



# Getting Feedback from Families

While sharing information with families is essential, encouraging families to give you feedback and ideas throughout the year is an important part of building and strengthening relationships. Here are a few ideas for soliciting feedback from parents:

- **Intake interview:** Once a family decides to enroll in your child care, it's helpful to schedule a meeting to learn more about what's important to the family. Topics of discussion include: special needs of the child, how the child reacts in particular situations, child's favorite things, specific information about the family, etc.
- **Face-to-face:** During drop-off and pick-up times, share a friendly greeting. When appropriate, share something the child accomplished during the day. During these informal conversations, ask the parents for feedback on a specific topic related to your center or their relationship with a teacher or administrator.
- **Suggestion box:** Encourage families to share thoughts and ideas with you. Remind families that they do not have to sign the suggestion slips if they prefer. Check the box every week. For fun, have the children help to decorate the box and put it in a visible location.
- **Parent advisory board:** Ask a few parents to be members of an advisory group, board or decision-making body. They will give you a parental and customer point of view you may not have considered. Ask them to discuss important agenda items with other parents and to act as a representative of families during decision-making.
- **Family group/Parent café:** Collaboration between parents is a great way to build new ideas, discuss current topics of interest and build capacity. Host a potluck family night or other social event to allow families the opportunity to work together to share ideas, solve a problem, network and offer suggestions for how to best communicate and partner with other families at your center.
- **Surveys:** Hand out family satisfaction surveys every quarter to get feedback and ideas about various aspects of your center. Think about providing incentives for completing a survey.
- **Ideas for recipes or menu items:** Parents may know some healthy and easy recipes you haven't tried yet. Their recipes may also be ones the kids will eat! Create a box or other container where families can leave their recipe ideas. Remember that you can adjust certain ingredients so the recipe meets the nutrition Rules.
- **Electronic communication:** Have families share thoughts and ideas with you through electronic methods such as a website, e-mail, list-servs, blogs or social media sites such as Facebook® or Twitter®.
- **Daily journal:** To provide consistency throughout the day, ask parents to use a daily journal to log their child's behavior and activities at home such as meal and bed times. This will give you an idea of the routine at home so you can adapt during the day if necessary.
- **Daily communication sheet:** A form of two-way communication similar to the daily journal; encourage parents to log their child's behavior and activities at home on the top portion of the daily communication sheet. During the day, you will fill out the bottom half of the sheet with details about the child's day and give it to the parents at pick-up. For more information see "Information Sharing" on page 28.

Remember, if you ask for suggestions, let families know what ideas you have received and how you plan to respond. This information can be given through an e-mail, note, memo, etc. Even if you can't act on all suggestions, it is important for families to know that you've heard and considered their ideas. If families aren't informed, they will assume their ideas have not been heard and will be less likely to suggest anything in the future.

# Family Survey

Dear Families,

The best way to make sure every child in our center succeeds is to build a strong partnership among families, the center and the community. The survey below gives you the opportunity to tell us what our center is doing well to support this partnership and what we can do better. We appreciate your feedback.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
My child care center has a welcoming atmosphere and feels like a place where parents “belong.”				
The center’s policies and programs reflect, respect and value the diversity of the families in the community.				
Children at the center are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.				
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The center keeps all families informed about important issues and events.				
The center makes it easy for families to communicate with staff.				
The center communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).				
I can talk to the center director when I need to.				
My child’s teacher communicates with me every day.				
Information from the center is provided in my language.				
The center asks for my thoughts, ideas and opinions.				
SUPPORTING CHILD SUCCESS	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
My child’s teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in child care.				
My child’s teacher understands and supports my child’s strengths.				
My child’s teacher understands and appropriately addresses my child’s weaknesses.				
My child’s teacher gives me useful information and directs me to resources about how to help my child make progress.				
SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
If the child care center can’t help me, they will connect me to someone who can.				
My child is treated fairly and has access to learning opportunities that support his/her success.				
I feel empowered to advocate for my own child’s and other children’s success in child care.				
SHARING POWER	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The child care center consults with me and other families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, center policies).				
Family input in decision-making is valued and taken into consideration.				

<b>CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
The center connects me to learning opportunities, community services and community improvement initiatives.				
The center staff participates in events in my community.				
The center staff understands my culture and community.				
<b>CONDUCTING HOME VISITS</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
Child care staff make an effort to visit me in my home.				
Visits to my home help child care staff understand my child and family.				
During home visits child care staff share with me what I can do to help my child learn.				
<b>OFFERING PARENTING CLASSES OR ADULT EDUCATION</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
The center provides training/education around nutrition, physical activity, child development and/or positive parenting strategies.				
The center offers or connects me to helpful classes that meet my needs.				
The center offers or connects me to classes that help me be an effective parent/guardian.				
The center offers opportunities for me to connect with other parents/guardians.				
<b>REDUCING BARRIERS</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
I have transportation that allows me to attend center events.				
I can find care for my child that allows me to attend center events.				
I am more likely to attend center events if food is provided.				
Center events are held on days and times when I am able to attend.				
<b>HOME EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
The center tells me what my child learns and does while in child care.				
The center shares with me what I can do at home to help my child learn.				
The center loans me books, toys or other resources to help my child learn at home.				
<b>INTEREST</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>NEUTRAL</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)</b>
I am interested in becoming more involved in center activities.				

Adapted from PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide. Accessed July 11, 2011 at [http://www.pta.org/National\\_Standards\\_Implementation\\_Guide\\_2009.pdf](http://www.pta.org/National_Standards_Implementation_Guide_2009.pdf).

# Parent Interest Tool

We would love to make use of your many skills and talents to make our child care center the best it can be! Volunteering can be on an as-needed basis, and you are welcome to turn down the opportunity if the time isn't right. Many of the below options can be done at home, if that's easier for you than working on them at the center. Check each of the following areas in which you would be interested in volunteering.

### Administrative & Planning

- filing, typing, mailings, etc.
- serving on a committee
- serving on a parent group
- hosting a parent night
- designing or managing center website

### Daily Activities

- read aloud or tell a tale
- preparing activities
- arts and crafts
- music activities
- providing needed materials
- helping during parties/events
- sharing a hobby
- recording a story or song for the class

### Outdoors

- leading active play activities
- leading nature activities
- chaperoning a field trip

### Fundraising

- planning healthy fundraisers
- staffing fundraisers

### Food

- planning healthy menus
- creating kid-friendly healthy recipes
- helping with cooking activities

### Repair

- furniture
- sewing
- playground equipment
- plumbing
- electrical
- carpentry
- book or toy

### Other

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I'd like to volunteer on a regular basis. These days and times work for me:

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I'd like to volunteer on an "as-needed" basis.

I am unable to volunteer at this time. Please ask me again soon!

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(Name of child)

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(Name of parent/guardian)

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(Name of child)

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(Name of parent/guardian)

# Family Engagement Checklist

Before you use the materials in this guide, please complete this engagement checklist based on the communication practices/family engagement strategies at your child care center. For each question, determine whether you are already doing the practice listed, are working on it, or have not yet considered doing it. Put an “X” in the box that matches your answer. Then, consider how you might expand or improve your efforts for each question. If you work at a child care center, make sure to involve teachers and other staff in completing the checklist and brainstorming steps for improvement.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Our child care center has a welcoming atmosphere and feels like a place where parents “belong.”			
The center’s policies and programs reflect, respect and value the diversity of the families in the community.			
Children at the center are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.			
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center keeps all families informed about important issues and events.			
The center makes it easy for families to communicate with staff in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).			
The center communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).			
The center director is available to talk to families whenever they desire.			
Teachers communicate with families daily.			
Information from the center is provided in all of the languages spoken by families.			
The center asks for families’ thoughts, ideas and opinions.			
SUPPORTING CHILD SUCCESS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Teachers keep families well informed about how their child is developing and what goals s/he is working on in child care.			
Teachers understand and support each child’s strengths.			
Teachers understand and appropriately address each child’s weaknesses.			
Teachers give families useful information and direct them to resources about how to help their child make progress.			
SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center connects families to community resources based on their needs.			
All children are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that support their success.			
Parents are empowered to advocate for their own child’s and other children’s success in child care.			
SHARING POWER	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The child care center consults with families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, center policies).			
Family input in decision-making is valued and taken into consideration.			

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center connects families to learning opportunities, community services and community improvement initiatives.			
The center staff participates in events in the community.			
The center staff understands the cultures and communities in which the children live.			
CONDUCTING HOME VISITS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Center staff conduct home visits to families.			
During home visits, child care staff share with families what they can do to help their child learn.			
OFFERING PARENTING CLASSES OR ADULT EDUCATION	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families are provided with opportunities for training/education around nutrition, physical activity, child development and/or positive parenting strategies.			
The center offers or connects families to helpful classes that meet their needs.			
The center offers or connects families to classes that help them to be effective parents/guardians.			
The center offers opportunities for families to connect with each other.			
REDUCING BARRIERS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center offers transportation to help families attend center events.			
The center offers child care to help families attend center events.			
The center provides healthy food at events as an incentive for families to attend.			
The center holds events at times when families can attend.			
HOME EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center shares with families what their child learns and does while in child care.			
The center tells families what they can do to support learning at home.			
The center loans families books, toys or other resources to help children learn at home.			
NUTRITION	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families receive written nutrition policies upon enrollment.			
Menus are posted for families to review.			
Families are provided with information about their child's daily nutrition while in child care.			
If food is brought from home, families are provided with the Delaware CACFP/Delacare Rules on nutrition so they can pack meals aligned with these Rules.			
Families are provided with general information on child nutrition.			
Families are provided with information that encourages healthy eating at home.			
Families receive policies about the center's breastfeeding support upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with a supportive breastfeeding environment.			

<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ALREADY DOING THIS</b>	<b>WORKING ON THIS</b>	<b>HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS</b>
Families receive written physical activity policies upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information about their children's daily physical activity while in child care.			
Families are provided with information on developmentally-appropriate physical activity options.			
Families are provided with information that encourages physical activity at home.			
<b>SCREEN TIME</b>	<b>ALREADY DOING THIS</b>	<b>WORKING ON THIS</b>	<b>HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS</b>
Families receive written screen time policies upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information on the benefits of limiting screen time.			
Families are provided with information that encourages them to limit screen time at home.			
<b>CELEBRATIONS</b>	<b>ALREADY DOING THIS</b>	<b>WORKING ON THIS</b>	<b>HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS</b>
Families receive written policies for healthy birthdays, holidays and celebrations upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information that encourages healthy celebrations at home.			

Adapted from "A Guide to Engaging Parents in Public-Private Child Care Partnerships," published by the Child Care Partnership Project and "Self-Assessment Questionnaire" published by the Contra Costa Child Care Council.

# Action Plan Template **Directions:**

- Using this form as a template, develop an action plan for improving your family engagement strategy. If you work at a center, collaborate with staff to develop the plan. Identify two to four goals you wish to achieve and how you plan to do this. Consider which individuals will be involved, what resources are at your disposal and any potential barriers. Also, create a timeline for achieving these goals and the ways in which you will measure your progress. Modify the form as needed.
- Keep copies handy to bring to meetings to review and update regularly. You may decide to develop new action plans for new phases of your quality improvement effort.

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	BARRIERS / SOLUTIONS	MEASUREMENT
	What steps will you take to achieve your goal?	Who will do it?	By when? (Day/Month)	What resources will help you achieve your goal?	Who or what may prevent you from achieving your goal and how will you overcome this?	How will you measure your progress toward your goal?
<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<p>Determine what information/resources should be posted on the board.</p> <p>Publicize the new bulletin board through a variety of sources (face-to-face conversation, e-mail, newsletter, etc.).</p>	<p>Director/ Administrator and teachers</p> <p>Director/ Administrator and teachers</p>	<p>Within 60 days.</p> <p>Within 60 days.</p>	<p>The Partnering with Families guide (i.e., resource flyers, Quick Tips, Information Sharing, etc.)</p>	<p>Lack of time to create the bulletin board. Will work on board during nap time.</p> <p>Parents/guardians might not be interested in the bulletin board. Will mention the board and what it covers to families at pick-up and drop-off.</p>	<p>How will you measure your progress toward your goal?</p> <p><b>PROGRESS ON THE ACTION STEPS:</b></p> <p>Review plan with staff (if applicable) within two weeks.</p> <p>Get agreement on materials to include on board.</p> <p>Each week ask families if they are aware of the bulletin board and ask for feedback.</p>
<b>GOAL 1</b>						

Adapted from: Healthy Lifestyle Initiative. University of Missouri-Extension. <http://extension.missouri.edu/healthylife/Action%20Plan%20Template2.doc>

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	BARRIERS / SOLUTIONS	MEASUREMENT
GOAL 2	What steps will you take to achieve your goal?	Who will do it?	By when? (Day/Month)	What resources will help you achieve your goal?	Who or what may prevent you from achieving your goal and how will you overcome this?	How will you measure your progress toward your goal?
GOAL 3						
GOAL 4						

Adapted from: Healthy Lifestyle Initiative. University of Missouri-Extension. <http://extension.missouri.edu/healthyife/Action%20Plan%20Template2.doc>