FLOURISHING WITH FAMILIES

EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTE

NOVEMBER 6, 2024

TEAM KENTUCKY®
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Who is joining us?

o Public Preschool

o Childcare

o Head Start

Training Intentions and Goals

Deliver information to child care, preschool and Head Start providers to feel informed and confident in communication skills and options.

Assist in building a partnership between child care, familial or non-familial caregivers and community/state level resources for children.

Mindfulness

Present	Present moment, wonderful moment
Inhale	Inhale – Breathing In, I calm my body.
Exhale	Exhale – Breath out, I smile.
Inhale	Inhale – Dwelling in the present moment,
Exhale	Exhale – I know this is a wonderful moment!

Definition of Family Engagement

Karen Mapp, a leading researcher and presenter regarding family engagement and creator of the [Dual Capacity Framework](#) states, "Family engagement is a full, equal and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career."

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Six Cornerstones of Family Engagement

Intentionally involve parents in learning and development

Develop trustful, respectful relationships with two-way communication

Collaborate to determine supports for safety, health and economic stability

Provide ways for parents to be employees or volunteers

Provide a safe environment using the family's preferred language

Implement procedures for staff to link the classroom, home and community

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Involvement vs. Engagement

Involvement:

- Focuses on individual responsibility
- Communication to families is one way
- Space for listening is low priority
- Focuses on programming, not people
- Relationship is transactional

Engagement:

- Focuses on collective responsibility and partnership
- Communication is two-way and listening is a priority
- Family knowledge is valued and honored
- Focuses on collaborative processes
- Relationship is transformative

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Discussion

Which best describes your program's approach: family involvement or family engagement?
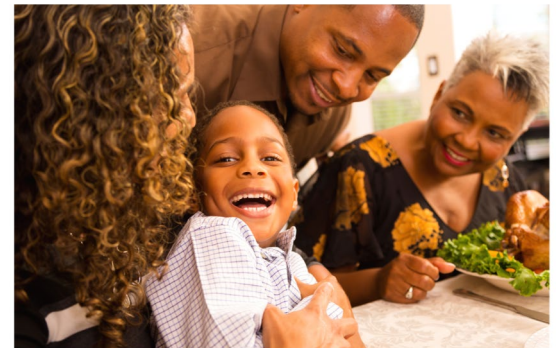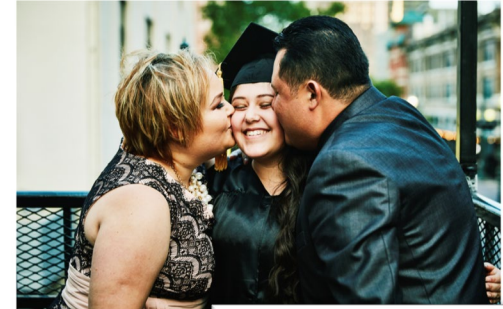
Part C to Part B: Supporting Families and Children during Transition

- Transition from Part C to Part B should be as seamless as possible.

- Both Part C and Part B staff should remember that it is not only the child that is transitioning, but the family as well.

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Preschool Transition

- Step 1: Transition Conference
- Step 2: Referral: Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) Meeting
- Step 3: ARC Evaluation Process
- Step 4: ARC Eligibility Determination
- Step 5: IEP Development
- Step 6: Placement in Least Restrictive Environment
- Step 7: IEP Implementation
- Step 8: Progress Monitoring

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Preschool: Annual Evaluation

- At least annually, parents, staff and other professionals are involved in evaluating the local preschool program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of participating children.

- The program evaluation addresses parent satisfaction with the services provided.

704 KAR 3:410, Section 9

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Preschool: Screening and Referral

- Parents or legal guardians are contacted if screening results indicate a need for further assessment by a specialist, follow-up or referral for special education and related services or other appropriate resources.

- Schools shall assist parent or legal guardian as needed through cooperation with existing medical and social services to obtain the physical examination required of all children prior to school enrollment.

704 KAR 3:410, Section 6

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Preschool: Parent Engagement

- Program allows active parental involvement. Consideration of the different types of family structure, such as the single parent, foster parent and extended family, shall be made when planning activities.

704 KAR 3:410, Section 6

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Preschool: Parent Engagement

At least the following are made available to parents:

- Participation in classroom and other preschool activities as volunteers or observers;

- Parent training, education or other activities which the parent has helped to develop;

- Work with the child in cooperation with preschool staff;

- Meet with preschool and other appropriate staff regarding the child's individual needs and progress or other two-way communication system developed with the parent;

- Periodic home visits by preschool staff, with a minimum of two visits per year and with the first visit conducted within 60 school days after enrollment.

704 KAR 3:410, Sections 6 and 7

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Preschool: Parent Engagement

A lead teacher is responsible for at least the following:

- Parent participation in the classroom;

- Parent-teacher conferences; and,

- Conduct parental involvement activities and coordinate with health and social services.

704 KAR 3:410, Section 7

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Strategies to Build Relationships

- Learn as much as you can about the family.

- Listen carefully to parents and caregivers.

- Choose your words wisely (*be direct, honest and compassionate*).

- Speak in a positive manner (*one-and-three rule: balance every negative statement with three positive statements*).

Strategies to Build Relationships

- Bring a sense of cultural awareness to all conversations and interactions

- Communicate frequently and consistently

- Document communication with parents

- Remember effective communication is a two-way process

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Family Engagement Resources

- [Technical Assistance Network](#) (SERTACs and Regional Training Centers)
- [Kentucky Autism Training Center](#) (KATC)
- [Human Development Institute](#) (HDI) Parent Involvement Initiative
- [Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network](#) (KY SPIN)
- [Parent and Family Rights](#) (OSEEL)
- [Parent and Family Resources](#) (OSEEL)
- [Parent and Family Toolbox](#) (OSEEL)
- [Parent Involvement Failures Often Boil Down to 2 Big Errors](#) (Special Ed Connection)

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Family Engagement Resources

- [Early Childhood Family Guides](#) (Governor's Office of Early Childhood)
- [Let's Learn Kentucky](#) (Kentucky Educational Television)
- [Family Engagement](#) (National Center for Families Learning)
- [Promoting Equity for Young Multilingual Children and Families](#) (WIDA)
- [4 Versions of Family-School Partnerships](#) (Prichard Committee)

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Head Start- Family Engagement

o Family Engagement is at the heart of a successful Head Start/Early Head Start program

Head Start- Family Engagement

Positive & Goal-Oriented Relationships

Equity, Inclusiveness, Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness

PROGRAM FOUNDATIONS	PROGRAM IMPACT AREAS	FAMILY OUTCOMES	CHILD OUTCOMES
Program Leadership	Program Environment	Family Well-being	Children are:
Professional Development	Family Partnerships	Positive Parent-Child Relationships	Safe
Continuous Learning and Quality Improvement	Teaching and Learning	Families as Lifelong Educators	Healthy and well
	Community Partnerships	Families as Learners	Learning and developing
	Access and Continuity	Family Engagement in Transitions	Engaged in positive relationships with family members, caregivers, and other children
		Family Connections to Peers and Community	Ready for school
		Families as Advocates and Leaders	Successful in school and life

Head Start's Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework

"Parent and family engagement in Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) is about **building relationships with families** that support family well-being, strong relationships between parents and their children, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. The Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework is a road map for progress in achieving the kinds of outcomes that lead to positive and enduring change for children and families" (p. 1).

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Head Start- Family Engagement

o Foundational Reflections

    o Why is it important to use parent-recommended engagement?

    o What does family engagement and partnership feel like to families?

    o What are the benefits of families having an important voice in your program?

> Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that **address prevalent needs of families across their program** that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.
>
> - 1302.50 Family engagement

> A program must offer individualized family partnership services that **collaborate with families** to identify interests, needs, and aspirations related to the family engagement outcomes.
>
> - 1302.52 Family partnership services

> Programs must structure education and child development services to **recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators**, and to encourage parents to engage in their child's education.
>
> - 1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services

JOIN THE HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Become a leader in your Head Start Program and provide input in all areas, from hiring to budget utilization.

Local and national training opportunities will be provided.

Collaborate with fellow parents, community representatives, program management and the Head Start Governing Board.

If you are interested, please notify your center staff, or contact the Head Start Program at:

(340) 774-0930 ext. 4200 or (340)244-4360 - STT/STJ

(340) 773-1972 or (340)772-1981 - STX.

HEAD START
VIDHS OFFICE OF HEAD START

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Head Start- Family Engagement

o Staff Mindset and Belief

   o Prioritize family engagement and partnership

   o See parents and caregivers as experts

   o Believe that parents and family members have solutions

   o Count on your parents to make decisions, advocate with them and trust their judgement

Parents are equal partners in their child's education.

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Head Start- Family Engagement

- How do we accomplish quality family engagement?

  - Set up ways of being together

Head Start- Family Engagement

o How do we accomplish quality family engagement?

    o Create a welcoming space
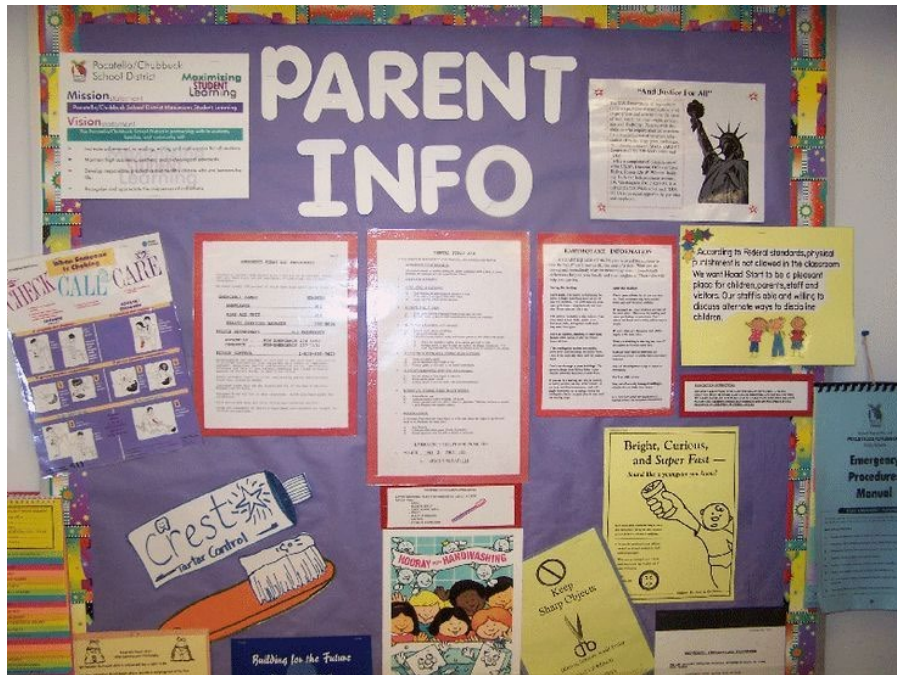
Head Start- Family Engagement

o How do we accomplish quality family engagement?

    o Ask questions with purpose

Head Start- Family Engagement

o How do we accomplish quality family engagement?

   o Bring parents in from the start

Head Start- Family Engagement

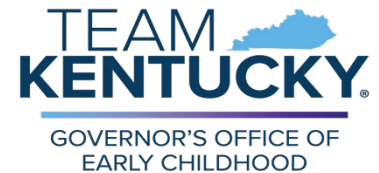○ How do we accomplish quality family engagement?

    ○ LISTEN
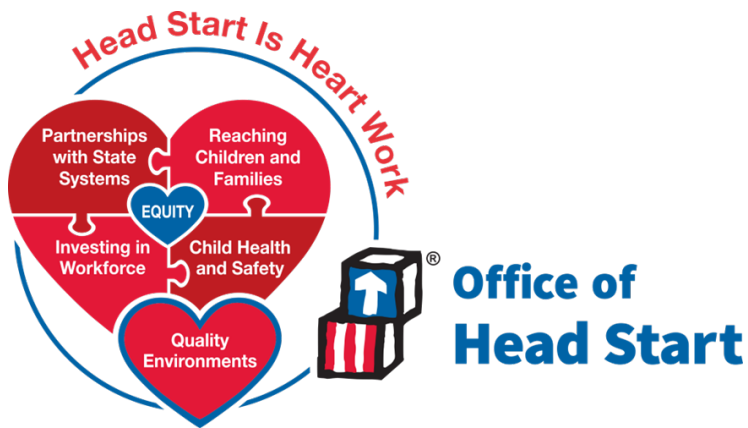
Head Start- Family Engagement Resources

o Relationship Based Competencies

o Families as Learners

o Families as Advocates and Leaders

o Family Engagement

Division of Child Care- Family Engagement

Establishing Communication

Communicating with caregivers can (and should) start before the child even enters child care.

Establishing positive, nurturing communication with caregivers models caring relationships for children, and validates their nurturing circle.

Children in your care are observing your communication! When they see you communicating consistently, kindly and directly with their caregivers, it promotes trust and safety.

Create an environment in your classroom and center where teachers, directors and the important people in the child's life celebrate successes, solve problems and collaborate on solutions regularly!

Methods of Communication

When you first meet a child and family:

◦ How do you approach the conversation with a new family visiting the center? Or who called in? Or e-mailed in?

◦ How do you individualize the experience for this specific family?

◦ Who is already on this child's "team" that you need to consider?

What does your center visit feel like?

What does your application process look like?

Join at menti.com- code: 2725 5567

Methods of Communication

Structure pick up and drop off times to include opportunities to interact

◦ Are there morning or afternoon opportunities every day for every family? If not – is there a text update or app that the teacher can communicate with the parents?

Work with staff to define what information should and should not be shared by a call, email/text/daily sheet or application, and face to face (conferences or meetings)

Newsletters, Bulletin Boards and "Open Door" policies

Group Celebrations

Join at menti.com- code: 2725 5567

Brightwheel
and Other Child Care Management Tools

Brightwheel is currently **FREE** to all Licensed Child care providers in Kentucky for a 3 year pilot (2024-2027)
Currently 700 programs enrolled!

Brightwheel and other Child Care management tools are used for online communication with staff and families.

Announcements, Private messaging, classroom messaging, and uploading documents to a program's library and sending out newsletters.

Brightwheel is available in Spanish with automatically translated content!

CCAP Attendance tracking using Brightwheel

Communication Goals!

◦ What digital platform (Child Care Management software) will be used for communication, or what methods of communication do you plan to use?

◦ What topics will you regularly communicate with families?

Strength-Based Communication

Frame challenges in the classroom positively & use alternative language

Approach the discussion from a place of wonder & curiosity
- Start with a positive observations, then share an observation of the behavior you are seeking ideas and support for:

"Megan loves swinging when we take the class outside to the playground in the afternoon. We have observed Megan swinging higher and faster when we ask her to let other children have a turn. Sometimes Megan starts crying or yelling at the other children because she doesn't want to stop. When Megan is at the playground with you, how do you help her transition to another activity?"

"Zarah shares that she enjoys art and that you spend time at home creating art with her cousins together. We can tell that she is fond of this time with you. She expresses happiness and is talkative during art time at school, too unless she is asked to share materials or space. Sometimes she pulls the all of the materials towards her space keeping her classmates from continuing their work. What are some of the ways you are able to encourage her to share items with her cousins when you spend time together?"

Strength-Based Interview

Aren't we commonly asked when applying for a job, "what are your strengths" or "what qualities make you the right fit for XYZ position"?

◦ Have participants pair together and "interview" each other asking what their strengths and challenges are.

◦ Then, have the opposite person share back their interpretation of the other person by introducing them to the group, but frame what they labeled as their challenges into strengths.

◦ You can also have someone list their own strengths and growth areas, and then reframe their challenges into strengths.

Sharing is Caring!

Timing is important!

Consider the home life of the family.

How could the information you share impact the family outside of the child care setting? (emotionally, financially, etc.)

Compassion and empathy are KEY.

Use resources to create a positive mindset and strategy before you have a conversation, attend a conference, or call a parent.

Reminders about Establishing Communication

This relationship is building from your first impression, not just when problems arise!

Keep in mind family preferences in communication styles.

Be considerate of outside factors.

Remind teachers and staff to send positive notes and photos of the children in play or at work throughout the week as much as possible.

Communication Goals

How often will you communicate with families?

What topics will you regularly give updates about?

What is your purpose for communicating with families?

Active and Ongoing Communication:
Communicating Concerns about a Child's Development with Parents and Caregivers

How we present information to others is JUST as important as *what* we present.

What Now?

Learn strategies for having difficult conversations with parents and caregivers about a child's development

Know how to intentionally structure a time and place to have a quality conversation, and why this is important

Discuss and understand how parents and caregivers may react to hearing information about their child, and why a parent's input is especially important

Learn more about providing support to parents and caregivers after your conversation

1. Choose a time and place where you can talk alone and talk in-person (as a first choice).

2. Make sure both you and the parents have enough time to talk.

Discussion Question: What are some of the challenges that might need to be addressed when thinking about where and when to have an important and possibly difficult conversation with parents or caregivers? Discuss solutions also.

3. Be prepared for strong emotions.

4. Be caring, supportive and respectful.

Discussion: Why is **ongoing**, open communication an important part of a healthy teacher-caregiver/parent relationship?

5. Begin by saying something positive about the child.

6. Ask if parents have concerns or questions about how the child seems to be.

7. Share your own observations and concerns.

Discussion: How do yours, and the parents "lived" experiences set the tone for important conversations with families?

When you **Know** it helps your child **Learn** and **Grow**

Screen early. Developmental checkups help your child learn and grow.

Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

8. Choose your words carefully.

9. Avoid using labels or technical terms.
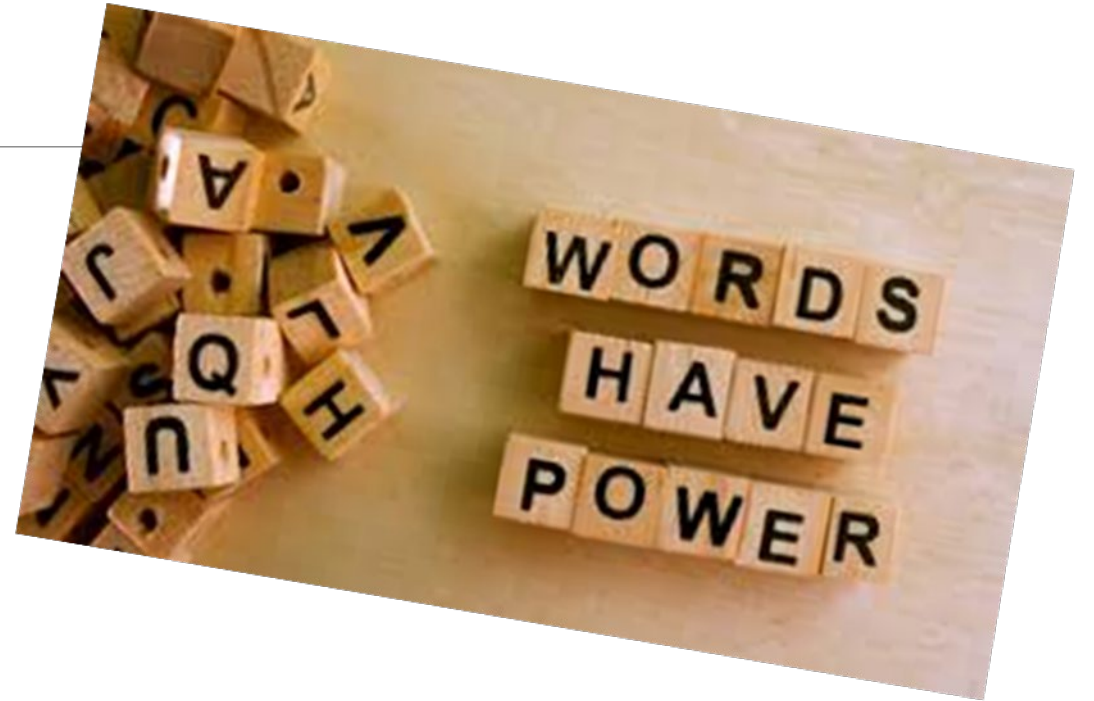
Discussion: What are some ways that you could prepare for a difficult conversation with parents?

10. Keep your eye on the goal.

Start Screening Today.

Developmental Screening helps you to:
· Learn more about how your child develops
· Identify problems or concerns as early as possible
· Find help your child needs

11. Stress the importance of checking things out right away.

12. Be ready to offer information and resources.

Discussion: What obstacles may cause families to be hesitant to have a child assessed for services?

13. Continue your support!

14. Trust yourself!

Discussion: What is your own biggest concern about talking with parents about a concern you have with their child's development?

Partnership with Families & Resources

Give parents and families resources on WHO they may need to partner with, and why.

Be respectful.

Continue building the relationship.

Manage expectations.

Keep the lines of communication open.
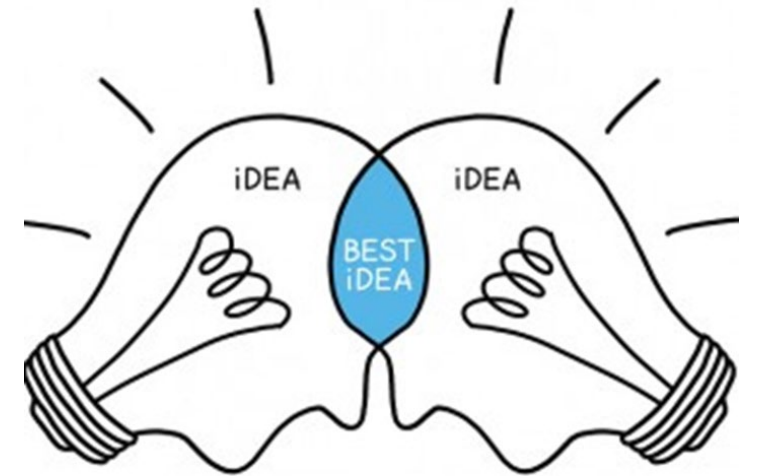
Brightwheel "Paperwork" Shared Files

Utilize Brightwheel's "Paperwork" tab and include Shared Files to all parents and staff, or individually to classrooms to create a resource library for families.

https://info.mybrightwheel.com/kentucky

Join at menti.com- code: 2725 5567

Wrap-Up

Establishing Communication
◦ Figure out what works best for each family/caregiver
◦ Keep it positive/strength based and continuous
◦ Be empathetic to families and their individual needs

Active and Ongoing Communication
◦ Use your resources (credible, online resources as well as senior staff and directors; document concerns to discuss with parents)
◦ Have an in-person conversation, if possible – this may require some creativity given current circumstances!
◦ Be understanding and willing to accept negative responses, and remind caregivers that your main focus is assisting their child

Continuity in Communication

Who should be communicating?

Parents

Child (based on age and maturity)

Service providers

Teachers

Coaches

Mentors/Peer specialists

Anyone working with this child and family

How might they communicate?

Phone calls

Texts

Emails

Virtual meetings (Zoom)

Notebook that child carries and all that interact with child put a note with the date and their name re: the interaction

Whatever means everyone agree to utilize

Questions?

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