

# Engaging Families in Children's Learning From Birth through School Age



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# Presentation Overview

- Christine will talk about strategies and policies that support family engagement in settings serving infants and toddlers.
- Sheila will focus on strengthening parent engagement for preschool through the early grades.
- There will be discussion and sharing about experiences with parent and family engagement.



# We will discuss...

- What is family and parent engagement?
- Why is it important for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children?
- What are effective family and parent engagement models for different ages?
- What *state level* public policies support family and parent engagement?

What is family engagement  
for children birth to three?

# High Quality Family Engagement

- Family well-being
- Parent-child relationships
- Ongoing learning and development of parents and children

# High Quality Family Engagement

- Families as lifelong educators
- Families as learners
- Family engagement in transitions
- Family connections to peers and community
- Families as advocates and leaders

# High quality family engagement...

- Encompasses a number of practices, policies, and activities
- Respects families as partners and leaders
- Supports families in parenting
- Includes culturally appropriate opportunities

# Research on Family Engagement for Infants and Toddlers

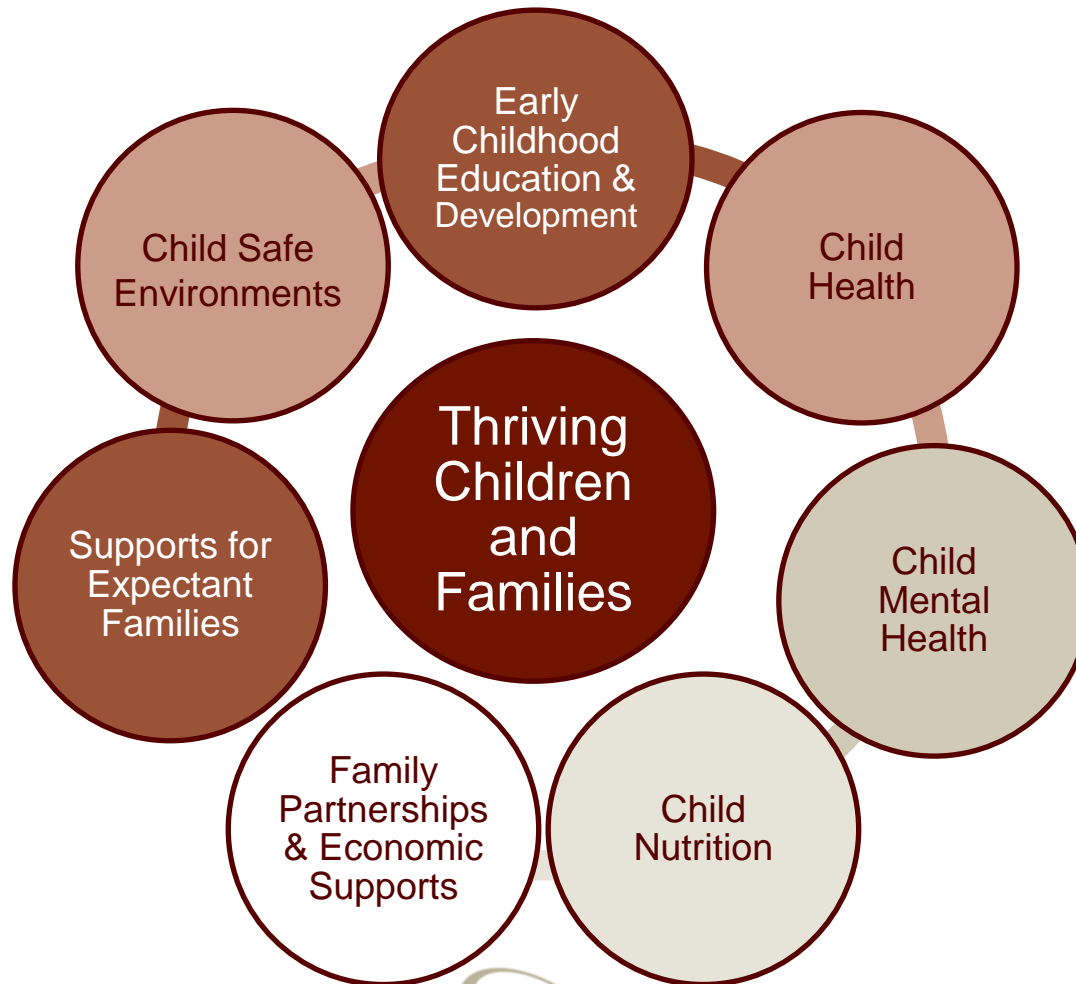
- Babies do better when family members and child care providers communicate and have relationships.
- Babies do better when families feel engaged and supported in their child care arrangements.
- Family support and parenting education in child care can improve outcomes for infants and toddlers and their families.



# A Two-Generation Approach

- Many young families are vulnerable, and can benefit from family engagement through child care.
- Family engagement can help connect parents to economic supports, services, and opportunities to learn.
- 53% of children ages one and two years old are in weekly non-parental care arrangements.

# Early Childhood System Components



# Examples of family engagement in early childhood settings

- Effective communication systems with families
- Home visits to offer parenting support
- Parenting support at the program site
- Opportunities for families to build social relationships
- Referral to services and work supports
- Family engagement in developing curriculum and approach
- Leadership roles in program



What can states do to support family engagement in early childhood programs?

# Policy Examples

- In Pennsylvania, OCDEL is partnering with Head Start, mental health agencies, school districts and other initiatives to incorporate Strengthening Families across state policies, quality standards, and professional development.
- In Tennessee, the state child care agency has partnered with other state agencies and the state's Children's Trust Fund to incorporate parent engagement and support into its policies at multiple levels using Strengthening Families.

# Policy Examples

- In Georgia, the state licensing agency identified a network of programs that model exemplary family partnership strategies, and established them as models and mentors to other providers.
- In Miami-Dade and Palm Beach, Florida, programs seeking the highest level in QRIS must have resources available to communicate with all families in their primary language.



# Policy Considerations

- Use regulation, incentives, and technical assistance to encourage best practices.
- Integrate best practices into licensing, and into quality policies such as QRIS.
- Talk to diverse families to understand the best approaches to culturally appropriate family and parent engagement.
- Build partnerships between families, providers, and communities.
- Require and offer professional development, training, and technical assistance.

# Resources

- *Promote Family Engagement, November 2013*  
A product of CLASP's *Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Project*  
[www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare](http://www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare)
- *Putting it Together: A Guide to Financing Comprehensive Services in Child Care and Early Education*  
<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/A-Guide-to-Financing-Comprehensive-Services-in-Child-Care-and-Early-Education.pdf>
- More resources at  
[www.clasp.org/childcare](http://www.clasp.org/childcare)





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