

Breakout Session Highlights
Building a Strong, Sustainable Family Component
Facilitators: Aurelia Carter (Allegheny County, PA) and Fran Goldfarb (Los Angeles, CA)

Key Issues Discussed:

General Topics

- Silos – currently have system silos that don't know what each has as its mandates, services & supports
- How to expand & use existing MH supports
- Sustainability – How to support family support staff
- How to promote professionalism in family advocacy
- Building bridges across family organizations; developing partnerships

Helpful Resources/Strategies Identified:

Silos – Connecticut: Child Welfare Initiative connected Early Childhood Initiatives to network; learn about others mandates and common goals. Initially included: Head Start & Child Protective Services; now includes Building Blocks/SOC, Child First, and all family support organizations.

Connecticut: Established a Family Advisory Board consisting of 4 different family organizations (FFCMH, NAMI, foster families, Family Group Connection)

Los Angeles: Family resource centers (FRC) & state mental health organizations had no connection. SOC Family Support Specialist/Fran Goldfarb was deliberate in bringing UACC & FRC together. Fran joined UACC in leadership role (board member).

Boston: Have Child Wellness Council

Challenge: Different state level & local level mandates – How to integrate?

Challenge: How to engage and develop family leaders in early childhood board?

Forth Worth – KFP – “Families need to feel their ideas are heard and valued”

Family presentations provide opportunity to feel empowered.

Develop brochure for families by families that reflects family values.

Guam: Experience of families as co-presenters provides support and preparation; families “practiced” in advance.

Families participated in evaluation summit; shared family stories

Witnessed one family member grow and flourish as leader through her involvement in their activities.

Connecticut: Workshops on public speaking, adult learning provided to family members to support to be facilitators.

How to engage and develop early childhood leaders?

Sustain family support role?

Build connection across family organizations

Local \longleftrightarrow State \longleftrightarrow National

Massachusetts: Early Childhood partner position – here a parent of young child in that position

Question – What are criteria/qualifications for family partner?

Seems to exclude parents of young children.

Alameda County – Have 4 parents of young children in planning council. Effective in their strategic planning

Connecticut – Need to set up systems of support (ie babysitting; transportation, etc) so they can attend meeting, trainings, etc.

Forth Worth – Different levels of involvement need to meet families where they are at. (Gave examples of family involvement in evaluation) Also have play groups. Families start TA network around support and resources. Also activities for families and caregivers in response to recognized need to take care of families and caregivers.

Massachusetts – FFCMH cannot have sustained family organizations without support & resources

Need to connect to local and national movement

Challenge: Sustainability

How to Engage Families?

- Take time to build relationships
- See results immediately from their feedback
- Evaluation has several roles for families
- Family members as co-presenters/co-trainers
- Developed a family brochure English/Spanish
- Require professional/family team to attend trainings – and roll out afterwards
- Make sure we prepare families/staff for taking risks
- [cecp.air.org/promising practices](http://cecp.air.org/promising-practices)
- Federation of Families website
- Step up systems of support for the family & their children

Family Voice - for What Purpose ?

- Levels of family involvement > support at each level
- Play groups – involve dads also families are connecting
- Many of the caregivers have needs
- Utilize established organizations
- Need to grow family leaders

Sustaining Meaningful Family Component

- Not just about \$ for family organization
 - Policies/procedures/regulations/ university training programs/non \$ aspects
 - MOA's/contracts language
 - Programs – build family leaders in safe environment
 - Connecting family leaders to other organizations & work
 - Local evaluation data
 - Classified positions
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- Frank – Not all sustainability about family. Build family partner role into policy
 - LA – find ways to connect family leaders to other relevant activities – embed in other systems
 - Guam – Pay attention to data collection. Need data to sustain family role. They were able to demonstrate efficacy in their prior SOC
 - Connecticut: Think and plan strategically about leveraging resources to sustain ie – locate family organizations within places where families naturally go.