



Focus Group Protocol Sample

Use this guide to plan the flow and content of your family engagement focus group. Keep in mind that this should not be read verbatim during your focus group but rather adapted to fit your needs. Think through how you want families to share their thoughts. While some may feel comfortable with large group sharing, others might be more open if you allow them to share their ideas on sticky notes and post under the discussion topics. After everyone has an opportunity to post, debrief their responses in a large group.

Opening

Thank you for participating in this focus group on family engagement for our 21st CCLC program. You have been selected to participate in this discussion because of the valuable insight you will be able to provide. This discussion is scheduled to last approximately one hour and thirty minutes.

I will be the group facilitator, helping to guide the discussion across five themes. I will also make sure that each of you has the opportunity to share his or her ideas with the other members of the group.

The five themes we will cover today include (1) family involvement in a 21st CCLC program, (2) educational opportunities for families, (3) shared family activities, (4) possible leadership opportunities for families, and (5) activities aimed at establishing, maintaining, and strengthening 21st CCLC program and community partnerships. I will introduce each of these themes with a brief description and may present some guiding questions. However, it is your voice that I am interested in hearing, so I will take a back seat and listen to what you have to say.

One last point before we begin: while we will be using the information you provide to strengthen our ability to meet your needs and the needs of other families. Your identities and opinions will be kept confidential. We want this to be a safe space where everyone can speak openly and honestly.

With that said, are there any questions before we begin?

ICE BREAKER: Let's go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves to the group. Each of us can also share something special or unique about ourselves, like an interest or hobby that we have.

Theme 1

The first theme is **family involvement in a 21st CCLC program**. Let's talk about the different ways we are currently involved in the program. For example, being part of this focus group is one example of that involvement. We may also talk about the ways in which you would want to be involved in the program in the near future.

Sample Questions:

1. Is family involvement in the 21st CCLC program important to you? Why or why not?
2. When was the last time you visited or engaged with the 21st CCLC program?



Focus Group Protocol Sample

- a. Why did you visit? How did it go?
3. How do you usually communicate with 21st CCLC program staff?
 - a. Is this the same or different than how you communicate with your children's regular school day teachers?
4. Which methods of communication do you prefer? Email, telephone, text, written note, social media, etc. Please explain.
 - a. Is there a time of the day (or maybe day of the week) that works best for you regarding the following:
 - i. Communicating with 21st CCLC program staff?
 - ii. Attending 21st CCLC program events?

Theme 2

The second theme that we will be discussing today is **skill-building opportunities for families**. These activities include English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes for Adults, GED or High School Equivalency Certificate Programs, nutrition and healthy living courses, and so on.

Sample Questions:

1. What are some skills families might want to learn?
 - a. Which activities do you think most families in our community would be interested in attending?
2. What might keep families from attending these types of events? Please explain.
 - a. What resources would help families attend these events? (e.g. childcare, food, transportation)
3. When and where should these types of activities take place?
 - a. Discuss dates, times, and locations that you think would work best for families.

Theme 3

The third theme is **shared family activities**. The purpose of these activities is to build strong relationships within and across families. Some examples of activities include: family board game night, family college tours, or a family collaborative science fair.

Sample Questions:

1. Do you think shared family activities would be well received by 21st CCLC program families? Why or why not?
2. What impact do you think these activities may have on...
 - a. families?
 - b. students and their academic performance?
3. What can we do to ensure that these types of activities are well attended?
 - a. How should we promote activities aimed at family building?
 - b. Are there any community groups or organizations that we should collaborate with to make these types of activities possible or better?



Focus Group Protocol Sample

Theme 4

Next: **leadership opportunities for families.** These opportunities may include being the member of the Program Team, leader of a special event, advocate for the 21st CCLC program in the community or a mentor to other families.

Sample Questions:

1. What types of leadership roles should the program offer?
2. What type of decision-making do you feel is most important for family members to play an active role in?
3. How would you recommend we ask and select family members to hold these types of positions?

Theme 5

The fifth and final theme we will talk about today is **activities aimed linking families to community resources.** Examples of these activities may include (1) school and community food, clothing, and supply drives, (2) connecting families to community supports or resources, or (3) business coupons and discounts.

Sample Questions:

1. What are some other activities which may be beneficial for our families and community?
2. Which community organizations would you recommend we consider partnering with? Why?
3. What community resources, if any, do you think we could use to promote these types of partnerships and events?
4. Are there any events or activities in the community that you or your family has attended in the past and found beneficial or enjoyable?
 - a. Please talk a little bit about why you went, what you liked and what you didn't like.
5. Are there any upcoming community events or activities that you feel 21st CCLC programs should be a part of?
 - a. What would be the value of joining in on these events or activities?

FINAL QUESTION: Would anyone like to add anything else to this discussion? Is there something important that you feel we did not discuss?

Closing

I would like to thank everyone for participating in this focus group. If you have any questions or concerns about what we have discussed during our time together, please reach out to our program coordinator, (PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION). Also, please be on the lookout for future 21st CCLC events and activities and information on how you can continue your involvement in the program. Enjoy the rest of your day!