



# Family Engagement as Parent Involvement 2.0

## UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE IN TERMS & CONCEPTS

HS/EHS programs have practiced parent involvement and parent engagement for years, prioritizing activities related to both performance standards and program innovation. The purpose of this paper is to help clarify the OHS change in terms and concepts from parent involvement to family engagement.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT** refers to **parent participation in the systems and activities** of Head Start in ways that support them as the primary educators, nurturers and advocates for individual children and for all children enrolled in the program. Parent involvement refers to **opportunities for parent participation in a variety of program activities** that support child and adult development, including policy and program decision making.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT** refers to ongoing, **goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and that support what is best for children and families** both individually and collectively. **Staff and families share responsibility** for the learning and development of children, the progress toward outcomes for children and families, **and** for parent involvement in the program. Parent involvement is a part of this larger construct of family engagement.

Progress in the 7 Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes outlined in the PFCE Framework is more likely to be achieved when **family engagement is systemic, integrated and comprehensive** in programs.

### Examples that illustrate the shift

PARENT INVOLVEMENT	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parent Involvement is primarily the responsibility of family services staff (or parent involvement specialists, home visitors, or transition specialists)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Family engagement is embedded in the work of all staff members, management systems and leadership priorities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parent involvement might revolve around outputs—for example, the number of parents who show up at a meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Family engagement focuses on evidence of positive, goal directed relationships, for example, that result in family progress in one (or more) of the seven outcome areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parent involvement works with a small % of families involved in leadership opportunities (policy council, parent meetings, special events)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Through ongoing relationships, family members are engaged in a variety of goal directed ways related to Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Programs that involve parents collect data from children and families—for example, information about parent participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Programs that engage families use child and family data to improve services. These programs help families understand and use child data to support their children's progress and development.</li> </ul>

▶ THE TERM "FAMILY" is used to convey all of the people that may play both a parenting a role in a child's life and a partnering role with HS/EHS staff. This includes fathers, mothers, grandparents, kith and kin caregivers, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered) parents, guardians, expectant parents, teen parents, and families with diverse structures that include multiple relationships with significant others.