



Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature

Linda C. Halgunseth, PhD
Office of Applied Research
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)



Picower Foundation

Family Engagement

NAEYC Engaging Diverse Families¹

Joint Literature Review² –
NAEYC & Pre-K Now

Full report = <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>

Family Engagement vs. Parent Education/Parent Involvement

- **strength-based**
- **emphasize reciprocity (*not* one-sided)**
- **true relationship**
- **how do we engage families in the program (e.g., builds upon their interests and skills)?**

Definition of Family Engagement

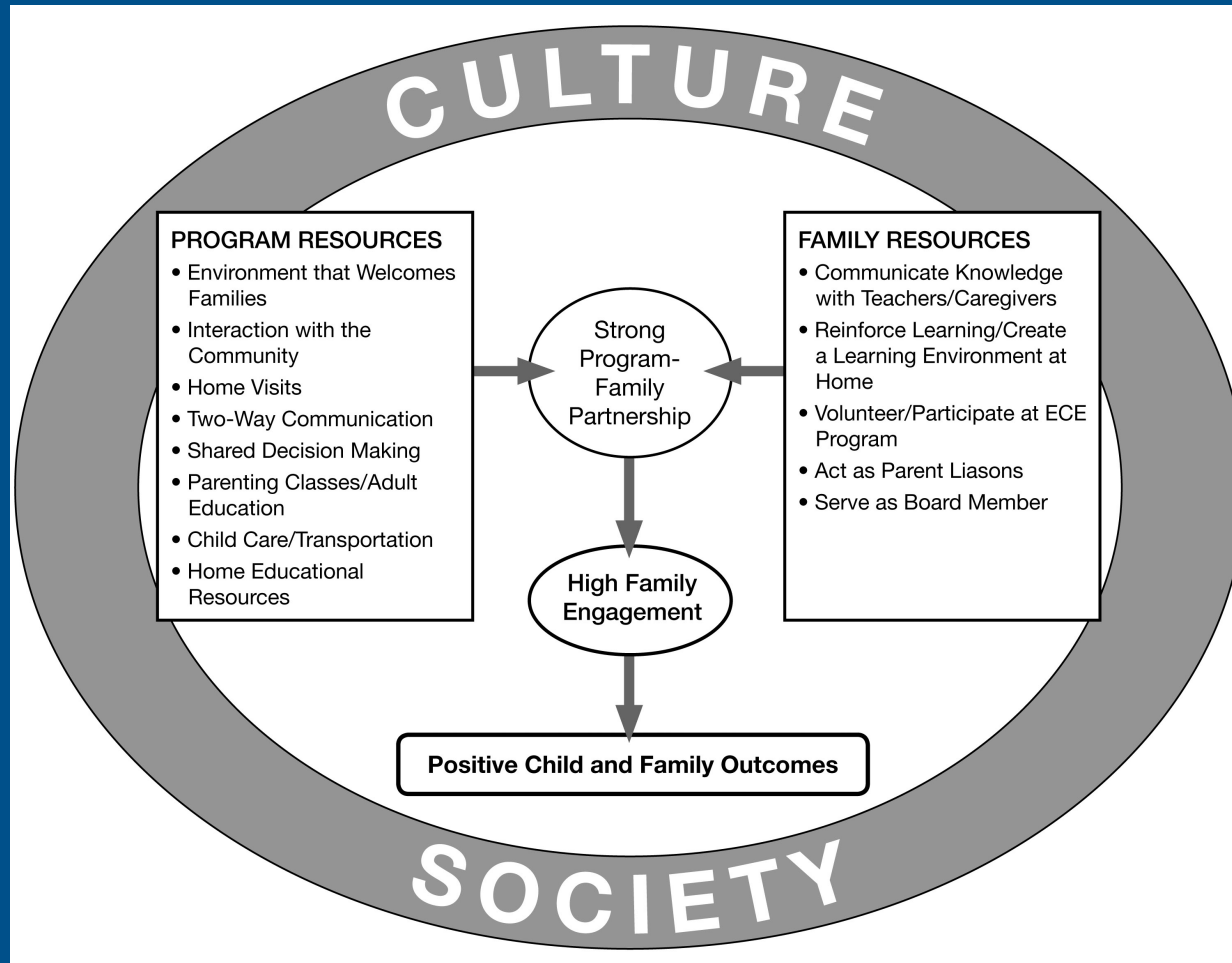
- Programs encourage and validate family participation in **decision making** related to their children's education.
- Consistent, **two-way communication** is facilitated through multiple forms and is responsive to the linguistic preference of the family.
- Families and programs **collaborate and exchange** knowledge.
- Programs and families place an emphasis on **creating and sustaining learning activities** at home and in the community that enhance each child's early learning.
- Families create a **home environment that values learning** and supports programs.
- Programs create an **ongoing and comprehensive system** by ensuring that administrators and teachers are dedicated, trained and supported to fully engage families.

** Stemming from the work of Henderson and Berla (1994)³, Epstein (2001)⁴, and Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez (2006)⁵. Full definition can be found at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>*

TWO ORGANIZING FRAMEWORKS

Ecological⁶

Social Exchange⁷



PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Integrate Culture and Community**
- **Provide a Welcoming Environment**
- **Strive for Program-Family Partnerships**
- **Make a Commitment to Outreach**
- **Provide Family Resources and Referrals**
- **Set and Reinforce Program Standards**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

NAEYC CULTURAL COMPETENCE CHECKLIST

- **A.L. Mailman Family Foundation**
- **Pathways to Cultural Competence Project⁸**
- **QRIS**

REFERENCES

- 1- Maril Olson, Coordinator, NAEYC Office of Family and Community Initiatives, Molson@naeyc.org
- 2 –Halgunseth, L., Peterson, A., Stark, D., & Moodie, S. (2009). *Family Engagement, Diverse Families and Early Childhood Education Programs: An integrated review of the literature*. Online at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>
- 3- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2004). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- 4-Nakonezny, P., & Denton, W. (2008). Marital relationships: A social exchange theory perspective. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 36 (5), 402-412.
- 5- Henderson, A.T., & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.
- 6 - Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- 7- Weiss, H., Caspe, M., & Lopez, M.E. (2006). Family involvement in early childhood education. *Family Involvement Makes a Difference* 1 (Spring). Online at <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/family-involvement-in-early-childhood-education>
- 8 – Davida McDonald, Director, NAEYC State Policy, DMcDonald@naeyc.org



THANK YOU!



Linda C. Halgunseth, PhD
Coordinator, Office of Applied Research
National Association for the Education of
Young Children (NAEYC)
LHalgunseth@naeyc.org