



Keep Connected Institute for Strengthening Family Relationships

Participant Workbook Day 3

October 21, 2020





The Keep Connected Implementation Toolkit

www.KeepConnected.info/register-login/

User name: (your email address)

Password: KiwiLadder*46

(Passwords are linked to specific email addresses. Only people who have attended the Keep Connected Institute can receive a password linked to an email to access the Implementation Toolkit)

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The Backstory of Keep Connected</p> <p>Key ideas, rationale, background, and research base for <i>Keep Connected</i>.</p> | <p>Planning and Organizing <i>Keep Connected</i> Workshops</p> <p>Features and logistics of planning and organizing <i>Keep Connected</i> workshops.</p> | <p>Inviting Families—and Keeping Them Coming</p> <p>Strategies and tools to tackle participation challenges.</p> |
| Wednesday | | |
| <p>Materials for Leading Workshops</p> <p>Facilitator’s guides, handouts, and other materials (English and Spanish).</p> | <p>Facilitation Guidelines and Strategies</p> <p>Ideas for facilitating sessions with youth, parents, and families together.</p> | <p>Feedback and Evaluation Resources</p> <p>Surveys and feedback forms to get and give feedback on <i>Keep Connected</i>.</p> |
| Thursday | | |
| <p>Extend <i>Keep Connected</i> Beyond the Workshops</p> <p>More opportunities for families to connect, learn, and lead.</p> | <p>Material from <i>Keep Connected</i> Institute</p> <p>Access workbooks and other materials from the <i>Keep Connected</i> Institute.</p> | <p>Promotional Tools and Resources</p> <p>Tools to generate interest and reinforce person-to-person outreach.</p> |
| Friday | | |



Planning for Keep Connected: At a Glance

Here are the building blocks of a comprehensive plan for hosting Keep Connected.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Families: Get to know families*, their priorities and interests (p. 4). Invite them to be part of <i>Keep Connected</i> . | Organization: Understand your organization’s goals, capacity, and mindset regarding family engagement (p. 5). | Shared Agenda: Connect families’ priorities and your organization’s priorities (p. 6). How can <i>Keep Connected</i> be a win-win? |
| Format: What format of Keep Connected will you use (p. 7)? When do you want to offer it (p. 8)? | Schedule: When will you schedule the workshops to be most workable for families? How will you get their input? | People (leadership and staffing): Who will facilitate youth and parent sessions (p. 8)? Who will provide childcare? Other staff needed? |
| Language and access services: Will you invite families who need these services? How will you provide them? (p. 8) | Childcare: What provisions will you make for families who have younger children (p. 8)? | Facilities: Where will you host sessions that will be welcoming and convenient and provide needed space (p. 8)? |
| Transportation: What will families need? What options are available (p. 8). | Technology: If using a virtual format, how can you ensure that families have needed technology (p. 8)? | Partnerships: What partnerships might be possible to enhance any part of this planning (p. 8)? |
| Shared Family Meals: How will they be provided? How could you make these a community-building time (p. 9)? | Budget: How much will it cost (p. 10)? How will these costs be covered? | Materials/supplies: Will you gather supplies for all the sessions in advance (p. 11)? |

* Remember, you don’t need to get to know everyone at once. Keep Connected is designed for 6-10 families.

Setting a Timeline for Launching Keep Connected

Each situation and organization is different in its readiness to plan, organize, and host its first workshop series. After the Keep Connected Institute, leaders often go through the following steps to get organized (with rough estimates of how much time it might take, depending on readiness, other activities, and time of year):

8 to 12 weeks before the workshop series:

- Build broader organizational understanding, buy-in, and support (if they don’t have it already). This can happen quickly, or it may require several months.
- Bring together a planning team, which ideally includes youth and parents. Establish or clarify goals and purpose for offering *Keep Connected*.
- Set a schedule, secure facilities, and finalize other basics of organizing workshops.

3 to 6 weeks before the workshop series:

- Invite families to participate (which will take longer if you don’t have existing relationships or connections).
- Organize logistics, gather supplies, and begin preparing to facilitate sessions.

Launch the workshop series, which takes seven weeks, if offered weekly and if doing the full series.



Set Up *Keep Connected* for Success

Aligning Your Organization and Families *(Use these worksheets to keep your own notes)*

Each organization has specific ways of planning and specific issues to address. Some of the issues on the next few pages may be relevant; others won't be. And there may be others you know about that are not listed. Use what's here as a starting point, combined with your own experience and expertise.

We recommend starting with families so that your efforts are centered around relationships with, within, and among families from the very beginning.

| Families in Your Community | |
|--|--|
| <p>Which families do you hope to engage, involve, support, or empower?</p> | |
| <p>What do you know about their strengths, priorities, challenges, and dreams?</p> <p><i>How can you find out more information? If you don't know a lot, how might you learn more? Better yet, who do you know who might introduce you?</i></p> | |
| <p>What is your current relationship with them?</p> <p><i>How do they view your organization? How many would you greet by name if you saw them in a park? Who are bridge-builders with and within their networks?</i></p> | |
| <p>Families' aspirations, hopes, and priorities</p> <p><i>What are families' needs, goals or priorities? How do you know?</i></p> | |
| <p>Families' strengths, gifts, and contributions</p> <p><i>How do you know? Do they recognize, share, or celebrate them?</i></p> | |
| <p>What systemic, institutional, or other barriers make it difficult for these families to achieve their aspirations?</p> | |
| | |



| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Organizational Context and Leadership <i>Vision, Commitment, Goals, and Challenges</i></p> | <p>What’s happening in your organization, it’s history, its goals, and its attitudes can all affect what you do and its success.</p> |
| <p>What are your organizations’ overall priorities and goals? How do they relate to partnering with families? <i>Is engaging families seen as integral or “nice but not necessary”?</i></p> | |
| <p>What are your organization’s current family engagement efforts? How are they going? How are they perceived? <i>How will current or past efforts affect how a new effort will be received or perceived?</i></p> | |
| <p>List some challenges your organization faces in engaging families intentionally and inclusively? <i>How many are related to mindsets, competing priorities, and other agendas that need to be considered? Where is there potential alignment or opportunities to address these challenges?</i></p> | |
| <p>Do you have individuals or a group who are eager to “champion” relationship-centered family engagement? <i>Do they have influence on their colleagues to welcome Keep Connected? Who are other allies and influencers who can help make this effort successful?</i></p> | |
| <p>How does a relationship-centered approach align with the values and goals of your organization? Where are there connections?</p> | |
| <p>How do your organizational priorities intersect with the goals, strengths, aspirations, and priorities of families? <i>If you can, consider co-creating your agenda for families with families. Some ideas for doing that are on page 6.</i></p> | |
| <p>How might families’ agendas align with your organization’s agenda? And does the relationship-centered approach and Keep Connected intersect with those shared agendas? <i>If it doesn’t it may not be the right resource for right now. Consider other ways to focus your relationship-centered family partnership-building efforts.</i></p> | |



Co-Create an Agenda for Youth and Families WITH Families

Here are some ideas for ways to get started:

1. **Start with building relationships and trust.** Everything else will be easier once you know them and they know you.
2. **Listen first.** Just asking for input after a plan is created either invites conflict or creates a lot of extra work if their ideas are not at all in sync.
3. **Tie opportunities to interests.** Some parenting adults will have expertise and interests that will be a major contribution in some areas, but they could become completely bored in others.
4. **Give extra time,** recognizing that their participation is voluntary, often on top of one or more jobs as well as their family responsibilities.
5. **Capitalize on the cultural strengths and connections** that families bring. Some may connect with communities (such as immigrant communities) who might otherwise be less likely to give input into a shared agenda. These families could be strategic in adding important voices to the conversation.
6. **Identify a variety of opportunities to engage parenting adults** in co-creating the agenda from simple, quick feedback surveys to serving on ongoing task forces or boards, recognizing that different families will have varied levels of interest and capacity to participate at different times.
7. **Cultivate leaders over time,** building relationships and capacities to work with you and to understand both the opportunities and limitations for engagement within your organization.
8. **Engage parent leaders as full partners** in listening and learning, in shaping plans and making decisions about what to do.



Keep Connected: How Might It Best Fit in Your Setting?

Keep Connected strengthens youth-parent relationships during the middle school years by offering a shared family experience in which youth and parenting adults reflect on, practice, and commit to shared actions that bring—and keep—they together.

Available variations

| | Who It Is For | Participants | Time Commitment | Format | Notes |
|--|--|--------------------------|---|-----------|---|
| Keep Connected: Full In-Person Series for Youth and Parenting Adults | Parents & middle school youth together | 6 – 10 families | 2 hours (including a meal) over 7 sessions (usually weekly) | In person | This version is the only version that has been extensively used and tested. |
| Keep Connected: Reducing Risks by Strengthening Relationships | Parents & middle school youth together | 6 – 10 families | 2 hours, 1 session (designed to be added to the full series); can also be standalone. | In Person | This module adds a prevention focus to the <i>Keep Connected</i> series. |
| Keep Connected: Full In-Person Series for Parenting Adults Only | Parenting Adults Only | 8-12 parenting adults | 2 hours (including a meal) over 7 sessions (usually weekly) | In Person | Parallel content to the youth-parent sessions, but without youth involvement. |
| READY IN JANUARY 2021 Keep Connected: Short In-Person Series for Youth and Parenting Adults | Parents & middle school youth together | 6 – 10 families | 90 minutes per session; 4 sessions | In Person | This will be a pilot version, and we will be asking for feedback as it is used. |
| READY IN JANUARY 2021 Keep Connected: Short Virtual Series for Parenting Adults | Parenting Adults Only | 15 – 20 parenting adults | 1 hour per session; 4 sessions | Virtual | This will be a pilot version, and we will be asking for feedback as it is used. |



| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Facilities, Meals, Budgets, and Other Logistics</p> <p>Many of these logistics are critical for ensuring that everyone feels truly welcomed and included</p> | <p>What do you need to plan for logistically when you decide to do the full Keep Connected Workshop Series?</p> |
| <p>Timing</p> <p><i>When do you plan to offer the workshop series? (6 sessions + graduation. Each session takes 2 hours, including a meal.) Also remember the other options for format—Page 9</i></p> <p><i>Day of the week? Time of day/evening?</i></p> <p><i>Frequency? (Weekly? Biweekly? Other?)</i></p> <p><i>Tentative start date?</i></p> | |
| <p>People</p> <p><i>Each workshop series is designed for 6 to 10 families</i></p> <p><i>Two facilitators (for youth, for parents)</i></p> <p><i>Language services</i></p> <p><i>Childcare for younger children (What will be needed to make it easier for families to participate?)</i></p> <p><i>Other supports need?</i></p> | |
| <p>Facility</p> <p><i>Space for youth and parents to gather separately, and then to come together for the family session. (It usually works best for the parents to move to the youth space so you don't have to shuttle the youth around.)</i></p> <p><i>Space for shared meal.</i></p> <p><i>Space for childcare.</i></p> | |
| <p>Shared Family Meals (p. 9)</p> <p><i>What options would work for providing a meal?</i></p> <p><i>School meal service? Takeout (restaurant donate?) Potluck? Families cook together? Other?</i></p> | |
| <p>Transportation</p> <p><i>What will families (parents and youth) need? What options are available in your community?</i></p> | |
| <p>Technology (only needed for virtual for virtual formats)</p> <p><i>How can you ensure that families have what's needed to participate?</i></p> | |
| <p>Partnerships</p> <p><i>Allies who could build bridges to families; share space, transportation, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Sponsors who might offset some costs.</i></p> | |
| <p>Materials/Supplies</p> <p><i>Reproducing handouts for sessions. Minimal supplies for sessions. (Many can be reused the next time.)</i></p> | <p>See master supply list on page 10-11</p> |



The Shared Family Meal

A shared family meal is a critical part of the *Keep Connected* experience for families. Not only does it meet a practical need for many families, but it also sets a tone of conversation and mutual care for the sessions. It gives them time to pause from their daily rush to transition from whatever went on during their day to the workshops.

Most sessions allow for about ten minutes of unstructured time for families to settle in and get food followed by an introduction to the topics that will be covered in that day's session. Activities during the shared family meal are designed to happen as families eat, so they tend to be less interactive than other workshop activities. The purpose is to provide information to participants that sets the tone and context for the rest of the workshop.



The Food

Each organization has different available resources for a shared meal. During the pilot project, groups did the following:

- Invited families to prepare the meal together.
- Served families in the school cafeteria, which catered the meal.
- Asked families what kind of carryout they wanted, and then picked it up for the next session.

In planning the meals, be aware of any food sensitivities or restrictions due to dietary concerns, cultural or religious practices, and health. Part of making the series welcoming for all is for them to be able to enjoy the meal together.

Other Ways to Enhance the Family Meal

A good meal may not need to be enhanced for it to be enjoyable and meaningful for families. However, consider the following:

- Provide **comfortable seating** for the families so they can enjoy talking with each other.
- Provide **quiet music** that helps create a relaxing atmosphere as families arrive and settle in.
- Put **discussion-starter questions** on the tables. You can use commercially available discussion starters. You might use the questions that are provided in the at-home packet for each session of *Keep Connected*. Or, you can find additional discussion starters in the “talk about it” sections on www.KeepConnected.info.



Budget Worksheet

Here are some budget considerations for *Keep Connected* workshop series.

(Budget examples provided as a starting point. They are based on costs from one school that participated in the pilot. They will vary greatly by size of the group and available resources in a particular community/organization.) SEE SAMPLE BUDGET BELOW.

| | Notes | Budget Notes |
|--|-------|--|
| People <i>Facilitators (for youth, for parents)</i> <i>Language services, including ASL, if needed</i> <i>Other support</i> | | <i>Example: \$180 for facilitators/session; \$50 for translator/session</i> |
| Child Care <i>What will be needed to make it easier for families to participate? Primary cost: Childcare staffing.</i> | | <i>Example: \$30/session</i> |
| Facility <i>Space for youth and parents to gather separately. Space for shared meal. Space for childcare.</i> <i>Accessibility for all families to participate.</i> | | <i>Example: No charge. However some organizations may choose to rent space that is neutral</i> |
| Shared Family Meals <i>What options would work for providing a meal?</i> | | <i>Example: \$150/session</i> |
| Transportation <i>What will families (parents and youth) need? What options are available in your community?</i> | | <i>Example: \$24/session</i> |
| Materials/Supplies <i>Reproducing handouts for sessions. Minimal supplies for sessions. (Many can be reused the next time.)</i> | | <i>Example: \$19/session</i> |
| Other Costs | | |

Sample Budget

| Fall 2017 | Session 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Total |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Certified Staff (3) | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$180.00 | \$1,260.00 |
| Success Coach (1) | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$350.00 |
| Support staff -Childcare Supervision (1) | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$30.00 | \$210.00 |
| Food | \$180.00 | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | \$150.00 | Potluck | \$930.00 |
| Transportation | | \$24.00 | | | | | | |
| Supplies- purchased and used over multiple sessions. | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | \$19.00 | |
| Totals | \$459.00 | \$453.00 | \$429.00 | \$429.00 | \$429.00 | \$429.00 | \$279.00 | \$2,750.00 |
| Supplies- purchased and used over multiple sessions. | | | | | | | | |
| 3m Flip charts | \$38.00 | | | | | | | |
| Name tags | \$21.00 | | | | | | | |
| Canvas | \$24.00 | | | | | | | |
| Stencils | \$20.00 | | | | | | | |
| Paints | \$20.00 | | | | | | | |
| Brushes | \$10.00 | | | | | | | |
| 133/7=\$19.00 | \$133.00 | | | | | | | |



Keep Connected Master Supply List

| Supplies | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 | Session 5 | Session 6 | Session 7 |
|---|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Bin | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Sign in Sheet | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Nametags | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Flipcharts (4 total) | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Easels (2 total) | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Parking Lot (opt) | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Talking Piece (opt) | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| 3 ring binder (1 per person) | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Boxes (1 per family total=12 x/ example) (non coated, able to color with markers) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Markers | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Pens | • | • | • | • | • | • | |
| Index Cards | • (3 per parent) | • (1 per parent) | | | | | |
| Bouncing Ball | • | | | | | | |
| Blank paper | | | • | • | • | | |
| Sticky Notes | • (10-15 per family) | • (5-6 per person) | | | • (8-10 per parent) | | |
| Ribbon (2" width) | | • (cut in 12 inch strips, 1 per person) | | | | | |
| Yellow Construction Paper | | | • (Cut into 6 inch suns) | | | | |
| Glue Sticks or Tape | | • | • | • | | | |
| Sticky Dots (about 1") | | | | • (5 per adult) | | | |
| 3-4 Sets of blocks (i.e. Jenga, building blocks, dominoes, NO Legos) | | | | • (1 set for each group of 3 or 4) | | | |



| Supplies | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 | Session 5 | Session 6 | Session 7 |
|---|---|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Rubber bands (wide enough to write on) | | | | • | | | |
| Fine Point Sharpies | | | | • | | | |
| Blindfolds (handkerchiefs?) | | | | | • (1 per youth) | | |
| Beach Ball | | | | | • | | |
| Construction Paper Arrows (fit on side of box or in box) | | | | | • (1 per family) | | |
| 3 cardboard boxes (storage size) | | | | | | • | |
| Bean bags (3 total) | | | | | | • | |
| Handouts (from website) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| Signs: | • (2 each) Really Important/Not at all Important | • (1 each) Like It!/Don't like it/It's embarrassing | • (12 topics: Page 21) | • (mini posters: page 36) | | • (mini posters: 7 pit stops from handout 6.3) | |
| Parent & Youth Survey | | | | | | • | |
| Graduation programs | | | | | | | • (Template in materials/Website) |
| Graduation Certificates | | | | | | | • (Template in materials/Website) |
| Posted pictures from sessions or selfies (opt) | | | | | | | • |
| Decorations (opt) | | | | | | | • |
| Take away gifts (opt) | | | | | | | • |

Optional Items: *150 Ways to Show You Care* packets from Search Institute








Tools for Inviting Families (Instead of Recruiting Them)

The Foundation (p. 14): Start with listening • Recognize families partners • Partner with trusted allies

- Build trust with families (see material from Day 2)
- Attend to the barriers, particularly when you can remove them, not just work around them (p. 15)

Connect with Families through the Developmental Relationships Framework

Pages 16 to 26 offer tips and tools for connecting with and inviting families that tie to each of the elements of a developmental relationship. Use this chart to select the ones you want to come back to as priorities.

| Express Care | Challenge Growth | Provide Support | Share Power | Expand Possibilities |
|--|--|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Tips and Tools | | | | |
| <p><u>Tips:</u> Connecting with Families through Expressing Care</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Listening to Understand</p> | <p><u>Tips:</u> Connecting with Families through Challenging Growth</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Learn and Keep Track of Families' Goals & Progress</p> | <p><u>Tips:</u> Connecting with Families through Providing Support</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> How Do You Want to Grow?</p> | <p><u>Tips:</u> Connecting with Families through Sharing Power</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Sharing Power Relies on Two-Way Communication</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Where Are You Now with Sharing Power?</p> | <p><u>Tips:</u> Connecting with Families through Expanding Possibilities</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Weaving a Web of Relationships</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Guest List</p> |
| Notes | | | | |
| | | | | |



Inviting Families—and Keeping Them Coming

How do you focus on building relationships and trust with families as the foundation for their participation and engagement? Here are some practical (though not simple) strategies.

1. Start with listening to families

- *Spend time in places where families spend time.* That may be a coffee shop, barber shop, or sports arena.
- *Listen to their stories and their strengths.* What brought them to where they are today? What really matters to them? What strengths have they tapped that have helped them navigate challenges they've encountered?
- *Set aside judgments.* Don't prejudge their parenting, family composition, cultural practices, or other customs that are unfamiliar.
- *Discover what they'd love to learn to strengthen their families.* These might involve stress points or skills they'd like to build. You'll likely find bridges to *Keep Connected* or other resources.

2. Recognize families as partners, not just recipients

- Remember that partnerships are grounded in trust and relationships.
- Start with the assumption that families know what they need and what they can do—even if you see serious challenges they are facing.
- Invite interested parenting adults and youth to shape how you structure opportunities for families. They are an advisory group of families.

3. Partner with trusted allies

- *Ask people who know youth and parents to invite them.* Focus on building a core group who will talk about their experiences with others.

- *Make it easy for them to tell their stories and invite others to participate.* Be sure they have the information they need to be trustworthy sources about what to expect and the value of the experience.
- *Encourage them to give a "warm handoff."* They might come with those they invite to the workshops or the first session. Or they might introduce new families to the session facilitators in advance of the first workshop.
- *Engage young people.* They can be great recruiters to get their parents and grandparents involved, if they are confident that it will be a worthwhile experience.
- *Connect families with others who have participated.* The best ambassadors are those who have experienced *Keep Connected* and can talk with their friends about their experience.

4. Build trust with families

- Find common ground, whether it's hobbies, music, family experiences, or other interests.
- Highlight the specific ways they would contribute to the group.
- Respect families and be clear that you want the best for them.
- Do not use information you learn in ways that violate their privacy or expectations.
- Help them solve a problem or work on a goal that is important to them.
- Show support for families through meaningful action, not just talk.

Barriers to Connecting with Families

What barriers are particularly challenging in your program, organization and/or community?

| | |
|--|--|
| Practical Barriers <i>Examples: scheduling, transportation, childcare, meals</i> | Personal Concerns <i>Examples: fear of being judged, stigmatized, labeled, diagnosed, compared to others, punished, blamed, or of losing privacy</i> |
| Institutional Barriers <i>Examples: feeling unwelcome in the institution or sponsoring organization, distrust of the sponsoring organization</i> | Historical Barriers <i>Examples: negative past experiences with similar programming or the organization, historically (or currently) excluded from the sponsoring organization</i> |

Tips: Connecting with Families Through Expressing Care

Be Dependable: Be someone I can trust.

- Start by building a foundation of mutual trust.

Listen: Really pay attention when we are together.

- Listen to families to understand their experiences, rather than following your own agenda
- Tool: Listening to Understand (page 15)



Believe in me: Make me feel known and valued.

- Recognize families' strengths and celebrate them.

Be warm: Show me you enjoy being with me.

- Show families you genuinely enjoy being with them.
- **Encourage: Praise me for my efforts and achievements.**
 - Emphasize messages of encouragement and praise for their efforts and achievements - the work they put into parenting - rather than blaming them for challenges or setbacks.



Tool: Listening to Understand

Beyond asking what they want you to do for them or what would get them to attend a program (interest surveys), how might you listen to families to really understand their realities, hopes, challenges, and dreams?

Here are some questions you might ask over the course of building relationships with families. (None ask the parent or family member to give you feedback on your program; they focus on you getting to know and empathize with the family - . *They focus on building a relationship and empathy.*) This will help you move beyond transactional interactions, such as providing a service or hosting a one-time program, toward strong and trusting relationships.

1. Who do you think of as part of your family?
2. What do you most appreciate about your family?
3. What are your hopes for your children?
4. What events from your family's past have made you what you are today?
5. How is your approach to parenting like or unlike that of the people who raised you/your own parent(s)?
6. How does your culture and heritage shape your family today?
7. What do you most value that has been passed down to you and your family?
8. What do you love to do with your family?
9. What traditions and values hold your family together?
10. Where does your family go for support or encouragement? Who turns to you?
11. When your family has faced hardships or challenges in the past, what strengths or resources have you tapped to help you?
12. What are ways your family makes your neighborhood, community, and world a better place?
13. Where do you feel most at home—outside of the place where you live?

Tips: Connecting with Families Through Challenging Growth

Expect my best: Expect me to live up to my potential

- Recognize families' strengths in a way that emphasizes their potential.

Stretch: Push me to go further

- Provide opportunities for parenting adults to learn and grow as parents.
- Get to the "challenge zone" - push parenting adults out of their comfort zone while supporting their growth.



Hold me accountable: Insist I take responsibility for my actions

- Understanding parenting adults' goals and checking in on their progress in a supportive way.
- Reminding families that kids still really need their parents, even as they get older and become teens. Challenge parenting adults to stay connected and involved with their kids, because they matter a great deal to their kids.

Reflect on failures: Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks

- Reflecting on failures or challenges together and providing opportunities for parenting adults to reflect with one another - hearing from each other to affirm that they aren't alone in the challenges they experience.



Tool: Learn and Keep Track of Families' Goals & Progress

Use this sheet (or something similar that works for you) to keep track of what you notice when you check-in with families. Use it to record your observations, not to “grill” the family. Then refer to your notes the next time you connect so that you can follow up to ask about how specific things are going. If something important to them has fallen off track, you may be able to encourage them to try again.

| Family | Strengths You Notice | Goals | Check-In Date | Progress/Change You Notice <i>(Star major changes; Underline any needed follow-up)</i> |
|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|
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Tips: Connecting with Families Through Providing Support

Providing support is about helping parenting adults. However, it's important that support helps them achieve *their* goals, not yours.

Navigate: Guide me through hard situations and systems

- Providing guidance and resources when families face challenges - make sure to ask families what they need before you provide what you *think* they need



Empower: Build my confidence to take charge of my life.

- Empowering families by building their confidence and celebrating their strengths and assets

Advocate: Stand up for me when I need it.

- Advocating for families within and beyond your organization

Set Boundaries: Put limits in place that keep me on track.

- Establishing clear expectations about what your programs can provide to families and what's out of your scope

Bonus - Instrumental Supports:

- Attend to the basics - child care, meals/snacks, transportation, and translation/interpreters.



Tool: How Do You Want to Grow?

Being open about how you're working to change or grow is the first step in getting support from others

It's hard to support and empower each other if we don't know what goals each of us needs support to achieve. This tool invites family members to identify **one thing they would really like to improve**—including something they may already be working on. Then you have an opportunity to encourage them as they work toward their goals. (This same process is suggested as a family activity. See “provide support” on www.KeepConnected.info <https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/strengthen-your-family-relationships/provide-support/>)

1. Give the family member (or members) a copy of the worksheet titled “Supporting Each Other in Positive Change” worksheet (p. 22). Have them complete it on their own (though you can certainly help them think it through).
2. Once the family member has picked a specific change to work on, have them talk about their plan with you, other family member, or other trusted friends.
3. Focus on #5, which is about **how family members can support you**. Ask people to talk about what they will commit to doing to help each other. If some people suggest things that seem to take over, talk about other ways they might offer support while also leaving the responsibility for achieving the goal with the person who wants to achieve it.
4. When all family members have talked about their plans and how they will support each other, decide together when and how you're going to check back in with each other. (You may want to talk about it again in a week, for example.)
5. When you get back together, **talk about how it went**:
 - Did people follow through with support? What did people do? What was harder to remember to do?
 - How did it feel to know that people were interested in how you were doing with your goals? How did it affect your focus on those goals?
 - What things were helpful? Awkward? Irritating?
 - How did it affect work toward the goal? What might have made it better?
 - What would you like to try moving forward?



Tool: Supporting Each Other in Positive Change

Use this worksheet to identify a small personal change you individually want to make to help you get closer to a bigger goal for yourself. (All family members can do this.) Be open with your family about what you're doing so they can all see how you're modeling positive change—even when it's hard. **Complete this worksheet in the order of the numbers.**

1. An area of life where I would like to grow or improve is . . .

2. Some BARRIERS that get in the way are . . .

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. CIRCLE ONE of these barriers that you could work on now that would help you to get started.

4. Write down one or two specific ACTIONS you can start doing to overcome that circled barrier.

- a. _____

- When will you start? _____

- b. _____

- When will you start? _____

5. Talk with family members and other key supporters about ways they can best support and encourage you in taking these first steps.

Tips: Connecting with Families Through Sharing Power

“Engagement should be based on strong and equal relationships among education practitioners, parents, and community organizations. These relationships need to be intentionally built around shared goals for children, and communication needs to be continuous, happening throughout the year and not just when problems arise” (p. 5).

— Pineau, 2019 (FrameWorks Institute)



Respect me: Take me seriously and treat me fairly.

- Building mutual respect.
- Focus on family goals and shared contributions.²

Include me: Involve me in decisions that affect me.

- Make sure families are included in decisions that will affect them, including decisions that will affect their kids.
- Seek feedback, and demonstrate how you use it.

Collaborate: Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.

- Solve problems and set goals together.
- Emphasize two-way communication.
- Explore ways to learn from each other, and recognize the contributions families make.

Let me lead: Create opportunities for me to act and lead.

- Recognize families as partners and leaders.
- Encourage families to take an active role and share their perspectives (Sotero et al., 2017).

Bonus - examine power dynamics:

- Recognize the power dynamics inherent in a family-program relationship, acknowledge them, and find opportunities to overcome them.



Tool: Sharing Power Relies on Two-Way Communication

| One-Way Communication | Two-Way Communication |
|---|--|
| <p>One person . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides information ● Tries to persuade the other person ● Asks the other person to do something | <p>Both people . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen and ask questions ● Gather information ● Check to be sure they understand what the other person is saying ● Work together toward a mutual agreement, decision, or next step |
| <p>Examples: Newsletters, report cards, websites, broadcast text/voice messages, emails, videos, posters</p> | <p>Examples: Dialogue, phone calls, Zoom calls, conferences, open houses, home visits</p> |
| <p>What are some of the ways you use one-way communication in your family engagement work?</p> | <p>What are some of the ways you use two-way communication in your work?</p> |
| <p>Review your one-way communication approaches. How could you adapt or supplement these approaches to encourage two-way communication?</p> | |

Tool: Where Are You Now with Sharing Power?

| | Places in your organizations where parenting adults currently play these kinds of roles | Places where parenting adults could play more significant roles (which may include moving some “up the ladder”). |
|--|---|---|
| Partnership Identify and lead shared priorities | | |
| Co-Production Lead set workshops | | |
| Consult Real input on topics, goals | | |
| Inform Invite for a set role | | |
| Tokenism Insignificant, scripted roles | | If parenting adults or other family members are currently in these kinds of roles, how can transform those roles so that they contribute meaningfully to your organization? |
| Decoration Asked to come; no real role | | |
| Manipulation Excessive reward Mandatory participation | | |

Adapted from Hart, R. A. (1997). *Children’s participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*. New York, NY: UNICEF.

Tips: Connecting with Families Through Expand Possibilities

Expanding possibilities includes inspiring people to see possibilities for their future, broadening their horizons, and connecting them to people or opportunities that help them grow.



Inspire: Help me see new possibilities for my future.

- Recognize families' and their kids' future possibilities.
- Connect families of multiple generations to learn with each other.

Broaden Horizons: Expose me to new ideas and experiences.

- Share opportunities that might help a family or young person grow and develop.

Connect: Introduce me to people who help me grow.

- Form connections with new people or organizations families may not be familiar with, and strengthen connections with people or organizations families may already know and trust.
- When you learn that some family members have particular skills or experiences, ask if they mind sharing those with other people from time to time. If you hear of others who need that expertise or perspective, offer to make the connection. Often parents and families going through a transition or new experience are eager to hear from someone who has been through it before.
- Listen to families' interests and dreams, then ask them if they'd like to meet others who share those same interests and dreams. Connect them and let them see what happens.

Tool: Weaving a Web of Relationships



Central “expert” as key resource



Community, culture as key resource

Instead of viewing yourself or your program as an expert who shares knowledge or resources, consider the wealth of connections that make up your community. Focus on making connections among the community and encouraging others to do so as well, weaving a supportive and resourceful web.

Cultivate a core group who will talk about their experiences with others.

- Who is passionate, credible, and eager to tell others?
- Who will take the initiative to talk to friends, neighbors, extended family?

What will they be **genuinely enthusiastic** to share with their networks?

- Word of mouth doesn’t work without enthusiasm.
- If they find an experience to be remarkable, they’re likely to remark on it!

How will you **make it easy** for them to tell their stories and invite others?

Get in the conversation. Listen to what people are saying, and reinforce messages. Pick up their language in talking with others about it.

Encourage the “ambassadors” to give a **“warm handoff”** (based on Danziger, 2017).

Nothing is more powerful than a personal invitation from someone who . . .

- Shares their life experience
- Connects the experience to the family’s specific goals, worries, and priorities
- Is trusted, warm, encouraging
- Will be there to welcome

GUEST LIST

Time: _____ Date: _____

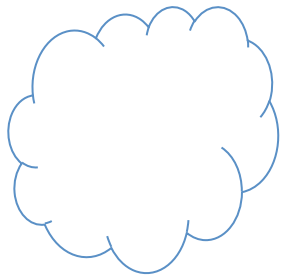
Place: _____

Hosts (facilitators): _____

Friends & Allies

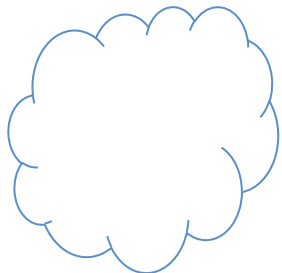
who can connect you
with interested families

| Family | Email | Phone | Confirmed/ Declined |
|--------|-------|-------|------------------------|
|--------|-------|-------|------------------------|



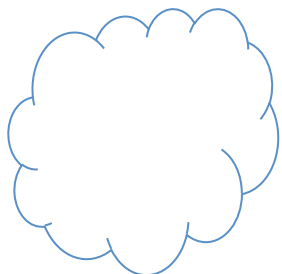
*Other parenting
adults and youth*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



*Allies in other
organizations*

9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____



Young people

17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____



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