Parent Leadership: Effecting Community Change

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LET’S GET ON THE SAME PAGE ...

PARENT:  

- Biological parent
- Any adult who is in the primary caregiver in a child or adolescent’s life

Examples:
- Any relative (aunt, uncle) who is the primary caregiver
- Grandparent raising a grandchild
- Adoptive parent
- Foster parent
- Any non-relative caregiver
PRACTITIONER

- A staff member, employed by an agency, who is involved in providing services to children & families
- A person we would normally consider a professional

Examples
- Principal, Teacher
- Social Worker
- Executive Director
- Counselor
- Family Support Worker
Note:

Practitioners may be parents themselves but for our purposes they do not represent the needs & perspectives of parents to an agency or organization.
How are parents involved in your agency’s programs?
Parent Leadership:

- Shared leadership
- Parent engagement
- Parent involvement
- Parent Encouragement
- Family Support

Note: A parent leader represents the needs and perspectives of parents to an agency.
Parent Leadership -

Born or Learned?
Why Do We Need Parent Involvement?

Because it fosters commitment not compliance.
Why do we need parent involvement?

Research supports parent involvement as a way to create stronger families and more effective organizations.
Principles of Parent Involvement:

- Parents / practitioners are equal partners
- No one has all of the solutions
- Mutual respect, trust and open-mindedness
- Collective action based upon shared vision, ownership & accountability
- Consensus building vs. democratic process
A Day in the Life of a Parent Leader
Involving Parents takes:

- Time, resources & patience
- An organization-wide commitment
- An understanding & acceptance of the impact parents can have on their children, family, & community
What do you see as benefits

- To Families?
- To Communities?
- To Agencies/Organizations?
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families:

- Improves services for own family
- Provides opportunity to effect meaningful change
- Feels good to make a contribution
- Increases confidence in ability to effect change
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

- Holds providers accountable to families
- Provides opportunities to network with other families and providers
- Builds knowledge and skills
- Models community involvement & empowerment for own children & family
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

- Offers a sense of accomplishment
- Increases sense of personal power
- Offers leadership role models for other families
- Prevents child abuse and neglect
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Families cont.

- Creates less passive recipients of care and services
- Makes things better for other families
- Opens doors for employment
- Creates a sense of belonging
Benefits of Parent Involvement

For Providers, Programs, Agencies and Communities:

- Enhances relationships between families and providers
- Increases responsiveness to family-identified needs
- Improves the quality of programs and services
- Keeps program relevant and realistic
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Providers, Programs, Agencies, Communities cont.

- Increases visibility of and respect for program in the community
- Develops a fresh perspective on how services should be delivered
- Increases empathy and understanding for families
- Shares responsibility
- Increases providers’ efficiency and cost effectiveness
- Improves ability to accomplish mission
Benefits of Parent Involvement

Benefits for Providers, Programs, Agencies, Communities cont.

- Increases appreciation of various cultures
- Contributes to the stability of the community
- Prevents child abuse and neglect
How do you see me?

Let’s explore how we think about parents and practitioners...
Donna’s Story
Journey of Parents and Practitioners

- Schedule a Two Day Parent Leadership Training in Your Community
- Make Plans Now and Get Your Team Together
Do you have engaged parents?

- The Virginia Parent Council provides an opportunity for parent leaders to work with other parents throughout the state to make effective change in our communities.
- Ask us for more details.
THANKS FOR COMING

Julie, Donna and Rachel