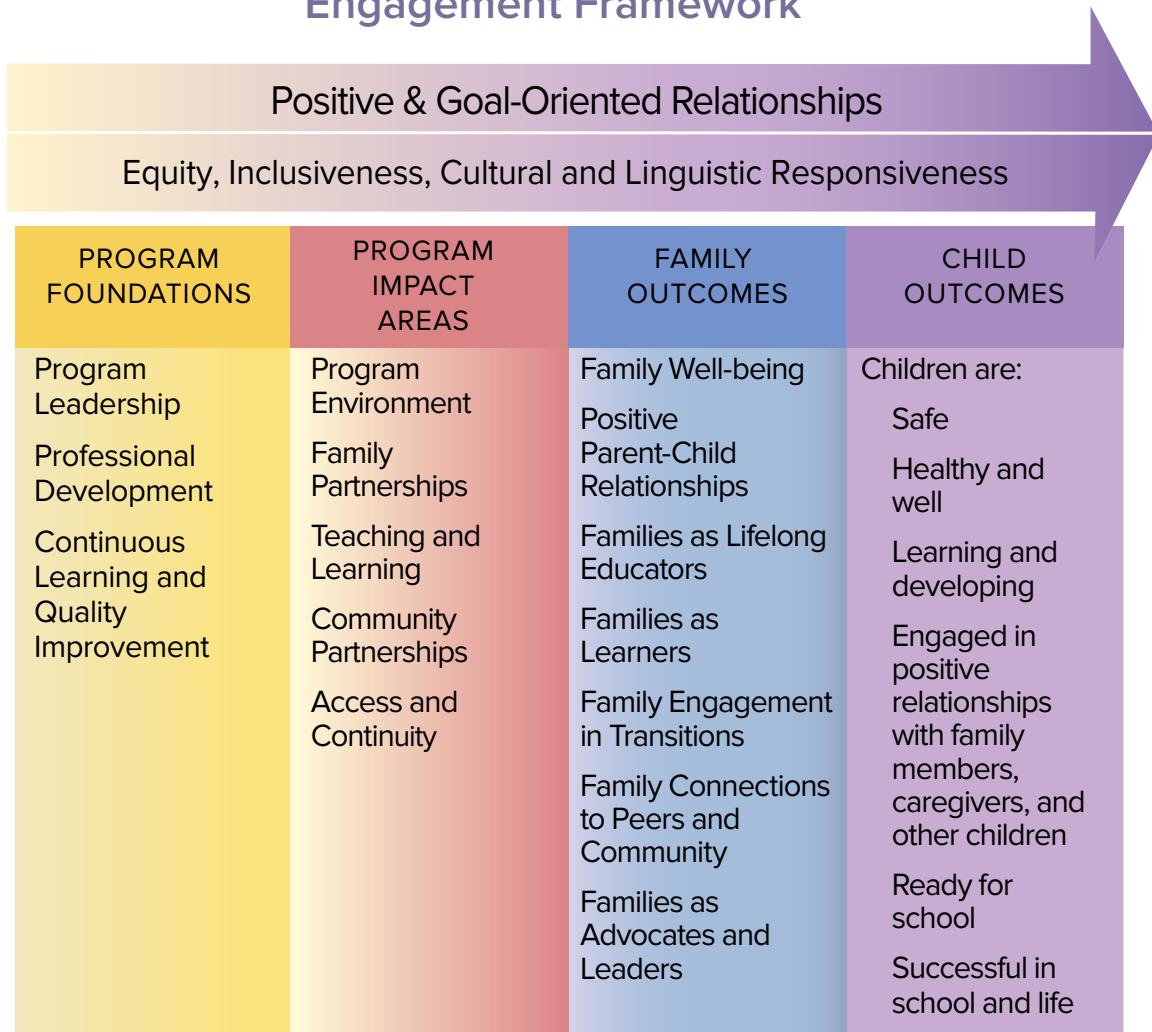


What is the Purpose of the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework?

From the beginning of life, families nurture their children to be healthy and to develop the capacities they will need to be ready for school and successful in life. Head Start and Early Head Start program staff share these goals and collaborate with families as they work toward these goals. The Head Start PFCE Framework is an organizational guide for collaboration among families and Head Start and Early Head Start programs, staff, and community service providers to promote positive, enduring outcomes for children and families.

The Head Start PFCE Framework describes the program elements—Program Foundations and Impact Areas—in early learning programs that can work together to positively influence child and family outcomes. The Framework identifies equity, inclusiveness, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and positive goal-oriented relationships as important drivers for these outcomes.

Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework



POSITIVE, GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS ADVANCE FAMILY AND CHILD OUTCOMES

Positive, goal-oriented relationships develop over time through interactions among families, family members, and staff in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. These relationships

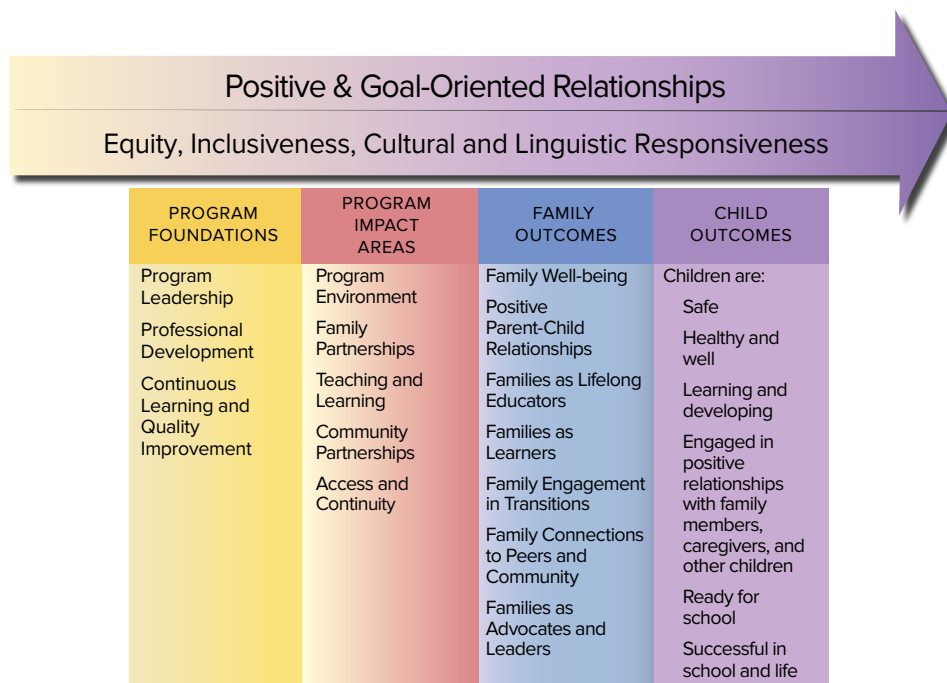
- are fueled by families’ passion for their children,
- are based on mutual respect and trust,
- affirm and celebrate families’ cultures and languages,
- provide opportunities for two-way communications,
- include authentic interactions that are meaningful to those who participate in them, and
- often require an awareness of one’s personal biases and how those biases can affect mutual respect and trust.

What the Research Says

Programs that prioritize effective family engagement practices support the efforts of providers and all staff to build positive, goal-oriented relationships with families.

Families who are active, respected participants in their children’s learning and educational settings can help providers see new ways to build safe, welcoming, and trusting environments (Reedy & McGrath, 2010; Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010).

Positive, goal-oriented relationships improve wellness by reducing isolation and stress for both families and staff. When these relationships focus on shared goals for children, staff and families can experience the support that comes from knowing that they all are on the same team. These relationships support the aims of equity, inclusiveness, cultural and linguistic responsiveness.



Family Outcomes

The Head Start PFCE Framework specifies seven family outcomes that research has shown to promote positive child outcomes.

Family Well-being

Families are safe, healthy, have opportunities for educational advancement and economic mobility, and have access to physical and mental health services, housing and food assistance, and other family support services.

Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's health, development, and learning.

Families as Lifelong Educators

Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, at school, and in their communities.

Families as Learners

Parents and families learn about their child's personality, development, and learning style. They also advance their own learning interests through education, training, and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families encourage and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments within and between, Early Head Start, Head Start, early childhood services, early elementary grades, and beyond.

Family Connections to Peers and Community

Parents and families form connections with peers, mentors, and other community members in formal or informal social networks. These networks are supportive and educational. They honor and are inclusive of families' home language and culture, and they enhance families' social well-being and community life.

What the Research Says

Head Start and Early Head Start programs improve families' knowledge of child-rearing practices (Love et al., 2005). In Head Start and Early Head Start, parent knowledge relates most directly to three of the PFCE Framework family outcomes:

- Positive parent-child relationships
- Families as lifelong educators
- Families as learners

Access to information about their children's learning and development affects families' self-efficacy, confidence, and skills (Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, & Sandler, 2005).

This access also influences families' motivation to trust, collaborate, and remain positively involved with providers and programs (Rosenblatt & Peled, 2002; Powell et al., 2010).

Families as Advocates and Leaders

Parents and families advocate for their children and play leadership roles in Head Start and Early Head Start. They participate in decision-making, policy development, and organizing activities in communities and states to improve children’s safety, health, development, and learning experiences.

These outcomes can guide Head Start and Early Head Start staff as they partner with families on the goals parents set for themselves and their children, and as they track progress together toward these goals.

