

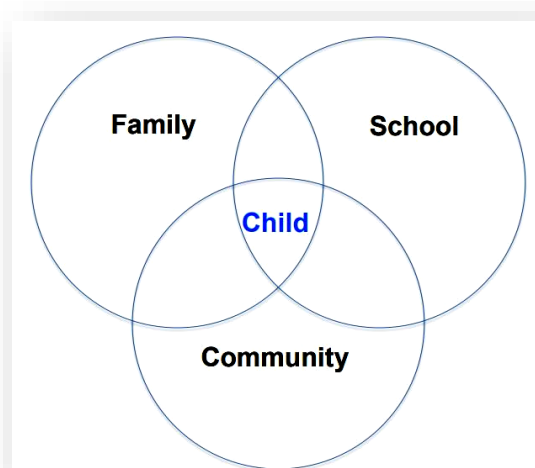
# Tips and Best Practices for Family Engagement

## What is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared obligation of families and staff at all levels that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths of all participants. Family engagement focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life. It also honors and supports the parent-child relationships that are central to a child's healthy development, school readiness, and well-being.

## Parent-Child Connectedness (PCC)

- PCC can be defined as a positive, high quality emotional bond between parent and child that is mutually felt by both parent and child, and is long lasting and sustained over time.
- Research has shown that PCC mitigates a wide range of negative life outcomes for adolescents, including unintended pregnancy, sexual risk-taking, delinquency and truancy, violent and aggressive behavior, and poor academic performance.



Evidence-based Interventions for Parent Engagement	Description
<a href="#">Children's Aid Society Carrera Model</a>	A long-term youth development program, which includes a multi-week workshop series to help caregivers increase their sexual literacy, improve communication skills with family members, and develop a holistic definition of sexuality.
<a href="#">Parents Matter!</a>	A 5-session program for parents and guardians of children 9 to 12 years of age, which includes risk awareness, positive parenting, and sexual communication components.
<a href="#">Project TALC (Teens and Adults Learning to Communicate)</a>	A 24-session social learning program designed to provide emotional coping skills to HIV-positive parents and their adolescent children.
<a href="#">Active Parenting of Teens</a>	This video and discussion program provides parents with the skills needed to use effective discipline, teach responsibility, and communicate with their children. Each session shows parents how to handle sensitive issues such as drugs, sexuality, and violence.
<a href="#">Teen Outreach Program (TOP)</a>	A positive youth development program that includes "family night out" gatherings, parent workshops on adolescent sexuality, as well as child care and dinner incentives for parent participation.

## Tips For Integrating Family Engagement Into Your Program

- Offer workshops and evidence-based programs to parents to help build their skills and comfort level when talking to their children about sexuality. A sample program that you can use is [Plain Talk](#).
- Train active parents to empower their peers to communicate about sexuality using a parent-peer education model, such as the [Adult Role Models Program](#).



- When parents perceive that there is little benefit to services, they do not view participation as valuable. Parents did not believe it was necessary for their students to learn about sexuality because their students were not dating and were seldom left unsupervised. Marketing the **WHY** is essential.
- Consider socioeconomic status, which can impact transportation and child care when planning face-to-face meetings.

## Online Resources

- [Office of Population Affairs: Talking with Teens](#) includes conversation tools and fact sheets for parents.
- [Parent-Child Connectedness: New Interventions or Teen Pregnancy Prevention](#) describes ways to enhance parent-child relationships.
- [Making Proud Choices](#) is an 8-module curriculum that provides adolescents with the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary to reduce their risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and pregnancy.

## Resources for Expectant and Parenting Teens

- [Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Teens](#) provides a comprehensive overview of important topics concerning expectant and parenting teens and tips for working with this population.
- [Healthy Teen Network](#) has a wealth of resources on the topic of young parents and young people who are pregnant or parenting.

## Tips for Community Engagement

- **Facilitate within existing groups of families:** Work with existing groups of families, youth, or supportive adults, including faith-based institutions, school groups, youth programs, or family support networks.
- **Identify underlying community needs:** This allows members to have a voice in developing an action plan.
- **[Involve Youth in Teen Pregnancy Prevention:](#)** Involving young people in planning and directing a program helps the program be relevant to the lives of teens today.

## Measuring Success

- **Retrospective post-surveys** allows parents to view videos and provide their thoughts and feedback prior to revealing personal information.
- **Pre-and posts-tests** measure knowledge gains from youths before and after the program is completed.
- **Use feedback** from youths to show the school/parents what the participants gained from the program.
- The [Family Engagement Toolkit](#) includes templates for planning and evaluation.