



# HOPE and Early Childhood Education: Engaging Families

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# Objectives

- To understand the importance of meaningful family engagement.
- To discuss effective strategies and challenges related to family engagement.
- To explore the concept of a HOPE-informed family café.

# Making Connections



# Relationships





# DEFINITION OF FAMILY

Birth Parents  
Step-Parents  
Other Kin, Friends  
Foster Families  
Adoptive Families

Family is...  
what a family says it is!

# Families are...

Stressed



Stretched



Struggling



**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**



**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

## Involvement

*talk to families at  
pick-up and  
drop-off*

*families attend  
meetings &  
events*

*staff ask  
questions about  
child, family,  
home*

## Engagement

**you and families are building relationships that promote family well-being, strong parent-child relationships and ongoing learning**



## Involvement

talk to families at pick-up and drop-off

families attend meetings & events

## Relationship Building

staff ask questions about child, family, home

together, make activities that reflect family culture, traditions.

## Engagement

together, discuss and implement a child's learning plan



# WHAT IS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

Building genuine relationships that promote  
family well-being,  
strong parent-child relationships,  
and children's healthy development.



# Principles of Effective Family Engagement

- Teachers and programs engage families in **two-way communication** and in ways that are **truly reciprocal**.
- Programs provide learning activities for the **home and in the community**.
- Programs invite families to **participate in decision-making and goal-setting for their child** and in **program-level decisions and wider advocacy efforts**.
- Programs implement a **comprehensive program-level system** of family engagement.

*<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement/principles>*

# Café Model



The café model provides guided reflective conversations about topics for families/providers that help to promote the optimal development of children.

- Promote community conversations with parents, providers and community leaders on how to implement the protective factors when caring for our youngest children.
- Weave culture throughout the model as this is a key consideration when looking at the protective factors.
- Tap into collective wisdom that is present in every community.

# Benefits of the Café Model

- **Relationship-Based:** Connects staff to staff, staff to parents, parents to parents, parent to child
- **Strength-Based:** Protective Factors are embedded
- **Ecological:** Aids in viewing situations from multiple perspectives through guided conversations. Offers opportunity to understand others' experiences in the context of family, relationships, culture and community.
- **Family-Centered:** Designed to build relationships through collaborative effort.
- **Reflective:** Open-ended questions with opportunity for reflection at the end.



# Strengthening Families

- Different than most approaches to preventing child abuse/neglect
- Supports all families, not just at-risk families
- All families:
  - Need protective and promotive factors to stay strong
  - Have challenges and experience difficulties.



# Protective and Promotive Factors

- **Protective means:** conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk.
- **Promotive means:** conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that actively enhance well-being.

# Protective Factors

- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

# Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

A basic understanding of how children develop and what children need from their parents, as well as parenting skills and strategies for guiding children's behavior.



# Parental Resilience

The ability of families to get through difficult and challenging circumstances, recover, and even grow from the experience.



# Social Connections

A network of people who care, listen, share parenting values, and offer help.



# Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to needed resources, including financial help, housing support, mental health or substance abuse services, health care, and more, through formal and informal supports.



# Social and Emotional Competence of Children

A child's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their families, other adults, and peers.





# HOPE Building Blocks

Relationships

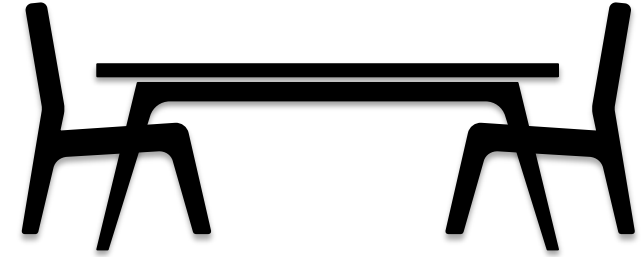
Environment

Engagement

Social emotional development

# Structure of a Cafe

- Planning Meeting: when, where, who, what
- Set-up: Table/chairs, décor, food, child care, table hosts
- Café agenda:
  - Introduction
  - Review of Protective Factors/HOPE Building
  - Blocks
    - Content
    - Café Conversations
    - Reflection
    - Reminder Memos



# Creating a Safe Environment

Active Listening – What is it?

Judgment Free Zone/Safe Place

Confidentiality

What would you like to add?



# Café Experience





# Partner Activity!

How do you feel when you're with your  
"go-to" person?

What does the person specifically do  
to help you feel that way?

# Café Question 1

What characteristics support a strong parent-provider relationship?

# Café Question 2

What strategies have you tried to meaningfully engage families?

Which would you consider successful? Why?

# Café Question 3

Discuss examples of how you create opportunities for families to experience one or more of the building blocks and how you might be able expand on that example.

Relationships

Environment



Engagement

Social emotional  
development

# Reflection

- How did you feel hearing about the experiences of other people?
- How did you feel sharing your own experiences and stories?
- What will you take away from today?



# Thank you!

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# Spreading HOPE: the First Annual HOPE Summit

Help us improve the Summit by taking the following evaluation:\*

[https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_57vJxYo7INtK5Rs](https://tufts.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_57vJxYo7INtK5Rs)



Scan the QR code using your phone's  
camera app



\*Please only take the evaluation once, *after* your last session