

Family Empowerment Matters: Culturally-Relevant, Culturally-Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Family Engagement



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About NBCDI

For 46 years, the National Black Child Development Institute has been committed to our mission to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and families through education and advocacy. With our National Affiliate Network, we develop and deliver strengths-based, culturally relevant, evidence-based and trauma informed curricula and programs that focus on health and wellness and family engagement. We support increased access to effective education by providing professional development scholarships for early childhood educators. NBCDI, the National Affiliate Network and our members advocate and inform education policies at the federal, state and local levels to ensure standards, regulations and resource allocations support equitable systems for Black children and families.



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Agenda

- ◆ Introductions
- ◆ Review Objectives
- ◆ Importance of Family Engagement
- ◆ History of Parent Empowerment Program
- ◆ Implementation in Chicago, IL
- ◆ Current FEP Overview Policy Implications
- ◆ Questions and Close



Introductions



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Objectives

- ◆ Discuss effective family engagement and identify NBCDI's Family Empowerment Program (FEP) as one such approach
- ◆ Define Culturally Relevant, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma Sensitive family engagement and discuss how NBCDI's FEP incorporates these factors to employ effective family engagement strategies
- ◆ Identify policy implications for family engagement



What is this the definition of?

“**A systemic and sustained commitment** that occurs across time, spans many settings, and requires shared responsibility from all parties.”



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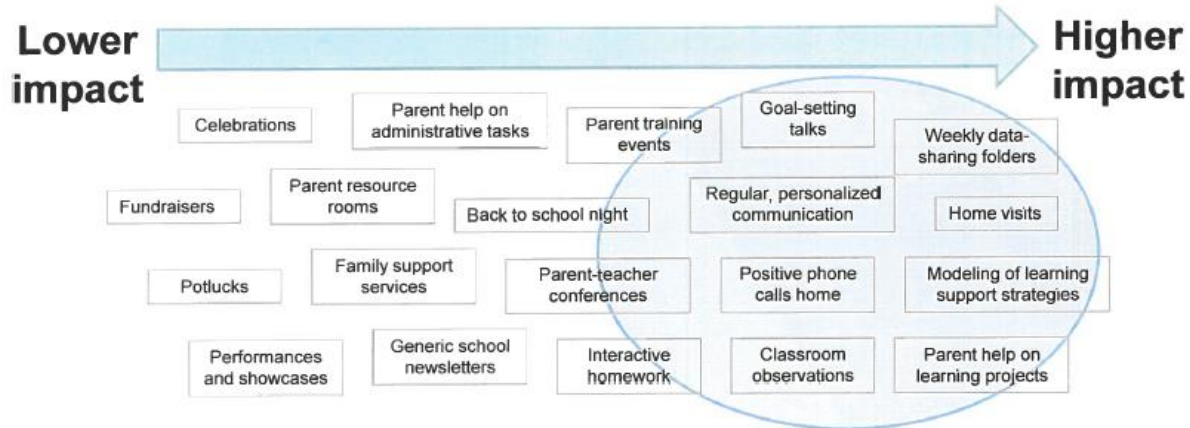
Perceived Barriers to Engaging Families

- ◆ “More often than not...parents are described as uncaring, dysfunctional, unsupportive and...as **obstacles in the way of progress and problems to be overcome.**” (Noguera, 2008)
- ◆ Current policies and practices at the federal, state, district, school and program levels rarely provide **sufficient support** to educators or to parents.
- ◆ **No one is held accountable** for comprehensively and consistently engaging a diverse range of families.



Flamboyan Foundation

Relative Impact of Family Engagement Strategies on Student Learning



FLAMBOYAN
FOUNDATION

Flamboyan Foundation defines family engagement as collaboration between families and educators that accelerates student learning.



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Parent Empowerment Program

- ◆ Powerful, flexible and unique family engagement curriculum
- ◆ Uses meaningful, culturally-relevant activities to ***increase knowledge, change behavior and build strong and lasting relationships.***
- ◆ Helps parents reflect on and strengthen their parenting practices, while reinforcing their sense of pride and confidence in themselves, their community, their culture and their history.

We believe that parents want what is best for their children.



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Curriculum Topics

P(F)EP is a 12 week program for parents and caregivers (of children ages 0-8) comprised of six topic areas with interactive activities. Each topic contains two sessions.

- ◆ Topic 1: Reflections
- ◆ Topic 2: Health and Wellness
- ◆ Topic 3: Child Growth and Development
- ◆ Topic 4: Positive Guidance
- ◆ Topic 5: Literacy (and Numeracy)
- ◆ Topic 6: Transitions



Evaluating PEP's Success

Measures focus on these outcomes:

- ◆ Increases in parents' knowledge, skills and confidence relating to parenting
- ◆ Increases in parents' knowledge and use of positive parenting tools and strategies
- ◆ Positive changes in parental stress and social support; family functioning and healthy living; childrearing attitudes, beliefs, and practices; knowledge of early childhood development, and home literacy environment and practices.

"I was excited to see the positive impact PEP had on the parents. The parents learned skills that promoted healthy relationships, ...[and] were able to bond and learn from each other."

- ◆ 96% of parents strongly agreed that the curriculum helped to **improve their knowledge** about children's development



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Implementation in Chicago, IL

BCDI-Chicago

- ◆ Identified need in the community
- ◆ Local Implementation
- ◆ Successes and Challenges
- ◆ Anecdotes



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Responding to the Needs of Families: Family Empowerment Program (FEP)

- ◆ **Culturally Responsive:** recognizes significant cultural and linguistic and historical strengths of Black families and cultivates these strengths into transformative practice
- ◆ **Culturally Relevant:** brings focus to specific needs and critical issues facing Black families and recognizes parents are leaders of their families with strengths to contribute to their communities
- ◆ **Trauma Sensitive:** takes a holistic approach to building the capacity of families – educates families on brain development, toxic stress, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the importance of building resiliency and developing protective factors in children and their families



FEP Program Enhancements

- ◆ Aligned with current research and best practices
 - ◆ Brain Development
 - ◆ New data on toxic stress in children
 - ◆ Learning Standards
- ◆ Developmentally-appropriate
- ◆ Designed with feedback from families

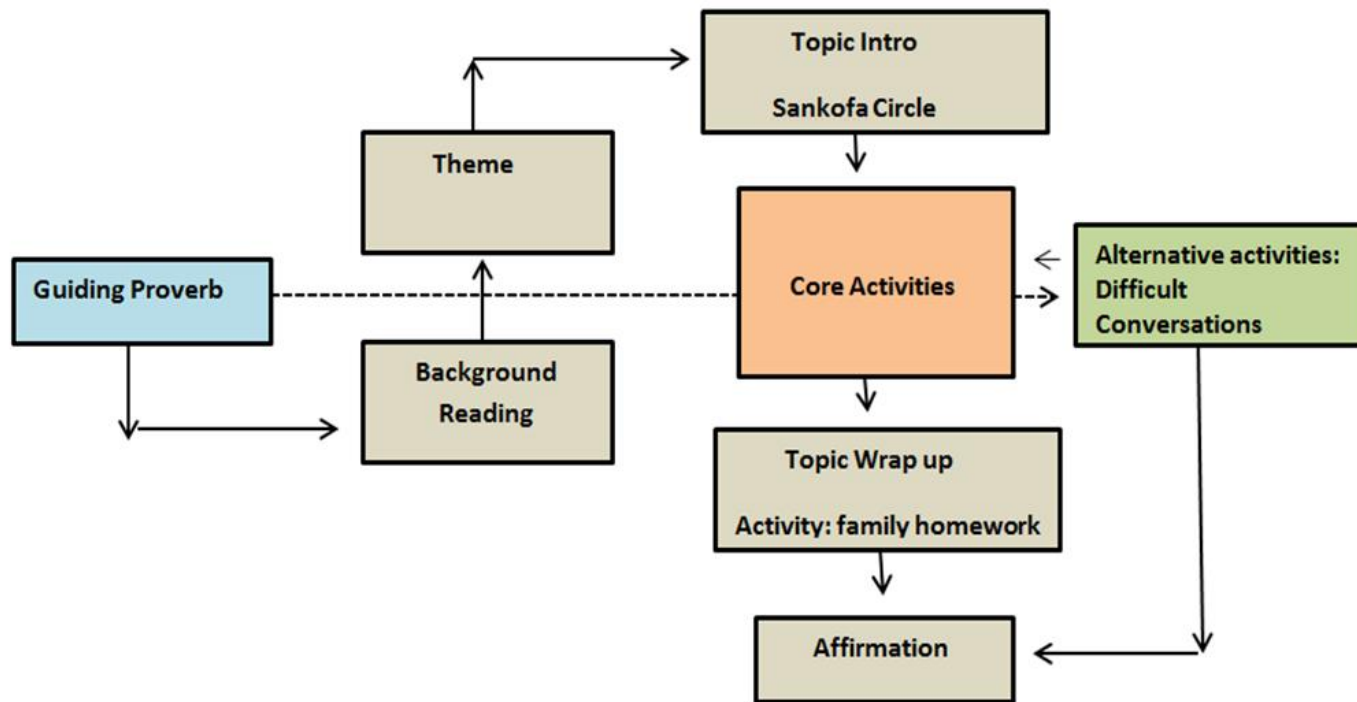


FEP Guiding Principles

1. Parents want what is best for their children.
2. Parents know best what they need to strengthen their parenting skills.
3. Parents learn best when they are involved in selecting the topics and activities
4. With information, resources and support, parents will make the best choices for their children.



Program Contents, Structure and Activities



Sample Session Agenda

- ◆ Program Overview
- ◆ Ground Rules of Engagement
- ◆ Introduce This Week's Overarching Guiding Proverb
- ◆ Background- Research
- ◆ Introduce Current Week's Proverb and Theme
- ◆ Community Building Activity
- ◆ Selection of Topic Area with Interactive Activities
- ◆ Family Homework Preview
- ◆ Closing Affirmation



Sample Lesson Structure

- ◆ African Proverb (opening): “You must act as if it is impossible to fail.”
 - ◆ Sankofa Circle
- ◆ Topic: Reflections (Session 1)
 - ◆ Theme – Resilience
 - ◆ Activity 1: What Hat am I wearing? (emphasis Parenting children 0 – 4), or
 - ◆ Activity 2: Embracing the joys and challenges of Parenting (emphasis Parenting school age children (5 to 8))
- ◆ Wrap-up
 - ◆ Sankofa circle
 - ◆ Affirmation (closing): I am a leader in my family; I take pride in planning for my family’s future.



What Hat am I wearing Exercise

- ◆ Give each parent a hat. Ask them to look inside the hat to see the label, but tell them not to disclose what the label says to anyone else.
- ◆ Explain that they are going to play a game similar to “charades.” As each parent acts out his or her assigned role, the other parents are to guess what parenting role the person is playing.
- ◆ Ask parents what their children learn as they watch them play all these roles.
- ◆ Ask parents to summarize by sharing one thing they will teach their children while going about everyday tasks during the next week.



Policy Implications

- ◆ Establish program standards related to culturally-relevant family engagement
- ◆ Establish supports for higher education, professional development programs, and teacher education programs to include coursework on culturally relevant family engagement
- ◆ ESSA Implications



Family Empowerment in ECE Programs and Schools

- ◆ Standards for schools and supports to help them implement those standards should include strong family engagement components and a strong commitment to cultural relevance.
- ◆ Addressing them can signal to families that ECE programs and schools understand who they are and where they come from.



Things to Consider...

- ◆ Support data sharing and linkages with community resources to provide comprehensive support around health, nutrition, and adult education.
- ◆ Revise budgets to allow adequate resources to fully implement robust family engagement plans.
- ◆ Redesign professional development and teacher education so that trainings and coursework include a focus on how culturally relevant family-engagement practices are designed and implemented.



Questions



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Thank you!

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