

Parent Engagement and Leadership Assessment Tool

Abridged Version

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the descriptions for each level of the scale within each pillar and dimension in the self-assessment. In each row below, tick the box for the description that most closely matches your agency. If you don't know or the examples do not apply, check the box on the far right of that section.

What is the Scope of this Self Assessment? <input type="checkbox"/> Agency-wide <input type="checkbox"/> One Program <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Programs	I am participating as: <input type="checkbox"/> Program Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Operations/Admin Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Management/Leaders	I am participating as a: <input type="checkbox"/> Parent leader <input type="checkbox"/> Community partner <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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ABRIDGED VERSION

PILLAR 1: FAMILY-CENTERED

Agencies prioritize and champion engaging parents as partners and leaders as a central strategy to achieving positive, equitable outcomes for children and their families.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There are no family engagement activities or programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Family engagement is viewed as a distinct program or tacked onto existing programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has a definition of parent engagement, a defined strategy and multiyear goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders regularly talk to staff about the importance and benefits of building trusting relationships with all adults that matter in child's life.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no funding for family engagement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Family engagement efforts expand and contract depending on grant funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> Core parent engagement efforts sustained from year-to-year, and increase when grant funds allow.	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaders prioritize parent engagement in the agency budget and allocate resources to ensure consistent programming.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Program staff do not have the time, training, or support to engage families effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/> At least one staff member working directly with parents has sufficient time, flexibility, training, and support to build trusting relationships with parents and respond to their interests and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program staff includes a small parent engagement team dedicated working with parents and increase their engagement; supervisors mostly understand and support their roles.	<input type="checkbox"/> All agency staff are expected to understand importance of engaging parents, including fathers; front-line staff have specific expectations outlined in their job descriptions; supervisors provide staff with training and professional development, coaching, mentoring, and reflective practice to help them continually improve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

<input type="checkbox"/> The agency does not consistently provide child care, translation, and meals at events and meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care, translation, and meals are provided at all parent events and meetings, but parents need to request it in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care, translation, and meals are provided at all parent events and meetings without advanced notice, but never at events that involve mostly professionals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Child care and other supports are automatically provided at all events parents are invited to, including galas, staff meetings, work groups, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
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Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There are no organized opportunities for parents to develop relationships with each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs, events, and meetings have some opportunities for parents to share and get to know each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs, events, and meetings always allow time for parents to get to know other parents and share their experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs, events, and meetings emphasize building relationships, and are often co-facilitated by parent leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence of opportunities for parents to become leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency programs emphasize parent leadership roles within the family, such as reading to their children.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency programs emphasize partnership with parents to shape and improve programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents are invited to advance their leadership in a variety of ways, including formal leadership training, policy advocacy, and paraprofessional roles leading to staff positions; staff provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to help parents reach personal and professional goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence of changes made in the agency in response to parent feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents are regularly surveyed about their satisfaction with programs and some adjustments are made in response to feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents have consistent opportunities to give feedback and suggestions, including focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents have opportunities to influence decisions at all levels, from care decisions for their child, to program delivery, to agency decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence that the agency invites parents to meetings to discuss issues or solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents are invited to meetings to discuss issues and solutions defined by staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> A group of parent leaders are formally or informally advising the agency on ways to improve parent engagement and other program strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Boards and committees include significant parent representation, and parent leaders are supported to actively seek input from all parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

ABRIDGED VERSION

PILLAR 2: EQUITY-DRIVEN

Agencies make it a priority to understand families' experiences and break down barriers created by systemic, institutional, and individual racism.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency strategic plan does not have specific goals related to diversity or racial equity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan for addressing diversity, but not equity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan around diversity, inclusion, and equity, and is taking steps to achieve them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency can demonstrate progress addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence of the agency's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency does not yet have resources allocated to specific diversity strategies, but publicly states it as a goal.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency prioritizes and allocates resources for some equity strategies, but not in a comprehensive or integrated way.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency allocates sufficient resources to build its capacity to address equity issues internally and externally.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency does not separate data by race/ethnicity, and therefore does not have the capacity to address gaps between different groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency collects data by race/ethnicity in programming but does not analyze the data to address gaps in participation, satisfaction, or outcomes for different groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency collects, breaks out and analyzes data by race/ethnicity in programming, but does not consistently take action to address gaps.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency collects, breaks out, and analyzes data by race/ethnicity in programs and operations and uses this information to guide program strategy and organizational policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Most staff interacting with families do not represent the cultures of the community the agency serves.	<input type="checkbox"/> At least half of staff interacting with families represent cultures of the community and/or speak the primary language spoken by families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most of the staff interacting with parents represent cultures of the families in the community and/or speak the primary language spoken by families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program staff and leadership represent cultures of the families in the community and parents have access to formal pathways to become leaders and employees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence that the agency designs programs to be welcoming and inclusive of diverse populations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff design programs and activities to be welcoming to and inclusive of diverse populations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff works informally with parents of diverse backgrounds to get feedback on program design.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff and parents co-create program strategies to ensure they are welcoming and inclusive.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence that the agency designs programs to address racial inequities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff design programs to address racial inequities, such as "know your rights" trainings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff ask parents for feedback on how well programs address core equity issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff and parents co-create program strategies to ensure they address priority equity issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence that the agency surveys parents about whether they feel welcome and respected when they participate in agency programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program staff regularly survey parents about whether they feel welcome and respected when they participate in agency programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency sometimes conducts focus groups or listening sessions to understand how parents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds experience programs and policies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders regularly listen to parents representing marginalized communities about their experiences with agency policies, practices and programs, and directs changes to address concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents do not voice complaints to program staff about equity issues, although equity issues exist in the agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents voice complaints to program staff about equity issues, but there is no process for these complaints to be addressed by agency leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors regularly ask staff about feedback they have received from parents about equity issues and relay this feedback to agency leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents are encouraged to voice complaints about equity issues and there is a formal process to address them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

ABRIDGED VERSION

PILLAR 3: COLLABORATIVE

Agencies develop strong partnerships with parents and parent-led organizations to support families to build their power, develop their leadership, and advocate for their children and community.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency does not state publicly that it values partnering with parents and developing their leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency states publicly that partnering with parents and developing their leadership is a value.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan to expand and strengthen its efforts to work in partnership with parents and develop their leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency's mission and goals include partnering with parents, developing their leadership, and supporting them to build their power to change systems.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> The agency does not allocate resources toward community partnerships and parent leadership development.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency provides some resources toward community partnerships and parent leadership development and has fundraising goals to fully resource these efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency allocates necessary funds to achieve strategic goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency prioritizes resources for developing strong partnerships with parents and community and developing parents' leadership skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency makes no effort to help parent leaders learn to participate in policy change processes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parent leaders learn to participate in policy change processes by offering or connecting them to training on civic skills, such as running meetings and public speaking.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parent leaders learn to propose policy change by offering or connecting them to trainings on reading budgets, collecting and analyzing data, and identifying key policy makers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parent leaders advocate for policy change by offering or connecting them to opportunities to build skills in planning a rally, delivering testimony at a hearing, and attracting media attention.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency does not coach or connect parents to training on how to navigate processes and access resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parents better understand systems by coaching them or connecting them to training on how to navigate processes and access resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parents advocate for their children by coaching them or connecting them to training on their rights and how to ask questions and address concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency helps parents advocate for their children by offering coaching, training, and mentoring to advocate for their children and in systems and policy change efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents do not have opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents sometimes have opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents have regular opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are encouraged to become active in other community organizations, coalitions, committees, and work groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Parents are not invited to attend conferences or agency meetings, participate in working groups, or be presenters in settings where they might share perspectives or expertise.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are sometimes invited to attend conferences agency meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are regularly supported to participate in intra- or inter-agency working groups to provide their perspectives on programs, policies and practices in agencies, and systems.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are supported to present and lead discussions at conferences, meetings, and work groups discussing policy and systems change.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has no evident track record of collaborating with parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has some track record of collaborating with parents, no formal process, or structure to do so.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has a Family Advisory or similar committee, but it has no decision-making power.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders of diverse backgrounds are well represented and supported in decision-making roles affecting agency policies and practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency does not involve parents in advocacy efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency sometimes invites parents to join advocacy efforts to share their experiences with decision-makers, but they do not shape the agenda and are not educated about the process.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency regularly invites parents to join advocacy efforts to share their experiences with decision-makers, and parent leaders receive training to educate them on the issues and policy process.	<input type="checkbox"/> In addition to integrating parents into agency advocacy efforts, agency leaders join and support advocacy efforts led by parents and community organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

ABRIDGED VERSION

PILLAR 4: TRANSPARENT

Agencies ensure parents have access to information that allows them to fully participate and influence agency and system-level change processes.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence of a policy to promote openness to and inclusion of families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders talk about the importance of openness to and inclusion of families, but does not have a written policy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has a written policy that outlines the agency's commitment to openness and inclusion, but it was created without parent input.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency has a written policy, co-created with a representative group of parent leaders, that outlines the agency's commitment to openness and inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders do not question the practices for openness and inclusion proposed by the coalitions and work groups they participate in, even when these standards exclude full participation of parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders usually accept the practices for openness and inclusion proposed by the coalitions and work groups they participate in, even when these standards exclude full participation of parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency makes efforts to shift the practices of coalitions and work groups they participate in toward greater openness and inclusion, but not comprehensively and usually behind the scenes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders publicly advocate for practices supporting openness and inclusion all coalitions and work groups they participate in, so that parents can participate fully.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no expectation that agency staff adjust meeting formats to emphasize the strengths of parents and the context of the communities they represent.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency staff attempt to facilitate professional partners' understanding of families and communities, but don't have much influence to change practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> When parents are specifically invited, agency staff work to facilitate understanding of the strengths of families and the context of communities they represent, but there is not full buy-in from professional partners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency staff, professional partners, and parents work together to design meetings that are accessible to everyone.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no evidence that agency leaders model core practices of openness and inclusion in the way they treat staff. Staff are not given opportunities to influence change strategies. As a result, staff don't feel encouraged to engage parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff are sometimes included in executive-level conversations about challenges or opportunities facing the agency, but do not have meaningful input on strategies to address them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Program directors are included in executive-level conversations about challenges or opportunities facing the agency and have meaningful input on strategies to address them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders include staff at all levels in planning and problem-solving, providing them with information they need to participate fully. As a result, staff feel confident in their efforts to engage parents in agency change efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> There is no effort to make materials, presentations, and meeting minutes accessible to parents—they use acronyms and professional terms, and materials are not translated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff decide which documents are "relevant" to parent representatives and make those documents accessible, but other documents related to the issue or process are not made accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/> When parents are invited to participate, most documents are made accessible to parents—acronyms are spelled out, presenters use plain language, and materials are translated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency regularly includes parent leaders in the planning of events and meetings. As a result, all aspects of the meeting, including materials, promote transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders do not explain how decisions will be made.	<input type="checkbox"/> When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders sometimes explain how decisions will be made, but this is not a universal practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders clearly explain how decisions will be made.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders participate in the design of the decision-making process.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
<input type="checkbox"/> When parents are asked about their needs or feedback, agency staff do not inform them how the information influenced the program or agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> When parents are asked about their needs or feedback, agency staff sometimes inform a core group of parent leaders how the information influenced the program or agency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agency leaders regularly report back to parent leaders how their feedback and ideas influenced decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is a defined process for including parents in a "feedback loop;" parent leaders are involved in the effort to get parent input from the beginning and included in the agency's report back to parents about how their feedback influenced decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are not involved in agency decision-making about programs, policies, practices, and budgets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are asked for their feedback on agency plans and strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders help identify issues with agency staff and leaders, but not usually involved in shaping or implementing solutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent leaders are informed and asked for their input when agency is defining a problem, coming up with a solution, putting the solution into action, and learning what worked and didn't work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know/ N.A.