



Family Engagement Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant



COLORADO
Department of Early Childhood



What is Family Engagement?

- Intentional
- Strengths-based
- Two-way communication
- Build positive, goal-oriented relationships
- Celebrate and respect diversity
 - Culturally relevant
- Cultivate partnerships
- Honor the unique interests, needs, strengths, and challenges
- Meet people where they are



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Why is Family Engagement Important?

- Systems work better
- Positive change
- Families thrive
- Families achieve their goals
- Equity can be achieved

“Families are the horizontal line through a vertical system”
- Eileen Forenza, Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI)





Family Centered: Relationship Building



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Relationship Building Recommendations

- It takes time!
- Tell people about yourself- be open
- Be open to talk about differences
- Have something to offer, compensating family/community members, giving opportunities for professional development, relationship building and many other benefits
- Address inequities and systemic exclusion



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Equity: Power Sharing



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What is power sharing?

- A way to level the playing field
- A commitment to intentional inclusion
- Two-way communication
- Opportunities for decision making
- Power-sharing also includes power-building, which involves developing the power and skills of others.





Inclusion & Belonging



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Meaningful Inclusion & Belonging

- Commit to partnership in the co-creation and co-ownership of solutions
- Understanding capacity and meeting family needs
- Increases everyone's capacity to address barriers to participation
- Transparency
- Frequently check in to see if they're feeling heard
- Influences a change in culture





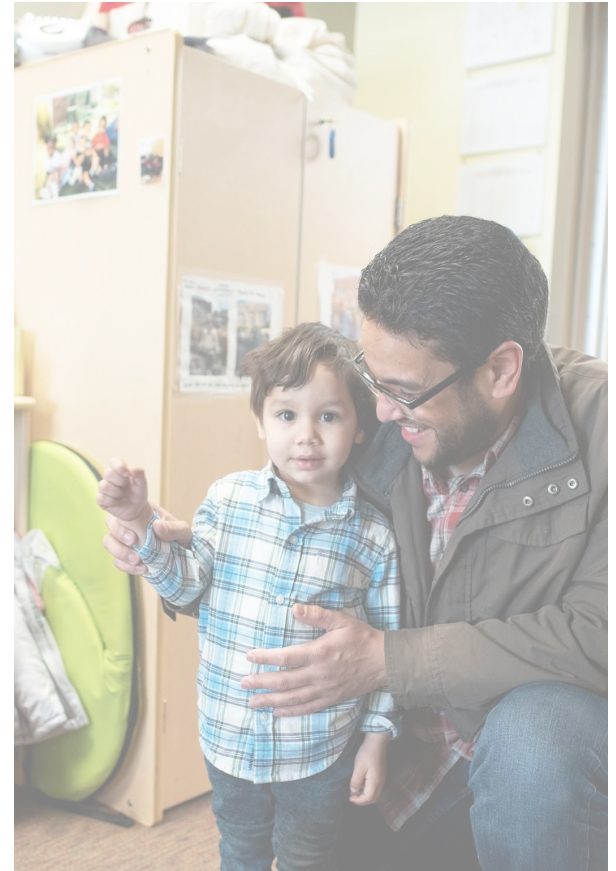
Examples of Meaningful Family Engagement



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Examples of Meaningful Engagement

- Board/Council participation
 - Committee/Sub-committee participation/or other ongoing workgroup participation
- Focus Groups
- Strategic planning
- Program review or evaluation meetings
- Workgroup/Task group participation
- Procurement/grant review committees
- Community panels as part of hiring process
- Creates a path to leadership



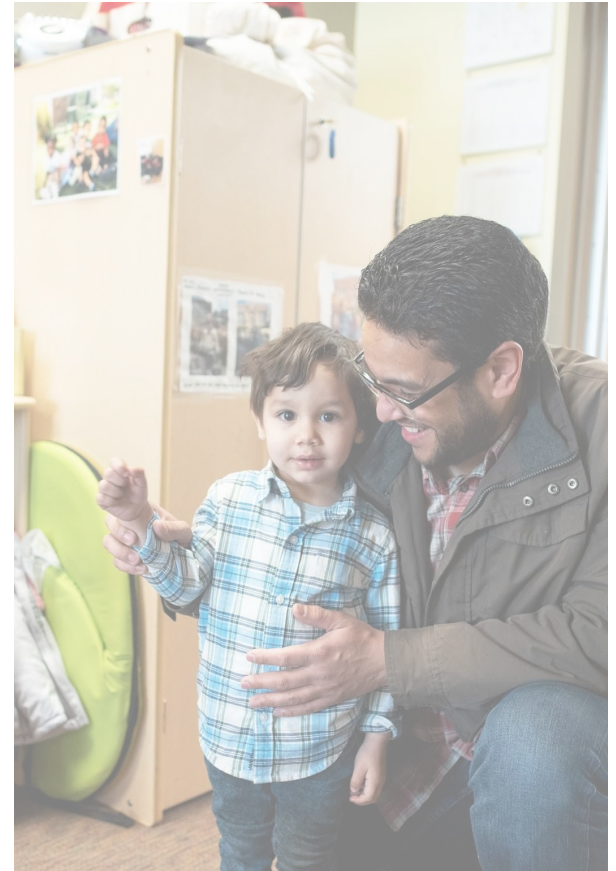
CDEC Family Voice Council

Purpose:

- The Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) Family Voice Council is a diverse group of parents and caregivers of children birth through age eight from across Colorado.
- Its purpose is to provide input to optimize the design and delivery of early childhood programs and services to ensure all children and families in Colorado are happy, healthy and thriving.

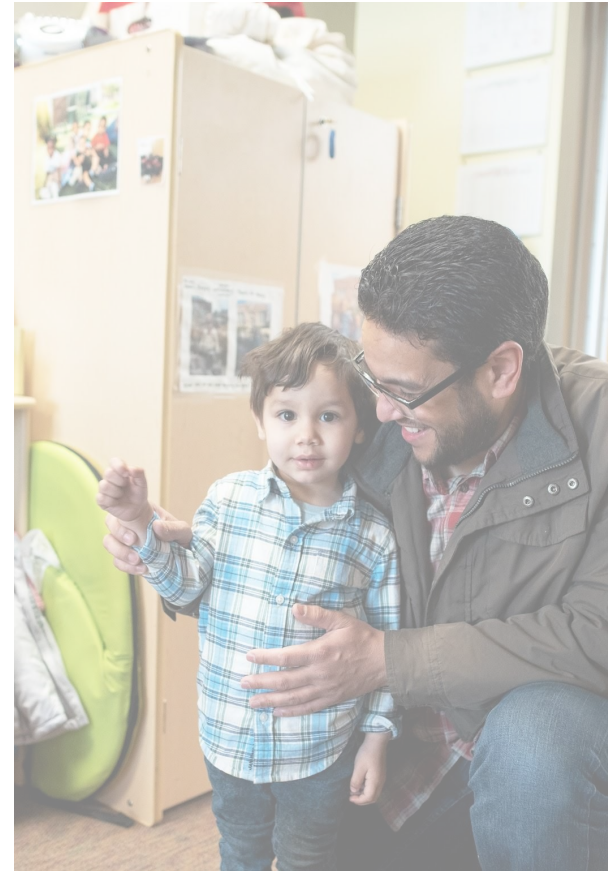
Logistics:

- Meetings held after business hours and on weekends
- Child care reimbursement
- Stipends
- Shared power with member co-chairs
- Training and professional development at no-costs to members
- Meetings are accessible by being held virtually



Informed State Systems

- Voiced experience to inform updates to the Colorado Shines Brighter B-5 Strategic Plan.
- Helped design the new Raising Colorado Kids Guide website for families.
- Informed activities included in the 2023 PDG B-5 Planning Grant application.
- Reviewed and selected proposals for grant opportunities to award local communities
- Participated in the interview panel to select new CDEC staff
- Engaged in contract and procurement processes by reviewing RFPs and selecting vendors for the Department
- Joined focus groups to update family facing applications and communications





Family Engagement Resources

- [Family Engagement Framework](#)
- [Community Partnership Principles Guide](#)
- [Family Voice Compass](#)
- [Manifesto For Race Equity & Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Systems](#)
- [Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience](#)
- [Ascend Aspen Institute](#)





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THANK YOU!
Questions?



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