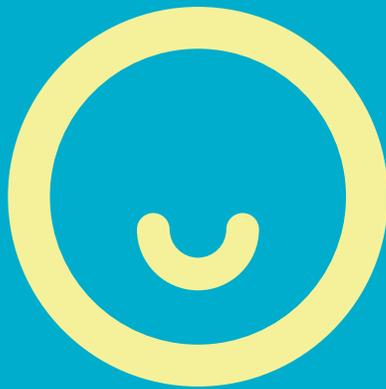
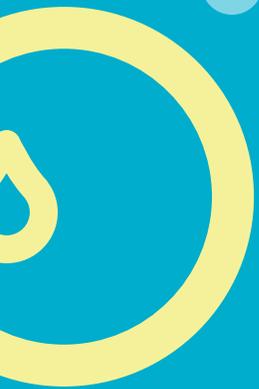


# Family Engagement Toolkit



Trying  
together



# Welcome!

**When adults come together to support children, profound changes can happen.**

Engaging in a child's learning and development is a dynamic and intentional process. Research shows that active family engagement leads to better outcomes for children and builds strong learning communities. Effective family engagement invites adults to learn together the best ways to connect, build trust, and join in true partnership for the well-being of a child.

The Trying Together Family Engagement Toolkit supports caregivers in bolstering their family engagement practice.

In this toolkit, families and early childhood educators can:

- access strategies that strengthen the relationships that nourish a child's growth and sense of belonging;
- find ideas and resources to enrich relationships in their learning community;
- learn ways to increase equity and access for all involved; and
- take the opportunity to reflect upon family engagement practices in their home or program.

Trying Together sincerely hopes that this Family Engagement Toolkit supports strengthening the relationships that best nourish children's healthy learning and development.

Sincerely,



**Cara Ciminillo**, Trying Together Executive Director

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# Definitions

Having a shared language is an important element of family engagement in this toolkit. Listed below are defined terms for the purposes of this toolkit.

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**Caregiver:** anyone who invests in caring for a child; a caregiver could be an educator, a family member, a mother or father, a sibling; anyone who spends time nurturing the growth and development of a child.

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**Family:** made up of a child's closest caregivers outside of school or child care; a family supports the physical and emotional needs of the children in their care.

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**Educator:** responsible for creating a learning environment where a child or children can learn, interact, and grow; an educator works directly with children to encourage healthy child development; an educator could work in a child care center, a family child care home, or a group child care home.

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**Child Care Provider:** includes directors, educators, and caregivers of young children in a child care center, a family child care home, a group child care home, or as a relative provider.

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**Relative Provider:** a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or a sibling 18 years and older who is designated by the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) as a child care provider and receives subsidy funding for child care; a relative provider is both family and a child care provider.

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**Learning Community:** could be a school, a child care program, a family child care home, a group child care home, or any group of people dedicated to providing enriching learning experiences for children.

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**Transitions:** changes for a child from one environment or experience to another; could be when a child moves to a new classroom or to a new educator within a program, to a different early learning program, to a new town or state, or transitions to Kindergarten.

# What is Family Engagement?

At its essence, family engagement is a process in which educators and families build intentional, authentic relationships toward the shared goal of supporting a child's healthy growth and development.

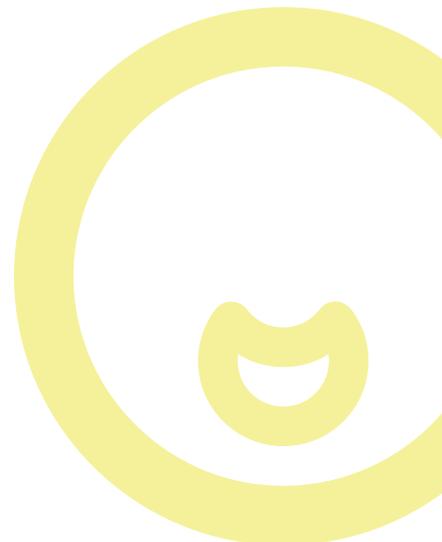
According to *The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth through College, Career, Community Ready Framework*, effective family engagement practices are:

- strengths-based;
- promote cultural and linguistic responsiveness, inclusion, and equity; and
- have a foundation of two-way communications between learning communities and families.

Effective family engagement practices leverage and respect families', learning communities', and community partners' unique expertise, knowledge, and leadership. To promote effective family engagement, it is necessary to support the identification and practice related to measurement and accountability of family engagement as an essential element to success in education and life.

Family engagement must start with these core assumptions:

- families are committed to supporting their child's learning and development; and
- the complex intersections of race, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, and language must be addressed to facilitate engagement



# What is the impact of Family Engagement in early childhood? What does research show?

**Family involvement can help children get ready to enter school.** In the early childhood years, family involvement is clearly related to children's literacy outcomes. For example, one study revealed that children whose parents read to them at home recognized letters of the alphabet sooner than those whose parents did not, and children whose parents taught them at home recognized letters of the alphabet sooner than those whose parents did not. (*Family Involvement: What Does Research Say?* By Holly Kreider, Harvard Graduate School of Education, [gse.harvard.edu](http://gse.harvard.edu)).

**Family involvement can benefit all children, especially those less likely to succeed in school.** Family involvement has been shown to benefit children from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. For example, low-income African American children whose families maintained high rates of parent participation in elementary school were more likely to complete high school. Latino youth who were academically high achieving had parents who provided encouragement and emphasized the value of education as a way out of poverty. (*Family Involvement: What Does Research Say?* By Holly Kreider, Harvard Graduate School of Education, [gse.harvard.edu](http://gse.harvard.edu)).

*What we need is a shared responsibility paradigm designed to build capacity among parents and practitioners, so both sides will gain from the relationship.*

—**Karen L. Mapp, Ed.D.**, Harvard Graduate School of Education Senior Lecturer and Faculty Director, Education Policy and Management Master's Program



## Who should use this toolkit?

The Trying Together Family Engagement Toolkit is meant for child care providers of children from birth to age nine. The toolkit is accessible for child care providers in a variety of settings including: child care centers, family child care homes, group child care homes, and relative providers. This toolkit is also meant for families who want to access ideas and resources to effectively engage with educators to support the positive growth of their children.

# Getting Started

## Providers

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### 1

#### Make A Family Engagement Plan

First things first: Make a plan! When one puts their ideas, strategies and goals on paper, they make a commitment to themselves and their learning community to weave long-lasting, effective family engagement strategies into the fabric of their program.

- [Provider Family Engagement Plan \(PDF\)](#)

#### Essential Questions for Reflection of a Family Engagement Practice

- Is it culturally responsive and equitable?
- Does it leverage the expertise, knowledge, and leadership of families, community partners, and the learning community?
- Is it an intentional, relationship-based approach that is connected to at least one of the early learning standards?
- Does it support a family as their child's guide in the educational process?
- How will practice of the plan and its effectiveness be evaluated/measured?

(Adapted from *The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth Through College, Career, Community Ready Framework*.)

As one creates their Family Engagement Plan, consider the methods used to connect and communicate with families on a regular basis. Include ongoing, two-way communication strategies as part of the Family Engagement Plan. Here are a few ideas:

- communication app;
- mail updates;
- [Message from Me](#);
- newsletters;
- phone calls;
- photos;
- social media;
- text messages;
- video calls;
- website; and
- written daily communication; [My Day \(PDF\)](#)

Need assistance creating a Family Engagement Plan? Contact Trying Together at 412.421.3889 or [info@tryingtogether.org](mailto:info@tryingtogether.org) for support.

***When two people are communicating effectively with each other, both are sending and receiving messages to come to a desired conclusion. This creates a shared understanding which is foundational to building positive relationships with one another.***

—**Maria Pisano**, Trying Together Director of Communications

# 2

## Make the First Connection: Welcome Families

Great family engagement begins in the first moments! In a Family Engagement Plan, outline strategies to welcome new families into the early learning program by considering the ideas and resources below.

### Ideas

- Conduct home visits—virtual or in person.
- Speak with families about their child before they begin care.
- Host welcome events for families.
- Hold enrollment meetings to discuss the family handbook and answer any questions before the family officially enrolls in care.
- Invite families to visit the classroom (or do a virtual “visit” with a family member during circle or snack time.)
- Establish the families’ preferred ways to communicate.
- Make sure any written information for the family is conveyed in their preferred language.
- Set up the play and learning areas, cubbies, and furniture with the accessibility needs of the children before they arrive for their first day--and ask families if there is anything missing to best accommodate their child’s needs.

### Resources

- [Getting to Know Each Other: Welcome Questionnaire \(PDF\)](#)
- [Every Child Belongs: Welcoming a Child with a Disability](#)
- [Welcome Children and Families into Your Classroom](#)
- [Welcoming Dual Language Learners](#)

# 3

## Strengthen the Connection: Making Family Engagement An Ongoing Practice

Family engagement is not a passing phase—it’s an ongoing practice! Stay engaged, stay connected, and continue to value family engagement as an essential part of children’s well-being.

Refer to the [Family Engagement Plan \(PDF\)](#) to guide ongoing practice.

(Adapted from the *Foundational Practices for Effective Family Engagement in Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth Through College, Career, Community Ready Framework*.)

### A. Build Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive and Equitable Relationships

*Early childhood educators are a crucial piece of our community support systems. As we acknowledge all the differences of the children we serve in the early learning environment, we must remember to embrace the cultural differences of the homes, communities, and caregivers they come from. Taking the time to partner with caregivers and learn details about their language, heritage, and traditions gives educators the tools to develop a culturally responsive classroom that produces compassionate lifelong learners.*

—**Lindsey Ramsey**, Trying Together Public Policy Regional Coordinator

## Ideas

- **Build relationships and be present.**
  - Enjoy neighborhood walks and porch visits.
  - Attend street fairs and other local events in the families' neighborhoods.
- **Recognize, honor, and promote existing knowledge.**
  - Understand and come to know what families know.
  - Invite families to share with the class/program.
  - Invite linguistically diverse families to teach or share their primary language.
  - Have families assist with buying books for the program.
  - Ask families to assist in decorating classrooms or displays.
- **Identify and use what works for families.**
  - Partner with families to co-plan a school-based family event or to codesign a home-based family activity.
- **Promote a culture of awareness, learning, and sharing**
  - Listen, observe, and learn from families.
  - Host storytelling and listening groups in which teachers and families gather to share personal experiences.
  - Host reading groups in which teachers and families read books and articles that examine unconscious bias, culture, and other relevant topics that help break down barriers.
- **Foster community by building social capital.**
  - Host mingling events that are centered on relationship-building and resource-sharing on and off school/program property to connect everyone to the surrounding community.
  - Create a "knowledge-sharing" board in the school where parents and teachers share local and personal knowledge.

(Adapted from [Five Key Practices for Family Culturally Responsive Family Engagement \(PDF\)](#) *Innovation Magazine*, Family Engagement Edition, published by the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, with support from School Readiness Consulting.)

## Resources

- [Anti-Racism Tools](#)
- [Dual Language Learners in the Preschool Classroom \(PDF\)](#)
- [Dual Language Learners Resources](#)
- Interpreting & Translating
  - [Global Wordsmiths](#)
- [Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education \(P.R.I.D.E.\)](#)

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## B. Build Inclusive and Safe Learning Communities

*Inclusion is the seed from which growing minds blossom.*

–Jayme Jordan, Trying Together Health & Safety Coach

## Ideas

- Collaborate with families to adjust the physical environment and learning program to meet all children's needs.
- Engage in professional development and ongoing learning about inclusive practice.
- Ensure that a program and its events are accessible to all families, including those whose members have disabilities.
- Develop a program's philosophy on inclusion.
- Collaborate with families to develop challenging and attainable goals for each child.
- Support each child in reaching their full potential.
- Establish a system of services and support for children with exceptional needs.
- Participate in local advocacy efforts to support young children with disabilities.
- Adhere to any updated health and safety recommendations to keep the learning community safe and healthy.

## Resources

- [Allegheny County Family Resource Map](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act & Child Care Providers](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Resources for Addressing Suspensions & Expulsions](#)
- [The Benefits of Inclusion in Early Childhood](#)

## Child Mental & Behavioral Health Support

- [Adaptive Behavioral Services \(ABS\)](#)
- [Jefferson Hospital Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Services](#)
- [Jewish Family & Community Services Counseling](#)
- [Matilda H. Theiss Child Development Center](#)
- [The Watson Institute](#)
- [UPMC Children's Hospital Pediatric Behavioral Health Programs](#)
- [UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital & Behavioral Health Services](#)

## Early Intervention and Child Development Support

- [Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#)
- [Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program](#)
- [PA Home Visiting Program](#)
- [PA Promise for Children](#)
- [The Alliance for Infants & Toddlers](#)

## Exceptional Needs Support & Advocacy

- [HUNE](#)
- [Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership \(PEAL\) Center](#)
- [Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania](#)
- PA Special Education Consult Line  
1-800-879-2301 (Voice/TTY/TDD)
- [Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance](#)

## C. Leverage the Expertise, Knowledge, and Leadership of Families

*Cultural humility is one of the qualities one must possess to navigate the diverse and different families we serve today.*

–Neil Walker, Trying Together Family Development Specialist

## Ideas

- Ask families about their interests and knowledge.
- Listen to families when they share about their skills and life experiences and ask about ways they could use that knowledge in the program's learning community.
- Invite families to discuss community helpers and share with children about their own position in the community.
- Ask families to sit on a parent advisory committee to support their child and the child care program.
- Recognize that families take on leadership and may have experience in leading advocacy efforts.
- Share information about voter registration and the power of voting to support early childhood education funding.
- Invite families to volunteer in your program.
- Encourage families to share their home language with children in the classroom.
- Ask families for guidance when selecting classroom books, decorating the classroom, or sharing student work.
- Invite families to collaborate in planning program events.
- Invite families into the classroom to read a story aloud or share a family story.
- Host events that focus on facilitating relationships between families.

## Resources

- [Advocacy Resources](#)
- [National Parent Advisory Committee](#)
- [Parents As Teachers](#)
- [PA Parent Advisory Council for Migrant Families](#)
- [Start Strong PA: Share Your Story](#)
- [State Parent Advisory Council](#)
- [Votes PA](#)

## D. Engage in Professional Growth

*Trying Together's Quality Initiative team takes great pride in ensuring our early child educators understand the importance of family engagement and strategies to use to be successful in the classroom. Professional development and training are offered in various ways to support learning and understand ways to engage with diverse families.*

–**Jasmine Davis**, Trying Together Professional Learning Program Manager

### Ideas

- Know that the role of a caregiver in a child's life is essential.
- Understand that work with children requires skill building and learning.
- Approach learning about child development and education as an ongoing, life-long pursuit.
- Identify areas of child development and learning that enrich practice with children.
- Know that understanding the importance of play is essential to developmentally appropriate practice.
- Determine what the professional development goals are: Does someone want to learn about a certain subject? Would someone like to complete a CDA credential or obtain an Associates Degree?
- Seek out low-cost or free opportunities to advance knowledge.
- Attend in-person events and/or virtual learning opportunities to further knowledge of the field of early childhood.

### Resources

- [Early Childhood Investigations Webinars](#)
- [edWeb](#)
- [ELRC Region 5 Events](#)
- [Everyday Interactions Matter](#)
- [McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership](#)
- [PA Keys Professional Development](#)
- [Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support Network](#)
- [Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance Network](#)
- [First Up Professional Development](#)
- [NAEYC Professional Development](#)
- [Trying Together Professional Development](#)
- [SharedSource PA](#)
- [Zero to Three Learning Center](#)

### Additional Credentials

- [Carlow University Child Development Associate \(CDA\) Credential](#)
- [Carlow University Child Development Director Credential](#)
- [CCAC Infant Toddler, CDA, Associates Degree Programs, and General Credits](#)
- [CDA Opportunities](#)
- [Trying Together CDA Program](#)
- [Pennsylvania Child Care Association T.E.A.C.H. Program](#)
- [Professional Development Organizations](#)

### English As A Second Language (ESL) Support

- [Casa San José ESL Classes for Spanish & Portuguese Speakers](#)
- [Goodwill ESL Classes](#)
- [Literacy Pittsburgh ESL Classes](#)

## E. Connect to Keystone STARS Performance Standards: Partnerships with Families and Communities

*Family engagement is a fundamental puzzle piece in support of the final picture of quality education.*

—Perrinda Sandiford, Trying Together Quality Coach

## STAR 2

**FC 2.1** Program has a written policy that states that Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) written plans, and/or special needs assessments, with family permission, are appropriately utilized to inform individualized instruction. The policy also recommends that the child's teacher participate in the IEP/IFSP meeting which must include family members, an early childhood teacher, Early Intervention (EI) specialists, and director or administrator.

### Ideas

- Understand that families might be hesitant to share an IEP/IFSP because of shame or embarrassment.
- Enlist family engagement strategies to build trust and connection with families.
- Talk with families about how an IEP/IFSP can enhance their child's learning and growth.
- Arrange for staff coverage if necessary so the child's primary educator can attend the IEP/IFSP meetings.
- Encourage educators to directly refer to IEP/IFSP goals in their lesson plan objectives.
- Ask for input from families with children who have IEP/IFSPs in order to understand how best to support them.

### Resources

- [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) and Individualized Family Service Plan \(IFSP\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [IEP and IFSP Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [More information and forms relating to IEPs and IFSPs](#)

## Early Intervention and Child Development Support

- [Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#)
- [Hello Baby](#)
- [Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program](#)
- [PA Home Visiting Program](#)
- [PA Promise for Children](#)
- [The Alliance for Infants & Toddlers](#)

**FC 2.2** Program has a written policy to demonstrate how children are helped to transition between developmental stages. Policy includes a plan to share information with families. Policies might include activities that support transition from: role as infant to older child in mixed age group; teacher directed play to child directed play; one classroom/group or program to the next; pre-kindergarten to kindergarten; school age program to self-care; and one early learning program to another.

### Ideas

- Know that caregiver's role in a child's life is essential in supporting the child and their family during transition.
- Communicate with families in advance--send an email or a letter, have a phone call, or an in-person transition meeting--to inform the families about the transition and discuss any support they might need.
- Access the school district's readiness packet to share with families of children transitioning to Kindergarten.
- Invite school guidance counselors to speak to the children about their new school.
- Encourage the parent or caregiver to reach out to ELRC Region 5 for supportive resources before and during a transition.
- Host a transition event.
- Fill a backpack with necessary supplies, transition information for parents and notes about a child's development and learning style to take with them through their transition.
- Show children their new cubbies or take them to visit their new classroom.
- Consider that family events like a new baby, a move, homelessness, or custody changes are important transitions.
- Offer information about Hi5! to the family if the child is transitioning into Kindergarten.
- Talk with the child about the change to come.
- Support a child's play scenarios relating to understanding the change.

- Create or read a story with the child about transition to Kindergarten, a move to a new house, a new sibling, etc.

## Resources

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Hi5! Kindergarten Transition](#)
- [Increasing Early Care and Education Opportunities in Pittsburgh: A Review of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion in U.S. Cities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition White Paper \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Stories to Help Children Get Ready for School](#)
- [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#)

**FC 2.3** Program has a policy and/or practice in place to support and encourage family engagement. A minimum of one family conference is offered per year to discuss children's progress and behavioral, social, and physical needs as well as the family's goals for their child.

## Ideas

- Reach out to all families to inform them of available conference times in advance.
- Consider adjusting conference times to meet families' scheduling needs.
- Consider having a video conference or a phone call if families are not able to meet in person.
- Save copies of communication with families about conferences: emails, conference time sign-up sheets, and records of completed/offered conferences.
- Document the information shared in the conference: a child's behavior, social and emotional growth, physical development, and a families' needs and goals.
- Host events for families to connect: picnics, family nights, learning activities, lectures/discussions on relevant topics for families, lunch and learns, an open house, or game night.
- Document communication with families about family engagement events.
- Be sure events are accessible to all family members--use the Reflective Questions as a guide.
- Formulate the provider Family Engagement Plan to keep a program on task and in regular, supportive communication with families.

## Resources

- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Early Learning](#)
- [Allegheny County Family Centers](#)
- [Kidsburgh](#)
- [Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth Through College, Career, Community Ready Framework](#)
- [Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative](#)

**FC 2.4** A current Family Handbook is distributed to outline program policies and practices beyond those required by Certification.

## Ideas

- Carefully consider the information to include in the Family Handbook.
- Use a sample handbook to guide the creation of a Family Handbook.
- Develop policies with input from staff and families.
- Be thorough.
- Make changes to the handbook as needed and update all families and staff of these changes.
- Dispense a copy of the handbook to all families--a paper copy or an electronic version, depending on families' preference.
- Consider how to share Family Handbook information with families—scheduling an enrollment meeting, hosting a virtual Parent Handbook Q&A, etc.

## Resources

- [Family Handbook Model for Centers \(PDF\)](#)
- [Family Handbook Model for Home-Based Providers \(PDF\)](#)

# STAR 3 & 4

**FC 3.4.1** A plan is written and implemented describing procedures to refer families to social, mental health, educational, wellness, and medical services when appropriate.

## Ideas

- Formulate a step-by-step plan for educators and directors to follow when they have concerns about a child's development.
- Identify families' unique needs and actively gather resources that best meet those particular needs.
- Reach out to nearby organizations to make connections and learn about services.
- Develop a binder or an online list of useful resources to support family wellness.
- Let families know about resources that may benefit them.

## Resources

- [Allegheny County Family Resource Map](#)
- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Allegheny County Family Centers](#)
- [Family Wellness Resources](#)
- [PA 211 Southwest](#)

**FC 3.4.2** A minimum of two family conferences are offered per year to discuss children's strengths, progress, behavioral, social, and physical needs, and the family's goals for their child.

## Ideas

- Reach out to all families to inform them of available conference times in advance.
- Consider adjusting conference times to meet families' scheduling needs.
- Consider having a video conference or a phone call if families are not able to meet in person.
- Save copies of communication with families about conferences, emails, conference time sign-up sheets, and records of completed/offered conferences.
- Document the information shared in the conference: a child's social and emotional growth, physical development, a families' needs and goals, etc.
- Reference the Family Engagement Plan to assess family engagement goals and ongoing communication strategies.

## Resources

- [Talking with Parents about Play and Learning](#)

**FC 3.4.3** Program implements practices that support continuity of care that helps ensure children and families are engaged in continued, high-quality early learning experiences through stable relationships with caregivers.

## Ideas

- Include the plan for continuity of care in the Family Handbook.
- Consider moving educators along with children as they grow in the program.
- Plan group activities or events with children's former or future educators.
- Intentionally create moments throughout the day in which children can maintain contact with former caregivers--story time, drop off, outdoor play time, etc.
- Communicate with families about the plan for slowly transitioning a child to a new educator's care. (For example, the child might spend a few hours in the new classroom and slowly phase into a full day there over time.)
- Develop a mentor program for older children to assist and connect with younger children in the program.
- Consider planning for educator absences with continuity of care in mind (for example, covering absences with the same substitute educator.)

## Resources

- [Building Positive Relationships with Young Children \(PDF\)](#)
- [The Many Benefits of Continuity of Care for Infants, Toddlers, Family, and Caregiving Staff](#)
- [Young Children Develop in An Environment of Relationships \(PDF\)](#)

**FC 3.4.4** Families are engaged in ways that demonstrate their participation in shaping the policies and procedures of the program and that encourage family networking.

## Ideas

- Invite families to participate in any changes to policies.
- Hold meetings, send online surveys, or make a comment box to invite input from families.
- Encourage the formation of a Family Advisory Council.
- Organize mentorship for families--connect new families

with seasoned families in the program.

- Host events for families to connect: picnics, family nights, learning activities, lectures/discussions on relevant topics for families, lunch and learns, an open house, and game nights.
- Be sure events are accessible to all family members--use the Reflective Questions as a guide.
- Provide information and opportunities for participating in group advocacy efforts in early childhood.

## Resources

- [Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Parents As Teachers](#)
- [PA Parent Advisory Council for Migrant Families](#)
- [Start Strong PA: Share Your Story](#)
- [State Parent Advisory Council](#)

**FC 3.4.5** Opportunities for families to attend education workshops are provided on topics such as: early literacy; adult/family literacy; positive family-child interactions; cultural awareness; substance misuse, developmental issues; health and safety; and/or other topics that address the identified needs and interests of enrolled families. Translation/interpreters are provided for families as needed.

## Ideas

- Gather input from families and educators regarding the learning areas that are most relevant to families.
- Seek out learning experiences in the community and share that information directly with families.
- Partner with the neighborhood Family Center to stay updated on community events.
- Invite experts into the program to speak to families about relevant topics.
- When planning an event, consider families' transportation needs.
- Offer translation/interpretation services if needed.
- Arrange for child care during these events to encourage full participation.
- Keep a record of communication about events offered to families (flyers, sign in sheets, emails, etc.)

## Resources

- [ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids](#)
- [Developmentally Appropriate Parenting Series](#)

- [Allegheny County Family Centers](#)
- [Family Wellness Resources](#)
- [Home Visiting Programs](#)

**FC 3.4.6** The Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework or a similarly focused evidence-based tool is used to assess engagement of and interactions with families. The results of the self-assessment are used to inform the program's CQI plan.

## Ideas

- Know that a process of self-assessment is essential in developing an ongoing, effective family engagement practice.
- Consider accessing training to effectively implement the [PA Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework](#) in the program.
- Decide how often to implement the self-assessment and mark those dates on the calendar.
- Plan to use the self-assessment to regularly inform the CQI plan and to keep on task in fulfilling the family engagement goals.

## Resources

- [Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth Through College, Career, Community Ready Framework](#)
- [PA Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework](#)

**FC 3.4.7** A current community resource handbook or materials are available to all families and includes community and school-based resources and/or information about direct services to promote child/family safety, health, and stability.

## Ideas

- Identify families' unique needs and actively gather resources that best meet those particular needs.
- Reach out to nearby organizations to make connections and learn about services.
- Develop a binder or an online list of useful resources to support family wellness.
- Make time in the schedule to regularly update resources and determine which resources best support the program's families.
- Let families know that the program can support them by providing relevant resources.

## Resources

- [Allegheny County Family Resource Map](#)
- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Allegheny County Family Centers](#)
- [Family Wellness Resources](#)
- [PA 211 Southwest](#)

**FC 3.4.8** To support learning at home, a variety of methods are used to communicate with families about curriculum objectives, early childhood education goals, and effective strategies for supporting their child's development.

## Ideas

- Email lesson plans to families regularly and include learning objectives.
- Invest in regular communication using virtual platforms, apps, a social media page, email updates, etc., and include strategies for supporting child development.
- Use bulletin boards or displays to highlight children's progress.
- Complete written daily communication for infants and toddlers and include information about developmental milestones.
- Host a workshop in which families and educators discuss ways to support children's development in partnership with program goals.

## Resources

- [My Day \(PDF\)](#)
- [Message from Me](#)

# 4

## Support Transition

A program's support during transitions makes a big difference! Transition could mean when a child moves to a new classroom or to a new educator within a program, to a different early learning program, to a new town or state, or transitions to Kindergarten. These transitions can be stressful, but when adults partner together during these times, the process can become much smoother.

***Transitioning is an important skill for children to learn as we all face transitions and changes in our day to day life. Whether it be a transition from our home to school or a schedule change in your daily routine, we are moving, changing and adapting our lives to the best of our ability. Change can be difficult for some so it is important to teach and model skills for our children to decrease frustrations or challenging behaviors and allow for smoother transitions!***

—**Alicia Sebastian**, Trying Together Early Head Start Coach

## Ideas

- Understand that a parent's role is essential in supporting the child and their caregivers during the transition.
- Communicate with families in advance--send an email or a letter, have a phone call or an in-person transition meeting--to inform the families about the transition and discuss any support they might need.
- Make a transition plan.
- Examine formal and informal assessments of children to inform the transition.
- Encourage the parent or caregiver to reach out to the ELRC for supportive resources before and during the transition.

- Encourage the parent or caregiver to contact school districts in their area.
- Offer information about Hi5! to the parent or caregiver if the child is transitioning into Kindergarten.
- Access the school district's readiness packet to share with families of children transitioning to Kindergarten.
- Reach out to the new school and invite teachers or guidance counselors to visit the program.
- Contact the new school to ask about opportunities for children to visit before enrolling.
- Host a transition event.
- Invite former children of the program to talk to children about Kindergarten.
- Host an event for families to connect with families of Kindergarteners about the transition.
- Invite school guidance counselors to speak to the children about their new school.
- Consider that family events like a new baby, a move, homelessness, or custody changes are important transitions.
- Talk with the child about the change to come.
- Support a child's play scenarios relating to understanding the change.
- Create or read a story with the child about transition to Kindergarten, a move to a new house, a new sibling, etc.

## Resources

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Hi5! Kindergarten Transition](#)
- [Head Start Transition Resources](#)
- [Increasing Early Care and Education Opportunities in Pittsburgh: A Review of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion in U.S. Cities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition White Paper \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Stories to Help Children Get Ready for School](#)
- [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#)

# 5

## Evaluate and Share the Effectiveness of the Practice

Part of the process of family engagement includes reflecting back on practice, determining whether or not the strategies were successful, and making adjustments to the approach in order to best serve children and their families.

*In order for self-reflection to be effective, you have to be honest throughout the process. This honesty stems from true and supportive relationships with families.*

—Judy Graca, Trying Together STARS Designator

## Ideas

Review the Family Engagement Plan to reflect on practice. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Did any part of the plan change?
- Why was the change made?
- How was the change made?
- What was missing from the plan?
- What changes will be made to the plan moving forward?
- What support will be given to the family as they transition out of the program?

## Resources

- [Strengthening Families Self Assessment Tool for Center Based Programs \(PDF\)](#)
- [Strengthening Families Self Assessment Tool for Family Child Care Programs \(PDF\)](#)

Were elements of this Family Engagement Toolkit used or changed to suit the needs of the learning community served? Let Trying Together know by submitting this [online form](#).

# Relative Provider

Relative providers fill two special roles as both a family member and a provider for a child. When a relative provider engages with a parent or caregiver using intentional, strengths-based supportive strategies for communicating and connecting, they actively strengthen the network of caring adults that contribute to the child's healthy learning and growing.

*'It takes a village.' You, the child care provider, and the families are the village in that child's life. The success of this village is dependent on the communication and engagement of its members.*

—Bliss Letang, Trying Together Early Learning Program Engagement Supervisor

# 1

## Make A Family Engagement Plan

First things first: Make a plan! When one puts all their ideas, strategies, and goals on paper for their [Provider Family Engagement Plan \(PDF\)](#), they make a commitment to prioritize consistent communication, partnership, and the best support possible for the child in their care.

While creating the Provider Family Engagement Plan, consider the methods one wants to use to connect and communicate with parents and caregivers on a regular basis. Include ongoing, two-way communication strategies as part of the Provider Family Engagement Plan. Here are a few ideas:

- communication apps;
- email updates;
- in person meetings;
- newsletter;
- phone calls;
- photos;
- text messages;
- video calls;
- written daily communication; [My Day \(PDF\)](#).

Need assistance creating a Relative Provider Family Engagement Plan and setting family engagement goals? Contact Trying Together at 412.421.3889 or [info@tryingtogether.org](mailto:info@tryingtogether.org) for support.



# 2

## Make the First Connection: Step Into the Relative Provider Role in The Family

Great engagement with caregivers begins in the first moments as a Relative Provider! Use the Provider Family Engagement Plan as a guide in setting the stage for great communication and connection with the parent or caregiver.

### Ideas

- Set up a time to talk with the child's parents or caregivers before care begins.
- Ask about the child's likes and dislikes.
- Collaborate on a plan for copayments and pay dates before care begins.
- Ask about a child's allergies to foods or medications.
- Ask about the child's normal routine at home.
- Discuss the parent's or caregiver's goals for the child.
- Ask about the child's special needs.
- Ask the parent or caregiver what sorts of activities they enjoy doing with their child.
- Ask the parent or caregiver if they want to discuss the child's development.
- Create a communication plan: Ask the parent or caregiver how they would prefer to communicate (Text? Email? Phone?)

### Resources

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Provider Family Engagement Plan \(PDF\)](#)

# 3

## Strengthen Connection: Deepening The Role of The Relative Provider

Family engagement is an ongoing practice! Stay engaged, stay connected, and continue to value Family engagement as an essential part of a child's well-being.

*You as the child care provider get to experience a lot of "firsts" in children's growth. Sharing those "firsts" with the parents and families can change cloudy days into sunshine and smiles.*

*—Bliss Letang, Early Learning Program Engagement Supervisor*

### Ideas

- Refer to Provider Family Engagement Plan to sustain communication and engagement with the family.
- Commit to learning more about child development, health and safety, and play.
- Know that understanding the importance of play is essential in providing excellent care.
- Seek out free or low-cost professional development courses--in the community or online--for further learning.
- Consider receiving CPR and First Aid Certifications.
- Contact the local fire department to inquire about fire safety classes or information.
- Learn about safe sleeping practices for infants.
- Communicate daily with families--through text and photos of their child, email, or daily written notes.
- Seek out training in using technology to communicate with caregivers if needed.
- Register to vote and select candidates who support early childhood education.

### Resources

### Communication

- [How to Communicate with Parents](#)

- [My Day \(PDF\)](#)
- [Talking With Parents about Play and Learning](#)

## Child Development Milestones

- [Pathways PA](#)
- [PA Promise for Children: Watch Them Grow](#)
- [Zero to Three Child Development](#)

## Professional Development

- [Community College of Allegheny County \(CCAC\) Community Education Courses](#)
- [Developmentally Appropriate Parenting \(DAP\) Series](#)
- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Importance of Play](#)
- [Parents as Teachers](#)
- [PA Keys Professional Development](#)
- [Trying Together Professional Development](#)

## Health & Safety

- [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [PA Safe Sleep](#)

## Community

- [Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Early Learning](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Kidsburgh](#)
- [Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative](#)
- [Votes PA](#)

# 4

## Support Transition

Support during transitions makes a big difference! Transition might mean when a child moves on to an early learning program, moves to a new town or state, or transitions to Kindergarten. These transitions can be stressful, but when adults partner together during these times, the process can become much smoother for all involved.

### Ideas

- Anticipate the transition and set aside time to talk with the parent or caregiver about their plans.
- Understand that a Relative Provider's role is essential in supporting the child and their caregivers during the transition.
- Encourage the parent or caregiver to reach out to the ELRC for supportive resources before and during the transition.
- Make a transition plan with the parent or caregiver.
- Encourage the parent or caregiver to reach out to school districts in their area if the child is transitioning into Kindergarten.
- Access the school district's readiness packet to share with families of children transitioning to Kindergarten.
- Offer information about Hi5! to the parent or caregiver if the child is transitioning into Kindergarten.
- Consider that family events like a new baby, a move, homelessness, or custody changes are important transitions.
- Talk with the child about the change to come.
- Support a child's play scenarios relating to understanding the change.
- Create or read a story with the child about transition to Kindergarten, a move to a new house, a new sibling, etc.

### Resources

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Head Start Transition Resources](#)
- [Hi5! Kindergarten Transition](#)
- [Increasing Early Care and Education Opportunities in Pittsburgh: A Review of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion in U.S. Cities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Stories to Help Children Get Ready for School](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition White Paper \(PDF\)](#)
- [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#)

# Families

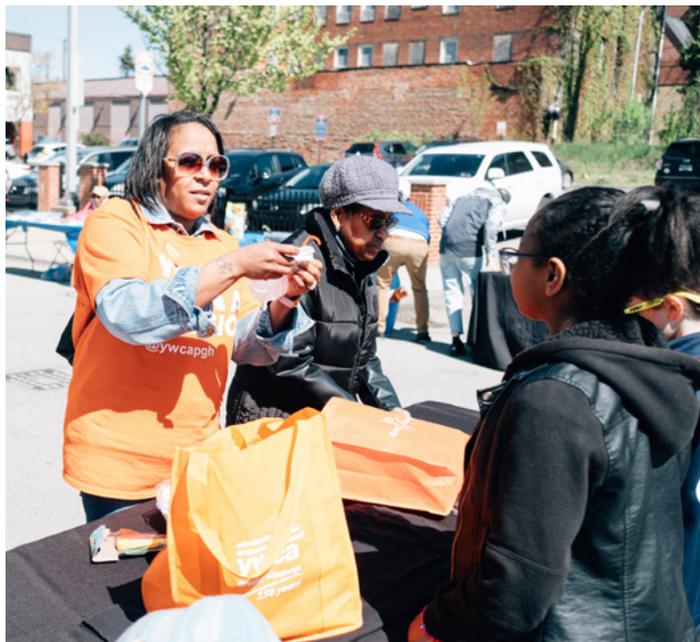
The steady support and presence of families in a child's life are essential! When families extend their presence into a child's learning community, they actively support better outcomes for that child. Know that a family brings unique talents, customs, and vibrancy to a child care program that only that family can bring. Child care providers need families—their knowledge, their lived experiences, and their partnership—to best support their child.

## 1

### Make A Family Engagement Plan

First things first: Make a plan! Getting ideas and goals on paper with the [Engagement Plan for Families \(PDF\)](#) helps clarify how one wants to partner with their child care provider to bolster their child's growth and learning.

Need assistance creating an [Engagement Plan for Families?](#) Contact Trying Together at 412.421.3889 or [info@tryingtogether.org](mailto:info@tryingtogether.org).



## 2

### Make the First Connection: The Beginning of a Partnership with A Child Care Provider

Engagement with a child care provider begins in the first moments! From the very beginning, families should let a provider know that they are ready to actively participate in the learning community and join forces with the provider to best support their unique and wonderful child.

#### Choose A Child Care Provider

- [Allegheny Child Care](#)
- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Family Care & Education Forum](#)
- [Head Start/Early Head Start](#)
- [Keystone STARS Rating System](#)
- [Matching Your Infant or Toddler's Style to the Right Child Care Setting](#)
- [Pre-K Counts](#)
- [Preschool Prep: How to Prepare Your Toddler for Preschool](#)

#### Sharing About Family

- [Getting to Know Each Other: Welcome Questionnaire \(PDF\)](#)
- [A Family Guide to Inclusive Early Learning in Pennsylvania \(PDF\)](#)
- [Your Family Matters \(PDF\)](#)

---

# 3

## Strengthen the Connection: Making Family Engagement an Ongoing Practice

Engagement in a child's learning and growth is an ongoing practice! Stay engaged, stay connected, and continue to value engagement with the child care provider as an essential part of a child's well-being.

### Ideas

- Know that a family is a unique asset to any child care program.
- Share talents with the child's classroom.
- Visit the child care program to speak about community helpers and position in the community.
- Attend program events or celebrations—virtual or in person.
- Read a book or share a family story in the child's classroom.
- Attend conferences. If the conference time does not work, request another meeting time.
- Participate in the virtual platform that the provider uses to communicate--and ask for help if having difficulty accessing it.
- Share the home language.
- Offer to volunteer if possible.
- Collaborate on planning program events.
- Sit on a parent advisory committee to support the child and their child care program.
- Ask the provider about the child's day.
- Share any concerns or successes in the child's development.
- Share about important family events with the child care provider.
- Get involved in advocacy efforts to support early childhood education.
- Register to vote and vote for candidates who support essential early childhood programs.

### Resources

- [Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Early Learning](#)
- [Common Sense Media](#)
- [Developmentally Appropriate Parenting \(DAP\) Series](#)
- [Family Care & Education Forum](#)
- [Have A Concern About School? Tips For Talking To The Teacher](#)
- [Kidsburgh](#)
- [Parents as Teachers](#)
- [Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative](#)
- [Start Strong PA: Share Your Story](#)
- [The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center](#)
- [Tips for Parent-Teacher Conferences](#)
- [Votes PA](#)

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# 4

## Prepare for Transition

A family's presence during transitions makes a world of difference! Transition could mean when a child moves to a new classroom or to a new educator, when a child moves on to a different school, or when they transition to Kindergarten. Transition could also mean when a new baby arrives, when a family moves to a new house, or when custody arrangements shift in a family. Any transition can be stressful, but when adults partner together during these times, the process can become much smoother.

### Ideas

- If a child is transitioning into Kindergarten, begin to contact school districts in the area and access the schools' readiness packets.
- Reach out to the ELRC for supportive resources before and during any transition.
- Ask the child care provider about Hi5! if the child is transitioning into Kindergarten.
- Inquire about taking the child to visit the new school.
- Request a meeting with the child care provider before a transition to help prepare.
- Collaborate on a transition plan with the child care provider.
- Understand that the family's role is essential in supporting a child through any transition.
- Talk with the child about the change to come.
- Support a child's play scenarios relating to understanding the change.
- Create or read a story with the child about transition to Kindergarten, a move to a new house, a new sibling, etc.
- Consider that family events like a new baby, a move or custody changes are important transitions .

### Resources

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Hi5! Kindergarten Transition](#)
- [Increasing Early Care and Education Opportunities in Pittsburgh: A Review of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion in U.S. Cities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Kindergarten Here I Come](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition White Paper \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Stories to Help Children Get Ready for School](#)
- [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#)

# 5

## Family Wellness Resources

Taking advantage of community resources is important--for the health and development of the child and for the wellness of the whole family! The more healthy and taken care of a family is, the more present they can be for the child as they grow. Access the resources below to strengthen family resilience and well-being.

### Advocacy in Early Childhood Education

- [Childhood Begins at Home](#)
- [Pre-K for PA](#)
- [Start Strong PA](#)
- [Votes PA](#) (register, verify, or update voter registration)

### Anti-Racism Tools

- [Anti-Racism Tools](#)
- [Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education \(P.R.I.D.E.\)](#)

### Child Behavioral & Mental Health Support

- [Adaptive Behavioral Services \(ABS\)](#)
- [Jewish Family & Community Services Counseling](#)
- [Matilda H. Theiss Child Development Center](#)
- [Peal Center](#)
- [Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Institute at Jefferson Hospital](#)
- [The Watson Institute](#)
- [UPMC Children's Hospital Pediatric Behavioral Health Programs](#)
- [UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital & Behavioral Health Services](#)

### Child Development Milestones

- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning \(CSEFEL\)](#)
- [PA Promise for Children](#)
- [Pathways](#)
- [Zero to Three](#)

## Children's Media

- [Common Sense Media](#)

## Choosing Child Care

- [Allegheny Child Care Search Tool](#)
- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Head Start/Early Head Start](#)
- [Keystone STARS Rating System](#)
- [Matching Your Infant or Toddler's Style to the Right Child Care Setting \(PDF\)](#)
- [Pre-K Counts](#)
- [Preschool Prep: How to Prepare Your Toddler for Preschool](#)

## Community Play

- [Buzzword Pittsburgh](#)
- [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Early Learning](#)
- [Everyday I Learn Through Play](#)
- [Kidsburgh](#)
- [Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative](#)
- [Play Pittsburgh](#)

## Communication Resources

- [Message from Me](#)
- [SharedSource PA](#)

## Domestic Violence & Homelessness Support Services for Women

- [Alle-Kiski Area Hope Center](#)
- [Bethlehem Haven](#)
- [Center for Victims](#)
- [Crisis Center North](#)
- [Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh](#)

## Early Intervention & Child Development Support

- [Allegheny Intermediate Unit \(AIU\)](#)
- [Hello Baby](#)
- [Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program](#)
- [PA Home Visiting Program](#)
- [PA Promise for Children](#)
- [The Alliance for Infants & Toddlers](#)

## English As a Second Language (ESL) Support

- [Casa San José ESL Classes](#)
- [Goodwill ESL Classes](#)
- [Literacy Pittsburgh ESL Classes](#)

## Exceptional Needs Advocacy & Support

- [Childhood Begins at Home](#)
- [HUNE](#)
- [Include Me PA](#)
- [Information about Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)
- [PEAL Center](#)
- [Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania](#)
- PA Special Education Consult Line  
1-800-879-2301 (Voice/TTY/TDD)
- [Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance](#)

## Allegheny County Family Centers

- [27 locations](#) including these in the South Hills and Lower Mon Valley areas:  
Clairton Family Center  
Duquesne Family Center  
Hazelwood Family Center  
Hilltop Family Center  
McKeesport Family Center  
South Hills Family Center  
Steel Valley Family Center

## Financial Counseling Services

- [Pittsburgh Financial Empowerment Center \(FEC\)](#)

## Food Assistance

- [Just Harvest](#)
- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)\\*](#)
- [USDA Food Assistance Programs\\*](#)
- [Women, Infants, & Children \(WIC\)\\*](#)

\* Apply for these assistance programs on the [PA COMPASS website](#).

## General Educational Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Credential (HSE)

- [Goodwill GED Classes](#)
- [Literacy Pittsburgh HSE Prep Class](#)

## Health Insurance/Low Cost Health Care

- [Be Well](#) (free and low-cost health care options for the uninsured/underinsured)
- [Children's Health Insurance Plan \(CHIP\)\\*](#) (for children and teens)
- [Medical Assistance\\*](#)

## Housing & Rental Assistance

- [Action Housing](#)
- [Allegheny County Housing Authority](#)
- [Allegheny Link Affordable Housing Resources](#)
- [Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh](#)
- [Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh](#)
- [US Dept of Housing and Urban Development](#)
- [Veterans Leadership of Southwest PA](#)

## Immigrant & Refugee Support Services

- [Allegheny Refugee Resettlement Programs](#)
- [Immigrant Services and Connections \(ISAC\)](#)  
ISAC includes the following organizations:  
[Allegheny Intermediate Unit](#)  
[Casa San Jose](#)  
[Jewish Family & Community Services](#)  
[Literacy Pittsburgh](#)  
[South Hills Family Center](#)
- [Latino Community Center](#)

## Job Training

- [Center for Women Pittsburgh](#)
- [Job Corps](#) (job training for 18-24 year olds)
- [Learn & Earn Summer Youth Employment Program](#) (youth and young Adults)
- [PA CareerLink](#)
- [Partner 4 Work](#) (adult and youth job seekers)
- [PA Women Work](#)
- [PennDOT Job Training Program](#)

## Kindergarten Transition

- [ELRC Region 5](#)
- [Head Start Transition Resources](#)
- [Hi5! Kindergarten Transition](#)
- [Increasing Early Care and Education Opportunities in Pittsburgh: A Review of Pre-Kindergarten Expansion in U.S. Cities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Kindergarten Transition White Paper \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Stories to Help Children Get Ready for School](#)
- [Transitioning to Kindergarten](#)

## Social Connections

- [Brown Mamas Pittsburgh](#)
- [Fathers Trying Together](#)
- [Rise Together](#)
- [Single Mom Defined](#)
- [Women's Rap](#)

## Support for Drug and Alcohol Misuse

- [Allegheny County Drug & Alcohol Resources](#)
- [Allegheny County Opioid Use Resources](#)

## Support Services for Families Affected by Incarceration or Family Separation

- [Amachi Pittsburgh](#)
- [Lydia's Place](#)

## Utilities Assistance

- [Dollar Energy Fund](#)
- [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#)

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# Acknowledgements

Trying Together would like to wholeheartedly thank Jefferson Regional Foundation for their generous support in funding the Trying Together Family Engagement Toolkit. Sincere thanks for their dedication to children, families, and early learning providers!

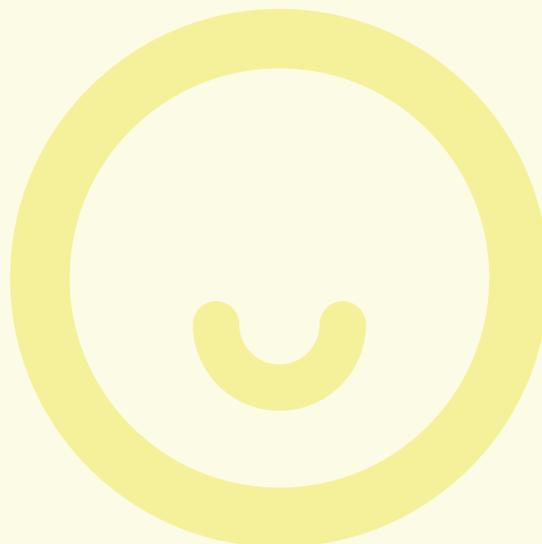
Thanks to the Allegheny County Family Centers directors who provided us with critical input in creating this toolkit, especially South Hills Family Center, Turtle Creek Family Care Connection, and McKeesport Family Center.

Inspiration and insight for the Family Engagement Toolkit was drawn from several sources during the research phase for this toolkit, including:

- Pennsylvania Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL) and Pennsylvania Department of Education's, *The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth Through College, Career, Community Ready Framework*;
- BUILD Initiative's *Family Engagement Toolkit*; and
- Karen L. Mapp, Ed. D., and her extensive work in family engagement including, *Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher's Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success* (2017.)

This toolkit was written by: Sarah Grubb, Trying Together Everyday Interactions Design Strategist and Serena Washington, Trying Together Family Engagement Specialist at The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center.

For more information, visit [www.tryingtogether.org](http://www.tryingtogether.org).



# Your Family Matters!

Your presence and engagement in your child’s learning and growth is essential! You are your child’s first teacher. As a member of any child care program, you have the right to:

---

- Make your own decisions about your child.
- Ask questions about your child’s learning and development.
- Ask questions about the family handbook.
- Share any concerns or successes you observe in your child’s growth.
- Request a meeting with a child care provider to discuss any changes or concerns relating to your child.
- Share information about your child’s health and/or specific needs.
- Ask questions about health and safety procedures and share any concerns.
- Request an assessment if you are concerned about your child’s growth and development.
- Request an interpreter to assist you in communicating with educators.
- Ask for program materials written in your native language.
- Ask for privacy if you are sharing sensitive information with a child care provider that you prefer not be shared with the learning community.
- Share information or strategies that could help an educator work well with your child.
- Participate in any program events and activities of interest.

Inspired by “Your Family Has a Voice” from the Build Initiative Family Engagement Toolkit.

---

# Getting to Know Each Other: Welcome Questionnaire

Welcome! As a new family, we would love to get to know more about you so we can partner to provide your child with the best care possible.

---

1. What sorts of things does your family enjoy doing when you are together?

---

2. What do you teach your child to do at home (for example, how to help in the garden, clean up, or take care of a pet)?

---

3. What are some traditions that have been passed down in your family?

---

4. What are some of your family values and beliefs?

---

5. Do you have any interests or skills that you would enjoy sharing with our child care program while visiting the classroom or volunteering? (For example, gardening, building, art, reading books aloud, organizing parent groups)

---

6. What language(s) do your family members speak?

---

7. What are your hopes for your child's future?

Questions inspired by "Your Family Is Extraordinary" from the Build Initiative Family Engagement Toolkit.

# My Day

## Daily Communication: Infants and Toddlers

---

1. Today, I felt...

Happy

Energetic

Sleepy

Fussy

Angry

Sad

Silly

Playful

Observant

---

2. Today, I spent my time....

3. Today, I learned about...

---

4. Meals

Time	What I Ate/Drank	Amount

---

5. Diapers

Time	Wet/BM		Notes
	Wet	BM	

---

6. Sleep

Time I Fell Asleep	Nap Duration

---

7. Items I need...

Diapers

Diaper cream

Wipes

Other

---

8. Other notes about my day:

# My Day

## Daily Communication: Pre-kindergarten

---

1. Today, I felt...

Happy

Energetic

Sleepy

Angry

Sad

Frustrated

Silly

Playful

Observant

Engaged

Active

Talkative

---

2. Today, I spent my time....

---

3. Today, I learned about...

---

4. Meals

Time	What I Ate/Drank	Amount

---

5. Sleep

Time I Fell Asleep	Nap Duration

---

6. Other notes about my day:

# Engagement Plan for Families

As we work together to support children through engaging conversations and opening lines of communication with parents and families, we must support the process of creating a strong team.

1. What is your goal for your child during their time in child care?

Area of Concern	Very Important	Important	Not Important	N/A
Socialization				
Behavioral				
Physical Needs				
Early Learning				
Developmentally Appropriate Growth				

2. What type of communication would you like to have with your child care provider?

Types of Communication	Yes	No	N/A
Text			
Phone			
Email			
FaceTime			
Social Media			

---

3. Is there a specific time of the day that you would be available for a face-to-face meeting to discuss your child's growth and milestones? (via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, or Google Hangouts or Duo)

---

4. Does Your child have any special needs/disabilities that your child care provider can help to support?

# Provider Family Engagement Plan

“To better support the families in which we serve, it is important to engage our families in the work we do with their children. Communication is the key.” - Serena L. Washington, Trying Together Family Engagement Specialist

1. As you build relationships with families, how will you connect them to community resources and services to support them? (Keystone STARS Performance Standard FC 2.3, FC 3.4.1, FC 3.4.8)

Types of Communication	Yes	No
Newsletter		
Text		
Phone		
Email		
FaceTime		
Social Media		
Message from Me		
Referral		
Conferences		
Group Meetings		

2. Create policies and procedures that will allow the parent to have a clear and concise understanding of what is to be expected from the provider and what is expected of them in relationship to the family. How will you do this in the Family Handbook? (STARS Standard FC 2.4 , FC 3.4.1, FC 3.4.2, FC 3.4.3)

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3. How will you support the families with children who have IEPs and IFSPs to connect them to services that support their learning and transitions? (STARS Standard FC 2.1, FC 2.2, FC 2.3)

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4. How will you support the families and children in continuous learning from home, in accordance with parents being the child's first teachers? (FC 3.4.8)

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5. What family needs will your Community Resource Handbook address? How will you make this Handbook available to the family? (FC 3.4.7)

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6. As you build relationships with your families, how will you include the Five Family Protective Factors and provide workshops to support their learning? (FC 3.4.6, FC 3.4.5)

# Relative Provider Family Engagement Plan

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1. Fun things we did and learned today:

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2. Today \_\_\_\_\_ did not want to participate in any play activities or play with other children. Is there anything that I should be aware of to make sure that he/she is comfortable?

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3. Today's Mealtime:

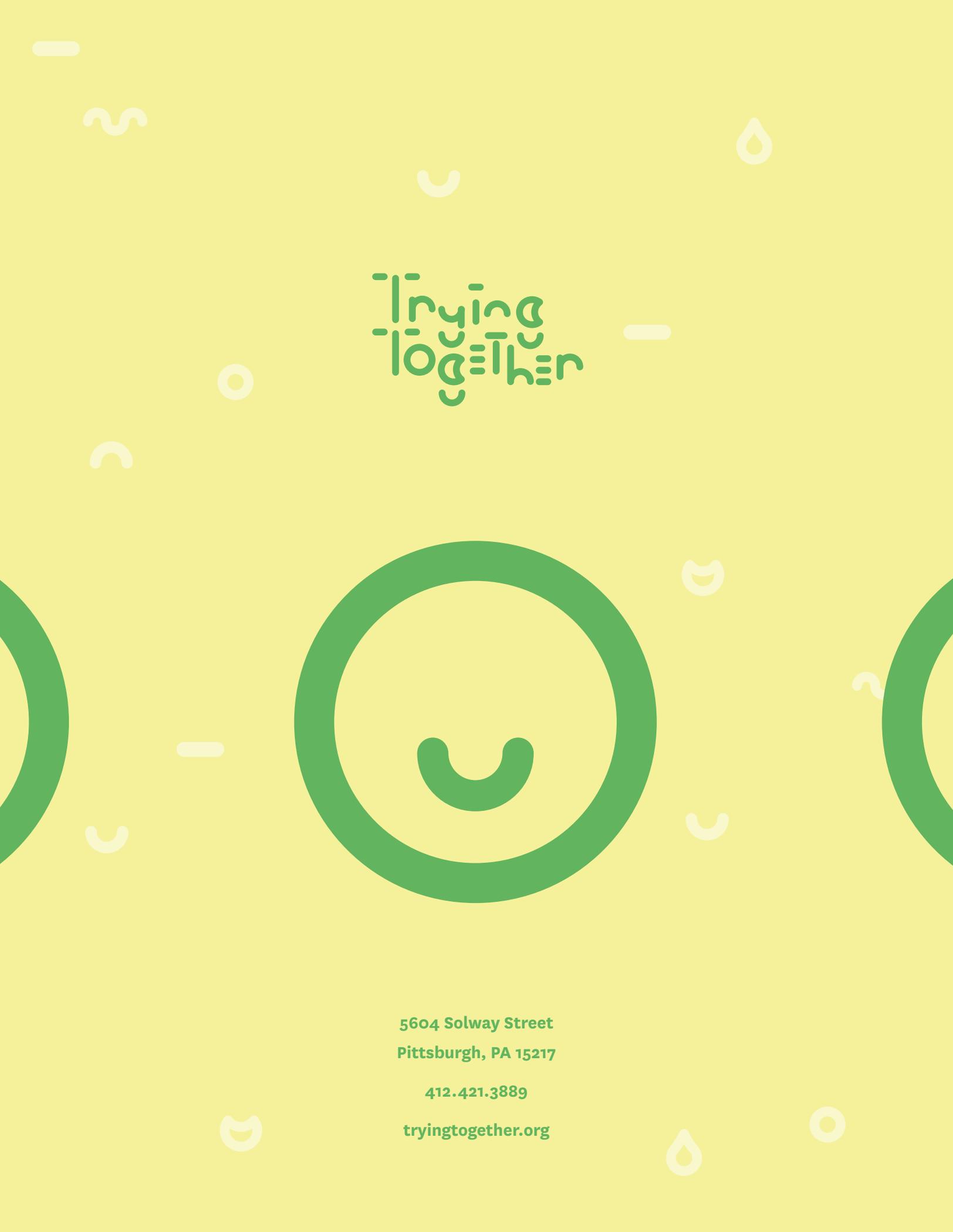
Meals	What We Ate	Mood
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		

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4. Today Child's Name exhibited the following behaviors below. Can we discuss this further?

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5. What would you like me to know about Child's Name to meet his/her needs and provide the best care?

The background is a solid light green color. Scattered throughout are various white icons: horizontal bars, wavy lines, circles, and teardrop shapes. In the center of the page is a large, thick green circle containing a white smiley face. The text 'Trying Together' is positioned above this central graphic.

Trying  
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