



BUILDING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

APRIL 2023: CENTERING PARENT VOICE DURING ENGAGEMENT, ASSESSMENT, EXPLORATION, AND ADJUSTMENT

Building a partnership with parents and caregivers is necessary for authentic engagement. A trusting partnership can be difficult if the conditions of the relationship are not defined, especially when the role of the CPS professional comes with inherent power. How do we bring parents to the table?

ENGAGE PARENTS AS EXPERTS

They know better than anyone what changes they can and can't live with.

PROMOTE PARENT SAFETY, AUTHENTICITY, AND AUTONOMY

Parents feeling honored, respected, and heard is an outcome of centering parental voice.

PRIORITIZE COLLATERAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Listen to what or who parents need to navigate the CPS process.



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Identify when there are challenges to building an effective partnership. The CPS professional can utilize skills and techniques to navigate challenging conversations to eliminate barriers. The following are examples of challenges the CPS professional may encounter.

Vulnerable and worried families: Involvement in the child welfare system often results in vulnerability and stress that is difficult to cope with.

Unreceptive or mistrusting families: Parents who become involved in the child welfare system often have mistrust which may be conveyed in a range of emotions.

An inherent power imbalance: On top of the power differential the nature of the relationship is often involuntary making a partnership difficult.

The duality of the caseworker's role: CPS professionals can play contradictory roles as they provide support and assistance as well as having the authority to make recommendations contrary to the parent's wishes.

Turnover and high caseloads: Turnover in CPS adds an element of instability that can hinder engagement and take away from the time needed to build trust.

Logistical challenges: Transportation costs, scheduling conflicts and other logistical challenges that both parents and the CPS professional face can impede engagement.

Family stressors: Problems including substance use, mental health, and intimate partner violence can complicate the effort in building a productive and engaging relationship.

Implicit bias: Bias occurs for or against a person, thing, or group. Common biases towards families involved in CPS include the belief that people can't or won't change, or that persons who inflict pain or suffering on their children must not love them.



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REFLECTION ON CONTENT

How is centering the parental voice able to enhance your current role and where is partnership key in your duties and responsibilities?

ACTION ITEM

Identify how you (or how you would like to) exemplify the values associated with centering parental voice in your practice. What do you do to demonstrate the parent is the expert, to promote parent safety, authenticity, and autonomy and that you prioritize collateral, and community supports?