



# Family Engagement Activities Checklist

There is a variety of reasons that families of children with disabilities may feel excluded or underserved by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs or at other school-related functions. These factors can include environments that pose physical challenges for their child, social anxieties of the student and time constraints. Use this checklist for any family engagement planning – whether the day-to-day or special events – to ensure best inclusion practices.

## **Communication**

- Use a variety of methods to communicate with families.
- Be sure to invite all program families to every event. Use inclusive language that signals your philosophy to all families.
- Describe potential modifications/program environment and invite families to request others.
- Check in with families during events to be sure there are no unanticipated barriers to their full participation. Be sure to follow up if any arose that could not be addressed to avoid a repeat of those barriers.
- Provide summaries of any in-person meetings/updates to maintain relationships with families that cannot attend due to time constraints or other limitations.
- Maintain confidentiality. Medical conditions and diagnoses are protected information. Do not discuss private information in public settings.
- Use language that focuses on a student's abilities while still discreetly acknowledging their challenges.

## **Inclusive Environment**

- Provide training for frontline staff about accommodations, creating an inclusive learning environment and what their daily family contact should look like
- Create a parent committee to advise 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC leaders about family needs.
- Considering the times of the events. Include a question around best times for events in your Family Engagements Survey. Remember that sometimes families whose children have disabilities have greater difficulty time taking time off from work for school- or program-related activities. They often save paid time off for their child's medical appointments, or they may work in a job that doesn't offer paid time off.
- Address any concerns that families of students without disabilities have in a direct and constructive manner. Remind them that their student enjoys the same privacy as the students they might have concerns about, that your program only includes students they are staffed to handle and that *every* student has unique gifts to share with their peers.

## **Socialization**

- Facilitate relationship building between all parents. Some families of children with disabilities may be hesitant to engage in program activities. They may feel like they have too little in common with other families. If their child demonstrates atypical or unsafe behavior, they might be worried that other families will say something negative about their child.



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- Organize a parent support group for families with children with disabilities, or provide private opportunities for them to network with each other. Always take cues from them on how information about their family may be shared with others.