



# PARENT-PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:

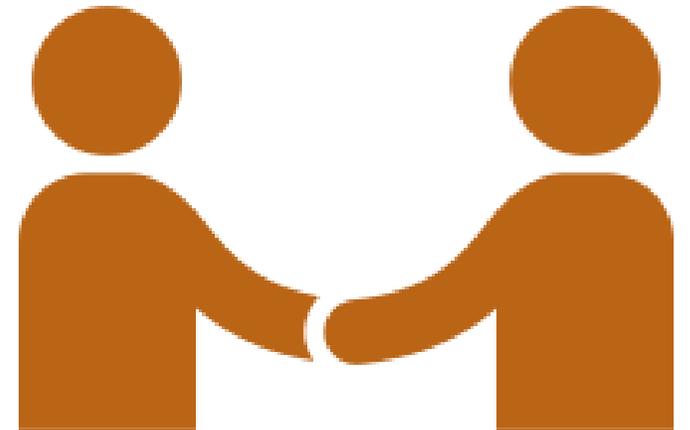
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“Developing a sound partnership takes **both parties** working together. **A system or agency** can prioritize partnership and begin the process but they find very quickly that they are unable to sustain the process if they don’t engage and adapt to their target partner’s interest and perspective. Likewise **a parent** can be committed to building a partnership approach, but if their professional partner is a reluctant traveling companion the partnership is likely to be one-sided, ineffective and disappointing.

Excerpt from “**A Travel Guide for Concerned Parents & Professionals**”  
Prepared by **Pat Miles & Toni Donnelly**



# PARENT-PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- What they are
- How they work
- Activities to support building Parent-Professional Partnerships
- Roles of parents
- Roles of professionals
- Recruitment
- Involvement



# FIRST LET'S CLARIFY

## Family Engagement vs. Family Involvement

One Involves “Doing to”,  
the other implies  
“Doing with”



- When organizations **engage** parents they lead with the agency's desires and interests
- When organizations **involve** parents they lead with the parent's interests in an effort to **develop** and **sustain** a genuine partnership



# WHY PARENT LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL

- Parents/primary caregivers **provide a perspective** critical to the successful development of effective policies and practices
- Parents/primary caregivers can **identify current gaps** while suggesting possible solutions
- **Communities are strengthened** when the voice of parents is listened to, heard and valued
- Parent voice and leadership is **essential in system transformation** efforts

# KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

## **To Get Better Results And To Change Systems**

- Parents know what works for them
- Parents know what their limitations are
- Parents can keep track of services and changes
- Parent experiences are holistic
- Parents are passionate and will not give up on their children

# WHAT ARE PARENT PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS?

Relationships between parents and professionals built on mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal and characterized by:

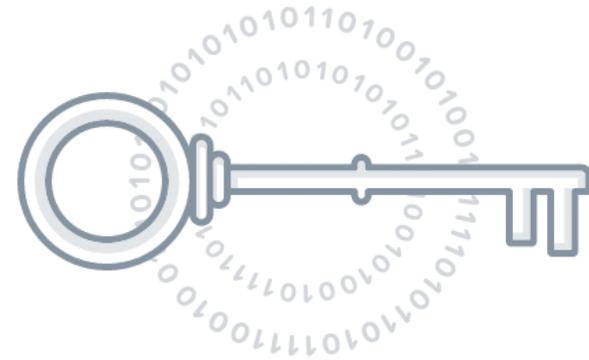
- Working together in the best interest of the child and the family
- Shared respect for the skills and expertise brought to the relationship
- The development of trust as integral to a collaborative relationship
- Open and objective communication and information sharing
- An atmosphere in which the cultural traditions, values, and diversity of families are acknowledged, mutually respected and honored
- A willingness to negotiate
- Participants making decisions together



*invent together*

# KEY PRACTICE ELEMENTS INCLUDE

- Clear, honest, respectful, communication
- Commitment to family-centered practice
- Strengths-based approach
- Shared decision-making and participatory planning
- Individualized service plans
- Praise and recognition of parents (celebrate the wins along the way!)



# BASIC VALUES OF PARENT-PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Mutual respect for people's time
- Genuine concern for one another
- Willingness to be human and vulnerable
- Communication of honest feelings and opinions in a positive, effective manner
- Valuing the opinions of one another
- An awareness of and empathy for the feelings and responsibilities of others
- Willingness to learn from each other
- Continuous desire to improve and learn together



# WAYS TO PROMOTE PARTNERSHIP

- Welcome opportunities to spend time together
- Communicate with respect
- Plan purposeful ways to solve mutual problems together
- Help one another find time to understand the challenges each faces
- Be organized and prepared
- Do nice things for one another, especially on a bad day
- Acknowledge the importance of each other's roles
- Assume positive intent

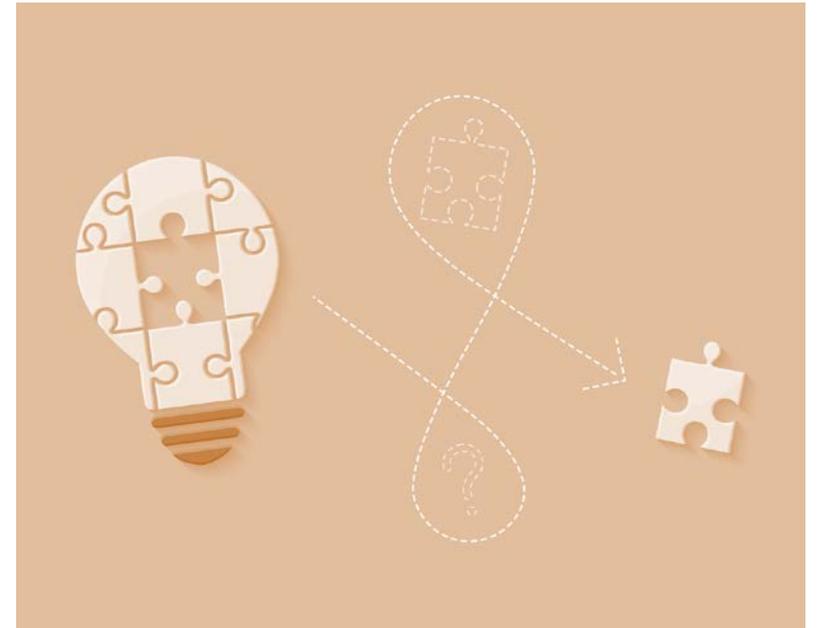


# WAYS TO PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS CON'T

- Have regular meetings or appointments with one another to "keep in touch"
- Engage in informal communication with one another
- Offer solutions to one another instead of criticizing or complaining
- Recognize and utilize the expertise of one another
- Find opportunities to participate together in special events outside the typical work setting
- Model strength and resilience in all interactions

# BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

- Become efficient and effective problem solvers
- Share feelings of accomplishment
- Assume appropriate shared responsibility
- Outward displays of appreciation and feelings of trust for one another
- Recognizing the value each brings to the table
- Recognition that the **“power” resides in the system**



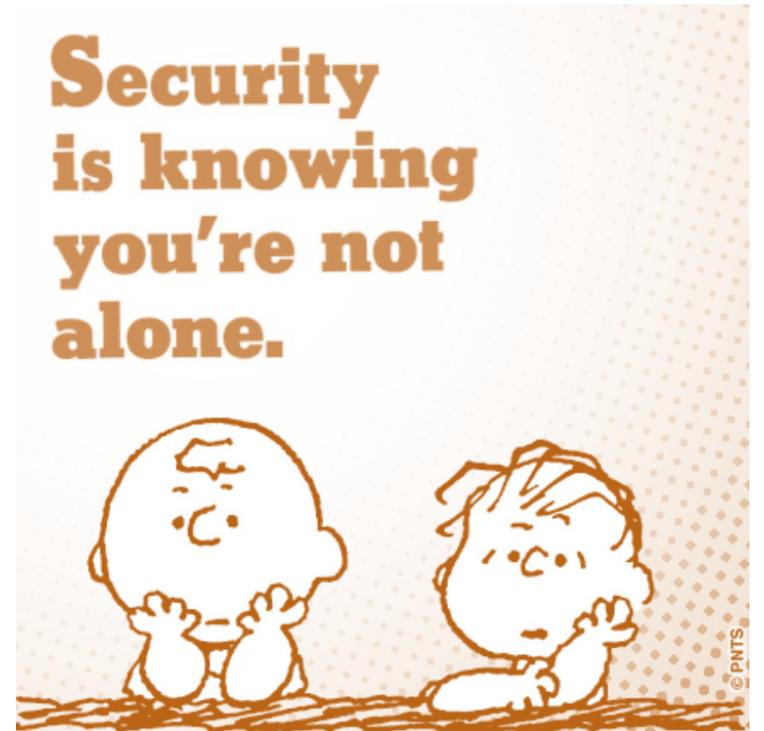
PARENT-PROFESSIONAL  
PARTNERSHIP IS A  
JOURNEY, NOT A  
DESTINATION



## REMEMBER EVERYONE AT THE TABLE

- Wants to feel safe
- Wants to feel valued, respected and competent
- Is there to work toward and has a role to play in achieving positive outcomes for family, youth and peers

**You're Not Alone!**





# “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”

This slogan communicates the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members and the group(s) affected by that policy. It refers especially to national, ethnic, disability-based, and other groups that are marginalized from political, social, and economic opportunities.

The following roles are based on the process used for evaluating services and service delivery in Arizona's System of Care. The descriptions capture both the responsibilities and the strengths parents and professionals bring to that process.



# THE ROLE OF PARENTS

1. To see and hear what a professional might miss in the feedback offered by parents/families
2. To help determine how well a family's needs are being met and what barriers may exist
3. To offer an empathetic observation of words, tones and body language of another parent
4. To ensure that feedback from parents is captured accurately – that their voice is heard
5. To participate in ongoing debriefing

# THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONALS

1. To coordinate the evaluation process, providing any necessary templates, etc.
2. To ensure that feedback from parents and families is accurately recorded during the evaluation process
3. To share with service providers any unmet needs or barriers a family is experiencing that are identified in the evaluation process
4. To accurately report parent/family feedback about supports and services to providers and to answer any questions that arise
5. To participate in ongoing debriefing

# ONGOING DEBRIEFING

- Supervision of and debriefing with evaluators should include opportunities for the parent/caregiver to seek clarification or mention immediate concerns that arise in the process of evaluation
- When work is at an identified stage of completion or necessary pause, be sure to continue engagement with parent/caregiver about their experiences and suggestions about the process



# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Awareness of family issues and needs is increased
- Meets the needs of and achieves positive outcomes for families
- Parents involved in decision making are more satisfied
- Services are better delivered, more cost effective and more culturally sensitive
- Parents active in developing a service plan are more likely to follow and maintain the plan



# RETURN ON INVESTMENT CONT'D

- Planning and policies are improved resulting in more responsive services
- System transformation that is persistent, enduring and even life long
- Future for families where they do not need to rely so heavily on formal systems
- Communities are healthier as their capacities to better support families are enhanced





# TOGETHER WE CAN!

**...achieve greater results**

**...break down barriers**

**...promote positive reinforcement**



...make a

difference

in the community



**Through Teamwork**

**All Things Are Possible!**



# RECRUITMENT AND INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

FOR EVALUATION AND OTHER ROLES



# RECRUITING STRATEGIES

## **How to find parents to serve as Parent Leaders:**

- Word of mouth
- Include current service recipients and organizational volunteers in recruitment efforts
- Ask current and former employees to help spread the word
- Flyers/ads/newsletters
- Job fairs
- Organization's website, social media outlets and external volunteers and/or career websites
- Workshops and training programs
- Work in collaboration with other agencies to identify peers who may be ready for the work

# WHAT PARENTS NEED FROM YOU

1. Develop and communicate clear roles for participation
2. Recruit candidates and assess readiness
3. Provide coaching, training and development for parents
4. Connection to other parents (avoid isolation)
5. Offer compensation
6. Provide supervision, feedback and support
7. Support and flexibility as their journey continues to unfold

thanks!

# KEEPING PARENTS ENGAGED IN THE WORK

- Offer continued support and opportunities to shadow various leadership roles e.g. committees, workgroups, advisory groups
- Notice when the responsibilities or challenges of family are interrupting the work, especially regarding the behavioral health of a child, school or involvement of other child-serving systems
- Offer to shift the role and/or demands when necessary
- Have a 'back-up' plan...because life happens

Life Happens

# INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

## **Individual Commitment**

- See parents as having expertise
- Help identify parent leaders - think recruitment when you're working
- Build their confidence - plant the seeds and encourage parents to consider sharing their stories in order to promote hope, resilience and recovering for others

## **Organizational Commitment**

- Clarify expectations of parent roles with other team members
- Include existing parents in screening and hiring processes
- Build a culture that welcomes and supports parents in partnership

“True family involvement requires an infrastructure that brings family voice to every nook and cranny of a system, ensuring that parents are heard at every table, at all levels where decisions are made about policies, services and supports that affect them and their children.”

Jane Kallal

Parent, Founder, Executive Director

Family Involvement Center

