Family and Community Engagement Survey Guide for Facilitators

Preface

Welcome to your first step in an exciting journey! We're glad that you have joined a community of advocates, staff, families, and service providers in pre-K to third grade systems that is seeking to broaden our understanding of whole child development.

Family and community engagement is at the center of this holistic view. It acknowledges and values the interconnected systems of knowledge that are generated by families and communities and transferred from generation to generation.

Family and community knowledge systems are local, national, and international. They constitute a domain that deserves to be recognized on its own terms.

In a step toward establishing that domain, the two family and community engagement tools that you will be administrating are designed to:

❖ Institutionalize a space for the voices of family and community within the pre-K to third grade system.

❖ Create a valuable feedback loop for multi-directional learning among families, service providers, and policy makers.

❖ Put more accurate information into public data bases about the experiences and preferences of families from all backgrounds.

Introduction

The family engagement survey tools promote and measure family and community engagement for healthy early childhood development.

Family engagement is a way of interacting with *family and community knowledge systems*. Family and community knowledge systems are the informal and formal ways children learn in their home and community environments.

Family and Community Knowledge Systems are essential to children, because:

- They are the glue--the shared understanding--that holds families and communities together.

- They contribute to the resiliency of children and families.

- They are at the core of effective families and communities.

- They [can] provide networks of opportunity, stability, and protection to families and children.

Goals for administering the survey tools

The data generated by these survey tools can be used to:

- Improve program responsiveness to children and their families.

- Build new knowledge that can inform policies and practices.

- Strengthen the connection between families and communities and the programs that serve them.

- Improve the design and delivery of programs and services.

- Enable programs and advocates to influence systems change by sharing family engagement data with decision makers and making data-driven improvements.

Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to give you:

➢ Easy-to-follow guidance in how to conduct the family engagement survey and administer the tools.

➢ A step-by-step process, a suggested script, and templates to help you to facilitate discussions with families and program staff about the survey questions and the information they generate.

Description of the survey tools

There are two survey tools. One is for parents or guardians. The other is for program staff. The tools are designed to be used for programs and parents of children, pre-K to third grade. Tools are available in Hmong, Spanish, and Somali.

The Early Childhood Assessment tool is for parents, and the Quality Rating tool is for staff and administrators of programs. The two tools are similar, but not identical. Together, they can give important information about what parents/guardians are experiencing, what program staff are observing about their program, and if the two are in alignment.

Survey tool for parents/guardians

The tool for parents/guardians has 14 questions. The questions help a parent/guardian think about what's most important to him/her in the development of his/her child. The questions are divided into 3 categories, and provide a way to measure and discuss:

- Extended family support and connections
- Family and community transmission of moral and cultural values
- Respect for self and others
- The degree to which they feel institutions, programs, and agencies are responsive and supportive

Survey tool for program staff

The tool for program staff has 15 questions. These questions help program staff to reflect upon, discuss, and measure new dimensions of quality that relate to Family and Community Knowledge Systems. These dimensions include helping children build character and integrity, and helping them to develop a sense of self. They also include understanding and valuing all types of families *within the context of their community.*

Together, these two tools measure and promote family engagement in a much deeper way:

- They acknowledge and respect family and community wisdom.

- They include families as an integral part of program design and decisions.

When incorporated into early childhood data systems and used regularly and periodically, the information collected by these tools can:

➢ Generate new knowledge that can be useful in assessments of children, program and curricula design and implementation, and in policy making.

➢ Ensure that early childhood data systems promote inclusion and equity for *all* children, regardless of their geographic location, race, culture, or ethnicity.

Such an inclusive data system is particularly important for low-income children and children of color. Data on these children are disproportionately drawn from child welfare, child protection, juvenile justice, and the criminal justice system. This disproportionality often obscures the strengths of low-income families and communities, leading to policies and practices that are based more on deficits than assets.

Description of the survey process

The survey process has three steps:

1. The parent/guardian survey tool and the staff survey tool are administered using this guide.

2. The completed tools are sent to Wilder Research at the address below to be processed, with the results compiled into a customized brief report, highlighting and interpreting the results:

   Richard Chase, Senior Research Manager
   Wilder Research
   Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
   451 Lexington Parkway North
   Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104

(An online option is also available. See page 33 for details.)

3. Parents/guardians and staff are reconvened together to review and discuss the report or data summary, and to decide how they would like to use the information.

Your role as facilitator

Your role as facilitator is to:

- Establish and maintain a positive, supportive environment.
- Maintain the integrity of the survey process, and follow the steps.
- Administer the surveys tools to parents/guardians and program staff.
- Facilitate discussion of the survey report or data summary in a joint dialogue with parents/guardians and program staff.
- Provide a summary of the joint dialogue to program administrators for distribution to staff and parents/guardians.

Administering the parent/guardian and staff surveys

Preparation for administering the survey tools

Familiarize yourself with both survey tools.

Work with administrators to identify a date and time to conduct the surveys. The parent/guardian tool and the staff tool are administered separately on the same or different days. It does not matter which is administered first.

Allocate ½ hour for administering the tools.

Have a name tag.

Make sure the room has enough tables and chairs where parents/guardians can sit and comfortably fill out the tools.

On each table where parents/guardians or program staff are sitting, put a small bowl with small packets of gum or penny candy.

Make sure you have enough copies of the survey tools.

For parent/guardian survey

Give program administrators a sample letter of invitation to parents/guardians that they can adapt to fit their needs.

Find out if you can add the parent/guardian survey to another meeting agenda when parents/guardians will already be present, and food and childcare are available.

For staff survey

Find out if you can add the parent/guardian survey to another meeting agenda when program staff will already be present.

Materials you will need for surveys

Survey tools printed front and back

Sign in sheet where people can write their names and contact information

Pens or #2 pencils

Clearly labeled 9x10 folders in which you can put the completed tools. The label should give:

Your name as survey administrator

The name of the program

The name of the survey—parent/guardian or staff

The date

Sample label

Survey Administrator_____Date_____ Name of Program_____ Check Survey Type: Parent/Guardian_____   # of surveys tools_____ Program Staff_____   # of surveys tools_____

The Process: Administering the parent/guardian Survey

Introduce yourself and thank the parents/guardians for participating. The suggested script is a guide. You can use your own words.

Hello, my name is _____. I'm here tonight to administer the Family Engagement Survey, developed by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and Training and Development, Inc., with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Thanks so much for being here this evening and participating in this survey. You are the heart and soul of this survey, and your answers are incredibly important to this program and this community. –And to foundations,

taxpayers, and policy makers who make programs like this possible.

Give a brief background on how the survey tool was developed and its purpose.

These survey questions were developed from community dialogues that were convened across the state of Minnesota in different cultural communities: American Indian, Latino, Hmong, African American, Somali, Swedish, German, Norwegian, and Irish. We asked people what was most important to them in raising their children. We looked for answers that stood out in each group and were common across ALL the Groups. There were 3 things:

- **People wanted their children to be good human beings. —To have good character.**
- **They wanted their children to have a positive sense of themselves and to be resilient.**
- **And they wanted their children to understand and interact effectively with the institutions and social networks that are an integral part of their communities.**

The questions on the survey reflect these priorities and concerns.

Describe the survey process.

This survey is part of a 3-part process. There is also a staff survey, with similar, but not identical questions. I will administer that survey to the staff of this program. All of

the responses—yours and those of the staff survey are anonymous.

I will send the completed survey tools to Wilder Research, part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, to be compiled and analyzed. They will write a report that looks at the patterns in your answers -- where there is a lot of agreement, and a lot of differences. The report won't make recommendations, but will highlight questions or issues you might want to think about.

Then I will meet with you and with the staff together, give you copies of the Wilder report. We'll go through the questions or issues, and you can decide how you would like to use the information.

Any questions about the process?

Describe how the survey is organized and how to answer the questions.

The survey tool has questions on the front and back. The front has the survey questions, and the back asks some demographic information. -- All of which is anonymous. Do not put your names on the survey forms.

The survey tool is divided into 3 sections. And it asks about your experiences as a parent/guardian and your observations. There are four possible answers to each question. On the right side of the page, beside each question you will see four boxes: one box for "A lot"; another for "Somewhat"; a third for "A little"; and a fourth for "Not at all". Check only one of these boxes for each question.

The survey will ask about your observations and experiences with your child. If you have more than one child in this program, think of *one* of your children and answer the questions as they pertain to *that* child.

Describe what to expect with the questions and your role.

Some of the questions are long and may have terms you are unfamiliar with. That's why I'm here to administer the survey.

The survey is designed to be used with very different people in different communities and cultures. The questions have to work with everybody. When a question has lots of choices, just look for the choice that fits YOUR experience.

Explain the instructions at the top of the Parent/Guardian survey tool.

"For each of the following statements, please describe to what extent or degree (how much or how often) your family demonstrates the feelings, skills, and behavior."

If there is a big disconnect between what YOU do and what your FAMILY does, answer the question based on what YOU do.

You will see the terms "community-based or faith-based" in some of the questions.

"In the statements below, *community-based* or *faith-based* institutions includes any one of the following: churches, mosques, or synagogues; clan or community

centers or neighborhood organizations; reservations and pow-wows; social gathering places such as shops, restaurants, or clubs; *or any place you feel connected and supported."*

As long as there is a choice that fits YOU, don't worry about the others.

For example, the first question asks: To what extent do you regularly rely on extended family, clan, close friends, or neighbors for help in raising your child?

You may not have extended family here, or be part of a clan. You may not have neighbors that you know, but you do have close friends. So you would answer this question about your experiences with your close friends.

If you have a question about any of the questions, just ask me. You are probably not the only one with that question AND that's what I'm here for. If you're not familiar with a particular term, ask me. Believe me, there are plenty of terms that I wasn't familiar with.

Give an example for a question or two in each section.

Signs of extended family support and connections

In this first section, signs of extended family and support, the third question asks, "To what extent do you rely on family, friends, neighbors, and/or community-based or faith-based institutions when you need concrete help?" Concrete help is more than advice or positive messages; it's when your car breaks down, and you need someone to pick up your child; or you need money to pay for day care this month.

Signs of transmitting moral and cultural values

"To what extent do you teach skills your child will need to interact well with his/her cultural and social networks, such as particular forms of curtesy and respect for elders?"

Example: In some cultures, children would not be allowed to call adults by their first names, because that would be grossly disrespectful, and your child would be considered very poorly raised and rude—with all the implications that would carry within that social network, which could be local, national (your cousins in California or Texas, or international (your grandfather in Ghana).

Example: "To what extent do you support and reinforce positive cultural messages your child receives from community-based or faith-based institutions?"

There may be cultural festivals--like the _____ festival in_____) Cultural festivals usually celebrate history as well as character traits that are admired. –like perseverance, service to others, and courage. Religious festivals and holidays, whether Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, or some other faith, celebrate religious figures as well as character traits and spiritual qualities.

This question asks to what extent you support and reinforce those types of messages with your child.

Example: "To what extent do you teach your child to help with family chores and responsibilities?"

For many families—especially with adults working long hours, sometimes holding 2 jobs, children are taught to pitch in early on, to contribute to the family's well-being and to be mindful of their surroundings. Picking up after themselves, helping to prepare snacks, helping with a younger brother or sister. They also learn a lot of skills that can help them in school and later in life.

Signs of experiencing responsive institutions, programs, and agencies

Some of the questions in this section are about this particular program, and others are about society in general.

Example: "To what extent do you feel invited, *in this program,* to talk about positive, advanced skills, abilities, and capacities that your child exhibits at home?"

When children are at home, playing with friends and relatives, or just exploring their world, they sometimes do things that surprise and amaze us. Things that they may not do in a school, center, or home childcare environment. This question is asking what things you have observed about your child that make you say, "WOW, look at that! I had no idea he/she could do that/understood that/could figure that out!" To what extent do you feel invited to talk about these observations *in this program?*

Example: "To what extent do you feel that the advice received from early childhood providers, teachers, and parenting professionals about parenting supports your own knowledge and experience, observations, and/or cultural values?"

Advice about parenting can come from many sources of expertise: articles you may read, professionals on television, teachers and providers who are trained and certified. Sometimes that advice is really helpful, and other times it may not fit with your own observations and experiences, or with what you think is appropriate. To what extent does the professional advice that you receive align with your own knowledge, observations, and experience?

Example: "To what extent do you feel concerned, *in general*, about how negative images and attitudes (or lack of positive ones) toward your child's cultural, ethnic, social of gender group will affect him or her?

This question is about "Otherness" and your experiences and observations about your child. "Otherness" refers to the way in which society, in general, sometimes treats someone who is seen as "different." "Different" can be anything. It could be how people in cities perceive people in rural areas. It could be about skin color, or accent, or race, or culture, or gender. It can be any of these things—based upon where you live or your particular environment. It's the subtle and not so subtle messages that children get that tell them, "You are not OK. You are not as valued as someone who is NOT "different."

This question asks the degree to which you are concerned about what your child experiences from society in general because of any of these "differences." Sometimes this can take the form of negative images, and sometimes there may be no images at all. Nothing. The person who is different does not really exist.

Another related question asks, do you feel you have to take extra steps, as a parent, to counter this?

These two questions are asked about society in general (questions 13 and 14) AND about this program in particular (questions 11 and 12).

On the back of the survey tool are demographic questions. Please answer these questions as well. One of the demographic questions asks if your family came here as immigrants or refugees. And if you are first generation (you came here from another country); second generation (your parents came here from another county); or third generation (your grandparents came here from another county.)

Raise your hand if you have any questions.

If you have not answered the questions as we talked, finish answering them now.

Put your completed tool on the desk, or raise your hand and I will collect it.

We will let you know when your survey results and those of the staff have been compiled and analyzed and the report completed. We will then invite you and the staff back to discuss the report and how you would like to use the information.

Make sure your name and contact information are on the sign-up sheet so that we can reach you.

Thanks so much for your participation!

The Process: Administering the staff survey

Introduce yourself and thank the staff for participating. The suggested script is a guide. You can use your own words.

Hello, my name is _____. I'm here tonight to administer the Program Quality Staff Survey on Family Engagement, developed by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and Training and Development, Inc., with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Thanks so much for being here this evening and participating in this survey. Your perceptions, observations, and experiences are central to this survey process, and your answers are incredibly important to this program, this community, foundations, and to policy makers.

Give a brief background on how the survey tool was developed and its purpose.

These survey questions were developed from community dialogues that were convened across the state of Minnesota in different cultural communities: Latino,

Hmong, African American, American Indian, Somali, Swedish, German, Norwegian, and Irish. We asked people what was most important to them in raising their children. We looked for answers that stood out in each group and were common across ALL the Groups. There were 3 things:

- **People wanted their children to be good human beings — to have good character.**
- **They wanted their children to have a positive sense of themselves and to be resilient.**
- **And they wanted their children to understand and interact effectively with the institutions and social networks that are an integral part of their communities.**

The questions on the survey reflect these priorities and concerns, and how *this* program responds, according to *your* experiences and observations.

Describe the survey process.

This survey is part of a 3-part process. There is also a parent/guardian survey, with similar, but not identical questions. I will/have administer(ed) that survey to parents/guardians of this program as well. All of the responses—yours and those of the parent/guardians who participate are anonymous.

I will send the completed surveys to the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul to be compiled and analyzed. They will write a report that looks at the patterns in your answers -–where there is a lot of agreement, and a lot of differences. The report won't make recommendations, but

will highlight questions you might want to think about based upon these patterns.

Then I will meet with you and with the parents/guardians in a joint session and give you copies of the report. We'll go through some of the highlights, and you can decide how you would like to use the information.

Any questions about the process?

Describe how the survey tool is organized and how to answer the questions.

All of the survey questions, except one, ask about your experiences with and observations of this program and its staff as a whole, not about your practice as an individual. For example, if there is a difference between what you are observing generally, and your own personal behavior and practices, answer the question based upon what you observing generally. There is, however, one question, # 13, which asks about your own personal experience, not about the program.

The survey tool is divided into 3 sections: Signs of building character and integrity in children; signs of helping a child develop a sense of self; and signs of understanding and valuing community. There are four possible answers to each question. On the right side of the page, beside each question, you will see four boxes: one box for "A lot"; another for "somewhat"; a third for "a little"; and a fourth for "not at all". Check only one of these boxes for each question.

The survey tool has questions on the front and back. The front has the survey questions, and the back asks some demographic information. All your responses are anonymous. Do not put your names on the survey forms.

Describe what to expect with the questions and your role.

Some of the questions are long and may have terms you are unfamiliar with. That's why I'm here to administer the survey.

The survey tool is designed to be used with very different people in different communities and cultures. The questions have to work with a very broad range of people. When a question has lots of choices, some of those choices may not be relevant to you, and that's OK. Just look for the choice that fits YOUR observations and experience.

Signs of building character and integrity in children

The questions in this section are concerned with the character development in children and the transitions between homes and centers or home care.

Example: *"To what degree does this program support character development, including values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and respect?"*

Some program activities may encourage positive character traits like honesty, trustworthiness, respect, and compassion through stories, songs, and games. Program staff may model respect, and the program may have a

variety of ways to recognize and reward positive character traits in the children.

Example: *"To what degree does this program model and teach skills children will need to interact well with their cultural and social networks, such as particular forms of courtesy and respect for elders?"*

In some communities, particular forms of courtesy and respect are extremely important for children to exhibit. They are keys to accessing support and resources in social networks that can be both broad and deep. For example, children may be expected to greet adults and to address them by Mr. or Ms. They may be expected to stand when an elder enters the room and to shake their hand. Being aware of these types of courtesies and acknowledging or supporting them can be important to children and their families.

Example: *"To what degree does this program support staff in developing the cross-cultural knowledge and skills to work well with children from cultures with communal values as well as those with more individualistic values through trainings, professional development courses, reflective supervision and staff discussions, or in-house learning teams?"*

Some children come from cultural communities that are individualistic, while others come from cultural communities that are more communal or group oriented. In families that are more communal, grandparents may be extremely important decision makers in the lives of children. Aunties and uncles may also play important roles. Interacting well with both types of families may require

new knowledge and skills. To what degree does the program support staff in acquiring these skills?

Signs of helping a child develop a sense of self

Examples:

To what degree does this program connect families to culturally or socially supportive organizations, advocates, and events in their communities?

To what degree does this program have working knowledge about culturally or socially supportive organizations, advocates and events in different cultural or social communities?

To what degree does this program engage with culturally supportive organizations, advocates, and events in different cultural communities?

These first three questions of this section of the survey refer to various depths of engagement between the program, families, and the community it serves.

Question 5 asks if the program connects the families it serves to culturally supportive organizations and events. "Connect" can mean giving parents a list of organizations or a calendar of events. Question 6 asks if the program has a working knowledge of organizations, advocates, and events. A working knowledge means that the program can refer families to specific people, particular programs, and/or events. Question 7 asks if the program has engaged with different organizations, programs, and events—meaning that the program has detailed and nuanced information that can help create a good fit

between a parent and the organization or event to which she/he is being referred.

Example: *"To what degree does this program recognize and support the positive cultural messages communicated by family, friends, and/or community-based, clan, reservation, neighborhood, or faith-based organizations or institutions?"*

Communities send positive cultural messages in many ways, such as cultural heritage festivals, religious celebrations, historical events, and family traditions. Embedded in these events, festivals, traditions, and celebrations are usually ideas of character, the common good, and innovation. This question is asking the degree to which this program recognizes and supports these positive messages.

Signs of understanding and valuing community

Example: *"To what degree does this program invite families to talk about advanced skills, abilities, and capacities that their child exhibits at home?"*

For many families—especially with adults working long hours, sometimes holding two jobs, children are taught to pitch in early on. They are expected in many cases to contribute to the family's well-being, to be mindful of their surroundings, picking up after themselves, preparing snacks, helping with a younger brother or sister. They learn a lot of skills in which academic concepts are embedded that can help them both in school and in life.

Examples:

"To what degree does this program change or adapt program rules and requirements in response to what it learns from families and communities?

To what degree does this program change or adapt its practices, methodologies, framework, and/or strategies in response to what it has learned from families and communities?"

Questions 11 and 12, while similar, refer to 2 different levels of authority. Question 11 asks if the program can change or adapt rules and requirements in response to families and communities. Program rules and requirements are often set by federal and state agencies or by funders. They are implemented by program administrators who may not have the power to change them. Is that the case in this program? To what degree is that the case?

Question 12 asks if the program can change or adapt practices, methodologies, framework, and strategies in response to what it learns from families and communities. These refer to changes that can be made at the program level, such as instructional strategies, planning processes, and choice of materials.

Example: *"To what degree do you yourself view that the advice received from mainstream early childhood and parenting professionals and researchers about parenting supports your own knowledge and experience, observations, and/or cultural values?"*

Answer this question based upon your own personal experience, not about this program.

Professional development courses and workshops are good ways to keep abreast of the latest research, increasing knowledge and skills. Some courses and information on early education and parenting are extremely valuable and the ideas, strategies, and techniques can be applied immediately. Other courses and information may not be a good fit for your particular community, circumstances or the families that you serve. Sometimes the theories and practices that are taught may not be in alignment with your own personal values, observations, and experiences. This question is asking the degree to which there is alignment with your own values, experiences, and observations—or not.

Example: *"To what degree does this program partner (i.e., share financial and other resources) or contract with knowledgeable and trusted community-based, clan, reservation, neighborhood, or faith-based organizations or institutions to deliver services?"*

Centers and child care homes contribute to the economic health of their communities. They purchase products and services, such as food, cleaning supplies, paper products, toys and games, cleaning services, lawn care, and other specialized services. Some of these products and services can be purchased locally from local vendors. In other instances, programs might partner with other community organizations and institutions to provide or purchase a service that they could not make available on their own. These economic relationships can strengthen ties between

programs and the communities they serve. To what degree does this program engage in this practice?

Example: *"To what degree does this program effectively combat and counteract negative images (or a lack of positive ones) and behaviors toward the child and his/her cultural, ethnic, gender, language, or disability status?"*

In most programs, there will be children who are perceived as "different." Who are perceived as the "other." Those perceived differences can be caused by a variety of things that can change based upon your geographic location and the dominant characteristics of the community you serve. They can be body size, economic status, disabilities, accents, language, race, color, gender, being rural, or urban. Negative stereotypes can be associated with any of these. People can also be ignored or dismissed based upon any of these differences. This question asks to what degree this program combats negative images or the invisibility of the "other"— whatever that "other" may be.

Demographic Questions

On the back of the survey are demographic questions. Please answer these questions as well. One of the demographic questions asks if your family came here as immigrants or refugees. And if you are first generation (you came here from another country); second generation (your parents came here from another county); or third generation (your grandparents came here from another county.)

Are there any questions?

If you have not answered the questions as we talked, finish answering them now.

Next steps

I will let you know when your survey results and those of the parents/guardians have been compiled and analyzed and the report completed. We can then set a date for convening the staff and the parents/guardians to discuss the report and how you would like to use the information.

Thanks so much for your participation!

The Process: Facilitating the parent/guardian and staff dialogue

Preparation for facilitating the dialogue

Familiarize yourself with the survey report, including the interpretation of the scores and the issues to consider.

With program administrators, identify a date and time to convene the dialogue. Make sure an invitation goes out to the survey participants.

Allocate 1 ½ hours for the dialogue.

Arrange the room with small tables that can seat 5-6 people.

Prepare an agenda.

Have name tags.

On each table where parents/guardians or program staff are sitting, put a small bowl with small packets of gum or penny candy.

Make sure you have enough copies of the survey reports.

Sample agenda

Family and Community Knowledge Systems
Parent/Guardian and Staff Dialogue
Agenda

Meeting purposes:

- To review the report generated from the parent/guardian and staff surveys
- To identify how the information generated by the surveys might be used to improve program quality and expand how we think about child development.

Dinner

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Review of the meeting purposes and agenda

3. Overview of the survey purpose and process

4. How the report is organized and highlights

5. Small group discussions of "Issues to Consider"

6. Report back highlights of small group discussions and other issues that emerged

7. Next steps

8. Adjourn

Interpreting your survey scores

The Family and Community Engagement Tools do not have normative standards that define cut off scores or provide conclusive interpretations of the numerical scores. Rather, the scores on each item and comparing scores across items can be used to prompt discussion and to consider issues that emerge to build on and strengthen family and community engagement with early childhood programs.

In general:

- 80% or more saying "a lot" on an item shows a clear strength.

- 70% to less than 80% saying "a lot" on an item shows adequate strength but should probably be discussed by the group to see if it requires attention.

- Less than 70% saying "a lot" on an item shows some concern and should be discussed by the group about how to address it.

- Less than 50% saying "a lot" reveals a clear concern and should be addressed.

Materials you will need for parent/guardian and staff dialogue

Name tags

Dinner

Copies of the report

Agendas or flip-chart paper with the agenda affixed to the wall

Flip chart paper for small group discussions

Agenda

Facilitating the parent/guardian and staff discussion

Creating a welcoming environment for everyone is a most important step in facilitating the discussion. The session will most likely take place in the early evening, after work hours. Many parents/guardians may come directly from work. It is important for everyone to feel valued.

Greet participants as they enter the room. Show them where the name tags and pens are located. Invite them to get their food, and take a seat at a table. Let them know you are glad they could come. Make sure that each table has a mix of parents/guardians and staff.

Welcome and introductions

Introduce yourself and thank everyone for participating. Let them know how valuable their experiences and perceptions are to this discussion.

Welcome, and thanks so much for coming back for this important conversation. I'm _____. This is my third visit with you as part of the Family and Community Engagement Survey initiative. It's been a pleasure to get to know you. I've surveyed parents/guardians, and I've surveyed program staff. I'm back again so that we can talk

together about what your surveys showed, and how you think you might want to use that information.

Ask each person to give their name and the number of children they have in this program. Include a warm up question that can be answered very quickly, bring smiles to most people, and make the atmosphere pleasant and relaxed.

Let's introduce ourselves. Please give your name, the number of children you have, and, in no more than 4 words, something that makes you smile. I'll start.

Example: My name is Betty. I have 3 children. (What makes me smile?) My two outrageous sisters.

Review of the meeting purposes and agenda

Referring to the agenda that is displayed on the wall or the printed agenda, reiterate the purpose of the discussion and the time the meeting will end.

Our meeting this evening has two purposes. One is to review the report that was generated from the parent/guardian survey and the staff survey that you took ___ weeks ago.

Copies of the report are on the table. If someone does not have a copy, please raise your hand, and I will give you one.

The second is to identify how you might want to use the information in this report to improve the program and expand how you think about child development.

Overview of the survey purpose

The purpose of these surveys is to make visible the knowledge and wisdom that families and communities have -- that we share with our children, grandchildren, friends, relatives, and one another. And to show how important it is, whether you are parents/guardians or staff. It's a different kind of knowledge. We don't get grades or diplomas or degrees for it. But it is the glue that holds us together, gives us backbone, and helps us deal with lots of different things in our lives.

How the report is organized and highlights

Describe how the report is organized: A summary description of who participated, highlights from their answers, the chart summarizing their aggregated responses, and questions to consider based upon their responses.

Ask if there are any questions.

Small group discussions of "Issues to Consider"

Break into smaller groups—ideally 4-5 people per group. Assign each group one of the issues to consider. Ask if there are other questions anyone might like to consider, based upon the data in the charts they are seeing. If so, you can add an additional group.

Give the group 20 minutes to discuss their issue. Ask them to choose someone to take notes and report back.

Report back highlights of small group discussions and other issues that emerged

Give each group 5 minutes to report back. After all of the groups have reported back, ask what stood out for them.

Next steps

Ask the group for some ways they think they might want to use the information.

Collect all of the notes from the note-takers.

Tell the group you will summarize the notes and their discussion and that you will give the summary to the program administration to distribute to everyone.

Adjourn

Thank everyone again for their participation and adjourn the group.

Online survey option

As the family and community engagement survey facilitator, you have the option of gathering and processing the survey data online. The online survey is appropriate when survey participants have private email accounts and can easily access the Internet. If survey participants require extra guidance to complete the

survey tools, you have the option of conducting the survey in groups and entering the completed tools online yourself.

This free alternative is available by going to http://wilderresearch.org/tools/facet.

You will be asked to register a group, using your own email address to use the secure web-based data entry and reporting platform. For each group you register, you'll be sent unique links for completing the parent and program staff tools.

As the group organizer, you'll be able to view summary scores for each tool. If you'd like to see data summaries for more than one group, you would register each group separately. You may register as many separate groups as you'd like. For repeated use of the tools and to measure progress across time, register the same groups again later.

Describing the on-line survey process to participants

Here is a way for you to describe the on-line survey process to the parents/guardians and program staff. The suggested script is a guide. You can use your own words.

I will email you a link to a secure website hosted by Wilder Research, part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in St. Paul. You can complete the survey online anonymously. I will receive a data summary of the responses for the whole group, which I will analyze for patterns in your answers. I will look for instances in which responses of parents and the staff are the same or different. Then, based on these patterns, I will prepare a list of questions or issues we might want to think about and discuss.

Next, I will meet with parents and staff together, and give you copies of the data summary and my list of questions or issues to consider. We'll go through the questions or issues, and you can decide how you would like to use the information.

Interpreting your survey scores

The Family and Community Engagement Tools do not have normative standards that define cut off scores or provide conclusive interpretations of the numerical scores. Rather, the scores on each item and comparing scores across items can be used to prompt discussion and to consider issues that emerge to build on and strengthen family and community engagement with early childhood programs.

In general:

- 80% or more saying "a lot" (average scores of 1.25 or lower) on an item shows a clear strength.

- 70% to less than 80% saying "a lot" (average scores of 1.3 to 2.0) on an item shows adequate strength but should probably be discussed by the group to see if it requires attention.

- Less than 70% saying "a lot" (average scores of 2.0 or lower) on an item shows some concern and should be discussed by the group about how to address it.

- Less than 50% saying "a lot" (average scores above 2.0) reveals a clear concern and should be addressed.

Issues to consider by comparing scores across items

To identify issues to consider when preparing for your joint discussion with parents and staff, you examine the survey responses or scores of questions on the parent tool and questions from the staff tool. Here are some related questions on the parent tool and staff tool that you may want to compare.

Issues to consider	Parent tool questions	Staff tool questions
1. What can be done to strengthen and increase supportive connections and capacity within extended families and within communities?	1-3	
2. What accounts for any difference in supporting character development and responsible behavior in young children? What steps can be taken to consistently support character development of children?	4, 7, 8	1, 3, 4
3. What can be done by families and programs to improve upon how they model and teach skills to children to navigate their cultural and social networks well?	5	2
4. What can be done by families and child caring programs to better mutually support and reinforce positive cultural messages communicated to children?	6	9
5. What are some of the barriers within programs to inviting families to talk about the advanced skills and abilities that their children exhibit at home? How can those barriers be reduced? How can the observations of families about their children's skills and abilities be useful to families and program staff?	9	10

6. Is there a disconnect between the knowledge, experience, and/or cultural values of families and staff and the advice they receive from mainstream early childhood professionals and researchers about parenting? What can be done to better align these sources of knowledge?	10	13
7. How can children be protected and families supported in addressing concerns about threats to their child's sense of self and pride in his/her identity? What can be done to help families overcome the systemic forces that undermine the protective factors of family and community connections and positive cultural identity?	11-14	8, 15
8. What can be done to better facilitate partnerships between early care and education programs and trusted community-based organizations? How can programs engage with culturally or socially supportive organizations in different cultural communities?		5-7, 14
9. What are some of the barriers to changing program rules, requirements, and strategies in response to what is learned from families and communities? How can those barriers be reduced? What changes in service delivery systems are needed to increase positive engagement with extended families and communities?		11-12

Options and costs

You have the option of Conducting the Family and Community Engagement Survey completely on your own or with various fee-for-service supports.

- Use of this self-guided manual and online survey tools and data summaries are free of charge.

- Advice and consultation on the survey and reporting process are available for $160 per hour.

- Training for a group of external facilitators and staff to administer the tools with parents and staff is available for $5,500 per training. (To preserve confidentiality, staff should not administer the survey to parents/guardians and staff in their own program.)

- For individual programs, we can facilitate one learning session with staff and one with families to complete the tools for $6,000.

- Returning completed tools to Wilder Research for processing and customized report preparation costs $4,000 per program report.

- Leading a joint learning session with families and staff to review issues that emerged and to devise strategies for addressing them costs $3,000 per session.

Survey tools

Early Childhood Assessment
Family and Community Knowledge Systems

For each of the following statements, please describe to what extent or degree (how much or how often) your family demonstrates the feelings, skills, and behavior. In the statements below, community-based or faith-based institutions includes any one of the following: churches, mosques, or synagogues; clan or community centers or neighborhood organizations; reservations and pow-wows; social gathering places such as shops, restaurants, or clubs; or any place you feel connected and supported.

Please check only one response for each statement.

To what extent do you:	A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Signs of extended family support and connections				
1. Regularly rely on extended family, clan, close friends, *or* neighbors for help in raising your child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
2. Rely on family, friends, and/or community-based *or* faith-based institutions for positive cultural or social messages and support?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
3. Rely on family, friends, neighbors, and/or community-based *or* faith-based institutions when you need concrete help?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Signs of transmitting moral and cultural values				
4. Teach and support character development, including values like honesty, trustworthiness, and respect?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
5. Teach skills your child will need to interact well with his/her cultural and social networks, such as particular forms of courtesy and respect for elders?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
6. Support and reinforce positive cultural messages your child receives from community-based or faith-based institutions?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
7. Encourage and teach your child to help with family chores and responsibilities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
8. Emphasize having a moral or spiritual code of behavior?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Signs of experiencing responsive institutions, programs, and agencies				
9. Feel invited, *in this program,* to talk about positive advanced skills, abilities, and capacities that your child exhibits at home?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
10. Feel that the advice you receive from early childhood providers, teachers, and parenting professionals about parenting supports your own knowledge and experience, observations, and/or cultural values?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
11. Feel concerned*, in this program*, about how negative images and attitudes (or lack of positive ones) toward your child's cultural, ethnic, social, or gender group will affect him or her?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
12. Feel the need to take extra steps, *in this program,* to teach your child to be proud of his or her cultural, ethnic, social, or gender group identity?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
13. Feel concerned, *in general,* about how negative images and attitudes (or lack of positive ones) toward your child's cultural, ethnic, social, or gender group will affect him or her?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
14. Feel the need, *in general,* to take extra steps to teach your child to be proud of his or her cultural, ethnic, social, or gender group identity?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

SITE ID#_____ Date_____

Please answer these questions to provide an overall picture of the families who complete this tool.

What is your relationship to the child?
☐¹ Parent
☐² Foster parent
☐³ Grandparent or great-grandparent
☐⁴ Other (Specify: _____)

What is your gender?   What is the child's gender?
☐¹ Female   ☐¹ Female
☐² Male   ☐² Male
☐³ Other (Specify: _____)

What is your age?   What is age of the child?

_____ (# of years)   _____ (# of years)

What is the race/ethnicity of the child?
☐¹ Black or African American
☐² American Indian
☐³ Asian
☐⁴ Hispanic or Latino
☐⁵ Hmong
☐⁶ Somali
☐⁷ White or Caucasian
☐⁸ Another group (Specify: _____)

Is your family an immigrant or refugee family?
☐¹ Yes
☐² No ---→ IF NO, what region of the United States are you from? _____

IF YES, from what country or countries? _____

IF YES, are you: (check the answer that best applies)
☐¹ First generation
☐² Second generation
☐³ Third generation

What is your household's total yearly income (gross income, before taxes)?
☐¹ Less than $40,000
☐² $40,000 to $55,000
☐³ $55,001 to $75,000
☐⁴ More than $75,000

SITE ID#_____ Date_____

Quality Rating of Early Childhood Programs
Family and Community Knowledge Systems

For each of the following statements, based on observation and discussion with the families and program staff, describe to what extent or degree (how much or how often) this program demonstrates the skills and behavior of the staff.
Please check only one response for each statement. *Answer question 13 about yourself, not this program.

To what extent does this program:

	A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Signs of building character and integrity in children				
1. Support character development, including values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and respect?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
2. Model and teach skills children will need to interact well with their cultural and social networks, such as particular forms of courtesy and respect for elders?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
3. Reinforce basic core values that are shared by a cross section of the families in the program?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
4. Support staff in developing the cross-cultural knowledge and skills to work well with children from cultures with communal values as well as those with more individualistic values through trainings, professional development courses, reflective supervision and staff discussions, or in-house learning teams?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Signs of helping a child develop a sense of self				
5. Connect families to culturally or socially supportive organizations, advocates, and events in their communities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
6. Have working knowledge about culturally or socially supportive organizations, advocates and events in different cultural or social communities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
7. Engage with culturally supportive organizations, advocates, and events in different cultural communities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
8. Demonstrate respect for the home language or dialect of children (including sign language) as they learn standard English?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
9. Recognize and support the positive cultural messages communicated by family, friends, and/or community-based, clan, reservation, neighborhood, or faith-based organizations or institutions?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Signs of understanding and valuing community				
10. Invite families to talk about advanced skills, abilities, and capacities that their child exhibits at home?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
11. Change or adapt program rules and requirements in response to what it learns from families and communities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
12. Change or adapt its practices, methodologies, framework, and/or strategies in response to what it has learned from families and communities?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
*13. View that the advice received from mainstream early childhood and parenting professionals and researchers about parenting supports its own knowledge and experience, observations, and/or cultural values?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
14. Partner (i.e., share financial and other resources) or contract with knowledgeable and trusted community-based, clan, reservation, neighborhood, or faith-based organizations or institutions to deliver services?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
15. Effectively combat and counteract negative images (or a lack of positive ones) and behaviors toward child and his/her cultural, ethnic, social, gender, or language group, or disability status, that affect the child?	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

SITE ID#_____ Date_____

Please answer these questions to provide an overall picture of the program staff and volunteers who complete this tool.

1. What is your current primary role in the program?
    ☐[1] Teacher
    ☐[2] Assistant teacher
    ☐[3] Aide
    ☐[4] Administration/management
    ☐[5] Community liaison/connector
    ☐[6] Volunteer
    ☐[7] Another role (Specify: _____)

2. Is your role: ☐[1] Part time   or   ☐[2] Full time?

3. How many years have you been affiliated with the program?   _____ (# of years)

4. What is your gender?
    ☐[1] Female
    ☐[2] Male
    ☐[3] Other (Specify: _____)

5. What is your age?   _____ (# of years)

6. What is your race/ethnicity?
    ☐[1] Black or African American
    ☐[2] American Indian
    ☐[3] Asian
    ☐[4] Hispanic or Latino
    ☐[5] Hmong
    ☐[6] Somali
    ☐[7] White or Caucasian
    ☐[8] Another group (Specify: _____)

7. Are you from an immigrant or refugee family?
    ☐[1] Yes   ☐[2] No

    a. **IF YES →** From what country? _____

    b. **IF YES,** are you (check the answer that best applies)?

        ☐[1] First generation
        ☐[2] Second generation
        ☐[3] Third generation

8. What is your family's total yearly income (gross income, before taxes)?

    ☐[1] Less than $40,000
    ☐[2] $40,000 to $55,000
    ☐[3] $55,001 to $75,000
    ☐[4] More than $75,000

SITE ID#_____ Date_____

For more information

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Betty Emarita is an ideation and strategic change consultant. A member of the National Network of Consultants to Grant Makers, she is certified in Human Systems Dynamics and part of the Polarity Management international learning community. For over two decades, Ms. Emarita and associates have provided services, including strategic planning, evaluations, assessments, and training to clients including the Annie E. Casey Foundation; Ford Foundation; Minnesota Department of Human Services; Washington State Department of Early Learning; Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota; and national, statewide, and regional cross-sector collaborations of public agencies, foundations, and nonprofit organizations. She has rich experience incorporating information gathered at the community level into broader state-level systems.

A contributor to the 2012 *Washington State Early Learning Guidelines,* she has also written several publications, including *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care Best Practices in Five Cultural Communities*; a *Home Visitation Guide to Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers* for Think Small, a services, resources, and advocacy organization for early education in Minnesota, and the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center; and most recently co-authored the BUILD policy brief, *Family and Community Knowledge Systems: New Tools for Engagement*.

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Dr. Richard Chase, Senior Research Manager at Wilder Research, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, studies early childhood policies, services, and indicators and evaluates the effectiveness of school readiness, prevention, and capacity-building programs for children, youth, and families, with a focus on equity and inclusion. For 30 years, Richard has worked with diverse community-based groups and government agencies to design and carry out useful studies focused on outcomes and improvement. Richard has presented nationally and internationally on culture as a protective factor and has written several reports and BUILD Initiative policy briefs on understanding and supporting family, friend, and neighbor caregiving for healthy early childhood development. He also co-authored the BUILD policy brief, *Family and Community Knowledge Systems: New Tools for Engagement*. Richard also directs Wilder's cost-benefit and return on investment studies. Richard has a doctorate in American studies from the University of Minnesota.

Wilder Research

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