

BUILDing Supportive Communities with Libraries, Museums, and Early Childhood Systems



*A Toolkit for Collaborative Efforts
to Improve Outcomes for Young Children
and Their Families*

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It is easy for our institution to partner with other established institutions. It is harder to find one family at a time. We need partners to do that work. Creating a shared message across museums, libraries and early childhood systems could help families see all of us as resources.”

– EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS LEADER



Introduction

Children live in, and are most significantly shaped by, families and communities. High quality early childhood programs and services are critical to the development of young children and community organizations, like museums and libraries, play a key role as well. Early childhood growth and development programs in both formal and informal settings can facilitate the important role that families play in a child's development. Museums, libraries, and early childhood systems are encouraged to work together to reach all children and families with high quality growth, development, and learning experiences that help them thrive, especially those children and families not currently utilizing museums and libraries.

Libraries and museums reach millions of children each year. They are among our communities' most engaging and trusted learning institutions, and provide a place for children, parents, caregivers, and other adults to play and learn. They are intended to create shared experiences and communication between children, parents and other caring adults. However, although they are designed to be available to all children and families, libraries and museums often reach only a fraction of those in their community. According to a 2013 IMLS study, 36% of children of the lowest socioeconomic status visited libraries in their kindergarten year, compared to 66% of the highest. For museums, these figures are 43% versus 65%.¹ Too many children and families are disconnected from powerful library and museum programs. Most child and family serving programs, including child care, preschool, health services, and family support programs, face similar challenges reaching all children and families, especially those with high needs.

Leaders from museums and libraries share many goals and challenges with leaders from early childhood systems. Leaders share an understanding that children grow and develop across multiple domains including social and emotional, language and cognitive development, communications, general knowledge, and

Definitions of Terms

Throughout this guide we refer to building partnerships among museum, library and early childhood systems leaders. We also refer to high need children and families.

Museum partners include the full range of museums including art, history, science and technology, children's museums, historical societies, tribal museums, planetariums, botanic gardens and zoos. Library partners include the full range of libraries, including public, academic, research, special and tribal.

Early childhood systems partners include representatives from the wide range of programs and services that contribute to the well-being of children and families, including early learning; family support; health; mental health and nutrition; and special needs and early intervention.

We believe the strategies and tools outlined in this guide are broadly applicable to those working in museums, libraries and early childhood systems who seek to collaborate in order to enhance their support of young children and their families. By partnerships we mean intentional collaborations among leaders from museums, libraries and early childhood systems, seeking to share their individual and collective strengths to create strategies that increase the number of young children and their families, particularly those with high needs, that have access to meaningful early childhood growth and development experiences.

High needs children and families refer to those with multiple risk factors that include:

- Households without English speakers;
- Large family;
- Low-level parental education;
- Residential mobility;
- Unmarried parents;
- Teen mother; and
- Unemployed parents.²

²National Center for Children in Poverty, Young Child Risk Calculator, <http://nccp.org/tools/risk/>

¹Swan, D.W. & Manjaarez, C.A.(2013) Children's Visitation to Libraries and Museums. Research Brief series, no.1 (IMLS-2013-RB-O1). Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.



We try to provide opportunities to make it easy for families to visit the museum – community agencies can apply for free passes to distribute to families, we offer a discounted rate to Title 1 schools, and all of our programs are free on the first Friday of each month. Despite all of that, our message is still not getting through to enough high-needs families.”

– MUSEUM LEADER

physical health and well-being. Parents and caregivers are an essential ingredient; a commitment to support them is essential to the delivery of effective programs and services. Shared challenges include inconsistent funding from multiple funding streams, the need for multi-lingual staff and materials available for families with various home languages, and lack of transportation for families to program and service sites.

Museums and libraries are too often on the periphery of state- and local-level conversations about early childhood systems. By creating intentional relationships and working more closely together, museums, libraries and the early childhood community can offer children and families a wide range of formal and informal learning opportunities. Together they can further extend existing strategies and create new ones. And, by joining forces, they can help address inequities and



reach those children and families that don't typically have access to the developmental and learning experiences they need to thrive.

This guide is the result of a yearlong collaboration between the BUILD Initiative and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Working in five pilot states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Washington) that are members of BUILD's learning community, the project convened leaders from museums, libraries, and early childhood systems to learn together and discuss ways to collaborate. The project focused on creating strategies for the leaders to pool their talents and resources to strengthen outcomes for children and families and reach those not consistently reached by libraries, museums, and early childhood programs and services.

The project was informed by a report published in 2013 by the Institute of Museums and Libraries titled, *Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners*. The report issues a clarion call for museums and libraries to play a greater role in developing early learning policies and practices at community, state, and national levels. The report called for action on two fronts:

1. Developing the capacity of libraries and museums to be a greater force for young children to grow and develop, and
2. Establishing the network of libraries and museums as an essential component of the national and state early childhood development systems.

A major tenet of the report was that libraries and museums are in a unique position to reach children and families who are living in the same geographic area as the organizations and should be seen as vital partners in finding solutions to the growing opportunity gap between underserved families and their affluent peers. Underserved families are those that experience severe disparities across all spheres, including health, economic security, safety, learning, and development.

This project was also informed by the experience of the BUILD Initiative which, for the past 12 years, has worked with state-level early childhood leaders to prepare young children to thrive and succeed. BUILD supports state leaders from both the private and public sectors as they work to set policy, offer services and advocate for children from birth to age five and their families.



Keeping an equity focus is critical to our work. I've always thought in terms of equal access but this work has made me think about how to ensure equitable access for all families."

– LIBRARY LEADER

About the BUILD Initiative

The BUILD Initiative supports state leaders in their work to develop a comprehensive system of programs, policies and services that serve the needs of young children and their families. This systems building approach effectively prepares our youngest children for a successful future, while carefully using private and public resources.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The mission of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. The IMLS provides leadership through research, policy development, and grantmaking.

The Format of This Toolkit

This toolkit offers resources that can be used to enhance existing partnerships or develop new partnerships among leaders from museums, libraries and early childhood systems. Each section of this toolkit has been designed based on the recognition that both infrastructure and leadership are required to support a successful partnership. Partnerships, whether existing or new, progress through distinct developmental phases as they work toward a shared goal.

Developmental Phases of Partnerships and Working Groups



For each section we have created discussion starters and questions to help identify common ground, shared interests and goals; provide focus; and suggest direction. We also have created a list of tools that support each phase of partnership development.

While a few of the tools have been specifically designed based on the strengths of museums, libraries and state early childhood systems, most are from existing resources and can be explored via links provided in this document. The tools that have been developed for this project are included in the appendix.

The desired outcome is an understanding of one another's strengths, goals and strategies for increasing

access to high-quality early learning and developmental experiences for young children and their families who have not historically benefited from the high-quality resources libraries, museums, and early childhood programs offer.

Getting Started

The leadership for creating a partnership might come from a variety of places - state or public libraries, state early childhood departments, museums, local early childhood sites, or perhaps a neighborhood coalition. Whatever the impetus and whatever form the work may take, it is essential that the leadership supporting the effort has a broad-based understanding of the developmental, cultural and linguistic characteristics of high-needs children and families that have not consistently had access to museums and libraries.

That understanding is made possible by authentic family engagement- finding ways to gather input from families about the services and programs they need and desire and responding to that input.

It is often helpful if the initial work is co-led by members from at least two of the three partnering sectors. Each partner - libraries, museums, and early childhood systems - have different governance, processes, and practices. Shared leadership can help enhance mutual interest, aide in determining mutual benefits and create shared accountability for the success of the partnership. As the partners create a plan for their collaborative work, it is important there be a clear appreciation of how families with children birth to five access the entire range of early childhood programs and services they need to support healthy development- through programs including those related to health, mental health, special needs and family support. Families need to be aware of and have access to programs and services that are responsive and reflective of their culture and language. For example, families with young children benefit from services in their home language. Other factors that influence access include affordability, acceptability, and availability of transportation.

This guide is designed to help museum, library and state early childhood systems leaders consider opportunities for integration, that increase not only their own reach and efficacy, but also collaborative approaches that support better developmental outcomes for children and families, particularly for those children and families that have not had the opportunity to consistently benefit from museum, library, and early childhood programs and services.



It's clear that we are all facing similar challenges - like transportation and language barriers. Both are critical to getting families in the door and feeling comfortable participating in our programs. We can learn a lot from each other about how to make families feel welcome while we do our daily work."

- STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS LEADER

Part One – Development of Relationships and Shared Interest

Identifying and Articulating Strengths of Museums, Libraries, and Early Childhood Systems

The work in this initial phase is focused on building an understanding of the current landscape, ensuring that potential partners are able to reflect on and articulate their individual strengths, as well as develop frameworks for communicating those strengths to each other and the external community. Although this work is often done when partnerships are new, it can also be helpful for established partnerships to step back and more clearly understand each other's capabilities, weaknesses and values. Although every partnership will work at its own pace, allocating three to six months for this phase should ensure that the partnership is built on a solid framework of common understanding and shared interests.

KEY QUESTIONS

For the initial meetings between leaders from museums, libraries, and early childhood systems, agendas can be framed to guide the group towards a common understanding of the challenges of serving children birth to five, particularly those with high-needs. The opportunities and challenges present in a given community or state will vary, but may be represented in the way a system or service is designed, how an institution or program is viewed by a particular population, or according to other geographic, demographic or cultural influences. The following questions can be used to guide your discussion:

Finding common ground:

- What is our shared definition of community (geography, population, demography, etc.)?
- What do we know about the needs of young children birth to five years old and their families?
- How does providing early growth and development opportunities for children and their families fit into the broader context of our organization? Of our community?
- What are our institutional/organizational goals for supporting children and families? For supporting high-needs children and families?
- What programs and services are currently provided in our area to support children's growth and development from birth to age five?
- Who are the children and families we currently serve?

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Leaders representing museums, libraries and early childhood systems develop a shared understanding of the early childhood growth and development opportunities present in individual institutions or organizations and investigate the opportunities for partnerships at the state, regional and/or local levels.

- What children and families live within our geographic area but are not served by our programs or services?
- Are there historical factors that have created or reinforced structural or institutional policies that have prevented specific groups of families or children from accessing our services?
- What are our group's hopes and wishes? What are our group's priorities for all children? For high needs children?

SUCCESS STORY

Promising Strategies Brainstorm

Teams from the five pilot states working on the BUILD/IMLS Initiative met in New Orleans in October 2014. Together they brainstormed ways to advance alignment of museums, libraries and state early learning systems and generated a list of promising strategies that served as a foundation for future discussions and collaborative work.

Some of their ideas included:

Promising strategies to leverage existing systems, standards, and networks:

- ✓ Document high-quality learning activities at museums and libraries and share these with educators, early learning programs and parent networks;
- ✓ Better educate families on what museums and libraries have to offer and how they can help children learn;
- ✓ Connect with summer reading programs and other state initiatives on literacy and grade-level reading;
- ✓ Engage new community partners in early learning and development efforts and build their awareness; and
- ✓ Develop a guide for libraries and museums to promote early learning standards.

Promising strategies to reach out to families:

- ✓ Be intentional about efforts to reach high-needs children and families;
- ✓ Promote libraries as a resource for children and adults regarding education, job and housing searches, health and well-being, and social networking;
- ✓ Demonstrate that museums and libraries are welcoming places in which children can learn;

- ✓ Connect museums and libraries to other services which meet needs – for example: summer lunches, pre-K registration, and others;
- ✓ Share, replicate and scale innovative exhibits and programs with other museums and libraries. Include intentional family engagement within museums and libraries and take programs and services out into the community to serve families;
- ✓ Replicate activities in museums and libraries in non-traditional locations, such as health centers, to build on existing relationships with families and extend the reach to additional families;
- ✓ Provide tools for families to link what children are learning at home, at school and in child care and early learning settings to opportunities in libraries and museums; and
- ✓ Create follow-up communication with families after museum and library visits to extend the learning and growth.

Promising strategies to work with and in neighborhoods/zones:

- ✓ Establish clear contacts within neighborhoods; and
- ✓ Develop intentional partnerships between neighborhoods and local libraries, museums and early learning programs.

Promising strategies to offer professional development:

- ✓ Create certified training programs in libraries and museums based on state early childhood system standards;
- ✓ Provide professional development for library and museum staff in early childhood growth and development; and
- ✓ Provide professional development to support implementation of scientific approaches to play and learning, using museums and libraries as laboratories for community organizations, programs, and services.

Engaging the right partners:

- Who else needs to be at the table? Are museums, libraries and early childhood programs and services adequately represented?
- Do the families at the table mirror the racial, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the community? And do our plans reflect their voices?
- Have we created opportunities for authentic family engagement – seeking out and acting on ideas and suggestions from families about how to address their needs?

Useful tools:

- Assessing Potential Collaborative Opportunities (page 18)
- Identifying Assets: Systems Builder's Audit (page 20)
- Sample: Pennsylvania Survey of Museum and Library Early Learning Services (page 22)
- The Big Picture Approach – Summary of Current Work (page 18)



SUCCESS STORY

BUILD/IMLS Partnership Created Enduring Connections

By bringing together leaders from museums, libraries and early childhood systems in five states, the BUILD/IMLS pilot partnerships demonstrated the promise of intentional collaboration focused on sharing resources, finding common ground, and identifying mutually beneficial goals focused on improving outcomes for young children and their families. Team members decided that a focus on high-needs families must be a clear thread that runs through all of their efforts. During the short pilot period, the team made new connections, increased learning about one another's programs and services, and generated ideas for ongoing partnership.

Comments included:

- "We realized everyone is playing in the same sandbox, and we don't have to compete."
- "Everyone now has a telephone line to someone else in the sectors."
- "We strengthened relationships across entities."
- "We brought people together who hadn't been involved before."
- "We are more prepared now to seize funding opportunities when they come along."

Part Two – Understanding and Articulating Opportunities for Shared Benefit

To develop a common agenda that leads to mutual benefit for museums, libraries, and early childhood systems and better outcomes for children and families, partners need to have a clear, shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges that exist. When partners use data to inform their planning, they can make decisions that are more reflective of the needs of the community and hold one another accountable. In addition to the data resources listed in this section, there might be additional data needed to fully understand the opportunities in a given setting.

In addition to formal data sources, informal data can also be informative. Consider interviewing or surveying families currently participating in programs to gather qualitative data about their needs and their perceptions about how museums, libraries, and early childhood programs and services can enrich their lives.

KEY QUESTIONS

Building the foundation for shared efforts – collecting data:

- What is the basic demographic profile of our community?
- Do the members of the partnership as well as the staff/volunteers reflect the cultural and linguistic identity of the community we are serving?
- What do we already know about children and families that are not accessing our programs and services?
- Can data collected by the partners in this group provide important information for our planning? For example, what do we know about participation rates in our museums and libraries? Do we collect zip code data? Do we track how often formal and informal childcare providers access our resources? Although we can't share the specifics of individuals who come to our sites, we can aggregate data and get a picture of who attends.

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Partners review information about existing programs and services for children birth to five to determine how best to reach each and every child with a particular focus on high-needs children and their families. Specific attention is paid to reaching families and children most likely to experience an opportunity gap leading to developmental delays and poor learning outcomes. Those families may need additional support to address cognitive, physical, literacy and language, and social and emotional issues. Partners develop greater understanding of the existing strengths and challenges that provide the foundation for developing shared efforts that will benefit the partners and the families they serve.

Looking at the participation in museum, library, and early childhood programs and services:

- What are the strategies the partners have used to increase the number of children and families who experience the resources of the libraries, museums, and early childhood programs?
- How can we ensure the strategies we employ are developed in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the cultural and linguistic needs of children and families?
- Do we need to conduct deeper investigation and data collection/analysis to ensure we are better-informed and understand the reasons why some families may not access the library, museums and early childhood programs in our community?



We know families want to do their best for their children but some don't even have an extra 15 minutes in their day. Where are the sweet spots? [What are] the little things we can do to connect and make an impact?"

– MUSEUM LEADER



- What information do we have to help us understand the barriers or challenges for families who are not benefiting from the opportunities provided by libraries, museums or early childhood programs in our community? For example, what do we know about awareness? About availability of transportation? About fees for services and families' ability to pay?
- Does the population of children visiting our sites or enrolled in our programs mirror the population of children and adults in our community? How does program participation compare to the census data for the community?
- What are the strategies we think might increase the number of children and families who experience the resources of the libraries, museums, and early childhood programs?

Looking at the current impact of our work:

- How do we measure the ability of families to access early learning opportunities?



- How do we currently measure the outcomes of programs to determine if they are successful?
- Are key stakeholders at the table – for example, parents, grandparents and other caregivers; pediatricians, housing development staff; community organizers; public health providers; Head Start; public pre-k; childcare providers; cultural and linguistic community leaders?
- What is the data on the health and wellbeing of the children birth to 5 years old in our community?
- Do children in our community experience risk, housing instability, food insecurity, and lack of access to high quality early childhood growth and development activities?

Useful tools:

- Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners (page 18)
- Community-Equity Self Assessment (page 27)
- Potential Data Resources (page 28)
- Video – “The Statisticks Lottery” (page 19)

Part Three – Design, Implementation and Assessment of Strategies and Action Plans

Museums, libraries and early childhood systems share some common processes and practices. Discussing those common processes and practices can provide a foundation for growth of the partnership and provide greater clarity for the development of action plans.

An action plan clearly specifies the activities that different partners have committed to implementing and evolves over time in response to the initiative's successes, challenges, and opportunities. The action plan must be vetted with all the stakeholders (the partnership members, community member, and other colleagues) prior to implementation, with any needed changes made based on stakeholder feedback. Building on existing resources, the partners must develop an agreed upon system for continuous and open communication with one another once the action plan is implemented.

Successful partnerships are those in which partners recognize that this is a long-term effort and requires commitment from all partners. Although each partnership will develop at its own pace, most will take at least 12 -18 months to get off the ground. Partners may consider developing a Memorandum of Understanding to help define the roles and responsibilities of each member in the partnership.

Successful partnerships are also those in which group members can articulate the common agenda in simple, easy-to-understand terms and can reach consensus on ultimate goals and a shared vision for change. In addition, partners agree on geographical boundaries and population targets as well as data (qualitative and quantitative) used to inform the selection of strategies

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Partners have a shared vision for better serving young children and their families, a common understanding of project goals and a joint approach with agreed upon actions for implementation. Partners identify the specific strategies for increasing access to existing programs, particularly for high-needs families and those that have not historically had consistent access. Partners have clearly articulated approaches and measurements for their own contribution to the work and they understand each other's work and how it supports the common agenda.



Literacy is an issue that brings us all together. Our statewide READ ON initiative has focused hundreds of organizations on increasing the number of third graders who pass their third grade reading tests. Museums, libraries and early learning programs can all push to engage more families."

– STATE LITERACY COORDINATOR

and actions. Partners have committed to solving the problem using an adaptive approach with clearly articulated strategies and agreed-upon actions.

Successful partnerships also ensure that there are points in the implementation phase when partners have the opportunity to take stock of their efforts, celebrate the advancement of their shared vision, and agree to any needed adjustments to achieve benefit on behalf of the organizations, children and families they serve. Additionally, it is essential to document lessons learned for future initiatives.

KEY QUESTIONS

Taking inventory of possible strategies:

- Are there some existing strategies that members within our partnership might need to revise or extend to achieve our desired outcome?
- What do the partners need from the state or the community to implement the action plan?
- What shifts in existing programs will increase participation of young children and families in high quality early childhood growth and development opportunities?
- What can we do in collaboration that we can't do individually?
- Where can we look for model programs and services?
- Are there implementation lessons to be learned from other states, regions, and communities?

Getting and processing feedback:

- What is our process for sharing and validating our action plan with diverse families, programs, and community organizations?
- What is our timeframe for vetting this with others, as well as for implementing our collaborative approach?
- How will we make revisions to the plan after receiving feedback from the larger community?



Assessing the partnership's plan:

- What should we measure to understand our success?
- Does the partnership's plan include voices from all relevant sectors and constituencies – for example, museums, libraries, public health providers, early learning programs, relevant state and municipal administrators, parents, early childhood educators, cultural, community, and neighborhood leaders and public housing?
- Did representatives of the target populations help shape the common agenda?
- Are resources distributed in ways that increase the access for children and families of racial and ethnic diversity?
- Have any of the partners changed how resources are used as a result of new information from the collaboration?
- Did the opinions and feedback from families impact the design and implementation of the organizations individually and the collaborative?
- Is the agenda informed by data about where high needs children and families live and attend childcare, Head Start, participate in home visiting programs, or pre-K?

Useful tools:

- Using Choice Points to Advance Equity (page 19)
- Visioning Tool (page 30)
- The Eight Word Mission Statement (page 19)
- Parent-Child Relationships:
Facilitating Interactions to Support
Children's Learning (page 31)
- Find The Standard Game (page 45)
- Ensuring an Intentional Approach
to Family Access (page 47)
- Collaboration Assessment Checklist (page 19)



SUCCESS STORY

Pennsylvannia One Book, Every Young Child Program

Since 2003, approximately 560,000 Pennsylvania children have participated annually in an early childhood literacy program. The children, ages three to six, are exposed to the fun of reading the same picture book. The initiative focuses on communicating to adults with children in their lives how the development of early literacy skills – through quality interactive experiences with books and stories – is critically important to children's success in learning to read. The project was created by a collaboration of community organizations – including libraries, museums, United Way organizations, and public broadcasting.

Recommended Tools and Resources

The tools cited in this publication are listed in the following chart, sorted by the developmental phases of collaboratives described in this toolkit. As each group using this guide will have unique needs, this chart is designed to help a group determine which tools would be most useful for its work. While each tool has been assigned to a particular section of this guide, many of the tools are multipurpose and can be used in multiple developmental phases.

Tools and Resources	PART ONE: Development of Relationships and Shared Interest	PART TWO: Understanding and Articulating Opportunities for Shared Benefit	PART THREE: Designing, Implementation and Assessment Strategies and Action Plans
Assessing Potential Collaborative Opportunities	✓		
Identifying Assets: Systems Builders' Audit	✓		
Sample: Pennsylvania Survey of Museum and Library Early Learning Services	✓		
The Big Picture Approach- Summary of Current Work	✓		
Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners		✓	
Community - Equity Self Assessment		✓	
Potential Data Resources		✓	
"The Statisticks Lottery" Video		✓	
Using Choice Points to Advance Equity			✓
Visioning Tool			✓
The Eight Word Mission Statement			✓
Parent-Child Relationships: Facilitating Interactions to Support Children's Learning			✓
Find the Standard Game			✓
Ensuring an Intentional Approach to Family Access			✓
Collaboration Assessment Checklist			✓

A Menu of Recommended Tools and Resources

KEY

- Available in the appendix of this publication
- Available online

● Assessing Potential Collaborative Opportunities

A simple activity from Community Wealth Partners to help potential partners identify needs, and assess assets and interest in determining the potential for collaboration. It is available online at http://conferences.unitedway.org/sites/default/files/Collaborative%20Opportunity%20Worksheet%20-%20Community%20Wealth%20Partners_0.pdf

● Identifying Assets: Systems Builders' Audit

This tool helps with the collection of information on all potential partners, including museums, libraries, and early childhood systems. It also provides a format for tracking useful data sources.

● Sample: Pennsylvania Survey of Museum and Early Learning Services

This sample survey was created by the Consortium for Policy Research and Education, Penn State Graduate School of Education, and Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning to provide state and local leaders with information about the types of services for children and families that exist, as well as the support that would be most beneficial for increasing availability and access.

● The Big Picture Approach-Summary of Current Work

This tool from The Forum for Youth Investment helps partnerships look at issues with a “big picture” approach and address problems from a child- or family-centered point of view. It is available online at <http://forumfyi.org/files/WhatMakesEffortBP.pdf>

● Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners

Published in 2013 by The Institute of Museums and Libraries, this report issues a clarion call for museums and libraries to play a greater role in developing early learning policies and practices at community, state, and national levels. It is available online at <https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/growingyoungminds.pdf>

● Community-Equity Self-Assessment

In order to meet the needs of all children and families, leaders from museums, libraries and early childhood systems must make intentional efforts to close the opportunity and access gaps that exist by income, race, ethnicity, language and culture. This tool is designed to help partnerships test their ideas and solutions within an equity frame.

● Potential Data Resources

Partnerships need different types of information at different points in the collaborative process. This tool lists potential data resources that will help a partnership define opportunities, identify best strategies and assess the impact of those strategies.

● “The Statisticks Lottery” Video

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the 150+ communities working with the Campaign are dedicated to narrowing the gap between children from low-income families and their more affluent peers. This video shows why that gap occurs and how we can close it. It is available online at <http://gradelevelreading.net/video-the-statisticks-lottery>

● Using Choice Points to Advance Equity

When developing partnerships between early learning and museum and library leaders, it's important to ensure policies and practices are created with racial, cultural and linguistic equity in mind. Equity assessments can be used to pre-empt the possibility that a proposal will affect some people unfavorably. Partnerships can use this tool, developed by Terry Keleher, to ensure equity is at the forefront of the planning and implementation process. It is available on the Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation website, <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit>

● Visioning Tool

This tool guides a partnership in creating a simple, visual map of a shared vision.

● The Eight Word Mission Statement

In an article for the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Kevin Starr provides tips to help develop a clear and specific mission statement that states exactly what a partnership has set out to accomplish. It is available online at http://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_eight_word_mission_statement

● Parent-Child Relationships: Facilitating Interactions to Support Children's Learning

All programs, services and organizations that engage with families of young children have the opportunity to support children's learning by facilitating the parent-child relationship. This three-part tool provides a checklist to help organizations rate how effectively they are promoting the key principles of family engagement and facilitating positive parent-child relationships, a continuum of principle and activities for promoting the parent-child relationship and an observation tool for parent-child interactions.

● Find the Standard Game

This tool was created to show partners new to a museum how exhibits and displays align with early childhood standards. Easily adapted to library settings as well, the tool promotes understanding of the innovative ways that museums and libraries are developing displays and exhibits and creating activities that help children meet these standards.

● Ensuring an Intentional Approach to Family Access

Access, coordination, and quality – these are the three most critical aspects for programs and systems serving children and families. This tool guides family-serving programs and organizations on taking a deeper dive on each of these aspects.

● Collaboration Assessment Checklist

This tool, developed for the Journal of Extension, helps partners evaluate a number of factors that influence or inhibit the collaborative process. It is available online at <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt1.php>

APPENDIX

IMLS and BUILD Initiative – Museums/Libraries Project System Builders’ Audit

Name _____ Representing _____

ECE Infrastructure	Is there a partnership?	Who is key contact?	What does the partner contribute regarding early learning and development birth to age 5?
State department(s) serving children and families			
State funded educators/ advocates (CFCE)			
Informal child care providers			
Formal child care providers			
AEYC state and local			
Museum Infrastructure	Is there a partnership?	Who is key contact?	What does the partner contribute regarding early learning and development birth to age 5?
Children’s Museums			
Science Museums			
State Museum Association			

Museum Infrastructure	Is there a partnership?	Who is key contact?	What does the partner contribute regarding early learning and development birth to age 5?
Regional Museum Association			
Other Museums (history, art, nature centers, zoo, aquariums, natural history)			
Library Infrastructure	Is there a partnership?	Who is key contact?	What does the partner contribute regarding early learning and development birth to age 5?
State library administration agency			
Public Libraries			
School Libraries			
Special Libraries (tribal, Academic)			

Pennsylvania's Survey of Museum and Library Early Learning Services

Thank you for participating in Pennsylvania's survey of museum and library early learning services. Please complete this survey, even if you do not provide services for children, or if your organization identifies as something other than a museum or library. The purpose of this survey is to provide state and local leaders with information about the types of services for children and their families that exist, as well as the supports that would be most beneficial for increasing availability and access. This survey is being conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania in partnership with the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Human Services, as well as with the BUILD Initiative. Survey results will be used to support future state and local efforts to promote early learning. No individual responses will ever be identified from this survey.

Important information:

1. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes.
2. If you cannot finish the survey in one sitting, you may click the email link again to begin from the last question you answered. Previous answers will be saved.
3. Your responses to this survey are voluntary and confidential. Although complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, we will do everything we can to protect your information. All individual data will be accessible only to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and will not be shared.

What is the name of your organization?

Please select the identifier that is most appropriate for your organization.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural History & Natural Science Museums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Science & Technology Museums & Planetariums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Botanical Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoos, Aquariums, & Wildlife Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Society / Historic Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History Museum | |

In what Pennsylvania county are you centrally located?

Is working with young children (birth to age five) part of your organization's mission?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is working with early elementary children (Kindergarten to Grade 3) part of your organization's mission?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your organization consider providing programming for young children (birth to age five) and their families a core service?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How does funding (or lack of funding) affect your organization's decision on whether or not to provide services for young children (birth to age five)?

In the past 12 months, has your organization offered any programming for young children (birth to age five) and their families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how often do you offer programming for young children?

☐ Never ☐ Less than Once a Month ☐ Once a Month ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
☐ Once a Week ☐ 2-3 Times a Week ☐ Daily

Please provide a brief description of a few of the most significant programs or services you've offered for young children (birth to age five) and their families in the last 12 months.

Are there certain populations of young children (birth to age five) and their families that you think about when designing and offering services? (e.g. infants, toddlers, preschool-age, military families, dual language learners, fathers, etc.)

Please check any of the following key learning areas that have been addressed by your organization's programming for young children.

- ☐ Approaches to Learning through Play (constructing, organizing, and applying knowledge)
- ☐ Language and Literacy Development (English language arts and/or dual-language)
- ☐ Mathematical Thinking and Expression (processing and problem solving)
- ☐ Scientific Thinking and Technology (scientific inquiry and discovery)
- ☐ Social Studies Thinking (connecting to communities and history)
- ☐ Creative Thinking and Expression (communicating through arts)
- ☐ Health, Wellness, and Physical Development (learning about my body)
- ☐ Social and Emotional Development (interpersonal skills and decision making)
- ☐ Other

In the past 12 months, has your organization offered any programming for early elementary children (Kindergarten to Grade 3) and their families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how often do you offer programming for elementary children?

☐ Never ☐ Less than Once a Month ☐ Once a Month ☐ 2-3 Times a Month
☐ Once a Week ☐ 2-3 Times a Week ☐ Daily

Please provide a brief description of a few of the most significant programs or services you've offered for elementary-aged children (Kindergarten to Grade 3) and their families in the last 12 months.

Do you plan on offering programming for young children (birth to age five) and their families in the future?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What types of programming are you considering that would serve young children?

What information or resources might be useful to you as consider offering programming in the future?

The next section of the survey asks about partnerships and other resources your organization may access to inform your early childhood programming. The first set of questions asks about partnerships you are engaged in, while the second set of questions asks about informational resources that you access.

Are you in partnership with others to actively plan and/or implement services for young children (birth to age five) and their families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please rate the importance of the partnership for your ability to provide those services.

☐ Not at all Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Very Important ☐ N/A

Please identify any organizations with which you plan and/or implement services for young children and their families.

Please tell us about the scope and reach of your partnerships for implementing services for young children.

Do you receive information from other organizations about designing and/or providing services for young children (birth to age five)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please rate the usefulness of the information that you have received.

☐ Not at all Important ☐ Somewhat important ☐ Very Important ☐ N/A

Please identify any organizations from which you receive useful information regarding services for young children and their families.

Please tell us about any information that you have found particularly useful when designing and/or providing services for young children.

Does your organization work in any way with hospitals, clinics, or health centers regarding services for young children (birth to age 5) and their families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please briefly describe.

Does your organization interact with the Pennsylvania Department of Education in any way that informs your early childhood (birth to age five) programming?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

If yes, please briefly describe.

Is there dedicated staff within your organization with responsibility for planning and/or implementing services for young children (birth to age five) and their families?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, is working with young children her/their primary responsibility?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Please briefly describe the work of any specific staff that work with young children and families.

How often does your organization collect and review data related to young children (birth to age five) and families that attend your programs?

☐ Daily or Weekly ☐ Once a Month ☐ Less than Once a Month ☐ Never

How often does your organization collect and review data to assess the needs of young children and families in your community?

☐ Daily or Weekly ☐ Once a Month ☐ Less than Once a Month ☐ Never

If your organization does collect and review data, how is it used?

In the last 12 months, which of the following outreach strategies have you used both generally (column 1) and specifically for early childhood programs (column 2)? Please check all that apply.

	General Communication Communication	Early Childhood Related Communication & Outreach
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your website (including blogs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mailer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School events such as back to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community events such as fairs and festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentations to small groups (such as Mom's Club)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have completed the survey. Thank you for your participation. As a token of appreciation for completing this survey, you are able to enroll in a raffle to receive a \$100 Amazon.com gift card (better than one in fifty odds). In order to be eligible, please provide an email address where we can contact you. Your email will be confidential and not shared without your consent.

Would you like to receive information at the above email address regarding the results of this survey and future opportunities for partnership around services to young children?

☐ Yes ☐ No thanks

Please let us know if there is anything else you feel may be useful to understand regarding your challenges and successes in providing services to young children and their families.

Please use the enclosed pre-paid envelope to return this survey to the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Thank you for your time!

Community Equity Self-Assessment

Successful early childhood programs strive to meet the needs of all children. In order to accomplish this, intentional efforts to close the opportunity and access gaps that exist by income, race and ethnicity, language, and culture must be a part of any initiative. This tool is designed to help collaboratives test their ideas and solutions within an equity frame.

Instructions: Members of the collaborative should complete this evaluation on their own prior to a group discussion. For best results, a trained facilitator who is not a member of the group should manage the group discussion. This tool is useful at multiple points of a collaborative plan. In particular, this tool should be used prior to the implementation of any action plan, as well as at agreed upon evaluation points developed by the group.

Desired Outcome	Not At All	Somewhat	Improving	Definitely	Not Applicable
Our plan will benefit high needs children and families in their communities and neighborhoods					
There is representation from the communities we wish to serve within our group					
The information from the community and families impacts the decisions made by the organization					
Resources are allocated in ways to increase the participation of children and families in the community who historically have not had access to museums, libraries and early childhood programs					
Members of our group reflect cultural, racial and linguistic diversity					
My institution has reviewed its policies and procedures to determine institutional barriers to children and families participation					
Our solutions address barriers of affordability for all families					
Our plan addresses barriers of accessibility for all families					
Our plan addresses barriers of availability for all families					
Our plan addresses structural barriers (transportation, hours of operation etc.) for all families					

Data Resources

Partnerships need different types of information at different points in the collaborative process. Data is important for members of the group in defining the opportunities, identifying the best strategies and assessing the impact of those strategies. In order to successfully increase the access to quality early learning experiences, there are some key data elements that each partnership should review:

Action	Data Elements
Understand the Opportunities	<p>Number of low-income children birth to five years of age</p> <p>Racial, ethnic and linguistic composition of children birth to five years of age</p> <p>Number of homeless children birth to five years of age</p> <p>Number of children birth to five years of age in public housing</p> <p>Number of early learning and development providers (childcare, Head Start/Early Head Start, home visiting, etc.)</p> <p>Number of children served by early learning and development providers</p> <p>Number and location of families enrolled in childcare subsidy program</p> <p>Number and location of children enrolled in childcare subsidy cared for by family, friends and neighbors</p> <p>Listing of providers serving young children and their families (WIC, community health providers, public health nurses, early intervention, faith based, neighborhood clubs, etc.)</p> <p>Number of children eligible but not participating in any early learning and development program</p> <p>Credential and training level of early learning and development workforce</p>
Develop Strategies	<p>Participation rates in museums and libraries by race, ethnicity and language</p> <p>Participation rates in museums and libraries of early learning and development providers</p> <p>Observation tools (see list of tools and resources)</p>

Action	Data Elements
Assess Impact of Strategies	<p>Participation rates in museums and libraries by race, ethnicity and language</p> <p>Participation rates in museums and libraries of early learning and development providers</p> <p>Parent Surveys</p> <p>Early Childhood Provider Surveys</p> <p>Observation tools (see list of tools and resources)</p>

Data Resources

Kids Count Data Center – KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is the premier source for data on child and family well-being in the United States. Access hundreds of indicators, download data and create reports and graphics on the KIDS COUNT Data Center Site that support smart decisions about children and families. Child Trends and the Annie E. Casey Foundation also have a review of 15 federal data sources from which child indicators can be assessed and tracked over time for many states and localities. It is available at datacenter.kidscount.org.

Diversity Data Kids – This site has data organized with a focus on race and ethnicity, equity, and geography. This resource website, managed by the Heller School for Public Policy and Management at Brandeis, provides a comprehensive data base of over 100 measures of child well-being. You can query data, find related policy analysis, and create customized reports for your specific geographic region. It is available online at diversitydatakids.org.

CLASP Data Finder – A custom, easy-to-use tool developed to provide select demographic information as well as administrative data on programs that affect low-income people and families. Users can create and download custom tables that present a national picture, a state picture, or a comparative look at states and communities. The Data Finder currently includes state and national data on childcare assistance spending and participation, Head Start and Early Head Start participation, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) expenditures, young child demographics, and poverty. It is available online at www.clasp.org/data.

The Youngest Americans: A Statistical Portrait of Infants and Toddlers in the United States. This Child Trends report presents information and data on infants and toddlers on basic demographics; indicators of health and well-being; and the risk and protective factors that are closely linked with those conditions, including parental well-being. The report also provides analysis of how the country's array of formal supports for the youngest children and their families – from both the private and public sectors – is meeting their needs. It is available online at <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/MCCORMICK-FINAL.pdf>.

Zero to Three State Baby Facts – Zero to Three publishes a factsheet for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia providing information for early childhood professionals and policymakers about the status of infants, toddlers, and families in their state. These fact sheets are updated annually and are available online at <http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/state-community-policy/infant-and-toddler-state-fact-sheets.html>.

Visioning Tool

Instructions: This tool is designed as a discussion starter and note-taking aid to support a visioning discussion.

Growing Young Minds and Lifelong Learners

TEAM:

DATE:

1. DESIRED STATE

Where do you want to be at this time next year?

What will it look, sound, feel like having implemented the IMLS BUILD project?

2. THE CURRENT REALITY

What are we doing now and what is in place that supports this vision?

What strengths can we leverage to move our work towards our desired state?

3. GOALS

What goals will enable us to attain our vision?

Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-framed.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

4. ACTIONS

What specific actions will enable us to achieve these goals?

5. MATERIALS, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT

Parent-Child Relationship: Facilitating Interactions to Support Children's Learning

Introduction

All programs, services and organizations that engage with families of young children have the opportunity to support children's learning through facilitating the parent-child relationship, as well as, other primary caregiver relationships children are engaged in. Enhancing the adult-child relationship, through actively facilitating interactions, is a critical delivery of engaging with families, and supports the fundamental goal of improving outcomes for children.

By facilitating interactions between the parent and child, we have the potential to impact opportunities provided to children. Research on the pace of brain development before birth and up to three years of age has confirmed that early brain development hinges not only on a child's genetic endowment, but also on the impact of experience and environment, including the quality of relationships with parents and other caring adults. A child's early experiences do not just affect mood or disposition; they affect all physiological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral functions mediated by the brain. Additional research reinforces that children's social and emotional development (which occurs in the context of relationships) is inextricably connected with their cognitive capacities.¹



The centrality of the parent-child relationship to children's learning prompts the need for a focus on facilitating parent-child interactions and considering how we approach parents. The support and development of the parent-child relationship is critical to the parent becoming empowered in their role. The parent-child relationship is made stronger when:

- parents can read their infants cues and respond to them appropriately
- parents understand their child's development and have realistic expectations and attitudes about the development
- parents have a perspective on their experiences as a child and how these relate to their current parenting
- parents seek and access social supports they need

The parent-child relationship is formed by everyday child rearing activities, professionals working with families of young children have the opportunity to guide, affirm and support these interactions. Early learning programming, museums, and libraries are all natural settings where parents, and other primary caregivers, can be supported to read and respond to children's cues, grow in knowledge about child development and engage in supportive relationships with professionals and other parents. The challenge that emerges in carrying out these strategies to support primary adult-child relationships is determining how to enhance the dyad, or the two person relationship, without forcing yourself in to the relationship.²

¹ Jayne Singer, Ph.D., Jessica Goldberg, MA, Elisa Vele-Tabaddor, Ph.D., A Review of the Early Care and Education Literature: Evidence Base for Touchpoints. Retrieved October 2014 at www.brazeltontouchpoints.org.

² McCollum and Yates. 1994. Dyad as focus, triad as means: A family centered approach to supporting parent-child interactions. *Infants and Young Children*, 6(4), 54-63.

Research on the Touchpoints model indicates that strategies are most successful when carried out with a strengths-based and collaborative approach to parents and families; this approach improves parents' experience of their relationships with the provider (professional), and this improved relational functioning stabilizes parental stress during periods of known risk for disruption in familial and developmental functioning.³

Also, research has found that 'teaching' parents, or caregivers, and giving information, alone, will not result in optimal child development. Programs and services must focus on strengthening interactions, and the parent-child relationship, with goals of increased parental sense of competence and efficacy and increased emotional availability on the part of the parent. Emotional availability, which includes caregiver sensitivity, contingent responsiveness, attunement, is necessary in order for adults to attune to and appropriately respond to their children. Emotional availability is essential to the arousal and attention of the young child, to regulating of stimulation, allowing it to be taken in and processed meaningfully, and to effective responses to child cues seeking stimulation or of overload. Positive interaction is dependent on these aspects of emotional availability. Work to support the parent-child relationship, and interactions, must involve a focus on emotional availability.

Through the professional role, we focus on facilitated support to build on and expand the strengths of the parent-child dyad, or relationship, to support the parent, or caregiver, to anticipate behavior and feelings, and plan for nurturing responses, thus making interactions smoother. Strategies of building on and expanding the strengths may include:

- providing developmental context to the interaction,
- offering verbal support for the parent through well timed encouragement and observation of the interaction, and
- facilitating the interaction by introduction of an object or toy and guidance to the parent for the engagement in the interaction.

The concept of facilitating a child's learning through supporting the parent-child relationship is a critical function of work with children and their families that cuts across all of the major systems and service models serving prenatal through age five/eight. These systems include: health/maternal and child health, family support, early learning and education; the service models include child care, early intervention/special education, home visiting, parent groups/services, preschool, (Head Start), primary care, education/cultural institutions. (see Chart on Family and Parent-Child Engagement across Systems/Service Models)



The consideration of a shared set of principles for supporting parent-child relationships is one aspect of aligning all of the systems and services for young children and their families. Another aspect of the systemic nature of this work stems from the proven fact that not one system in isolation can be responsible for all aspects of a positive parent-child relationship and the resulting optimal child outcomes. The collective impact theoretical framework has demonstrated that isolated efforts to address broad social problems are limited in the efficacy and impact.⁴ Systems, and the entities within these systems, must work collectively toward a shared goal of strengthening parent-child relationships. Progress on this goal relies on mutually reinforcing activities across programs and services which are focused on facilitating the parent-child relationship to enhance children's learning. Throughout materials to support mutually reinforcing activities across programs and sites, the terms parent-child relationship and parent-child interactions will be used in reference to the primary caregiver-child relationship that is the focus of these targeted efforts to enhance child learning.

³ Sparrow, MD, J. New Approaches to Optimizing Child Development and Breaking the Cycle of Poverty. Retrieved October 2014 at www.brazelton-touchpoints.org.

⁴ Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011) Collective Impact. Stanford social innovation review. Winter.

Principles of Family Engagement and Promoting the Parent-Child Relationship:

Checklist and Rating Scale

Through the following list of principles, you have the opportunity to assess how intentional your programming is in the promotion of family engagement and promotion of the parent-child relationship. Reviewing the principles and considering your focus on embodying each in work with families is not necessarily an assessment of good or bad practice. In fact, the rating for your program may be very appropriate to your mission and current services to families. Taking a moment to reflect on the principles related to your services may provide additional insight necessary to the strength of your program.

Instructions: Review the list of fourteen principles, check yes or no for whether these are currently a focus of your program/services to children and families. Next rate how intentionally you focus on integrating the principle in to your work with parents and children. You may choose to modify this tool by adding lines under each principle to allow staff to write in evidence of activities that support a given principle in action.

Principle	Focus?		Rate how intentionally your programming focuses on or embodies each principle.		
	Yes	No			
1. Focus on strengths and potential. Align with strengths of the parent, the parent-child interactions and relationship, and the family.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
2. Provide families with encouragement and education. Engage with families as a tool to promote learning and growth for the parent and the child.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
3. Provide a safe and welcoming environment for the family to learn and grow.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
4. Focus on building the parent's capacity. Consider the primacy of parent in child's life is critical and parent as first teacher, work to increase confidence in their role as a parent.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
5. Acknowledge the perspective of the parent/family. Consider their expectations of engaging in this program/service, correct or incorrect, and the family's perspective of their role in the program/site.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
6. Establish a trusting relationship with families. Create and build mutually respectful, caring, trusting relationships with parents and families, seeing the family with worth and dignity.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
7. Be active and intentional in working toward reducing disparities experienced by families. Focus on disparities in power and privilege that undermine respectful, trusting, caring relationships with parents/families.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional

Principle	Focus?		Rate how intentionally your programming focuses on or embodies each principle.		
	Yes	No			
8. Allow the parent to lead and guide you to becoming part of their family and life.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
9. Embrace differences across parents and families and be culturally sensitive and attuned. Develop an understanding of the family's past experiences, history, current situation, culture, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious/spiritual background, beliefs and values of families and how these may differ from your own history, beliefs and values.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
10. Engage in a two way partnership with families. Build a partnership, relationship, with parent offering a model for creating a nurturing relationship with, and environment for, their children.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
11. Participate in conversations with the family. Show effort to understand the family, not related to approval or disapproval and use empathy in responses. Ask to learn from family, make no assumptions about the family.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
12. Be consistent in actions and words. Ensure consistency across verbal messages, nonverbal behaviors and feelings. Be reliable and honest with families, clear on roles and transparent with information.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
13. Acknowledge and address barriers to engaging. Consider barriers to trust building and barriers to engaging with the programs/services and acknowledge the specific challenges to different types of engagement.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
14. Share planning and decision making with families. Validate the participatory role of the family in planning and making decision for their child, for the program, for the community and in wider advocacy efforts.			Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional

Activities for Engaging Families and Promoting the Parent-Child Relationship

Selection Tool

There are innumerable activities that programs and services working with families of young children may use to carry out the principles of engaging families and promoting the parent-child relationship. These activities range in intensity and therefore can be considered as a continuum of activities, from light touch to high intensity engagement. In this chart, activities for each principle have been organized on the continuum from light intensity, or engagement, to high intensity/engagement. The continuum does not convey one end is good and the other is bad, instead the continuum is designed to reinforce the idea that the intensity of work with families varies across service type, program model, and contact with families. Therefore identifying activities in the light or medium intensity section of the continuum may be reflective of your contact with families yet the continuum demonstrates that in our communities the range of service intensity exists in order to address the diverse needs of families.

Instructions: Select all of the activities in the chart that you commit to implementing to advance your work to engage families and facilitate the parent-child relationship. These may be activities that you already have components of in place at your site as well as activities that you believe your program has the capacity to add.

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
1. Focus on strengths	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff comment on positive attitudes and aspects of the family <input type="checkbox"/> Staff receive training on principles of strength-based approach to family engagement and the parent-child relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Printed materials/signage show parents and children engaged in activities, with language referencing positive impact of parent role	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff note the parent's efforts to use a piece of equipment, engage with their child or other aspects of positive parent-child interactions	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/family report tools used to gather family input on strengths <input type="checkbox"/> Staff use motivational interviewing techniques with families <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate information about family strengths in to planning and activities <input type="checkbox"/> Staff use specific parental strengths as example of parent supporting child's development and exploration
2. Provide families with encouragement and education	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational materials are available for parents in common areas <input type="checkbox"/> Educational materials are matched to the activities/regions/exhibits and located in close proximity to the content <input type="checkbox"/> Staff encourage families to engage with activities/toys/exhibits <input type="checkbox"/> Staff observe parent-child interaction and use observation to grow understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff match parent education resources to the needs of parents and share education materials directly <input type="checkbox"/> Staff participate in conversations with families to share parent education information <input type="checkbox"/> Offer information and referrals to supportive services in regards to family issues <input type="checkbox"/> Staff observe parent and child and suggest activity based on stage of development and demonstrated interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/family interviews/report tools used to gather information about areas of education desired <input type="checkbox"/> Program model includes staff techniques for engaging families in interacting with their child (scaffolding, labeling, facilitating interaction) and monitors implementation of the techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Program model includes staff techniques for tailoring and discussing parenting, child development or educational topics and monitors implementation of the techniques

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
3. Provide a safe and welcoming environment	<p>___ Space that is inviting to families is easily accessible and available/large enough for multiple families</p> <p>___ Physical spaces encourage families to explore with their child and demonstrate a safe physical environment for the child</p> <p>___ Training provided to staff on the design and importance of the physical space</p> <p>___ Interactive elements arranged in ways to allow accessibility for both parent and child to use, together</p>	<p>___ Children's book or toy lending program is available</p> <p>___ Family resource library available</p> <p>___ Extended hours/care during evening and weekends</p> <p>___ Physical space and environment monitored for safety, family engagement criteria and support for parent-child interaction</p> <p>___ Materials and activities are changed on a routine schedule, responsive to family input and observation of parent-child interaction</p>	<p>___ Offer adult classes on site</p> <p>___ Seminars and support groups available to families</p> <p>___ Child care is available during conferences, adult classes, meetings</p> <p>___ Home visits offered to develop understanding of family's home environment and parent-child relationship</p> <p>___ Staff are active, engaged presence to support use of materials/environment by the parent with child(ren)</p>
4. Focus on building the parent's capacity	<p>___ Activities built for parent and child to interact together</p> <p>___ Staff trained in understanding the role of the parent in the child's life</p> <p>___ Printed materials highlight the role of the parent/family as primary in the child's life</p> <p>___ Printed materials/signage offer examples of parent role in activities with child</p>	<p>___ Staff implement strategies to engage a parent with their child (eg point out child's enjoyment)</p> <p>___ Staff trained in facilitating the parent-child interaction</p> <p>___ Staff implement principles that demonstrate the staff are external to the interaction</p> <p>___ Staff voice child development information in relation to action of parent/impact of parent's engagement with child</p>	<p>___ Staff observe parent-child interaction and modify activities to meet the developmental stage of the parent and child</p> <p>___ Activities planned are based on knowledge of the parent and child and tailored to their needs</p> <p>___ Surveys on the areas of support and interest are completed by parents and used to guide the planning</p> <p>___ Staff recognize and label the behaviors of the parent, within interactions with their child, to grow parent's knowledge</p>

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
5. Acknowledge the perspective of the parent/family	<p>___ Staff ask parents what they are interested in, why they were drawn to the program, if there is anything they can support them in finding</p> <p>___ Staff engage parent in sharing what they observe of their child's interests</p> <p>___ Staff observe families to learn signs of parent perspective, what they are drawn to or hesitant about</p>	<p>___ Surveys on expectations of the program/service are routinely used with parents/families</p> <p>___ Staff comment on parent-child interaction and ask parent if they have observed this action/skill/interest in their child before</p> <p>___ Staff trained in self-awareness concepts including acknowledging parent/family experience is different from own</p>	<p>___ Surveys on program experience completed by families (Annually, Twice a year)</p> <p>___ Parent/families serve in an advisory capacity regarding program operations</p> <p>___ Information gathered from family surveys is fed in to programmatic changes (eg policy change, printed materials, staff training, activities and services)</p> <p>___ Staff trained in awareness of one's own biases and prejudices about families and regulating these in relation to interactions with families</p>
6. Establish a trusting relationship	<p>___ Staff trained in strategies to approach child, family and/or their home with respect</p> <p>___ Principles of relationship-based approach (eg staff and parent are equal partners, goal is for ongoing relationships with parents/families) are woven in to program model and staff are trained in this approach</p> <p>___ Program mission includes the parent/family as a central piece of the relationship</p>	<p>___ Staff are respectful in their approach to families (eye contact, approach family, do not leave family waiting or ignored)</p> <p>___ Staff allow families to talk with few interruptions and use encouraging facial expressions and body language</p> <p>___ Staff ask families about their observations of their child and/or their thoughts on the parent-child interactions</p>	<p>___ Staff ask encouraging questions but do not correct or offer solutions</p> <p>___ Staff are consistent in commitments to families (appointments, visits, availability)</p> <p>___ Staff use knowledge of parent/family to drive how they approach the family and inform the services offered</p>

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
7. Be active and intentional in working toward reducing disparities experienced by families	<p>___ Analyze costs of participation compared to family/community</p> <p>___ Materials are available in an accessible literacy level</p> <p>___ Materials are translated in to languages represented in community</p> <p>___ Annual data on population served gathered</p>	<p>___ Consider use of programs that scholarship participation: how are these made available to families, do they meet the needs of families</p> <p>___ Physical space supports families in engaging with equipment/materials and their child without having to 'ask permission' of a professional</p> <p>___ Annual data on population served, community and potential target population gathered</p> <p>___ Data on access (eg transportation, financial, socio-cultural considerations) gathered for population served and community at large</p>	<p>___ Survey and interview families/community around issues of power and privilege related to program/service</p> <p>___ Analysis of use of program/services/site (annually) includes comparison of those served, community of location and/or the potential target population/areas of young children</p> <p>___ Integrate information about community and nonparticipants in to planning and activities</p>
8. Allow the parent to lead	<p>___ Materials/equipment and instructions on use are easily accessible to families</p> <p>___ Printed materials/signage and equipment focus on parent and child interacting together, allow for engagement without requiring staff support</p>	<p>___ Staff observe the parent and child/family prior to engaging in activity and follow the family's lead to engage them</p> <p>___ Staff ask parent permission before introducing a toy/activity, allowing parent to lead with the item</p>	<p>___ Staff use motivational interviewing techniques with families (eg comment and question specific aspects of parent-child interactions)</p> <p>___ Program/service plans are mutually agreed upon with the staff and family, focused on items family views as helpful</p> <p>___ Staff observe for parent responsiveness to child and attunement with child's cues and label these parental skills</p>

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
9. Embrace differences across parents and families and be culturally sensitive and attuned	<p>___ Program accesses and reviews information about community and population of families served, to be served</p> <p>___ Staff trained in principles of approaching families that include consideration of past experiences, temperament and personality, beliefs and family/cultural values</p> <p>___ Printed materials acknowledge diversity of culture, race, ethnicity, language, religion and sexual orientation</p> <p>___ Program values include embracing role of culture in driving parenting practices</p>	<p>___ Parent/family report tools used to gather information about families</p> <p>___ Physical spaces reflect diversity of culture, race, ethnicity, language, religion and sexual orientation (eg family spaces for toileting in both gender washrooms, private lactation rooms)</p> <p>___ Staff open to learning about the diversity of families and demonstrate an acknowledge that this diversity influences interaction with children</p> <p>___ Staff trained in strategies to understand and embrace role of culture in parenting practices</p>	<p>___ Program/services are modified/tailored to the diversity of the family, including history, beliefs, values, culture, race/ethnicity, language, religion, and sexual orientation</p> <p>___ Program is monitored for adherence to these principles of cultural sensitivity and attunement, along with responsiveness to family history, beliefs and values</p> <p>___ Staff trained in awareness of one's own biases and prejudices about families and regulating these in relation to interactions with families</p>
10. Engage in a two way partnership with families	<p>___ Staff trained in principles of staff-family relationship as basis for supporting the child's growth and development</p> <p>___ Program approach includes outline of intersection of staff and family roles and how these rely upon one another</p>	<p>___ Staff engage parent/family in exploring about the child, their likes/dislikes, aspects of the child's temperament and personality and strategies the parent uses</p> <p>___ Staff ask parent their preference, or interest, before introducing a toy/activity</p>	<p>___ Family Partnership Agreements/Family Goal Sheets created with family and used to drive service delivery</p> <p>___ Parent conference and/or home visits offered to develop relationship with family</p> <p>___ Staff draw parent's attention to their child's activities and development, relate to the impact of the parent interactions</p>

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
11. Participate in conversations with the family	<p>___ Staff allow a two way dialogue with families (eg do not lecture)</p> <p>___ Physical environment allows for conversation (noise level, space for adults)</p> <p>___ Staff get on the same level with parents</p> <p>___ Staff respond to feelings and experiences of parents with empathy</p>	<p>___ Staff trained in and implement active listening techniques (summarize, ask questions, integrate parent's content in to responses)</p> <p>___ Staff hold dedicated time to meet with families and do not hurry families through conversations</p> <p>___ Staff observe for parent communication both verbal and nonverbal</p> <p>___ Staff empathize with the feelings and experiences of parents by validating what they hear and not judging or denying the feelings/ experience</p>	<p>___ Staff use motivational interviewing techniques with families (including focusing on parent responsiveness to child and reading child's cues)</p> <p>___ Parent/family surveys gather input on family experience of conversations and availability of staff</p> <p>___ Staff observe parent-child interaction, cues, and verbal and nonverbal communication and appropriately respond with focus on strengthening the parent-child relationship</p>
12. Be consistent in actions and words and be forthright with families	<p>___ Printed materials cover program and family participation information and expectations</p> <p>___ Staff are well informed of programmatic and family expectations</p> <p>___ Staff are trained in implementing activities consistent with program and family expectations (eg observing child, observing parent-child interactions, suggesting activities, adding new elements)</p>	<p>___ Staff words and actions align with the programmatic approach</p> <p>___ Staff are consistent across words and actions</p> <p>___ Staff answer questions of families and share appropriate additional information, or engage another staff member to meet the needs of the family</p> <p>___ Staff are seen implementing activities (eg observing child, observing p-ch interactions, suggesting and adding, commenting and discussing development)</p>	<p>___ Program model monitors implementation of program approach and family experience</p> <p>___ Surveys on program experience completed by families (Annually, Twice a year)</p> <p>___ Staff use parent-child interaction as window to verbally interpret development stage/task, relating to the parent's actions and impact on the child</p>

Principle	Continuum of Activities, ranging in intensity		
	Light Intensity/Engagement	Medium Intensity/Engagement	High Intensity/Engagement
13. Acknowledge and address barriers to engaging	<p>___ Offer open house activities where families do not need to be enrolled to join in</p> <p>___ Survey broad community on participation in program/services</p>	<p>___ Create action plan responsive to engagement barriers that emerge through survey process</p> <p>___ Observations of staff supporting parent- child interactions are used to improve staff capacity</p>	<p>___ Use family mentor model where new families receive outreach and support from current participants</p> <p>___ Engage families (participants/non participants) in focus groups to discuss barriers and inform plans to address</p>
14. Engage families in shared planning and decision making	<p>___ Comment box/online comment box available at all times throughout year</p> <p>___ Program values and mission around parent-child engagement/ interaction are built with community members and program participants informing the core concepts and priority areas</p>	<p>___ Focus groups/informational meetings are open to family/community participation on a variety of topics related to programming throughout the year</p> <p>___ Family Partnership Agreements/Family Goal Sheets created with family and used to drive service delivery</p> <p>___ Parents and community review and inform the parent-child interaction strategies (printed materials, activities, staff training, physical space/design)</p>	<p>___ Parent conference and/or home visits offered to develop relationship with family</p> <p>___ Parent/family advisory committee a standing body that guides programming (Twice per year, quarterly, monthly)</p>

Requirements for Family Engagement and Supporting Parent-Child Relationship:

A comparison across major programs and models

Early childhood systems, and the components comprising them in a state, support a shared vision related to the children and families in their state. In most states, this vision involves healthy children, strong parents, and children ready for school success. Across all systems, the state vision is impacted by activities to engage families in services and support the development of a strong parent-child relationship. Often federal early learning programs, grant makers and states seek information or require intentional approaches to family engagement and supporting the parent child relationship. The following chart of descriptors and activities is designed to increase understanding of these requirements across funders, programs and models and allow for consideration of the role of each entity in this work.

Programs or Systems	Description/Philosophy – Engaging Families and Supporting Parent Child Relationship
Child Care and Development Fund	Child Care and Development Fund increases the availability, affordability and quality of child care. No federal requirements related to family engagement and parent child interaction; consumer education around child care choices required and lead agency in state required to coordinate with employment services and workforce development.
Early Head Start and Head Start	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. Model embodies a family partnership strength-based approach, collaboration with parents, programmatic decision-making driven by families and support for family-child interactions.
Family Services (Children's Bureau)	As part of Children's Bureau funding, family support services under: Promoting Safe and Stable Families program includes coordinated programs of community-based family support services, family preservation services, time-limited family reunification services, and adoption promotion and support services; and Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect program includes community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities designed to strengthen and support families to prevent child abuse and neglect.
IDEA Part C	Statewide systems of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs and making early intervention services available to children with disabilities, aged birth through 2, and their families, are required. The IDEA requires that early intervention services be provided in natural environments, which includes the home or a community setting the child would be participating if they did not have a disability. Each child and family has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) created at onset of services, which guides delivery.
IDEA Part B, section 619	Assistance to states in providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities ages 3 through 5. States may include preschool-aged children who are experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the state and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, who need special education and related services. To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled. Each child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) informed by expert assessment of the child and accepted by the parent.

Programs or Systems	Description/Philosophy – Engaging Families and Supporting Parent Child Relationship
Intensive Home Visiting (MIECHV included)	Intensive home visiting programs use the home visitor-family relationship as the tool through which all of the work takes place; the centrality of the parent-child relationship to home visiting is a key feature that defines the delivery of each home visiting model, regardless of the model in used by the program. Home visitors work directly with parents, through intensive, often weekly, in home visits, in order to support them in their role, develop their skills to interact with their child, and support their child's healthy development.
Libraries and Museums	Museums and libraries are trusted, welcoming places where children make discoveries, deepen common interests, expand words and knowledge, and connect their curiosity to the world. They bring a unique focus on family engagement and parent-child relationship with their role as ‘connectors that bridge the generations and bring children, their parents, and their families together in fun and nonthreatening settings that build mutual knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy.’ (Growing Young Minds, IMLS report)
Quality Rating and Improvement System	A QRIS is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings. A QRIS includes the following components: (1) quality standards for programs and practitioners, (2) supports and an infrastructure to meet such standards, (3) monitoring and accountability systems to ensure compliance with quality standards, (4) ongoing financial assistance that is linked to meeting quality standards, and (5) engagement and outreach strategies. As QRIS involves levels of quality, the family engagement and support for the parent child relationship varies across the levels, involving more intensive strategies at the highest levels (the chart includes the most intensive level, or the highest level of the QRIS).
State-funded Preschool	State-funded preschool programs have as their primary goal to enhance the learning and development of children, particularly those at greatest risk, and ensure young learners are ready for school success. States make determination around family engagement and parent child relationship focus and activities; sample activities on the chart represent those in place at states implementing a high quality preschool program model.
State Licensing Requirements	Federal law requires that states have policies in place to protect the health and safety of children in child care in three areas: the prevention and control of infectious diseases; building and physical premise safety; health and safety training appropriate to the program setting. The standards set by states for licensing child care centers and family child care homes vary greatly in areas of training, group size and ratio and environment and include the most basic standards around engaging with families, such as exchanging information at beginning and end of the day.
Title I of ESEA	Local schools, districts and LEAs may opt to use Title I funding to run preschool programming; this programming is typically targeted at high need, eligible children. Programs using Title I funding are required to implement parental involvement activities; activities common in Title I funded preschool programs are marked on chart.
Other:	

Family Engagement and Support for Parent-Child Relationship/Interactions

This chart provides a snapshot look at how major programs support and engage parents and families.

	Child Care and Development Fund	Early Head Start/ Head Start	Family Support	IDEA Part C	IDEA Part B	Home Visiting	Quality Rating Systems	Libraries	Museums	State-funded Preschool	State Licensing requirements	Title I ESEA	Other: _____
Parent access to program at any time	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Ongoing two-way communication with families: Parent-Teacher conferences	•	•			•		•		•		•		
Ongoing two-way communication with families: Home Visits		•	•	•		•							
Ongoing two-way communication with families		•	•	•		•	•			•			
Communication with family in primary language		•				•							
Parent/Family Education		•	•			•		•	•	•			
Parent-Child Groups		•	•	•			•	•	•				
Activities facilitate the parent-child relationship		•	•	•		•	•	•	•				
Transitions: Training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten		•		•	•	•	•			•			
Intergenerational activities		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•			
Linking with community supports and adult and family literacy programs		•	•	•	•	•	•						
Parent involvement in decision making (Parent Council)			•	•	•	•	•		•		•		
Parent involvement in program governance (Policy Council, Policy Committee)		•											
Parent leadership development		•	•			•	•						
Written plan, policies and procedures for family engagement		•	•	•		•	•	•	•				
Written plan, policies and procedures for supporting parent-child relationship		•	•			•	•	•	•				
Curriculum focused on supporting parent-child interactions		•	•			•			•				

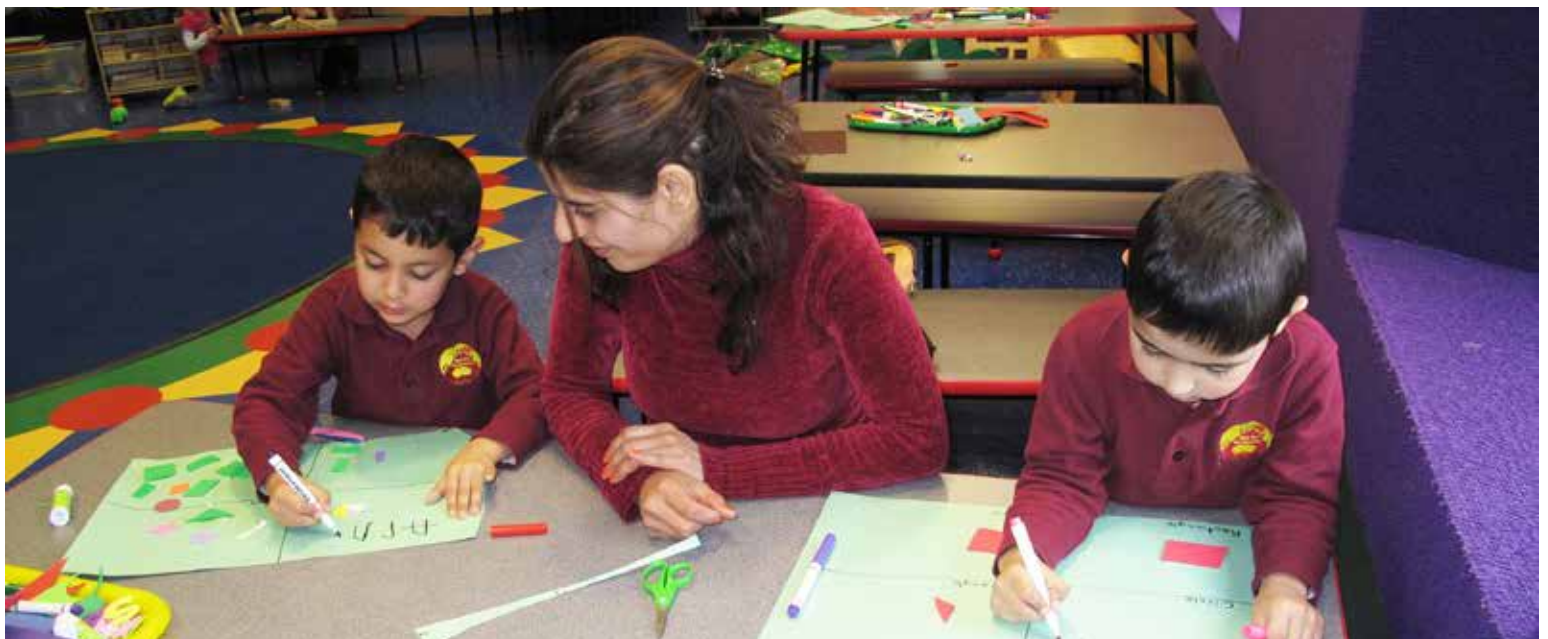
Find the Standard: Museum/Libraries/Early Childhood Program Game

NOTE: States are encouraged to adapt the tool to align with their own Early Learning Guidelines.

1. Increase awareness of some common, important early learning and development standards.
2. Promote understanding of how museums can help young children meet the standards.
3. Share innovative ways that museums and libraries are developing displays and exhibits and creating activities that help children meet important early learning and development standards and/or are supporting parents to help their child meet those standards.

Common, important Early Learning and Development Standard construct (these are sometimes called early learning standards or early learning guidelines)	Do you have a display, exhibit, activity, or practice that helps children meet this standard (or helps parents help children meet this standard)?	How might you help parents, other caregivers and other children extend this activity elsewhere?
<p>Physical Development and Health: Motor/Physical</p> <p><u>Fine Motor</u>: Children can cross midline and manipulate grip (crossing midline, hand dominance, visual motor domination).</p> <p><u>Gross Motor</u>: Children exhibit balance and control, coordinated movement; loco-motor movements, handle balls.</p>		
<p>Approaches to Learning</p> <p><u>Essential Life Skill</u>: Self-Directed, Engaged Learning</p> <p><u>Concentration/Attention Control</u>: Children engage in self-selected activities. Child maintains focus and perseveres to accomplish collaborative tasks selected by self and others.</p> <p><u>Problem Solving</u>: Children recognize and solve problems; engage in trial and error; describe/explain solutions; seek help to find a solution.</p>		
<p>Social & Emotional Development</p> <p><u>Focus and Self Control</u>: Children need this skill in order to achieve their goals, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly, and exercising self control.</p> <p><u>Behavioral Regulation</u>: Children can follow rules and expectations, behave appropriately, understand effects/consequences of actions; exhibit impulse control.</p> <p><u>Social Skills with Peers</u>: Children can resolve conflicts, initiate and sustain interactions, share, cooperate, take turns, defend rights.</p>		

<p>Cognition and General Knowledge: Numeracy Common, important Early Learning and Development Standard construct (these are sometimes called early learning standards or early learning guidelines)</p>	<p>Do you have a display, exhibit, activity, or practice that helps children meet this standard (or helps parents help children meet this standard)?</p>	<p>How might you help parents, other caregivers and other children extend this activity elsewhere?</p>
<p>Cognition and General Knowledge: <u>Number, Counting and Base 10:</u> Children count objects; understand concepts of more than, less than, and equal to; understand 1:1 correspondence, cardinality, counting after adding small quantities of more.</p> <p><u>Music/Arts:</u> Children participate in music and rhythm activities/ create music; they are familiar with musical instruments; they are aware of different traditions of music.</p>		
<p>Language and Literacy <u>World Languages:</u> Children know that people use different languages (including sign language) to communicate, and will express simple greetings, words, and phrases in a language other than their own.</p> <p><u>Alphabet Awareness:</u> Children recognizing letters, name letters, understand the function of letters.</p>		



Ensuring an Intentional Approach to Family Access

Access, coordination and quality - outcomes for young children are frequently boiled down to work on improving these three aspects of the programs and systems serving children and families. As part of this work, programs and systems have a responsibility to analyze the access experience of families and improve upon strategies to ensure families have access seamless delivery system of services that meet their needs in a timely fashion. All families need some level of access to a predictable set of services and supports as they raise their young children.¹ Programs, and the organizations serving families, are well served to take a deeper dive in to the concept of access.

Access is not solely defined by the number of families that seek out and engage in programming, just as the state of having access to a service is not only defined by the presence or absence of that service in the community. In order to advance intentional thought on the concept of access, we put forward a break down of the core components of access, which builds upon strategic thinking of early childhood leaders regarding how to increase access to programs and services, particularly for high-needs children and families. Access is composed of the following elements: aware, affordable, accessible, available, accommodate, and acceptable. These elements are presented through a self-assessment tool guiding programs to consider both the experience of access for the families they serve and to go more broadly by thinking about access for those that are not reached by the program.

Part I: Thinking about the families you are currently reaching and serving, how intentional are your efforts to address these six elements of access?

ELEMENTS OF ACCESS	How intentional is your program in addressing each element of access?		
	Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
Aware: Population is informed that service exists and what the service provides			
Affordable: Prices of services meets the ability of the population to pay			
Accessible: Location of supply aligns with population location and demand			
Available: Size or volume of the supply meets population needs			
Accommodate: Delivery of service accommodates population needs			
Acceptable: Characteristics of service providers and population are acceptable to each other			

¹Gruendel, J. and Carroll, E. When Brain Science Meets Public Policy: Rethinking the Governance of Early Childhood Systems, Institute for Child Success, February 2015. Retrieved at http://www.instituteforchildsuccess.org/mydocuments/brain_science_pt2.pdf

Part II: Next, push your consideration of access to your programming by expanding to thinking about the full community. In this process start by analyzing your awareness and understanding of what defines the community you serve e.g., “how do we know we are reaching everyone?”

For those families you are not reaching or serving, how intentional would you rank your efforts around each of the following elements of access? NOTE: one of the most productive ways to consider access is compare the number of the children who are birth to 5 in the community sorted by race and income to the numbers of children and families served to define the gap in access for families.

ELEMENTS OF ACCESS	How intentional is your program in addressing each element of access?		
	Unintentional	Somewhat Intentional	Intentional
Aware: Population is informed that service exists and what the service provides			
Affordable: Prices of services meets the ability of the population to pay			
Accessible: Location of supply aligns with population location and demand			
Available: Size or volume of the supply meets population needs			
Accommodate: Delivery of service accommodates population needs			
Acceptable: Characteristics of service providers and population are acceptable to each other			

Ensuring an Intentional Approach to Family Access

How do you work with partners in your community to address those you are not reaching? Consider your responsibility to ensuring families access the services they need, if your service is not the match for their needs then who will serve the family?

BUILDing Supportive Communities with Libraries, Museums, and Early Childhood Systems

A Toolkit for Collaborative Efforts to Improve Outcomes for Young Children and Their Families

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Thanks to the West Bloomfield Township Public Library for providing photos for this publication.