



Family Involvement—Training Plan

Use this Training to Go training plan with the Power Point to lead a staff training. Customize it to fit you, the time and setting, and the participants. Break it into shorter parts, delete or add sections, change the activities, or expand on topics. All handouts referenced are available here. If participants don't know each other, you may want to add a warm-up or icebreaker, or go around with introductions.

TRAINING TO GO Training Plan		
Family Involvement		
Time: 45 minutes		Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper and markers • Reaching Out to Families tip sheet • Understanding Program Families (optional)
Prep: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print handouts for all participants • Arrange the space for group and pair work 		
Slide Number and Title	Timing	Notes and Talking Points
1. Family Involvement	1 min	Explain: Our program can be a welcoming doorway for parents and families to connect with youth's learning and development. Families are also a valuable resource for the program. It's important that we find ways to involve and engage families to support and enrich our work.
2. Objectives	1 min	Explain: We all know—and research confirms—that caring parent and family involvement with youth makes a difference. Caring adults matter for all ages, and the more we can do to build or reinforce connections with families, the better for program youth. Today's session will focus on how to: create an environment where families feel welcome; provide various ways for families to be involved with the program; and outline ways to connect with the hardest-to-reach families.
3. Family Involvement	5 min	Ask and Discuss: What does family involvement look like? Address the question as whole group and record ideas on chart paper. Encourage all types of answers such as: attending meetings, phoning in periodically, making presentations, volunteering, etc.



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<p>4. Sending a Welcoming Message</p>	<p>5 min</p>	<p>Discuss: What aspects of family involvement listed in the previous activity are already a strong part of the program and which elements are missing or need to be developed?</p> <p>Facilitator Note: You may want to talk about diversity in families and adults who are responsible for youth’s well-being. Be aware of youth who may live with relatives or individuals who are not parents or family members. Some youth are homeless and on their own. Some live with alternating parents or adults, or shifting households. Some have abusive relationships with parents or guardians, and greater familial involvement is the last thing the youth wants.</p> <p>Discuss these issues with staff, while respecting appropriate confidentiality. Be clear that by “family” we mean “the caring adults or young adults youth live with who are responsible for youth’s well-being.”</p>
<p>5. Creating a Welcoming Environment for Families</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide into small groups. • Explain that each group is going to create a “Family Welcome” area or areas. • Distribute blank paper and markers. • The goal is to make spaces that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a sense of welcome, community, and connection among all families ○ Share information about the program and schools ○ Exchange and communicate around goals, needs, questions, and accomplishments ○ Recognize and celebrate all kinds of connections and contributions • Have groups present their designs. • Create a list of common features. • Put a star next to ideas that seem do-able in the context of your program.
<p>6. Families as Resources</p>	<p>5 min</p>	<p>Explain: Families are also potential resources in different ways. We often think about families volunteering time, and that’s one resource. But time doing what? How else can families contribute?</p> <p>Brainstorm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a flip chart, brainstorm different ways families could support and enrich the program.



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When ideas slow down, ask participants to think of specific families in the program. Without naming them, go down the list of ideas and check those you might be able to use in the short term. Ask staff if it would be useful to learn more about families to see how connections could be made. How can you learn more? <p>Optional: Have participants examine and fill out the <i>Understanding Program Families</i> tool for a program family they know well and discuss how to utilize the tool to learn more about families and their potential contributions to the program.</p>
7. Connecting with the Hardest to Reach	5 min	<p>Ask and Discuss: Some families are hard to reach or to get involved. We know family involvement is important, so how can we engage families who can't or won't come to the program? Without naming specific families, list reasons for lack of involvement, which might include answers like: lack of time, language barriers, cultural barriers, don't see it as important, other responsibilities, illnesses, etc.</p>
8. Building Bridges	8 min	<p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out the <i>Reaching Out to Families</i> tip sheet. Individually or in pairs, identify strategies that can get around some of the barriers to involvement that we listed in the previous activity. If new barriers or strategies come up as you work, add them to the lists.
9. Next Steps	5 min	<p>Explain: Family involvement takes creating a family-friendly environment, making sure all families know their involvement is welcome, and actively reaching out to the hard-to-reach.</p> <p>Ask: What family engagement ideas can be put into action soon? How can we make sure our family involvement efforts provide resources and opportunities families most need.</p> <p>Thank everyone for participating, and move on to next steps!</p>