pages 7-9 first.

### Crafting Your Message & Engaging Others

1. How would having a Parent Engagement Checklist benefit your work and community?  
What difference would it make for your group/organization and local families?
2. Who else should be a part of developing the Checklist (other parents, staff and partners)?
3. What materials and support will you need to help explain the Checklist to others and encourage their participation in its development?

### What Will You Measure?

4. How are the Roadmap elements you identified already demonstrated in your work?  
What strategies do you use to implement them?
5. For Roadmap elements that have not been addressed yet, what strategies would you use to implement them?
6. For each strategy you identified, what Checklist questions would you ask to assess how you are doing? Would you use a numbered scale or other method of measurement?  
(See Helpful Tips for Creating Checklist Rating Scales next page)

### Using the Checklist

7. How will you collect and review information with the Checklist?
8. How will information gathered from the Checklist be used?
9. How often should an assessment using the Checklist be completed and by whom?

## Community Voices:

**“Families and partners get to tell us what they did or didn’t get out of an activity. If goals aren’t met, we problem solve together. We also roll out a customer satisfaction survey every few months that helps keep us on track.”**

**“A lot of parent activities are like a bad party, with people not talking to each other or feeling awkward....and it seem like people just don’t know how to connect anymore because we’re all busy with our own lives. With the parent cafés it helps a lot because the structure for conversation is already worked out. People are so much more comfortable and something special happens that takes you to a new level of friendship and communication.”**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PARENT CAFÉS, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.KEEPYOURFAMILYSTRONG.ORG](http://WWW.KEEPYOURFAMILYSTRONG.ORG)

**“Evaluating where you’re at is not about perfection. It’s about improvement and gaining more knowledge that will help you get to where you want to go.”**

## Helpful Tips & Examples for Creating Checklist Rating Scales

### For each of the elements and strategies included in your Roadmap:

1. Decide how you are going to determine if your group is successful. (It may help to review your answers to Question #6 on page 9 as a starting point.)
  - a. How will you know if your group is making progress toward those goals?  
How will you gather and use feedback from parents?
  - b. What are the specific outcomes and improvements your goals and activities are expected to bring about?
  - c. How will you know if your group is making progress toward those goals?  
How will you gather and use feedback from parents?
2. Once you have identified your desired outcomes, agree on a starting point (aka where you are now). This becomes your baseline from which you will assess future progress.
3. Working from your starting point, identify target milestones that you will use to assess your immediate, short-term, and long-term progress.

## Sample Scales

Here are a couple examples of scales the might be included in a  
Parent Engagement Checklist:

FATHERS ARE ENGAGED AS ACTIVE LEADERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN OUR COMMUNITY BUILDING EFFORTS.

Never	Very Rarely	Occasionally	About Half the Time	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6

RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE WELL-REPRESENTED AT OUR  
PARENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

## Achieving Success: Guide for Creating Your Own Strategies

### ➔ STRATEGY #3 CREATING A PARENT ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK

<p><b>What is a Support Network?</b></p>	<p><b>A Parent Engagement Support Network</b> consists of a group of parents and community partners that share ideas, strategies, and mutual support to strengthen parent engagement efforts within and across many communities.</p>
<p><b>Example</b></p> 	<p>The Roadmap might include a core element such as <b>‘engage fathers in all family activities’</b> that communities may be having a tough time implementing. To help resolve this challenge, the Support Network might organize a cross community meeting to discuss what’s been learned about father engagement strategies and challenges that could lead to new ideas and solutions.</p> <p>The Support Network might also include different peer-to-peer networks for specific groups, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-to-parent networks</li> <li>• Youth networks</li> <li>• Father networks</li> <li>• Grandparent networks</li> </ul>
<p><b>How this strategy helps</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It builds local knowledge and resources that are needed to develop effective parent engagement strategies, thereby creating a learning community.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from one another increases understanding across communities about what really works and helps stakeholders avoid repeating what didn’t work elsewhere.</li> <li>• Communities will be better able to connect and build on different strategies used, creating more options for parents to lead and participate in various activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. It promotes relationship building and social connections that increase available mutual supports for parents and community partners.</li> </ol>

## A Recipe for Networking Success

Experience has shown that peer support networks work well when:

- 1. A diverse mix of stakeholders are involved** and a high priority is placed on involving parents and other community residents as learning partners.
- 2. Shared learning objectives have been clearly defined** and participants understand: **1.** what is driving the need to learn from each other, **2.** what specific issues do people want to learn more about, and **3.** what will be different as a result of the learning that will take place?
- 3. The goal is not to copy one group or community's approach**, it is to support participants in creating strategies that will work best for their communities.
- 4. Participants have an opportunity to interact with others who share similar roles** and responsibilities in their groups, families, and communities.
- 5. In person gatherings are held in comfortable settings that are accessible to parents** and community members, with food, child care, translation support, and other incentives .
- 6. Open, interactive discussion** and balanced participation is encouraged from all.
- 7. Network meetings provide time for reflection and commitment to follow-up actions** so that participants have an opportunity to review accomplishments and identify next steps.



“The beauty of a support network is that a little nucleus of parents who create something that’s working well in their community can go to another place and connect with a parent leader who can draw other parents to share it with, and on and on. Then you’ve got that good thing going on all across the area and the next thing you’re onto is spreading the work in different cities, working together as leaders, sharing their beliefs and talents for a common goal.”



## Developing a Parent Engagement Support Network: Key Questions for Parents and Partners

### Crafting Your Message & Engaging Others in Planning

1. What benefit will a Support Network add to your parent engagement work and community?  
What difference will it make for your group/organization and local families?
2. How would you describe the Network?
3. What family and community issues do parents and PFF partners want to learn more about?  
How can you find out what is most important to them?
4. What other parent and partner groups and/or communities would you like to include in your Support Network? (How will you make sure that the people who participate have diverse experiences and perspectives?)
5. Who else (other parents, staff or partners) should be involved in helping to plan and create a Support Network?
6. What kinds of materials and support will you need to engage other parents and partners in developing a Support Network?



**How Adults Learn:** Tests have shown that people remember 20% of what they hear, 40% of what they hear and see, and 80% of what they discover for themselves.

## Setting Up The Network

7. How will the Network operate?
  - a. How will members be selected and engaged?
  - b. How will learning agendas be established and put into action?
  - c. Who will coordinate activities and communications?
8. How can agencies make sure parents are involved as partners in the Support Network?
  - a. What kinds of activities, supports, and incentives would encourage parents to participate?
  - b. What approaches to sharing helpful information and ideas work best for parents?
  - c. What kind of materials will you need to get started with outreach to peers?
9. What are the best ways to help parents connect and build supportive relationships with each other?
10. What challenges can you imagine and how might they be addressed?

### Community Voices:

“Parents are really interested in the health and well-being of the children, but a network should not only involve agency staff. It should include representatives from different parent groups and organizations who come to share what they are doing, experiencing, and learning as parents.”

“Parents are not just listeners. They are important participants who are fully capable of leading and contributing to every part of a project or meeting, whether it’s creating the agenda, providing food, taking notes or sending reminders using email or a phone tree.”

“Meeting somewhere you feel safe and comfortable is important to me [as a parent]. Places where you feel the warmth of the environment, even by how the room is set up or decorated, makes a big difference.”



## V. Toolkit Resources: Source Materials & Recommended Tools

### 1. PARTNERSHIPS FOR FAMILIES: Stories and Lessons from Los Angeles Communities (Includes Parent Engagement Celebration Luncheon Report – Appendix H)

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/partnerships-for-families-stories-and-lessons-from-los-angeles-communities-2010.pdf>

### 2. HELP ON THE WAY: Communities Getting the Results They Want from Peer Matches

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/neighborhood-investment/help-on-the-way-communities-getting-the-results-they-want-from-peer-matches.pdf>

### 3. COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING LEARNING GUIDES

#### a. Working Together To Achieve Results

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/working-together-to-improve-results-final.pdf>

#### b. Theory and Purpose of Local Decision-Making

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/top-five/theory-and-purpose-of-local-decisionmaking-learning-guide-1.pdf>

#### c. Working With Members

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/working-with-members-learningguide-2.pdf>

#### d. Setting A Community Agenda

[http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/setting-a-community-agenda-learningguide\\_3.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/setting-a-community-agenda-learningguide_3.pdf)

#### e. Strategies to Achieve Results

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/top-five/strategies-to-achieve-results-learningguide-4.pdf>

#### f. Financing and Budgeting Strategies

[http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/financing-and-budgeting-strategies-learningguide\\_5.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/financing-and-budgeting-strategies-learningguide_5.pdf)

#### g. Using Data To Ensure Accountability

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/constituents-co-invested-in-change/community-decision-making/using-data-to-ensure-accountability-learningguide-6.pdf>

### 4. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP: To Improve Results for Children and Youth Families and Communities

<http://www.cssp.org/publications/documents/resident-engagement-and-leadership-to-improve-results-for-children-and-youth-families-pdf>

### 5. PARENT & COMMUNITY CAFÉS

[http://www.strengtheningfamiliesillinois.org/index.php/line/category/parent\\_cafe/](http://www.strengtheningfamiliesillinois.org/index.php/line/category/parent_cafe/)

<http://www.thecommunitycafe.com/>





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