



Parent Engagement Programs – Data Summary Report

What is parent engagement?

Parent Engagement is defined as parents in meaningful leadership roles in the implementation of direct services, training, policy and systems change and public awareness and education programs that strengthen families and communities.

Brief Description: This report presents general information on parent engagement programs listed in the California Parent Engagement Center (CPEC), an online resource for parents, consumers, practitioners and policy-makers that highlights parent engagement programs offered in multiple languages in California. Of the 48 programs in CPEC, 33 identified advocacy as a component of their programs. All programs could check one or more of the following activities parents are engaged in: **advocacy, parent leadership skill development, parent mentor/role model, program evaluation design/implementation; program planning and development, program/strategy implementation, training design/implementation or other.**

I. General Statistics and Information

- Thirty percent of California counties have programs where parents engage in one or more activities including advocacy, parent leadership development, program planning and development, program implementation and strategic planning and training.
- 83% of parent engagement programs are offered in two or more languages
- 87% of parent engagement programs provide specialized training and technical support to parents in their engagement roles.
- Sixty-eight percent of 41 parent engagement programs reported that they received funding through public resources (i.e. CAPIT, PSSF, CBCAP, Title IV-E, Wraparound, State General Fund); 32% reported that they received funding through private foundations and private donations (i.e. Annie E. Casey Foundation, United Way); and funding for programs ranged from less than \$25,000 to \$99,999 annually.
- Programs use various methods to evaluate effectiveness including Consumer Satisfaction Surveys (72%); tracking individual change (49%); and other outcome evaluation data (30%).
- Sixty percent of these programs reported that they are not based on a evidence-based model.

II. Target populations of All California Parent Engagement Programs:

- * Biological parents, relative caregivers and foster parents
- * Pre-adoptive and post-adoptive families
- * Parents who have successfully reunified with their child(ren) or entering the child welfare system
- * Parents who are previous consumers of services across various systems, including mental health and substance abuse, and who display leadership skills and expertise
- * Home visitation and high-risk families either referred by the community or through CWS differential response
- * Parents involved with Child Welfare, who are homeless and/or drug addicted
- * Pregnant women, fathers, and families with children under the age of three
- * Low income working parents
- * Monolingual, low income families
- * Parents and caregivers of children and youth enrolled in mental health and/or Child Welfare Wraparound programs
- * Parents who have children with disabilities or significant medical conditions
- * Parents who have come into contact, or are at risk of coming into contact, with the Juvenile Court due to alleged abuse or neglect, and who are in substance abuse treatment
- * Parents of children with mental health issues involved with Juvenile Justice
- * Parents/caregivers with children with closed CPS cases
- * Parents with children receiving domestic violence services
- * Teen mothers or fathers

III. A SPECIAL FOCUS ON ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES IN CALIFORNIA PARENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

- **33 out of 48 programs (69%)** in CPEC identified advocacy as an activity and/or role of parents in their parent engagement program.
- Data indicates that advocacy occurs through parent engagement in specific roles and activities in these programs. A special subcommittee was formed to further explore parent advocacy roles and activities in parent engagement programs across systems in California.
- There are 4 statewide parent engagement programs in California with specific advocacy roles and activities for parents: the California State Parent Team, Celebrating Families Parenting Program, Parents Anonymous® Program and Shared Leadership® in Action Program.
- 29 parent engagement programs with advocacy roles and activities for parents operate in 16 (28%) California counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Kern, Los

Angeles, Mariposa, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Shasta and Ventura.

- Parent engagement programs with advocacy roles and activities for parents occur across systems including child protective services, mental health, education, and substance abuse.
- 88% of parent engagement advocacy programs are available in multiple languages.
- Parent engagement advocacy programs are funded through multiple public and private sources: 33% of programs are privately funded; 77% are funded by state, county and city dollars; and most programs are funded at \$50,000 to \$99,999 annually.
- 52% of and programs and strategies are not utilizing an evidenced-based model.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

The data in CPEC demonstrates a clear paradigm shift where parents/caregivers are empowered to create change in themselves, their families, and communities and in systems designed to strengthen families and communities. A **key lesson** in the data review is that these programs typically embrace cultural diversity, the value and potential of the parent/caregiver to change, and more importantly support parents/caregivers as change agents in their own family and communities. Parent engagement activities range from peer to peer support, parent advocacy, strategic planning, and policy improvements in cross systems to better the lives of all families. These efforts lead to some of the following implications for parents/caregivers, practitioners, policy-makers, funders, public and private agencies:

- * Parent engagement programs have diversified funding (public v. private, cross systems) but the budgets appear to be very small and thereby limiting the number of families served and overall impact.
- * Significant outcome research on parent engagement programs is extremely limited and funding needs to be obtained to support a research agenda. Most often Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are utilized rather than standardized tools and measures.
- * There are only 4 statewide parent engagement programs. The majority of these programs have an evidence-based model, evaluation tools and a long track record in direct services and policy and systems change. For example, the California State Parent Team was developed as a strategy by Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. in collaboration with CDSS to engage skilled and experienced parent leaders in shaping the direction of state level programs and policies to improve the lives of children and families throughout the state.
- * There appears to be a need to provide assistance to develop curricula and training programs to assist in the implementation of parent engagement programs.

- * There is a need to outreach to more community-based organizations and key community stakeholders to make them aware of the California Parent Engagement Center as a resource to learn more about evidence-based/evidence-informed programs and strategies.
- * Further delineation of roles and activities is needed to organize the data on these programs to assist in expanding and enhancing parent engagement statewide.
- * With regards to policy and systems change, further information needs to be gathered on tasks, products and results to be achieved.
- * CPEC needs to be promoted more extensively with drug and alcohol, mental health, juvenile justice, healthcare, and education systems.
- * Although most parent engagement programs include parents in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs, only a few utilize parents in leadership roles in governance and policy change.
- * Parent engagement programs are more likely associated with promoting individual and family level change rather than community and system change.

A few thoughts from individuals who submitted programs to the California Parent Engagement Center...

Use of evaluation data from parent engagement programs-

“We need to gain greater understanding of the correlation between parent-to-parent support and reunification rates.”

Reasons why a parent engagement program was funded-

“First 5 is interested in supporting projects that engage in shared community governance.”

Reasons why a parent engagement program was adopted by a county advisory council-

“Reunified parents and the Parent Leadership Task Force initiated this program out of a desire to assist us in improving the system to benefit new parents coming through.”

Reasons why a parent engagement program was selected over other programs-

“Our program has adapted key elements of these strategies to our unique demographics and needs in the County”