



Family Engagement in Early Childhood: A Resource Guide for Early Learning Challenge Grant Recipients

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education invited states to apply for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTTT–ELC) to help states’ efforts in supporting young children and their families through the development of more unified early learning systems, better information sharing among educators, and an increase in access to quality early learning and development programs. Part of the RTTT–ELC application also encouraged states to focus more resources on family engagement in early childhood. Harvard Family Research Project has developed this resource guide to support RTTT–ELC grant recipients’ efforts in this area.

The first round of RTTT–ELC grant winning states was announced in December 2011, and now must begin the challenging work of implementing their ELC proposals. To support these states—along with any other states, districts, and local programs interested in expanding their family engagement work—Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) produced this selective list of resources about engaging and supporting families with young children. We hope that this list of journal articles, practical guides, webinars, and presentations will be useful for those interested in strengthening their programs and partnerships with families.

The RTTT–ELC grant competition marked an extraordinary opportunity for states to focus on expanding their early education work into the family arena through the “engaging and supporting families” selection criterion—one of four selection criteria that states needed to address in the “Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children” Focused Investment Area.

The resource list aligns with the three family engagement areas highlighted in the “engaging and supporting families” criterion that states will need to address during implementation and includes two additional areas that we believe are important to programs’ family engagement efforts. The resources in this guide are organized into sections by topic, as follows:

Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge areas:

- Culturally And Linguistically Appropriate Standards for Family Engagement
- Training Early Childhood Educators on Family Engagement
- Promoting Family Support and Engagement Statewide

Additional areas:

- Sharing Data with Families
- Creating Programs that Engage Families

About Race to the Top

The Race to the Top (RTTT) Fund was created in 2009 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, this \$4.35 billion competitive grants program awards funds to State Education Agencies that demonstrate support and create innovative plans for comprehensive school reform. Phases 1 (fiscal year 2010) and 2 (fiscal year 2010) of RTTT grants focused on K–12 reform, while phase 3 (fiscal year 2011), the Early Learning Challenge, focuses on early childhood education improvement and kindergarten readiness.

For more information, visit:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/>

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Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Standards for Family Engagement

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for a Multi-Ethnic Society This brief, created by the Build Initiative, addresses the importance of assessing race, gender, language, and culture in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), a method used to assess and improve the level of quality in early education and care settings.

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/files/QRIS-Policy%20Brief.pdf>

Achieving Cultural and Linguistic Competence: Implications for Systems Supporting the Health and Mental Health of Young Children and Their Families This webinar, presented by Tawara Goode and sponsored by the Build Initiative, discusses strategies for achieving cultural and linguistic competence in health and mental health systems for young children and their families.

<http://www.buildinitiative.org/files/webinars/TawaraGoode/lib/playback.html>

How Can We Prepare Teachers to Work with Culturally Diverse Students and Their Families? This resource from HFRP's *FINE Newsletter* features the insights of nine experts about how to prepare teachers to work with diverse students and families.

<http://www.hfrp.org/MemberInsight-8>

Where We Stand: On Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity This resource from National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) provides a list of recommendations for early childhood programs and staff about working with families and young children in ways that are appropriate and respectful of families' cultural identities and home languages. NAEYC emphasizes viewing linguistic and cultural diversity as an asset, not a deficit, for young children.

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/diversity.pdf>

The Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness [website] This website contains a number of research-based tools and resources for early care providers who work with culturally diverse children and families.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/>

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Express Checkout This e-worksheet, produced by the Office of Head Start National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness, walks early childhood program staff through a step-by-step process to select culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and resources for the families and children they work with.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/express-checkout-worksheet.pdf>

Latino Infants & Their Families: A National Perspective of Protective & Risk Factors for Development This report for the National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics (<http://ecehispanic.org/work.html>) highlights the characteristics and



early experiences of children from different racial/ethnic groups.

http://ecehispanic.org/work/Latino_Infants.pdf

Training Early Childhood Educators on Family Engagement

Bringing the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework to Your Program: Beginning a Self-Assessment The Office of Head Start's National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) developed this self-assessment tool for early childhood staff working to bring parent, family, and community engagement to their programs.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/ncpfce-assessment-101411.pdf>

Teaching Cases on Family Engagement: Early Learning (Ages 0–8) This set of teaching cases for early childhood education programs was developed by Harvard Family Research Project to highlight critical dilemmas in family–school–community relations, especially among low-income and culturally diverse families.

<http://www.hfrp.org/ECE-TeachingCases>

Teaching the Teachers: Preparing Educators to Engage Families for Student Achievement HFRP and the National PTA partnered to produce this brief on developing a professional learning and training system that incorporates family engagement. Five cases, including an innovative early childhood teacher education program and two urban teacher programs, are featured.

<http://www.hfrp.org/TeachingtheTeachers>

The Teacher–Parent Relationship: Using Professional Development to Improve Family and Community Engagement The National PIRC Coordination Center at the U.S. Department of Education, together with United Way Worldwide, National PTA, SEDL, and HFRP, developed this webinar on using professional development to improve family engagement efforts. The webinar is the 4th installment of a 9-part webinar series about family and community engagement.

<http://www.hfrp.org/AchievingExcellence-Webinar4>

Promoting Family Support and Engagement Statewide

Parent Engagement Program Resources, Tools, and Initiatives for the 2011–2012 School Year This presentation from the Georgia Department of Education's introduces the new Georgia Parent Involvement Coordinator (PIC) Network initiative. The presentation also announces the February 2012 statewide Family Engagement Conference hosted by Georgia's Department of Education, Title I, Part A, and the Georgia PTA.

<http://bit.ly/wJwNWz>

Virginia's JobOne: Business Leaders for Smart Beginnings [website] Virginia's Job One is an initiative created by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation to bring business leaders from across the state together to advocate for quality



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early learning experiences. JobOne is supported by the Partnerships for America's Economic Success and America's Promise Alliance.

<http://www.vajobone.org/>

Collaborative Approach to Promoting Social Emotional Well-Being for Children, Youth and Families in the Child Welfare System The National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at Georgetown University produced this webinar on aligning statewide systems to improve the social-emotional well-being for children and their families. The webinar highlights a statewide model in North Dakota.

<http://gucchdtacenter.georgetown.edu/resources/Webinar%20and%20Audio%20Files/09.15.11FinalWebSeminar.pdf>

On the Same Page: A Summit for Family Engagement in Education [website] This annual statewide summit—now in its third year—on family engagement in education is sponsored by the New York State Parental Information Resource Centers (PIRC), Every Person Influences Children (EPIC), and the New York State PTA.

<http://www.samepagesummit.org/>

Getting from Good to Great in Home Visiting: Systems Coordination This webinar from 2010 highlights statewide efforts to coordinate systems (prenatal providers, social services, and early education agencies) in New Jersey and Virginia. The webinar is part of the Pew Center on the States webinar series, *Model Practices in State Home Visiting: Getting from Good to Great*.

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewcenteronthestatesorg/Initiatives/Home_Visiting/HV_December_webinar_slides.pdf

Sharing Data with Families

Making Data Come Alive for Families through Young Children's Play In this article, a director from a Tools of the Mind program (<http://www.mscedu/extendedcampus/toolsofthemind>) in Colorado discusses the program's innovative approach to engaging families through children's play by tracking and sharing "play plans."

<http://www.hfrp.org/MakingDataComeAlive>

Breaking New Ground: Data Systems Transform Family Engagement in Education HFRP partnered with the National PTA to produce this brief for teachers on data sharing. The brief uses six cases to highlight innovative efforts to engage families with student data, beginning in early childhood.

<http://www.hfrp.org/BreakingNewGround>

Family Engagement and Ongoing Assessment: New Opportunities to Engage Families in Children's Learning and Development This paper from the Office of Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement's (NCPFCE) highlights strategies for using child assessment data to share information and collaborate with families to promote child development.

<http://www.hfrp.org/OngoingChildAssessment>



ARIS Parent Link: Five Lessons in Linking Families to Student Data Systems In this FINE Newsletter article, Shael Polakow-Suransky, the former Deputy Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, discusses how families in New York monitor and interact with online student data systems such as the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS).

<http://www.hfrp.org/ARISParentLink>

Creating Programs that Engage Families

Parenting Classes, Parenting Behavior, and Child Cognitive Development in Early Head Start: A Longitudinal Model This article from *The School Community Journal* highlights the positive outcomes of children whose parents participate in parenting classes as part of Early Head Start.

<http://www.adi.org/journal/ss09%5CChangParkKimSpring2009.pdf>

Connecting with Parents in the Early Years This seven-chapter e-book from the Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting (CEEP) outlines effective ways to communicate with parents, including those who are hard to reach.

<http://ceep.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/connecting.html>

Ready for Success: Five State Strategies for Expanding Effective Early Childhood Education The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) produced this case-based report of five states' early childhood initiatives. The report highlights programmatic efforts to partner with families, among other things.

<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/6908/pdf>

Emerging Leaders in Family Engagement This recent issue of HFRP's *FINE Newsletter* features visions from six emerging leaders in the family engagement field for creating systemic, integrated, and sustainable family and community engagement in schools.

<http://www.hfrp.org/FINESpring2011>

Enhancing the Transition to Kindergarten: Linking Children, Families, & Schools

As part of the National Center for Early Development & Learning (NCEDL) Kindergarten Project, Marcia Kraft-Sayre and Robert Pianta produced this manual on transitioning students from early learning centers to kindergarten through the use of social connections.

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED479280>

Handbook on Family and Community Engagement This guidebook, published by the Center on Innovation and Improvement, contains four sections (Framing the Discussion, Families and Learning, Families and Schools, and Suggested Practices) that offer a survey of the best family and community research and practice to date.

<http://www.families-schools.org/downloads/FACEHandbook.pdf>



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