



Family Engagement and the Leadership Team

Meghan von der Embse and Lise Fox

*In program-wide implementation of the **Pyramid Model**, programs are guided to include a family member as a full participant on the leadership team.*

Family members on the leadership team add the unique perspectives of the family and community to discussions about implementation steps and help guide decisions related to family engagement and family support strategies. This document provides the leadership team with information on how family membership will strengthen the leadership team, guidance for recruiting a family member, and considerations for supporting the family member as a participating team member.



Including Family Members on the Leadership Team

Inviting family members to be a part of the leadership team allows programs to build strong partnerships with families and community members. Prior to the recruitment of a family member, the leadership team should consider how inviting families to partner with the leadership team can strengthen buy-in from families, add a unique perspective

on Pyramid Model implementation across home and school contexts, and enhance implementation supports that promote positive outcomes for children and families.

Below are some of the many ways a family member might contribute to the leadership team.

- **Help team understand** how best to reach all families.
- **Provide guidance** in considering cultural and community perspectives of families, family needs, or community resources.
- **Provide leadership** in developing and administering family surveys or focus groups to gather data on family engagement, family perspectives, or family needs.
- **Contribute ideas** on how to ensure all family and community members feel welcome and engaged with the program.
- **Assist in the development or review of materials** and provide guidance on the use of family-friendly language or family information needs.
- **Assist team in developing family engagement strategies** related to Pyramid Model implementation including initial family buy-in presentations, roll-out to families, and family forums for gaining family perspectives, family discussion groups, or family workshops.
- **Co-lead family workshops** or co-lead staff professional development presentation on family engagement and cultural responsiveness.
- **Challenge the leadership team** to consider family perspectives and strategies for fully engaging families in all tiers of support to children.

- **Help the leadership team** understand strategies that are most acceptable to the culture of the community.
- **Initiate awareness** of an emerging or systemic issue within the program.
- **Link with and support other families** to implement Pyramid Model practices in the home and community environments.

It might also be important for the leadership team to engage in activities prior to recruiting a family member to join the team. Those activities might include:

- **A discussion** among staff members on the team **to evaluate assumptions about families** enrolled in their program and the inclusion of a family member as a partner in the leadership teaming;
- **Developing a clear purpose** for the family member on the leadership team;
- **Identifying communication skills** that will be important to the functioning of the leadership team and the inclusion of a family partner (reflective listening, use of open ended questions, etc.);
- **Identifying the supports** that can be provided to allow for full participation of family member, including time of meetings, reimbursement for costs associated with transportation, childcare, or time spent in meeting;
- **Developing a plan for the orientation** of all new leadership team members that includes a discussion of the team function, procedures, and implementation planning process;
- **The development of procedures to use for data review** that will address team



members' concerns about data sharing and data discussions with family members; and

- **The development of a written confidentiality agreement** that all team members sign related to data review and leadership team discussions (Fox & Swett, 2017).

Recruiting a Family Member to Join the Leadership Team

- **Develop materials** to use in the recruitment of family members. Clearly define:
 - Mission statement of the leadership team
 - Clear description of the role and responsibilities of family members on the team
 - Meeting obligations
 - Team expectations for family members
- **Ask for nominations** from current leadership team members or recruit family members through a family event, family meeting, or through the program/home communication system (e.g. app, newsletter, Facebook page, website). Designate a team member who can answer questions about the opportunity.
- **Create a formal link** between the leadership team's family member and the program's family or community advisory board or create a new structure that links the leadership team's family members to other families in the program, such as a family committee.

- **Create structured agendas** so that team members independently report on their areas versus having a team leader guide all discussion items.
- **Provide agenda prior to all monthly meetings.** Share these ahead of time to give family member the opportunity to get input from other families.
- **Share meeting minutes** and updated implementation plan promptly after meetings.
- **Provide supports** to allow for full participation for family member (e.g., reimbursement for transportation, childcare, or time spent in meeting).
- **Allow for extra time** during meetings to accommodate conversations and/or situations that may arise with family member on the team.
- **Translate all materials** if needed for individual team members.
- **Plan to rotate roles** of facilitation and note-taking among team members so that one member is not perceived as the leader and others as support.

Supporting Family Member Participation on the Leadership Team

- **Provide orientation** for all new leadership team members that includes:
 - Function of team
 - Review of data elements used in meetings
 - Orientation to current implementation plan
 - Access to shared files and resources

References

Fox, L. & Swett, J. (2017). Implementing partnerships with families to promote the social and emotional competence of young children. In Weist, M. D. Weist, S.A. Garbacz, K. L. Lane, & D. Kincaid, D. (Eds), *Aligning and integrating family engagement in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Concepts and strategies for families and schools in key contexts* (pp. 84-97). Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon Press.

