

Home Visiting Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network 2.0:

*Toolkit to Build Parent Leadership
in Continuous Quality Improvement*



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More Information:

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Contents

<i>Why Parent Leadership?</i>	1
<i>Stages of Parent Leadership</i>	3
<i>Purpose of this Toolkit</i>	3
Continuum Stage 1:	
<i>Assess and increase team's readiness to partner in CQI</i>	4
The Benefits of Parent Leadership in CQI	5
Readiness Assessment for Parent Involvement and Leadership in CQI	6
Empathy-Building Resources	8
Benefits for Parent Leadership in CQI	9
Continuum Stage 2:	
<i>Set partnership goals and build shared understanding and commitment</i>	10
Goal-Setting for Parent Leadership in CQI	11
Action Plan Worksheet for Parent Leadership in CQI	12
Continuum Stage 3:	
<i>Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners</i>	13
Survey Basics	14
Parent Satisfaction Survey	15
Focus Group Basics	17
Roles and Responsibilities of CQI Team Parent Leaders	19
Identifying and Recruiting CQI Parent Leaders	22
CQI Team Parent Leader Application	24
Strategies to Develop and Strengthen Parent Leadership	26

Continuum Stage 4:

<i>Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop Parent Leaders</i>	28
Principles for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders	29
Policies and Procedures for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders	30
Parent Leader Reimbursement Form	35
Basic Budget for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders	37
Sample Agenda: In-Person Orientation to CQI for Parent Leaders	38
Sample Activity: Tree of Life	39
Sample Activity: What is Parent Leadership?	41
CQI Basics for Parent Leaders	44
Sample Evaluation of Parent Leader Orientation	45
Designing Virtual CQI Training for Parent Leaders	47

Continuum Stage 5:

<i>Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain parent leadership</i>	48
Suggested Agenda for First CQI Team Meeting with Parent Leaders	50
Shared Agreement for How to Work Together as a CQI Team	51
Partnership Assessment Tool	52
Ladder of Engagement	54
Creating a Parent Support Network	56
<i>Concluding Thoughts</i>	58
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	58

Introduction: The Parent Leader Continuum

Why Parent Leadership?

Home visiting awardees and local implementing agencies (LIAs) have made great strides toward improving the quality of their home visiting services. There are many opportunities, including the Home Visiting Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Network 2.0 (HV-CollIN 2.0), technical assistance requests through Home Visiting Improvement Action Team (HV-ImpACT) and the Home Visiting Performance Measurement and Continuous Quality Improvement Team (HV-PMCQI), and annual awardee continuous quality improvement plans, to create and foster the infrastructure, capability, and will to improve the quality and outcomes of the home visiting services provided to families.

A basic tenet of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is to include a variety of perspectives—in particular, the perspective of the customer or consumer. Different stakeholders bring unique knowledge and experience that collectively improves the functioning and effectiveness of the services provided.¹ Parents in particular bring lived experience and familiarity with the systems as customers of home visiting, and their contributions to CQI are essential.

But involving participants and parents in CQI represents a shift in philosophy for some programs—from improving services for families to improving services *with families* as partners.²

This shift in philosophy also requires greater transparency of services, skill building, and infrastructure development to create an environment where effective partnerships with parents and families can thrive.

Partnering with participants and their families is not a new concept and is part of a growing movement in health care and social services. There is growing evidence that engaging or partnering with parents accelerates improvement in outcomes.³ Parents are integral to CQI efforts in the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, programs for children with special health care needs through Title V, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Parent involvement in CQI is also included in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct.⁴ The Institute of Medicine names patient-centered care as a key quality dimension of improving health care, and the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has developed a strategic plan around engaging parent leaders.⁵ Leaders in the field, such as Family Voices,⁶ have emerged to build resources and capacity to include the family perspective in improvement.

- ¹ Langley, G. L., Moen, R., Nolan, K. M., Nolan, T. W., Norman, C. L., & Provost L. P. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- ² DeBronkart, D., & Sands, D. Z. (2013). *Let patients help! A "patient engagement" handbook—How doctors, nurses, patients and caregivers can partner for better care*. Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Fritz, C., Jofriet, A., Moore, L., Myers, S., Nocito, S., Opiari-Arrigan, L., & Siedlaczek, R. (2014). *Working together to improve care now*. www.improvecarenow.org
- ³ Batalden, M., Batalden, P., Margolis, P., Seid, M., Armstrong, G., Opiari-Arrigan, L., & Hartung, H. (2015). *BMJ Quality & Safety*, 1–9. doi:10.1136/bmjqs-2015-004315
- ⁴ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2011, May). *Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment*. Retrieved from <https://naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct>
- ⁵ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. (2016, November 12). *Person and Family Engagement Strategic Plan*. Baltimore, MD: Author.
- ⁶ Family Voices [Website]. Retrieved from <http://familyvoices.org/about>

Why Parent Leadership? (cont.)

In addition to those noted above, there are many potential benefits to partnering with parents in CQI:

- Working with parents to collaboratively set goals helps CQI teams prioritize work that provides direct value to participants; reducing efforts that do not add value may reduce costs.
- Transparent data-sharing with participants may build trust and increase their ownership of results.
- New innovations that stem from lived experience may be developed and tested.
- Expanding the team's capacity can help frontline home visitors, who often feel overstretched.
- Participants provide a constant reminder of why home visiting is important, which may motivate teams to sustain their CQI work.

We refer to *parent leadership* throughout this document, but it is important to note that parent leaders may also be grandparents, guardians, and foster parents—anyone who is in a parenting role and has experience with and knowledge about using home visiting resources or services to strengthen their family. Therefore, the term parent leadership is meant to be all-inclusive and to encompass the many people who can speak from the perspective of a parent.



Stages of Parent Leadership

Parent involvement and parent leadership in CQI is both a skill set and a culture that needs to be intentionally developed. This toolkit breaks down five stages in which awardees and LIAs can integrate parent leadership into their CQI initiatives and then sustain parents' involvement. The continuum ranges from early readiness to partner in CQI to long-term strategies for bolstering the infrastructure and team functioning needed for parent leadership to continue to flourish.

This Continuum of Parent Leadership is adapted from a scale created by Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Medical Center⁷ and was featured in the 2017 *Partnering With Families in Continuous Quality Improvement: The Maternal,*

Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program tip sheet; it has since been further developed.⁸ These stages are not linear; rather, they suggest various approaches to engaging parents in CQI work. For example, teams with parent leaders who actively lead CQI initiatives may still need shorter-term strategies to learn from a broader proportion of participants, or medium-term strategies to recruit additional partners. Using multiple strategies also creates a variety of ways for parents to participate. Not all parent leaders will want to participate regularly on a CQI team or actively lead an initiative but may still want to contribute. Offering multiple opportunities and ways to participate allows parent leaders to better match their interests and skills to different needs and activities.

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Assess and increase team's readiness to partner in CQI	Set partnership goals and build shared understanding, and commitment	Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners	Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop Parent Leaders	Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain Parent Leadership

Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit for parent leadership in CQI was developed to accelerate the efforts of awardees and LIAs to successfully incorporate parent leadership into their CQI efforts. The tools and information provided here come from both within and outside of home visiting and are intended to be easily adapted for your context and current needs. These materials are directly relevant to LIA CQI teams; awardees can also apply them to their own improvement efforts and their leadership in supporting LIAs in CQI.

Please note that this toolkit does not cover CQI methods; these are clearly described in the [HV-ColIN 2.0 Model for Improvement eLearning series](#) and in the [Design Options for Home Visiting Evaluation CQI Toolkit](#).

This toolkit is not intended to be all-inclusive but rather to provide you with a set of materials for getting started. You can adapt and modify these materials for your local context and to meet your specific needs.

Although the materials are categorized by the five different stages of parent leadership, keep in mind that you will likely want to use a variety of tools and strategies to build robust parent leadership in your organization. It will be helpful to visit this toolkit regularly as your team advances along the continuum; in each stage, new tools and concepts will be relevant to your efforts to partner with parents in CQI initiatives.

⁷ Myers, S., Powell, J., Fritz, C., Jofriet, A., Moore, L., Monti, L., & Oipari, L. (2015). *Co-production change package: Catalyzing community input v3.0*.
⁸ Zeribi, K., Mackrain, M., Arbour, M., & O'Carroll, K. (2017, August). *Partnering with families in continuous quality improvement: The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program*. OPRE Report #2017-47. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Produced by James Bell Associates.

Continuum Stage 1:

Assess and increase team’s readiness to partner in CQI

The tools in this section—a summary of why parent leadership is important, and a readiness assessment—will help get your team on board with the idea of partnering with parents and more fully understand your starting point.

- TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION**
- The Benefits of Parent Leadership in CQI
 - Readiness Assessment for Parent Involvement and Leadership in CQI



CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN CQI

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Assess and increase team’s readiness to partner in CQI	Set partnership goals and build shared understanding, and commitment	Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners	Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop Parent Leaders	Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain Parent Leadership

The Benefits of Parent Leadership in CQI

What is Parent Leadership in CQI?

Parent leaders have a unique perspective and valuable expertise to offer. parent leadership in CQI is developed when parents are able to contribute their knowledge and skills; offer input and feedback regarding various short-, medium-, and long-term CQI strategies; and have a meaningful role in CQI projects. parent leadership is successfully achieved when parents and professionals build effective partnerships that combine professional knowledge and expertise with lived experience and expertise.

Who are Parent Leaders?

Parent leaders may be parents; they may also be grandparents, guardians, and/or foster parents who are in a parenting role, have experience

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

These benefits can be helpful talking points that you can customize as you explore the idea of parent leadership with others in your organization. Awardees may find this list helpful in building parent leadership in their state, territory, or tribe and in encouraging LIAs to build parent leadership. LIAs can use this list to encourage their senior leaders, stakeholders, and other CQI team members to support and strengthen parent leadership.

with and knowledge about using resources or services that strengthen their family, and can speak from the perspective of a “parent.”

What are the Benefits of Parent Leadership in CQI?⁹

Benefits to parents who participate:

- Parents gain a better understanding of the system
- Parents appreciate being listened to and having their opinions valued
- Parents can become advocates in their community
- Parents learn new skills
- Parents develop relationships with other team members and build their sense of community
- Parents provide a critical feedback loop

Benefits to the program:

- Parents as team members can lead to increased parent satisfaction with services
- Parents bring an additional and important perspective to the work
- Parents help build neighborhood and community connections
- Parents help brainstorm the reasons that a problem exists and solutions that can be tested and help accelerate change
- Parents help ensure that materials are parent-friendly
- Parents can support the team in the testing process and help the team study the results
- Parents ensure that materials utilized are parent friendly
- Is considered, “Best Practice” in CQI

⁹ Adapted from VanDerMoere, R., & Dietrich, B. (2016, September). *Parent Role in Continuous Quality Improvement*. Presentation at the Michigan Home Visiting Initiative Parent Mini-Conference, Lansing, MI.

Readiness Assessment for Parent Involvement and Leadership in CQI

How to Use this Tool

This assessment helps CQI team members evaluate their feelings about partnership with parent leaders and their organizational readiness to do so. Ideally, each CQI team member and other partners would complete the assessment individually and then compare results, which will give you a more comprehensive view of the team's readiness. The results of this assessment should be used as a conversation guide among your team members to identify opportunities and areas for improvement before you embark on the journey of partnering with parent leaders.

Personal Readiness to Partner with Parents in CQI	1 Not at All	2 A Bit	3 Neutral	4 Yes, with Reservations	5 Absolutely!	Comments (Optional)
I believe that parents bring unique expertise to a CQI team						
I believe that parent perspectives in terms of improving services are as important as my own						
I can clearly state what is expected of parents in their role on a CQI team						
I feel comfortable sharing data transparently with parent leaders						
I feel comfortable talking about our problems openly with parent leaders						
I am willing to test ideas to improve services that parents contribute						
I feel comfortable with parents leading initiatives as part of our CQI work						
Leadership Readiness to Partner with Parents in CQI	1 Not at All	2 A Bit	3 Starting	4 In Progress	5 Strength!	Comments (Optional)
Our mission statement clearly commits to parent leadership						
Leaders in our state, territory, or tribe believe that parent leadership in CQI efforts is a priority						

Readiness Assessment for Parent Involvement and Leadership in CQI

Leadership Readiness to Partner with Parents in CQI	1 Not at All	2 A Bit	3 Starting	4 In Progress	5 Strength!	Comments (Optional)
Leaders model that the opinions of parent leaders should influence policy and priorities						
Personnel are expected (i.e., it is part of their job description) to collaborate with parent leaders to improve quality						
Infrastructure to Support Parent Leadership in CQI	1 Not at All	2 A Bit	3 Starting	4 In Progress	5 Strength!	Comments (Optional)
Our state, territory, or tribe has advisory boards or councils to enable and support parent leadership						
Our state, territory, or tribal programs include role descriptions for parent leaders to collaborate in CQI						
Financial resources have been committed to infrastructure or opportunities to build parent leadership						
There are parents ready to work with our state, territory, or tribe to improve the quality of our services						
There are information or communication mechanisms to share CQI data with parents						
Our state, territory, or tribe has training programs to orient parent leaders to their role and to teach them about CQI						
There are opportunities for parent leaders to meet and to learn from one another's CQI experiences						
Technology or other supports are available to encourage and enable parent leaders to participate in CQI meetings						

Zeribi, K., Mackrain, M., Arbour, M., & O'Carroll, K. (2017). Partnering with families in continuous quality improvement: The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. OPRE Report #2017-47. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Produced by James Bell Associates.

Empathy Building Resources

Empathy researcher Brené Brown¹⁰ describes four main attributes of empathy:

- Seeing the world as others see it
- Being nonjudgmental
- Understanding another's feelings
- Communicating understanding of another's feelings

There are a variety of resources on developing empathy in order to foster meaningful communication. Here are three we recommend:

- This short video, Brené Brown on Empathy (<https://youtu.be/1Ewwgu369Jw>), is a great way to launch a discussion on empathy-building with your team. Watch it together during your team meeting (or ask team members to watch it before the meeting) and discuss how empathy-building might help your team prepare to welcome parent leaders.
- Improv games and exercises are a fun way to improve communication and empathy—and they are also great team-building activities! Check out these five improv exercises suggested by The Emotion Machine, an online resource on psychology and self-improvement (<http://www.theemotionmachine.com/5-improvisation-exercises-for-improving-communication-skills/>).

HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

Empathy-building is an important building block of meaningful communication and relationships. Building empathy is also a great way to increase a team's readiness for authentic partnerships—not just with families, but also with those who work in the home visiting and early childhood system. These resources will help your team learn more about the importance of empathy and begin to develop this skill.

- Walk a Mile Cards (<http://walkamilecards.com/>) were designed to build empathy for those with specific diseases or medical conditions. However, you can build on this model, using real scenarios from multiple perspectives in your organization—home visitors, supervisors, family members, and other stakeholders—to create your own set of cards. This could be a great empathy-building activity for team meetings, learning sessions, or other events, helping to keep lived experiences at the center of what we do.

10 Thieda, K. (2014, August 12). Brené Brown on Empathy vs. Sympathy: Empathy never starts with the words "at least." *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/partnering-in-mental-health/201408/bren-brown-empathy-vs-sympathy-0>

Benefits for Parent Leadership in CQI

Understanding the benefits for parent leadership in CQI is an important building block for creating team commitment. An intentional dialog is a great way to increase a team's readiness for authentic partnerships—not just with families, but also with those who work in the home visiting and early childhood system. This process will help your team learn more about the importance of why you would want to include parent leaders on your CQI team.

There are many ways to have a dialog regarding the benefits for including parent leaders in CQI, but we recommend the following four step process:

- Step 1:** Set aside time for team members to engage in dialogue regarding the team's goals for parent leadership. Identify a facilitator and a recorder for this dialogue.
- Step 2:** Begin by reviewing: The Benefits of Parent Leadership in CQI on page 5.
- Step 3:** Conduct the dialogue session.
- Step 4:** Come to a consensus regarding the most important goals.

Note: *Dialogue* is intended to create shared understanding and meaning. Dialogue tends to have a slower pace as group members seek to understand one another's perspectives and viewpoints and deeply listen to one another's ideas; the conversation flows, and judgments, opinions, and disagreements are suspended.

- Which **benefits** move us closer to the change or improvements we want to see?
- Which **benefits** could make a real difference and impact in our work?
- Which **benefits** generate key results?
- Which **benefits** are consistent with the purpose of our CQI work?

Continuum Stage 2:

Set partnership goals and build shared understanding and commitment

This stage offers your team the opportunity to pause and reflect on what you learned from your readiness assessment, empathy building and benefit prioritization activities.

You can determine your goals for building parent leadership and identify and access the resources you need to accomplish those goals. Just as your team sets goals for improvement, it is also valuable to set goals for what you hope to accomplish regarding parent leadership in your CQI efforts. For example, one team may already have some parent leaders and now aims to diversify the group by recruiting additional partners. Another team may be just starting their efforts to build parent leadership and is still working on team members' readiness.

TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION:

- Goal-Setting for Parent Leadership in CQI
- Action Plan Worksheet for Parent Leadership in CQI



CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN CQI

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Assess and increase team's readiness to partner in CQI	Set partnership goals and build shared understanding, and commitment	Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners	Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop Parent Leaders	Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain Parent Leadership

Goal-Setting for Parent Leadership in CQI

This process is an opportunity for the CQI team to pause and reflect on what they believe are the key activities that need to build parent leadership in CQI team for home visiting system.

Steps for Process:

1. Staff either lead or identify a facilitator and flip chart recorder
2. Conduct a Brainstorming activity with CQI team members identifying the key benefits of parent leadership in CQI that are important to the local community's or region's home visiting system (Directions follow)
3. Conduct a Prioritization Process to identify the top two or three CQI team goals for parent leadership in CQI (Directions follow)

Brainstorming – Its purpose is to generate many positive and possible ideas.

Directions to consider:

- Define the subject Key Local Leadership Group (LLG) you want to sustain.
- Pause and give everyone a minute or two to think
- Invite members to call out ideas
- No discussion
- No judgment or criticism
- Build upon each other's ideas
- The more ideas the better
- Record ideas on a flip chart

Decide as a group which benefits are the most important for your team, and write a goal statement for each one:

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

You will use these goal statements when you create your action plan.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Just as your team sets goals for improvement, it is also valuable to set goals for what you want to accomplish regarding parent leadership in your CQI efforts. Recruiting multiple parent leaders is a good way to ensure continuity and to maintain ongoing parent leadership.

Prioritization – the process to select the top two or three goals for developing parent leadership in CQI.

One technique you could consider:

- Distribute three stickers to each member
- Instruct members to vote for their top three goals by placing their stickers next to their preferred choice on the flip chart of brainstormed ideas
- The top two or three vote getters are selected are you CQI team's priorities for developing parent leadership in CQI

Action Plan Worksheet for Parent Leadership in CQI

How to Use this Tool

Creating a shared action plan ensures that all team members are on the same page regarding the goals for parent leadership. It can also help to surface underlying assumptions about the

timeline, resources needed, and individuals responsible for moving the work forward.

Complete this worksheet for each goal your team identified.

GOAL:

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES OR ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Continuum Stage 3:

Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners

This section of the toolkit provides short-term strategies and tools to help your team begin planning for parent leadership by gathering information about your community through surveys and focus groups.

If you are not using surveys and focus groups already, these are great ways to learn more about your larger population on a topic of interest. Even when you have active parent leadership on your CQI team, surveys and focus groups can be a great strategy to explore multiple perspectives and learn from diverse viewpoints. Engaging parent leaders in co-designing these tools is a great way to involve them and benefit from their knowledge and unique expertise!



TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION:

Tools for learning about your community:

- Survey Basics
- Parent Satisfaction Survey
- Focus Group Basics

Tools for building relationships and recruiting parent partners:

- Roles and Responsibilities of CQI Team Parent Leaders
- Identifying and Recruiting CQI Parent Leaders
- CQI Team Parent Leader Application
- Strategies to Develop and Strengthen Parent Leadership

This section also includes tools for recruiting parent leaders, including a role description and an application, which you can adapt for your context. Recruitment should be ongoing to ensure continuity in the parent leadership on your team and that your team has an opportunity to continue to learn from multiple perspectives.

CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN CQI

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Survey Basics

A well-executed survey can provide you with a wealth of information concerning the parents and families you serve.

Simple steps to design a survey:

1. Establish the goals of the survey. What you want to learn?
2. Determine your target audience. From whom do you want to learn?
3. Create your questionnaire, keeping your goals in mind as you develop the questions.
4. Pre-test the questionnaire, with members of your target audience, if practical.

Guidelines for writing survey questions:

- Start with easy questions.
- Use a logical order.
- Include details to build trust; for example, note that answers will be kept confidential (if this is the case) and explain how the information will be used.
- Remember that less is more. Keeping surveys short and to the point (e.g., 10 or less items) is preferable.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

A survey is a data collection tool commonly used to gather information from individuals. Survey data can help your team take an unbiased approach to decision-making; rather than base decisions on assumptions and “gut instincts,” you can base them on your survey results and the objective information provided. Even if your parent leaders are able to provide consistent feedback, surveys continue to be a good way to learn about your broader population and to ensure that the views of multiple families are represented. It is good to involve parent leaders in creating and adapting surveys, as they can provide insight into the questions asked and the data collection methods.

For parent leaders on the CQI team:

- Involve them in the survey design. Do they have any thoughts about what to include and whom to reach out to?
- Seek their advice about the best time and place to administer the survey and the best method for doing so.
- Have them read all the questions ahead of time to ensure their clarity and appropriateness for the target audience.
- Brainstorm with them around problems or issues that might arise.

Parent Satisfaction Survey

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

A satisfaction survey is a great way to learn from your clients how they feel about the home visiting services they receive. Satisfaction surveys can be especially useful if you use them consistently as one way to assess service quality. For example, your organization could regularly survey a random sample of families who have receive home visits. Again, it's good to involve parent leaders in the survey design, as they can provide insight into the questions asked and the data collection methods.



Parent Satisfaction Survey

Thank you for participating in

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and let us know about your experience. Your input is very important to us and will help us provide a quality experience for all the parents and families we serve.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please check the corresponding box.)

6 = Strongly Agree **5** = Agree **4** = Somewhat Agree **3** = Somewhat Disagree **2** = Disagree **1** = Strongly Disagree

Questions	6	5	4	3	2	1
I appreciate the services my family receives.						
I feel welcomed and supported by the staff.						
In the last year, I have had the opportunity to learn new things about my community and care of my child(ren).						
I am involved in the decisions that affect my family.						
I understand the importance of parenting in my child's growth and development.						
The staff of this program make me feel that my role is important and valuable.						
I am satisfied with the opportunities my home visiting program offers for my participation.						
I have been kept informed about what is going on with my child.						
I have received the support and guidance I need.						
I feel a sense of confidence and accomplishment as a parent.						
My participation has helped me develop new job-related skills.						
I have become more involved in other opportunities in the community.						
I would like to explore additional opportunities.						
I would be interested in becoming a parent leader with the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team.						

Please list three things we can improve to make your experience more meaningful:

What experiences had the greatest impact on you and your family?

Do you have any additional comments?

If you are interested in joining our CQI team, please provide your name, email address, and phone number, and we will be in touch with you very soon.

Name

Email

Phone

Planning and Preparing for a Focus Group

1. Identify what you want to learn. For example, your team may use a focus group to learn how to improve relationships between families and home visitors, or to explore how to discuss breastfeeding with families. Ask yourself: What problem or need will be addressed by the information gathered during this session?

Carefully develop five to six questions. Here are some very general examples to get you started:

- How have you been involved in home visiting services?
 - Think back over the past year about the things that (name of organization) did and the services they provided. What went particularly well?
 - What could (name of organization) improve?
 - If you were recommending a friend to participate in this home visiting program (name of organization)'s, what would you say in the invitation?
 - Suppose that you were in charge and could make one change that would make the program better. What would you do?
 - Is there anything you want the home visiting program to know that hasn't already been mentioned?
2. Consider offering attendees an honorarium to offset their child care and transportation costs. This is an especially good way to capture knowledge from families with economic challenges; it also shows that you value their insights and experience.

On the Day of the Focus Group

1. Set up the room. Configure the chairs so that all attendees can see one another. A circle or semi-circle is ideal.
2. Provide name tags and pens.
3. Optional: Set out the refreshments.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Focus groups are a powerful means to evaluate or gather input on services and to test new ideas. Basically, focus groups are interviews of 6–10 people at the same time. You can gather a great deal of information in a short amount of time during a focus group session. It is great to involve parent leaders in designing the focus group questions; a parent leader might also assist with facilitation. (Parent attendees might speak more freely and openly to another parent.)

3. Choose a setting that will be comfortable for your audience and relatively easy to get to.
4. Choose a time that will be conducive to a variety of participants and schedule the focus group. Plan for the session to last approximately one and a half hours.
5. Invite participants. Ideally, focus groups comprise 6–10 attendees who have similar roles in a program.
6. Plan the session and create an outline. A focus group agenda typically includes a welcome, a review of the agenda, a review of the goals for the group, a review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, and a wrap-up.
7. Plan to record the session or line up a recorder to take notes. Don't count on your memory!
8. If possible, plan to offer refreshments or a light meal to participants.

¹ Adapted from Krueger, R. A. (2002). *Designing and conducting focus group interviews*. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota.

Focus Group Basics

Facilitating the Focus Group

The facilitator is a neutral listener who gathers the ideas and information generated by the group. The facilitator also ensures that multiple voices are heard—encourage all members to participate as much as possible. Consider using a round-table approach: moving in one direction around the table, give each person a minute to answer the question. This is one way to ensure that no one dominates the discussion.

1. Introduce yourself and (if applicable) the co-facilitator and/or recorder.
2. Explain that the recorder will take notes during the session. Or: Obtain permission to record the session.
3. Establish ground rules, for example:
 - One person speaks at a time
 - Don't be afraid to build on one another's ideas
 - Treat all ideas generated with respect—this doesn't necessarily mean that you agree with them
 - Put cell phones on mute
4. Go over the agenda and the goals for the group.
5. Pose each question to the group. Facilitate discussion around the answers to each question.
6. Before moving to the next question, carefully reflect a summary of what you heard. (Option: Have the recorder do this.)
7. Close the session: Tell members that they will receive a copy of the report generated from their answers, thank them for their participation, and adjourn the session.

Immediately After the Focus Group

1. Verify that detailed notes were taken throughout the session and ensure that the pages are numbered. Be sure to record where and when the session took place.
2. Clarify any confusion, flesh out any notes that seem incomplete, etc.
3. Write down important observations you made during the session. For example, how would you characterize the nature of your group's participation? Were there any surprises during the session?

As soon as possible after the session, develop the written report and distribute it to participants and your team.

Roles and Responsibilities of a CQI Team Parent Leader

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

This section presents important information for potential parent leaders about CQI, the role of a parent leader in CQI, and expectations for participation. You can use it to create a flyer, brochure, or PowerPoint presentation, or simply use it as talking points. Please note that this is intended as a starting place for your organization—feel free to adapt or expand on the information here.



¹ Adapted from Michigan Home Visiting Initiative (MHVI). (2017). *Kent County Local Leadership Group Parent Representative Policy Manual*. https://public.mphi.org/sites/mihomevisiting.org/mhvi/LLG_Resources/General_Documents_and_Resources_from_ECIC/Continuum_Resources_from_ECIC/LLG_Parent_Representative_Policy_Kent.docx

Roles and Responsibilities of a CQI Team Parent Leader

Purpose of Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement, or CQI, is a deliberate and defined process that organizations use to reduce waste, increase efficiency¹¹, and build satisfaction, both internal (employees) and external (customers). It is an ongoing effort to improve efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and outcomes to support an organization in achieving its mission.

CQI is based on the Model for Improvement¹² (developed by Associates in Process Improvement) and is driven by three key questions that guide a program's effort to improve outcomes:

What are we trying to accomplish? (our aim statement)

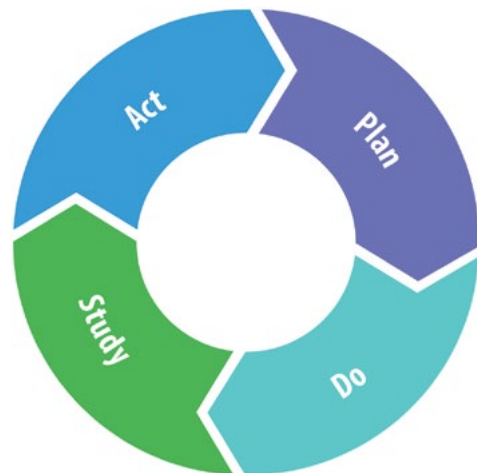
How will we know that a change is an improvement? (measurement to assess whether improvement has occurred)

What changes can we make that will result in improvement? (new strategies to accomplish our aim)

The context for this effort is rooted in four basic principles¹³:

- Develop a strong customer focus
- Continually improve all processes
- Involve employees
- Use both data and team knowledge to improve decision-making

The CQI team is made up of a small, diverse group of people who set aims, frequently learn from data, and test changes via Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles. Ideally, an interdisciplinary team consists of a lead (who can provide direction, offer support, and eliminate barriers), front-line staff, at least two parents (customers of our services), and a staff member with data and technology expertise. Teams often add additional staff for specific parts of the project.



11 Riley, W.J., et al., Defining quality improvement in public health. *J Public Health Manag Pract*, 2010. 16(1): p. 5-7

12 Langley, G. J., Moen, R. D., Nolan, K. M., Nolan, T. W., Norman, C. L., & Provost, L. P. (2009). *The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

13 Brassard, M., & Ritter, D. (2007). *The Public Health Memory Jogger II: A Pocket Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement and Effective Planning*. Salem, NH: Goal/QPC.

Roles and Responsibilities of a CQI Team Parent Leader

Role of a Parent Leader

Parent leaders bring a valuable perspective to the CQI team and the work. Your ideas, experience, and expertise help shape every step of a CQI project—from setting priorities and crafting the aim statement to assessing impact and identifying potential new changes.

Parents are considered essential allies and partners in planning, implementation, and evaluation throughout the CQI process. Your role, along with other parents, is to represent families who receive the services of _____. You will bring information to the CQI team from the groups in your community with whom you are involved, and report back to those groups about the work we are doing and the resources available to them. Your role may also include serving on subcommittees or workgroups.

Requirements and Expectations of Parent Leaders

Program participation: A parent leader is a person whose family is participating or has participated (received services within the last two years) in the _____ program.

Meeting attendance: Your voice is valuable, and your presence at meetings is important—not only so that your perspective is heard, but also so that you stay up to date on the project. Meetings are held only once per month, and a lot happens between meetings!

Expectations: The Parent Leader Will:

- Attempt to attend all monthly meetings, communicating with _____ when unable to attend
- Attend a minimum of 90% of meetings in the calendar year
- Attempt to attend all workgroup or subcommittee meetings, communicating with other members when unable to attend
- Attend 80% of all agreed-on workgroup or subcommittee meetings in the calendar year
- Arrive on time or early to meetings and other commitments
- Respond to requested surveys, and provide feedback
- Share your perspective as a parent or family member
- Maintain an open line of communication with professionals and other parent leaders
- Partner with others as needed
- Serve as an active voice in CQI meetings by participating in discussion, asking questions, offering feedback and insight on _____ services, etc.
- Serve as a community liaison by providing insight and information and disseminating group information to personal networks
- Ensure confidentiality of all CQI information
- Positively represent _____ at local and state meetings, conferences, and presentations
- Communicate with _____ as barriers to active participation arise; work together to overcome said barriers, and provide feedback on the experience

Identifying and Recruiting CQI Parent Leaders

Basic Mindsets and Motivators that Attract Parent Leaders

Generally, parents will self-assess if they believe they have something to contribute to your efforts and if it is meaningful for them personally. Parent leaders are often motivated by three factors¹⁴:

- Building social connections or networks
- Developing personal skills and having access to information, resources, and/or training
- Working toward a meaningful mission—a chance to create a better future for all parents and families

Effective Practices for Recruiting Parent Leaders¹⁵

- Using Parent Satisfaction Surveys (see the example provided in this toolkit on page 16)
- Reaching out to focus group members
- Disseminating information about your work to the newsletters or email blasts of organizations and networks that include your parent and family customer base
- Involving front-line service providers who have relationships with parents
- Engaging parent-to-parent networks, particularly those who have relationships with your targeted parent group

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

The information in this document will help your organization determine what might attract parent leaders to your CQI efforts and help you identify potential parent leaders. It is helpful to have a good number of parent leaders on board; your CQI efforts will benefit from multiple perspectives and having several parent leaders will ensure continuity if there is turnover in this role. Even if you have one or more active parent leaders, these practices are good to continue over time!

Qualities to Look for in Parent Leaders

- Experience with the services you offer
- Diverse experiences and perspectives
- A passion for improvement and change
- A sense of commitment
- Strong follow-through
- The ability to speak with candor in a group
- The ability to use personal experience constructively
- The ability to think beyond their own experience
- Connections to other parents
- The ability to hear differing opinions
- A schedule that allows them to participate in CQI project meetings
- The ability to respect the shared agreements and procedures of the work group
- The ability to receive constructive feedback
- A willingness to act when needed

¹⁴ Fortune, B., Wingard, H. (2015). Is there a Hole in my Bucket? Understanding Parent Engagement and Key Drivers to Success: Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

¹⁵ Siracusa, C. M., Weiland, J. L., Acton, J. D., Chima, A. K., Chini, B. A., Andrea, J. H., & McPhail, G. L. (2014, April). The impact of transforming healthcare delivery on cystic fibrosis outcomes: A decade of quality improvement at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. *BMJ Quality & Safety*, 23, 156–163.

Identifying and Recruiting CQI Parent Leaders

Success Strategies

1. Establish financial support to enable the participation of parents with economic challenges. (Financial support of parent leaders is covered in more detail in Continuum Stage 4: Medium-Term Strategies on page 29).
2. Meet at a time and in a location that best fit parents' needs but can still work for the professional staff members. While virtual meeting options may not build relationships as quickly as in-person meetings, this can make frequent meetings more feasible for off-site team members.
3. Typically, having one parent leader join your team doesn't work in the long run. Your odds will increase if you have at least two parent leaders on your team.
4. Provide training and orientation for new parent leaders (see the suggested agenda in Continuum Stage 4: Medium-Term Strategies on page 38).
5. If possible, pair each parent leader with a member of the team who can be a mentor.
6. Parent leaders will grow and develop in this role. Be prepared to support them over time in feeling accepted, encouraged, and reinforced as members of the team, and offer opportunities for leadership and growth whenever possible.
7. It is often helpful to meet with parents ahead of the CQI meeting to discuss the topics for the upcoming agenda, and to hold a short debrief following the meeting.
8. Recognize parent leaders for their successes and accomplishments.

CQI Team Parent Leader Application

Thank you for expressing interest in being a parent leader on our CQI team. Parent leaders bring a valuable perspective. Your ideas, experience, and expertise will help shape every step of our work to improve home visiting services for all families, from setting priorities to assessing the impact of our efforts and identifying potential new changes.

Parent leaders will increase our capacity to improve outcomes for families within HV-CoIIN 2.0 in several ways:

- Collaborating in designing and testing innovations to improve care and outcomes for families
- Communicating with the community to ensure that parents' and families' perspectives are appreciated and will be incorporated into improvement efforts
- Facilitating outreach and education to families to increase their involvement in improving care and outcomes for all families

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

You can edit or adapt this template to meet the needs of your organization and the population served. These questions provide you with a script and potential content that you can adapt in different ways to reach out to potential parent leaders.

Please answer a few questions so that we can understand more about your interest in participating on our CQI team as a parent leader.

1. Tell us about any experience you have in being a parent leader on a team.

2. Give an example of something that worked well for you and your family in terms of receiving our services.

3. Tell us about a time when our services didn't work well for you and your family.

CQI Team Parent Leader Application

4. What motivates you to want to join our CQI team?

5. Give an example of a time when you worked with a group to solve a problem.

6. Do you see any challenges to partnering with our team that we should address in advance?

7. What days of the week are best for you to work with our team?

8. What times during the week are best for you to have a two-hour meeting with our team?

Please provide the following contact information:

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Strategies to Develop and Strengthen Parent Leadership

The goal of home visiting is to engage parents from the beginning and to surround them with support. As home visiting agencies create the infrastructure to engage parent leaders, they will need to recognize and encourage the development of leadership qualities early in the enrollment phase of the program (as parents often self-identify that they are interested in leadership activities), provide parents with meaningful opportunities to contribute, and work to sustain their engagement and participation in the home visiting program.

- The parent–home visitor relationship begins in the enrollment phase of the home visiting program. On the first home visit, the home visitor will inform the parent that this is a two-way relationship—a partnership—and that the parent’s voice matters.
- The home visitor will let parents know that there will be ongoing opportunities to provide feedback to make sure that the home visits are meeting their needs.
- The home visitor needs to factor in each family’s strengths and characteristics, rather than apply the same approach to all.
- Developing a welcoming program greatly influences family engagement. The home visitor should prepare a welcome packet for all new families, making sure that written materials represent the family’s culture and language, and including a picture of the home visiting team.
- The home visitor should develop a script that references future opportunities for parent involvement with the home visiting program.
- The home visitor will let parents know that the home visiting program values parent input and participation.
- The home visitor will seek to understand and acknowledge both verbal and nonverbal communication techniques.
- Using a strengths-based approach at every home visit will help the parent identify their own self-efficacy—an important factor in their future involvement with parent leadership activities in the home visiting program.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

These tips offered here can help your team convey to parents the importance of their leadership throughout home visiting, starting with enrollment in services. A parent leader may begin by focusing on their own services and eventually develop interest in leading the improvement of services for others.

Supervisors will regularly ask home visitors during weekly one-on-one conferences to identify potential parents to recruit as parent leaders. The goal is to build a cadre of parent leaders to sustain parent leadership as attrition occurs.

Additional Resources

Here are several additional resources for engaging families in home visiting services:

- Engaging Parents, Developing Leaders: A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Nonprofits and Schools by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2016 (<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-EngagingParentsDevelopingLeaders-2016.pdf>)
- How to Engage Families in Service by the Best Start Resource Centre, 2011 (https://www.beststart.org/resources/howto/pdf/BS_Engage_Families_fnl.pdf)
- Family Engagement Guide, the Role of Family Health Partners in Quality Improvement within A Pediatric Medical Home, (n.d.) <https://www.nichq.org/resource/family-engagement-guide-role-family-health-partners-quality-improvement-within-pediatric>
- For Cultural Considerations, see Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Culturally and Linguistically Competent Service Delivery Systems for Children With Special Health Needs and their Families Implications for Policy Makers and Administrators https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/Getting_Started_CSHN_2003.pdf

Continuum Stage 4:

Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop parent leaders

When recruiting parent leaders to join a CQI team, you'll need to have an infrastructure and procedures in place to support them; these are important factors in attracting parent leaders who actually reflect the parents and families that you serve. The tools in this section will help your organization develop the necessary infrastructure to grow and develop parent leadership in the medium to longer term.

To the best of your ability, you will want to attract parent leaders who represent the diverse demographics of the customers that you serve. In your outreach efforts, pay attention to racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, geographic, and gender diversity.

It is unrealistic for a system to assume that parents who are economically challenged can expend family monies to volunteer their efforts, no matter how passionate they are about the work. It is also important to note that the professional members of the team are all paid for their time and expertise.

This toolkit includes a number of documents to aid you in your recruitment and engagement efforts. However, these are just a starting point. Use your imagination: What could your organization do or create to help parent leadership flourish?

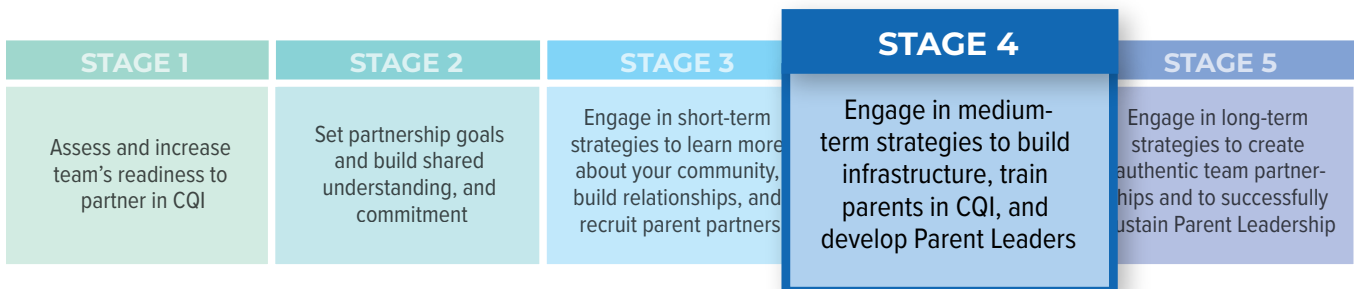
TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION:

- Tools to Build Infrastructure for Parent Leadership in CQI:
- Principles for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders
- Policies and Procedures for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders
- Parent Leader Reimbursement Form
- Basic Budget for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders
- Tools for training parents in CQI and developing Parent Leaders:
- Signing Virtual CQI Training for Parent Leaders

Note: Four tools from the previous section may also be useful at this stage of the continuum:

- Roles and Responsibilities of CQI Team Parent Leaders on page 19
- Identifying and Recruiting CQI Parent Leaders on page 22
- CQI Team Parent Leader Application on page 24
- Strategies to Develop and Strengthen Parent Leadership on page 26

CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN CQI



Principles for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

Financial support is an essential component of the infrastructure needed to grow and sustain parent leadership. As a first step in creating clear financial systems, it is important to have a shared understanding of the principles behind offering financial support to the parent leaders on your CQI team.

- Parents are considered essential allies and partners in CQI projects.
- Diversity is honored and respected. Parents bring many diverse perspectives and experiences, and they are welcomed and encouraged to share their ideas and input.
- To the best of our ability, parent leaders should represent the demographics of our customers. Recruitment efforts should include parents who reflect the race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, geographic areas, and gender diversity of the families served by our program.
- Procedures need to be in place to acknowledge and accommodate possible economic challenges that a family may face.
- It is unrealistic for a system to assume that parents who are economically challenged can expend family monies to volunteer their efforts, no matter how passionate they are. The experience and expertise that all team members bring is of great value. Just as the professional team members are paid for their time and expertise, parent leaders will likewise be compensated for their expenses, time, and efforts for the project.
- When recruiting parents for CQI activities, consider what it will take for this parent to fully participate. When compensating or reimbursing parents for their participation, diversity in needs should be recognized and responded to in an individualized and creative manner.

Policies and Procedures for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders

As you strive to increase parent leadership, it will be important to work with senior leaders in your organization to plan for more financial supports. This is also an important role for an awardee, who can create clear financial systems for LIAs to access financial mechanisms to grow and sustain parent leaders in CQI.

Note: If these policies and procedures do not adequately support a parent's efforts to participate, identify a member of your team who can discuss other options and ideas for how to best provide the needed support.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

Financial support is an essential component of the infrastructure needed to grow and sustain parent leadership. These guidelines will help you establish user-friendly policies and procedures to support the provision of financial support to parents participating in CQI activities and to ensure accountability, with clear paper trails for evaluation and audit purposes. You will need to work with your organization and senior leaders to adapt this information, especially payment and reimbursement rates, for your local context and budget.

¹⁶ Adapted from Michigan Home Visiting Initiative Guidance Manual, State of Michigan Procedures and Guidelines for Financial Support of Parents in the Michigan Home Visiting Initiative at the state or local level, (2018), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Policies for Supporting Parent Leaders

Communication: Parent leaders are responsible for maintaining communication regarding CQI work, whether by email, phone, or snail mail. Communication will most typically be via email. If a parent leader needs a different method to maintain communication, they should request support from _____ (add name and email address).

Child care: Parent leaders are responsible for obtaining child care as needed to participate in CQI meetings, events, and activities. The child care can be provided by a school, a center, a home, or a family member. These expenses can be reimbursed (see page 32 for more information on child care reimbursements.).

Transportation: Parent leaders are responsible for obtaining transportation (via car, bus, ride service, carpooling, etc.) to CQI meetings, events, and activities. If a parent leader needs additional support in obtaining transportation, they should speak to _____ (add name and email address). These expenses can be reimbursed (see page 33 for more information on travel-related reimbursements.).

Submitting reimbursement forms: The parent leader will submit a completed Parent Leader Reimbursement Form to _____ (add name and email address).

Processing requests for reimbursement: Parent leaders will submit reimbursement requests within 24 hours of the meeting, event, or activity. Reimbursement must be requested within 30 days of the activity. Upon receipt of a request for reimbursement, parents will be reimbursed as soon as possible, ideally within two weeks of submission.

Check printing schedule: (add your organization's billing cycle)

Questions, concerns, and feedback can be directed to _____ (add name and email address).

Compensation and Taxes

All compensation provided to parent leaders is taxable, but taxes are not taken out of each check. You are encouraged to set aside money from each check to account for the taxes you may owe when tax season arrives.

As noted, child care and travel-related expenses are reimbursable—and in some cases,

reimbursement is reported to the IRS as income. If you receive a 1099 tax form in which different types of reimbursement are folded together, you should talk to an accountant or the person who prepares your taxes to learn whether you can claim the travel and child care reimbursement portion as a deductible expense on your tax forms.

Honorariums

Honorarium reimbursement is generally available to parent leaders for CQI-related business. It is paid at a rate of \$16/hour or \$128/day, with total time calculated based on meeting preparation time, actual meeting time, and travel time to and from the meeting.

Honorarium reimbursements are taxable; you will need to report these earnings on your incomes taxes. Additionally, if you receive services from government programs that are based on income eligibility, you need to report the amount of your compensation to your caseworker within 10 days of receipt of the honorarium reimbursement.

Honorariums (cont.)

Agencies may wish to include language such as the following in documents provided to parent leaders:

“The recipient of the Honorarium Reimbursement shall not be entitled to participate in any plans, arrangements, or distributions by the “agency” pertaining to or in connection with any fringe, pension, bonus, or similar benefits for “agency” regular employees. The “agency” will not withhold or pay any sums; state, federal, or local taxes; Social Security (FICA); retirement contributions; unemployment insurance; or workers’ compensation insurance. The recipient of the Honorarium Reimbursement agrees to hold the “agency” harmless for the payment of such sum, interest, penalties, or costs in the collection of the same.”

Forms for a parent leader to request an honorarium reimbursement are available from _____ (add name and email address) and should be available at all events in which the parent is participating.

Information needed for the Parent Leader Reimbursement Form (this may vary, based on your agency’s fiscal policies):

- Parent’s Social Security number
- Name and type of meeting, event, or activity
- Sponsoring group or agency
- Date and time of meeting, event, or activity
- Hours spent on preparation, including dates and times
- Tasks completed

Child Care Reimbursement

Child care reimbursement is generally available to parent leaders for CQI events in which a parent is participating. Actual child care expenses, up to a maximum of \$50/day, will be reimbursed by _____ (add name). If your child care expenses will exceed the \$50/day limit, contact _____ (add name, phone number, and email address) prior to the event to request an exception.

Be aware that when you pay a provider to provide care for your child, the fees you pay are considered income for that provider. If you have questions about taxes and payment for child care, you should talk to an accountant or the person who prepares your taxes.

Parent leaders requesting child care reimbursement are responsible for:

- Choosing their own child care providers
- Providing any needed training
- Assuming any liability
- Making the payment to the child care provider

If you have extenuating circumstances that don’t fall within these guidelines, please contact _____ (add name and email address).

Forms for a parent leader to request child care reimbursement are available from _____ (add name and email address) and should be available at all events in which a parent is participating.

Information needed for the Parent Leader Reimbursement Form (this may vary, based on your agency’s fiscal policies):

- Parent’s Social Security number
- Name and type of meeting, event, or activity
- Sponsoring group or agency
- Date and time of meeting, event, or activity
- Tasks completed
- Dates and hours that child care was provided
- Name, address, and other contact information for the child care provider
- Rate per hour
- Names and ages of children receiving child care
- Total amount due

Policies and Procedures for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders

Child Care Reimbursement (cont.)

The agency will review the request for child care reimbursement and, if approved, process it for payment. Generally, payment will be received approximately 14 days after the form is submitted, depending on agency policies. If the agency has a question about a request for child care

reimbursement, they will contact the parent directly to discuss the question.

Checks for child care reimbursement are issued in the name of the parent leader. Parents are responsible for issuing payment for child care to the provider.

Travel-Related Reimbursement

Travel reimbursement is generally available to parent leaders for their participation in CQI-related business activities. (Travel reimbursement for special meetings and events must have prior approval by _____ [add name and email

address].) Expenses will be reimbursed either (1) at approved government rates or (2) for actual costs (lodging, tolls, parking, other transportation, registration, etc.). See the chart below.

TYPE OF EXPENSE	RATES
Mileage	The current state premium rate for an approved private vehicle (as of January 1, 2019) is \$0.58 per mile. See the Internal Revenue Service Website (www.irs.gov) for the most updated information.
Hotel	Usually \$75/night (per state rates)
Meals	Per diem state rates: \$8.50 for breakfast \$8.50 for lunch \$19 for dinner
Parking	Actual fees (receipt required)
Tolls	Actual cost (receipt required)
Other transportation (cabs, etc.)	Actual cost (receipt required)
Registration fees for special events or meetings	Actual fees (receipt required)

Note: You can search the per diem lodging, meal and incidentals breakdown in your state here:
<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

Note: Parent leaders are generally reimbursed only for mileage or other transportation fees, parking, child care, and time spent participating in meetings. The other types of expenses identified in this table do not normally apply. Any exceptions to the agency’s reimbursement policies require prior authorization from the project or agency director.

Travel-Related Reimbursement (cont.)

Forms for a parent leader to request travel-related reimbursement are available from _____ (add name and email address) and should be available at all events in which a parent is participating.

Information needed for the Parent Leader Reimbursement Form (this may vary, based on your agency's fiscal policies):

- Parent' Social Security number
- Name and type of meeting, event, or function
- Date and time of meeting, event, or function
- Sponsoring group or agency
- Mileage (round trip), including printed verification via Google Maps or MapQuest
- Dates and hours worked
- Tasks completed
- Other travel-related expenses

Receipts for all travel expenses should be attached to the form before it is submitted.

_____ (add name) will review the request for travel reimbursement and, if approved, process it for payment. Generally, payment should be received approximately 14 days after the form is submitted.

If there is a question about a request for reimbursement, _____ (add name) will contact the parent directly to discuss the question.

Parent Leader Reimbursement Form¹⁷

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This template was developed by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation in Michigan and has been used by Local Implementing Agencies to reimburse parent leaders for expenses related to their participation in CQI activities. Please adapt this reimbursement form to fit your context.



¹⁷ Fortune, B. Template Reimbursement Form (2009). Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

Parent Leader Reimbursement Form

Parent Name:	Date and Time of Meeting, Event, or Activity:	
Social Security No.	Phone:	
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Email Address:		
Name of Meeting, Event, or Activity:	Sponsoring Group or Agency (<i>please specify</i>):	
Tasks Completed:	Dates and Hours Worked (Including Preparation Time, if Applicable):	

Honorarium: ____ hours @ \$16/hour	\$
Child Care: ____ hours @ \$6.25/hour	\$
<i>Note: Reimbursement is limited to \$6.25/hour and \$50/day. If your expenses will exceed this limit, please contact _____ at (email address). Exceptions require prior approval.</i>	
Child Care Provider Information <i>(this must be filled out to receive reimbursement)</i>	
Provider's Name:	
Provider's Address:	
Provider's Phone Number:	
Hours of Care:	
Days of Care:	
Rate per Hour:	
Names and Ages of Children Receiving Care:	
Mileage (round trip, if applicable): _____ miles @ \$0.58 per mile (Printed verification via Google Maps or MapQuest must be attached.)	\$
Parking: Actual fees (attach receipts)	\$
Ground Transportation (e.g., taxi, train, bus—attach receipts)	\$
TOTAL:	\$

I am requesting reimbursement for the above expenses:

Parent Signature:	Date:
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Basic Budget for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Creating an estimated budget for parent leadership in CQI will help your organization effectively plan for the potential costs incurred. This sample budget is based on the Michigan Maternal and Infant Home Visiting Program's (MIECHV) experience with parent leadership in CQI. It is meant to be an estimate of the associated costs and times of CQI activities. Your team may choose to adapt these activities and how they are reimbursed.

Assume that Each Parent Leader:

- Attends a one-day (eight-hour) orientation session
- Spends four hours per month participating in CQI efforts:
 - One hour for preparation
 - Two hours for monthly CQI meeting
 - 30 minutes for travel time to and from CQI team meeting
 - 30 minutes for a debrief following CQI team meeting
- Is paid an honorarium for the orientation and CQI team meetings at \$16/hour
- Is reimbursed for the round trip for the orientation and CQI team meetings at \$0.58/mile (up to 30 miles)
- Is reimbursed for child care fees to participate in the orientation (up to 8 hours) and CQI monthly meetings, plus 30 minutes before and after each event to accommodate travel time, at \$6.25/hour

Honorarium reimbursement:

- First month: Total hours for orientation and CQI work = 12
 $12 \text{ hours} \times \$16/\text{hour} = \$192$
- Subsequent months: Total hours for monthly CQI work = 4
 $4 \text{ hours} \times \$16/\text{hour} = \64
 $\$64 \times 11 \text{ months} = \704
- First year: First month's honorarium + subsequent months' honorarium
 $\$192 + \$704 = \$896$

Mileage reimbursement:

- Total mileage for 13 trips (orientation + 12 meetings) @ 30 miles/trip = 390
 $390 \times \$0.58 = \226.20

Child care reimbursement:

- Total hours for orientation (8) and CQI monthly meetings (24), with 30 minutes before and after each event for travel time (30 minutes \times 2 = 1-hour \times 13 events = 13 hours travel time)
 $8 + 24 + 13 = 45 \text{ hours}$
 $45 \text{ hours} \times \$6.25/\text{hour} = \$281.25$

Total first year budget: (Estimated cost per parent leader)

- $\$896 \text{ (Honorarium)} + \$226.20 \text{ (Mileage)} + \$281.25 \text{ (Child care)} = \$1,403.45$

Sample Agenda: In-Person Orientation to CQI for Parent Leaders

This orientation is designed to run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with two 15-minute breaks and a half-hour break for lunch.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This suggested agenda for an in-person orientation for parent leaders can be delivered in one full day or split into two half-day sessions. If your state, territory, or tribe hosts ongoing learning events, you might use this agenda for one of these events to reduce planning time and costs. If your team already has a parent leader on board, take the opportunity to involve them in co-designing this session—they will have valuable feedback on what will be useful to new parent leaders.

ORIENTATION AGENDA

9:00–9:15 a.m.	Welcome and Overview
9:15–10:15 a.m.	Activity: Tree of Life [see page 39 in this toolkit]
10:15–10:30 a.m.	BREAK
10:30–11:30 a.m.	Activity: What Is Parent Leadership? [see page 41 in this toolkit]
11:30 a.m.–12 noon	Review Roles and Responsibilities of CQI Team Parent Leaders [see page 19 in this toolkit]
12 noon–12:30 p.m.	LUNCH
12:30–1:00 p.m.	Review Policies and Procedures for Financial Support of CQI Team Parent Leaders [see page 30 in this toolkit]
1:00–1:10 p.m.	Review Parent Leader Reimbursement Form [see page 35 in this toolkit]
1:10–2:10 p.m.	CQI Basics for Parent Leaders (PowerPoint presentation)
2:10–2:25 p.m.	BREAK
2:25–2:40 p.m.	Discussion Question: How does a typical CQI meeting operate?
2:40–2:55 p.m.	Discussion Question: What CQI experience do team members bring?
2:55–3:25 p.m.	Discussion Question: What CQI project are you working on? Provide background and context
3:25–3:40 p.m.	Commonly Used Terms in CQI
3:40–4:10 p.m.	Final Questions and Answers
4:10–4:20 p.m.	Evaluation [Sample Evaluation of Parent Leader Orientation see page 45 in toolkit]
4:20–4:30 p.m.	Wrap Up and Thank Attendees!

Sample Activity: Tree of Life²¹

Purpose:

This activity is meant to be an icebreaker; it gives participants an opportunity to get to know one another and to better understand the personal history and wisdom that each person brings to the team.

Time required:

The complete activity takes 60 minutes (assuming a group of six participants): 20 minutes to explain the activity, 20 minutes for participants to create their individual “Tree of Life,” and 20 minutes for each person to share. Allow two to three minutes per person for sharing.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- One piece of self-stick flip chart paper for each participant, including facilitator
- One box of colorful markers for each participant, including facilitator
- Tree of Life handout
- Stopwatch or timer

Directions:

1. Explain the purpose of the activity to the group.
2. Give participants their materials.
3. Explain that each person will draw and create their own “Tree of Life.” Remind them that artistic ability doesn’t matter.
ROOTS are the family we came from and how they shaped us.
TRUNK is the structure of our life today—family, job, organizations we belong to, etc.
LEAVES are the sources of our information.
FRUITS are our achievements, including projects we’ve completed and programs and groups we have participated in.
BUDS are our hopes for the future.
4. Let participants know they will have 20 minutes to complete their drawing and two to three minutes to share information about their drawing with the group.
5. Allow participants to complete their tree drawings.
6. Share your “Tree of Life” first.
7. Remind participants they have two to three minutes to share with the group. Let them know that at the three-minute mark you will walk next to them, which indicates that they need to complete the sentence (not the paragraph!) they are sharing.
8. Once all participants have shared, thank the group for their sharing and participation.

¹⁹ Adapted from:

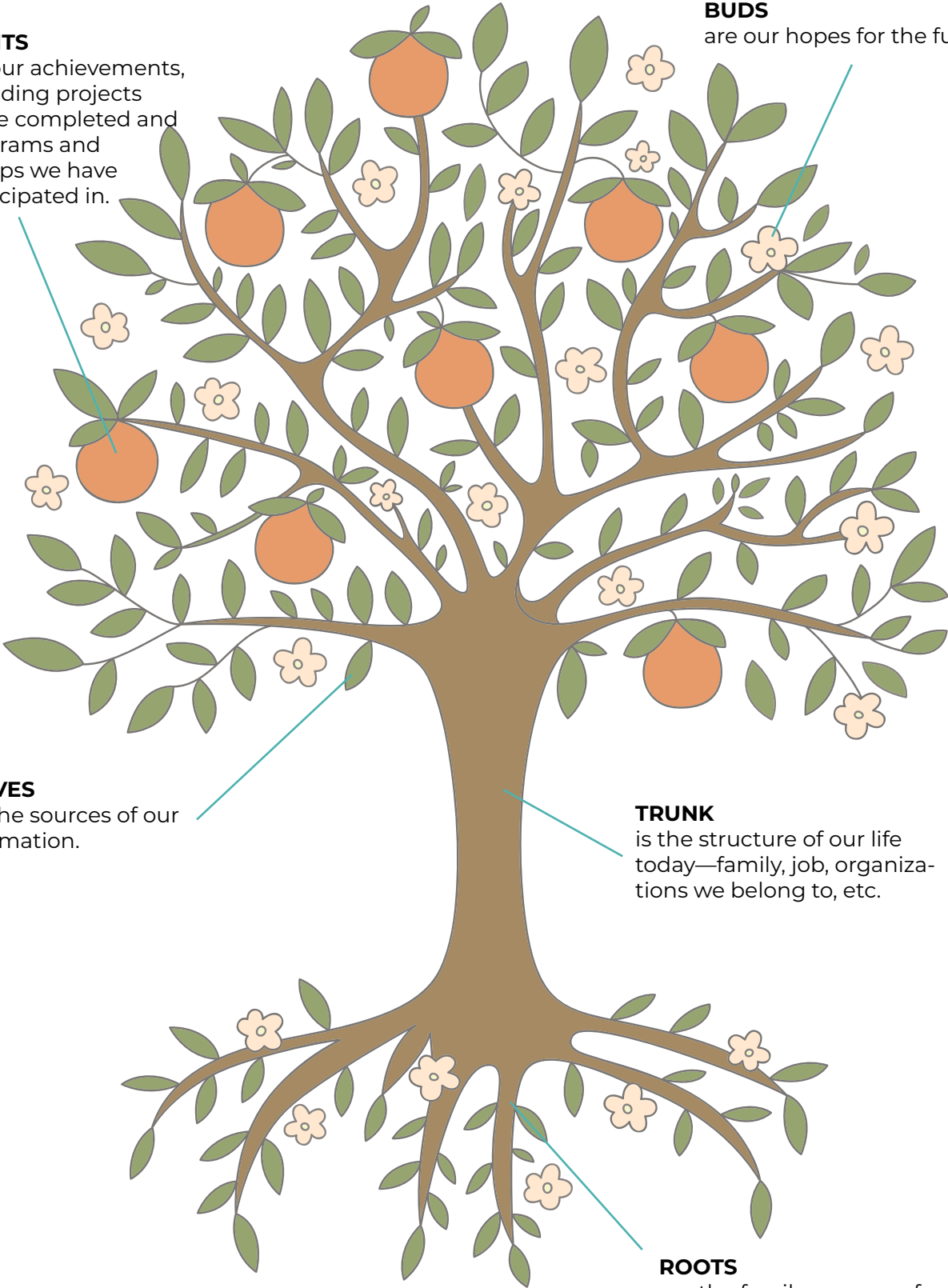
Blough, J., Brown, P., Dietrich, S., & Fortune, B. (1996). *The Parent Leadership Program: Training Manual*. Bethesda, MD: Institute for Family-Centered Care.

Hope, A., & Timmel, S. (1984). *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press.

Sample Activity: Tree of Life

FRUITS
are our achievements,
including projects
we've completed and
programs and
groups we have
participated in.

BUDS
are our hopes for the future.



LEAVES
are the sources of our
information.

TRUNK
is the structure of our life
today—family, job, organiza-
tions we belong to, etc.

ROOTS
are the family we came from
and how they shaped us.

Sample Activity: What is Parent Leadership?²²

Purpose:

To define parent leaders, leading, and leadership and to have participants reflect on their own experience of leadership and the skills they will bring to being a parent leader.

Time Required:

This four-part activity takes 60 minutes: Part 1 (15 minutes), Part 2 (30 minutes), Part 3 (5 minutes), and Conclusion (10 minutes).

Directions:

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pad of self-sticking flip chart paper
- Markers
- Painters tape or masking tape
- Sticky notes (1 pad for each participant)

PART 1 (15 MINUTES)

1. Review the purpose of the activity.
2. Share definitions:
 - Parent leaders are those in a parenting role who have experience with receiving a service, such as home visiting, early intervention or special education. The primary perspective they bring to the group is that of being a parent.
 - Leading is when a person has influence in a group and is accomplished in establishing relationships with others.
 - Leadership is about learning in the process of making change.
3. Conduct a group brainstorm on the following question: What are some examples of times when you have been a parent leader?
 - Remind participants the rules for brainstorming:
 - No discussion
 - No judgment or criticism
 - Build on one another's ideas
 - The more ideas, the better!
 - As participants share, record their responses on flip chart paper.
 - If the group needs help getting started, prompt them with examples of parental leadership:
 - Contacting an organization to access resources for your children
 - Advocating for resources for your family
 - Partnering with teachers to find ways to provide for your child's education
 - Serving on committees or boards
4. Remind the group who can be a parent leader:
 - Parent leaders may be parents, grandparents, guardians, or foster parents—anyone who is in a parenting role, who has experience with and knowledge about using the resources or services to strengthen their family, and who can speak from the perspective of a parent.

²² Adapted from: Fortune, B., & Marvin, T. (2007). *What Is a Parent Leader and What Does It Mean?* Lansing, MI: Early Childhood Investment Corporation.

Sample Activity: What is Parent Leadership?

PART 2 (30 MINUTES)

1. Tell participants that they will now have an opportunity to reflect on their personal leadership qualities and life experiences.
2. Distribute a sheet of chart paper and a pad of sticky notes to each participant and put markers and tape on the table for them to share.
3. Explain the activity:
 - Each participant can use painters or masking tape to create the pi symbol (one piece of tape across the top, with two vertical strips coming down that create three equal columns) on their sheet of paper.
 - First, they will think about their experiences with organizations or activities when they were in a leadership role. Write each idea on one sticky note and place it above the horizontal line.
 - Next, they will think about the skills they possess and the value they bring to a leadership role. Write each idea on one sticky note and place it in the middle column.
 - Finally, they will reflect on the individual ideas they placed in the middle column: If the skill is one that they currently possess, they should move that sticky note to the left column. If the skill is one that they need to improve or develop, they should move that sticky note to the right column.
4. If the group has trouble thinking of qualities they bring, offer some ideas:
 - Passionate
 - Honest
 - Respectful
 - Inspiring
 - Trustworthy
 - “Can do” attitude
 - Motivated
 - Responsible
 - Strong follow-through
 - Strong communicator
 - Creative
5. Give each participant two minutes to share some of the skills and attributes they listed. Encourage participants to add another sticky note to the left or right columns if anyone shares an idea that resonates with them personally.

Activity: What is Parent Leadership?

PART 3 (5 MINUTES)

Share the following qualities of effective leaders:²¹

- Mission-oriented: They have a purpose and aim to achieve a defined goal that is both ambitious and realistic
- Good decision-makers: They base their decisions on what they have learned throughout the process
- Collaborative: They form relationships with people who share a common goal
- Curious: They ask questions to better understand and learn
- Trusted relationships: They form relationships based on assuming positive intent

CONCLUSION (10 MINUTES)

1. Ask participants to reflect on and briefly discuss the following questions:
 - What do you hope to gain by joining the CQI team?
 - What do you want to contribute to the CQI team?
 - What tools or skills do you need in order to be successful?
2. Ask if there are any remaining questions that need to be answered.

²¹ Adapted from Lambert, K. (1998). Five Mindsets of Parent Leaders. *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

CQI Basics for Parent Leaders

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

[This PowerPoint presentation](#) is from the September 2016 Michigan Home Visiting Initiative Parent Mini Conference: Parent Role in Continuous Quality Improvement. It provides a good overview of how you might structure an initial training session.



Sample Evaluation of Parent Leader Orientation

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This simple tool for getting feedback from parent leaders on the orientation session can be adapted for different events.



Sample Evaluation of Parent Leader Orientation

Thank you for completing this evaluation!

Please circle the number that corresponds to your thoughts about the orientation session.

0 = Not Applicable 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

Questions	0	1	2	3	4
1. The facilitator was prepared and organized.					
2. The facilitator knew a lot about the topic.					
3. The facilitator provided good answers to the questions posed.					
4. The information shared today was new to me.					
5. I will use the information I learned today.					
6. The facilitator made me feel included.					
7. The activities helped me understand more about my role as a parent leader.					
8. The handouts were helpful.					
9. I would recommend this session to another parent.					
10. I am interested in more information on this topic.					

The biggest problem today was:

What I liked best about today was:

Designing Virtual CQI Training for Parent Leaders

A good model for virtual CQI training is to plan short segments (15–20 minutes) of training content, followed by a practical activity. (It is difficult to hold participants' attention much longer than that!)

The series of training videos produced by the Cystic Fibrosis Learning Network (<https://www.cflearningnetwork.org/>) is a good model of virtual CQI training. This series was co-designed and created with parent leaders for new parent leaders. The modules are each 10–20 minutes and cover the following topics:

- Introduction to CQI
- Setting Aims
- Defining Measures
- Using Run Charts
- Process Maps
- Single PDSA Cycles
- PDSA Ramps

Your team can use this example as a jumping-off point and adapt the content for your parent leaders based on the needs of your team and your community.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

As it becomes easier to access online content using smartphones, your team may choose to design some simple CQI training videos. These can be prepared and then recorded using meeting software, such as GoTo Meeting or WebEx. Recordings can then be saved in Vimeo or uploaded to YouTube. Virtual training is a great way to address ongoing training needs for new parent leaders.

Note: Virtual options are a great supplement to in-person time, but they do not replace it; time to meet and bond as a group is essential to building trust and relationships.

Continuum Stage 5:

Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain parent leadership²²

Parent leaders report that they are likely to maintain active participation and engagement when a team develops strong, trusting relationships based on mutual respect. In these situations, parent leaders also note that team members share a passion for the work and a commitment to make the needed improvements and change. The ability to create this type of team dynamic is best achieved by a skilled (or willing to learn) facilitator.

TOOLS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION:

- Suggested Agenda for First CQI Team Meeting with Parent Leaders
- Shared Agreement for How to Work Together as a CQI Team
- Partnership Assessment Tool
- Ladder of Engagement
- Creating a Parent Support Network

Why is it Important to Maintain, Build, and Support Sustained Parent Leadership?

It is important to maintain the commitments and momentum of parents who have invested their time in your organization to make a positive difference. Strategies to sustain parent leadership include helping parents develop new capacities, skills, and knowledge that they can use again and again to strengthen their families and communities. The most effective service systems and community initiatives are guided by what parents say they need in order to be stronger and better parents, and by a commitment on the organization's part to obtain regular feedback from families about programs and services.



CONTINUUM OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN CQI

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Assess and increase team's readiness to partner in CQI	Set partnership goals and build shared understanding, and commitment	Engage in short-term strategies to learn more about your community, build relationships, and recruit parent partners	Engage in medium-term strategies to build infrastructure, train parents in CQI, and develop Parent Leaders	Engage in long-term strategies to create authentic team partnerships and to successfully sustain Parent Leadership

What Does Success Look Like?

In a successful program, parent leaders work with one another, agencies, and community partners to continue strengthening programs, neighborhoods, and families in a variety of ways, for example:

- Parents help organize and lead family and community initiatives.
- Agencies and community groups seek parents' expertise and turn to them for input and guidance on program planning and policy development.
- Parents regularly engage in community and agency decisions involving their children.
- Parent leaders continue to work together to implement strategies that strengthen families long after the original initiative has ended.

This section provides tools and guidance for building and maintaining authentic engagement as a CQI team, including a suggested meeting agenda that is interactive and requires member engagement, a sample shared agreement for how to work together, and a tool to regularly assess how well the team is partnering with parents. The Ladder of Engagement, on page 54, provides a longer-term view of the journey that a parent leader may take, from joining and learning about their role to becoming an active leader and/or mentor. The final tool in this section outlines how to create a parent support network; as your organization builds infrastructure to support parent leadership, it is strongly recommended that you provide a structure to connect parent leaders with one another.



Suggested Agenda for First CQI Team Meeting with Parents

Once parent leaders have participated in an orientation, they are ready to join the CQI team. Consider the following agenda for your first meeting:

“Getting to Know You” Activity

Go around the table and ask each member to introduce themselves, providing their name and answering the following questions:

- What personal interest brings you to the CQI team?
- What experience and expertise do you bring to the CQI team?

Go over the Shared Agreement on page 51 for How to Work Together as a CQI Team and discuss each question.

If time allows, provide a brief history of the CQI team and its work.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

The proposed agenda below, along with the *Shared Agreement for How to Work Together as a CQI Team*, can set the right tone for this new relationship. You may want to consider regularly including team-building activities in CQI team meetings to intentionally build relationships and foster trust among team members over time.



Shared Agreement for How to Work Together as a CQI Team

How to use this Tool

Each team decides how it will work together. A thoughtful agreement that everyone signs on to can help the day-to-day work go more smoothly, ensuring that all members are on the same page from the beginning. Also, written accountability generally ensures that people are more likely to adhere to the agreement and take it seriously.

The questions below are guidelines—this tool is not meant to be a precise, step-by-step method. Feel free to adapt the text for your own needs.

	ALWAYS DO	SOMETIMES DO	NEVER DO
How will we discuss ideas and options?			
How will we make decisions?			
How will we respect each other's time with respect to deadlines?			
How will we schedule and run our meetings?			
How will we assign responsibilities for tasks or ensure follow through on our commitments?			
What are our expectations for meeting preparation and attendance?			
How will we communicate with one another?			
How will we transfer information?			
How will the team manage conflict constructively?			

23 Adapted from: Cambridge Health Alliance Practice Improvement Team. (2013). *Development Toolkit*. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Partnership Assessment Tool

How to use this Tool

This tool can be used to regularly assess how well a team is partnering with parents in their CQI work, which can be done at any point in a partnership. It allows professionals and parents to compare their different perspectives about team functioning and to focus their ongoing efforts to strengthen the partnership. The idea is not to

look for any single person to blame, but rather to identify any actual or potential misalignment between professionals and parents. Teams can use the results to discuss changes or growth as well as areas for strengthening. Strategies can be integrated into a plan or ongoing dialogue within team meetings.

PROFESSIONALS	YES	NO	YES	NO	PARENTS
Do I believe that parents bring unique expertise to our relationship?					Do I feel respected for the unique expertise I bring to our relationship?
Do I believe in the importance of parent participation in decision-making at the program and policy levels?					Do I feel supported and encouraged to participate in decision-making at the program and policy levels?
Do I believe that parents' perspectives and opinions are as important as those of professionals?					Do I feel like my perspectives and opinions are considered as important as those of the professionals?
Do I believe that parents bring a critical element to the team that no one else can provide?					Do I feel like I bring a critical element to the team that no one else can provide?
Do I consistently let others know that I value the insights of parents?					Do I feel confident sharing my insights and the insights of other parents?

24 Fritz, C., Jofriet, A., Moore, L., Myers, S., Nocito, S., Opiari-Arrigan, L., & Siedlaczek, R. (2014). *Working together to improve care now*. Co-Production Change Package.

Partnership Assessment Tool

PROFESSIONALS	YES	NO	YES	NO	PARENTS
Do I work to create an environment in which parents feel supported and comfortable enough to speak freely?					Do I feel supported and comfortable enough to speak freely?
Do I listen respectfully to the opinions of parent members?					Do I feel like my opinions are respectfully listened to?
Do I believe that parent members can look beyond their own child's and family's experiences?					Do I feel confident that I can look beyond my own child's and family's experiences?
Will I be able to help parents set clear expectations and goals for their role?					Do I feel expectations and goals for this partnership have been mutually agreed on?
Do I feel comfortable delegating responsibility to parents?					Do I feel comfortable having the home visitor delegate responsibility to me?

Ladder of Engagement

How to use this Tool

This tool is useful for identifying how parents are most interested in contributing. It is important to keep in mind that while some parents are interested and comfortable in leading, others may look for more of an advisory role.

Your team might also use the Ladder of Engagement to discuss personal goals and interests with parent leaders. Those who are interested in growing their responsibility and leadership may need additional support to do so. Some may change their mind about their desired role as they become more skilled and experienced. This construct is a helpful tool for discussing these possibilities with parents and deciding together how to best engage with the team and at what level.

The Ladder of Engagement provides a simple construct to see how parent leaders evolve from the early stages of learning about CQI and a project, to finding their voice in the partnership, activity participating in the work, teaching others about CQI, and perhaps even leading an initiative. The Ladder of Engagement provides a useful organizing principle for exploring the interests of parent leaders and helping them reach their goals for engagement. Teams can use the tool below during a parent meeting or in 1:1 conversation to learn more about parents interests and to understand where they see themselves on the ladder of engagement. After discussing, you can use this information to partner with parents in the areas where they most want to engage.

Level of Engagement

Leading an effort and teaching others	7
Taking ownership of a project	6
Actively participating in the work	5
Recognizing my part in the CQI project	4
Understanding more deeply how CQI, partnerships, and transparency of data matter	3
Appreciating the value of CQI	2
Accepting that I have a voice	2
Learning about the CQI project	1

You can plan to use this tool periodically to check in on parents over time to ensure expectations and opportunity are parent driven.

25 Seid, M., Margolis, P. A., & Opipari-Arrigan, L. (2014, March). Engagement, Peer Production, and the Learning Healthcare System. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 168(3), 201–202. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4918091/>

Ladder of Engagement (cont.)

Parent engagement within this ladder does not happen overnight and will require intentional conversation and coaching. Additionally, parents may move up and down the ladder based on life circumstances and goals. As parent leaders join your team, it is important to ensure that they understand their role and why their voice matters to the team. There are some thoughtful practices to demonstrate this, such as sharing the upcoming meeting agenda and asking for their input in advance or assigning a team buddy to ensure that the parent's voice is heard during the meeting. If a parent misses a meeting, a follow-up phone call (not an email) can remind them that their participation is important to

the team; you can also debrief them on what occurred at the meeting they missed.

As parent leaders become more acclimated to the work, it will be important to have ongoing conversations to understand the role they want to have within the team. Some parent leaders may be content to stay an active participant, contributing their ideas and insights but not leading a project. Other parent leaders will look for new challenges and will appreciate opportunities to lead efforts (for example, testing specific change ideas, or actively working to involve other parents).



Creating a Parent Support Network

How to use this Information

As the parent leadership infrastructure, culture, and will matures, parent leaders may seek a wider community of support. A key strategy for sustaining parent engagement, interest, and motivation to participate in or lead CQI efforts is to design opportunities for parent leaders to learn from and inspire one another. A Parent Support Network is one good way to address these needs.

Why Establish a Parent Support Network?

- Peer support networks are effective because people learn best when they can compare their own experiences and work to what others are doing in a respectful, trusting environment. Parent leaders crave opportunities to learn from their peers, both within and across communities. A dedicated support network allows parent leaders to share strategies and successes, combine knowledge from multiple areas, and ultimately improve their work. It encourages parents to share what is or is not working well in a way that supports the development of new ideas and strategies. Instead of getting stuck on problems that need to be fixed, network members work together to easily and quickly develop options for action.
- Peer networking also increases the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the sources of information and help available in communities. By connecting diverse groups of families, agencies, and community members, networks expand the perspectives and “voices” that are engaged in assisting and learning from one another.
- Peer networks help people develop a new sense of what is possible beyond their own experiences while equipping them with the knowledge and relationships they need to act on behalf of families.

Here's what parent leaders have said about the importance of a support network:

It will increase shared understanding across communities about what really keeps parents involved.

The more communities learn from each other, the more their “toolbox” of parent leadership options grows, and they can avoid doing what didn't work elsewhere.

Agencies and parents across communities could consult with each other about common challenges.

Partners would be better able to build on engagement strategies used throughout the region, including how they complement each other and can be connected.

26 The Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2010, December). Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement: A Toolkit for Parents and Community Partners. Retrieved from <https://cssp.org/resource/growing-and-sustaining-parent-engagement-a-toolkit-for-parents-and-community-partners/>

How to Establish a Parent Support Network

How to Establish a Parent Support Network

As parent leaders become more comfortable in their role, leaders may naturally emerge; ask them to help build a network between parent leaders. This may be most useful at the county, state, territory, or tribal level, so that parent leaders across different CQI teams can work together.

There are a variety of ways to create these networks, for example:

- Taking advantage of existing CQI initiatives, such as learning collaboratives or award-level activities
- Holding breakout sessions during in-person events
- Offering regular parent leader webinars or in-person sessions
- Creating online platforms for parent leaders to share with one another
- Offering peer-to-peer learning opportunities (such as through local collaborative learning sessions, HV-CoIIN 2.0, or local state, territory, or tribal initiatives)
- Connecting to an existing organization that is active in supporting parent leaders (such as Family Voices or the Family to Family Health Information Exchange)
- Connecting with other parent-led organizations that have a strong, active role in supporting parent leaders in your state, territory, or tribe

Concluding Thoughts

There are a variety of ways for parents to engage in CQI work. We recommend having conversations with potential parent leaders about their interests and motivations for this work. It is important to take the time to understand parents' desires for autonomy, mastery, and connection as well as the role they would be most interested in playing.

As we continue to learn about building parent leadership in home visiting, our intention is to enhance and iterate a standard set of tools, guidelines, and operating principles to guide teams as they aim to build the depth and breadth of partnership opportunities to improve home visiting services with families. Please visit this toolkit often to continue to test new ideas and strategies.



(draft for piloting, 2019)