Parent Engagement and Leadership Assessment Tool

Comprehensive Version

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the descriptions for each level of the scale within each pillar and dimension in the self-assessment. In each row below, tick the box for the description that most closely matches your agency. If you don't know or the examples do not apply, check the box on the far right of that section.

What is the Scope of this Self Assessment?

- ☐ Agency-wide
- ☐ One Program
- ☐ Multiple Programs

I am participating as:

- ☐ Program Staff
- ☐ Operations/Admin Staff
- ☐ Upper Management/Leaders

I am participating as a:

- ☐ Parent leader
- ☐ Community partner
- ☐ Other:

COMPREHENSIVE VERSION

PILLAR 1: FAMILY-CENTERED

Agencies prioritize and champion engaging parents as partners and leaders as a central strategy to achieving positive, equitable outcomes for children and their families.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no evidence of a strengths-based approach to working with families.	☐ Strengths-based philosophy is embedded in program description and goals.	☐ Goals to enhance strengths-based practice outlined in strategic plan.	☐ Strengths-based philosophy is embedded in mission and leadership messages to staff and public.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There are no family engagement activities or programs.	☐ Family engagement is viewed as a distinct program or tacked onto existing programs.	☐ Agency has a definition of parent engagement, a defined strategy and multiyear goals.	☐ Leaders regularly talk to staff about the importance and benefits of building trusting relationships with all adults that matter in the child's life.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no funding for family engagement.	☐ Family engagement efforts expand and contract depending on grant funding.	☐ Core parent engagement efforts sustained from year-to-year, and increase when grant funds allow.	☐ Leaders prioritize parent engagement in the agency budget and allocate resources to ensure consistent programming.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency values father engagement.	☐ Agency leaders acknowledge the importance of engaging fathers.	☐ Agency adopts Father Friendly Principles and sets goals for expanding male staff.	☐ Agency prioritizes resources for father-specific programming and strategies.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Program staff do not have the time, training, or support to engage families effectively.	☐ At least one staff member working directly with parents has sufficient time, flexibility, training, and support to build trusting relationships with parents and respond to their interests and needs.	☐ Program staff includes a small parent engagement team dedicated working with parents and increase their engagement; supervisors mostly understand and support their roles.	☐ All agency staff are expected to understand importance of engaging parents, including fathers; front-line staff have specific expectations outlined in their job descriptions; supervisors provide staff with training and professional development, coaching, mentoring and reflective practice to help them continually improve.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Staff make no attempt to plan meetings or activities at times convenient to parents.	☐ Staff attempt to offer events, programs and meetings at times and locations that parents prefer, but do not consult parents.	☐ Staff consult parents to find times and locations that work best for parents and offer events, programs, and meetings at times that work for the majority.	☐ Staff continually monitor trends in attendance and adjust strategies to meet the needs of most parents, offering two or more different times if needed.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ The agency does not consistently provide child care, translation, and meals at events and meetings.	☐ Child care, translation and meals are provided at all parent events and meetings, but parents need to request it in advance.	☐ Child care, translation, and meals are provided at all parent events and meetings without advanced notice, but never at events that involve mostly professionals.	☐ Child care and other supports are automatically provided at all events parents are invited to, including galas, staff meetings, work groups, etc.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Staff receive no training on the importance of engaging fathers or strategies to do so effectively.	☐ Staff have occasional opportunities to attend training to engage fathers.	☐ Staff receive ongoing training and coaching to develop strategies and best practices to engage fathers.	☐ Staff involve fathers in the development of programs and strategies.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ The agency does not have any training or opportunities for parents to develop skills for and engage in peer-to-peer outreach or education.	☐ Agency leaders understand the value of peer-to-peer parent engagement strategies, but has no formal career pathway to allow parents to develop their skills for paid roles.	☐ Agency provides leadership and skills training, as well as formal leadership positions for parents.	☐ Agency modifies job qualifications to include life experience as well as education and actively recruits parents for suitable open positions.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Staff rely heavily on written notices or impersonal calls to notify parents of policies, programs, or opportunities, and workshops and meetings tend to be in a lecture format.	☐ There is at least one program that attempts to communicate with parents in ways that emphasize diverse communication and learning styles.	☐ Staff use multiple methods for outreach and facilitation to include diverse communication and learning styles and points of view.	☐ Staff partner with parent leaders to continually improve outreach and facilitation so that all parents, including those most often marginalized in systems, are included.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that parents are encouraged to participate in care decisions for their children.	☐ Parents are provided with information about care options but not asked for their opinions.	☐ Providers are trained to talk with parents about care options and ask their opinions.	☐ Providers are trained to partner with parents on all care decisions and parents feel empowered to advocate for their child's needs.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There are no opportunities for parents to learn about child development.	☐ Programs are designed to build parents' knowledge of child development, but they are primarily delivered in a lecture format.	☐ Programs are designed to increase parents' confidence and skills and provided outside of a lecture format, allowing participants to control content and experience.	☐ Programs are designed to increase parents' knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills, and parent leaders collaborate on planning of programs and initiatives and help to implement strategies.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There are no organized opportunities for parents to develop relationships with each other.	☐ Programs, events, and meetings have some opportunities for parents to share and get to know each other.	☐ Programs, events, and meetings always allow time for parents to get to know other parents and share their experiences.	☐ Programs, events, and meetings emphasize building relationships, and are often co-facilitated by parent leaders.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

☐ There is no consistent group of parents who attend programs and meetings.	☐ A core group of parents regularly attends, but it is not representative of the population served.	☐ Core parents invite other parents and participants are more reflective of the community.	☐ Agency offers training to parents wanting to expand their outreach skills and provides stipends for parent leaders to reach out to parents.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence of opportunities for parents to become leaders.	☐ Agency programs emphasize parent leadership roles within the family, such as reading to their children.	☐ Agency programs emphasize partnership with parents to shape and improve programs.	☐ Parents are invited to advance their leadership in a variety of ways, including formal leadership training, policy advocacy, and paraprofessional roles leading to staff positions; staff provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to help parents reach personal and professional goals.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence of fathers participating in agency programs.	☐ Staff reach out to fathers and are sometimes successful recruiting them to participate in agency programs.	☐ Agency has at least one program or activity is designed specifically for fathers.	☐ Agency has multiple programs and leadership opportunities for fathers.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no evidence of changes made in the agency in response to parent feedback.	☐ Parents are regularly surveyed about their satisfaction with programs and some adjustments are made in response to feedback.	☐ Parents have consistent opportunities to give feedback and suggestions, including focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys.	☐ Parents have opportunities to influence decisions at all levels, from care decisions for their child, to program delivery to agency decision-making.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency invites parents to meetings to discuss issues or solutions.	☐ Parents are invited to meetings to discuss issues and solutions defined by staff.	☐ A group of parent leaders are formally or informally advising the agency on ways to improve parent engagement and other program strategies.	☐ Boards and committees include significant parent representation, and parent leaders are supported to actively seek input from all parents.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that parents volunteer or contribute ideas and opinions.	☐ A small group of parents volunteer to help with programs and contribute ideas and opinions, but there is no formal representation of parents or leadership program.	☐ A few parent leaders are invited to represent the parent perspective in committees, working groups and conferences.	☐ Parent leaders, including fathers, design their own outreach or action research to identify community needs and and agency uses this information in tandem with other data sources to shape program strategies.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that parents receive any support to build their skills to advocate for themselves or their children.	☐ Agency staff support parents to build their skills to advocate for themselves and their children, but parents are not included in advocacy efforts.	☐ Some agency staff support parents to build their power to influence policy and systems change, informally connecting them to advocacy efforts.	☐ Agency leaders and staff support parents to build their collective power to influence policy and systems change by and provide formal pathways to connect parents to advocacy efforts.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

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PILLAR 2: EQUITY-DRIVEN

Agencies make it a priority to understand families' experiences and break down
barriers created by systemic, institutional, and individual racism.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency has no stated policy on either diversity or racial equity.	☐ Agency has a stated diversity policy, but no specific policy on equity.	☐ In addition to clear diversity and equity policies, agency communications highlight the importance of expanding opportunity and closing racial gaps.	☐ Agency leadership regularly communicates that reducing racial inequities is mission-critical.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency strategic plan does not have specific goals related to diversity or racial equity.	☐ Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan for addressing diversity, but not equity.	☐ Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan around diversity, inclusion, and equity, and is taking steps to achieve them.	☐ Agency can demonstrate progress addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency communications makes no significant mention of the diversity of the community it serves.	☐ Agency communications celebrate the diversity of the community.	☐ Agency communications frequently portray parents' stories celebrating their culture and highlighting struggles with bias and discrimination.	☐ Leadership values diversity, and communicates the expectation that staff who work with diverse groups be culturally competent.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence of the agency's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	☐ Agency does not yet have resources allocated to specific diversity strategies, but publicly states it as a goal.	☐ Agency prioritizes and allocates resources for some equity strategies, but not in a comprehensive or integrated way.	☐ Agency allocates sufficient resources to build its capacity to address equity issues internally and externally.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency has not committed professional development resources to build staff capacity to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.	☐ Agency offers or sends staff to cultural competence training and opportunities for cross-cultural conversations and learning.	☐ Agency staff and leadership participate in trainings about racial equity and bias, but there is lack of clarity about what to do next.	☐ All agency staff, leaders, and volunteers participate in high quality trainings on diversity, inclusion, equity, and racism and have ongoing opportunities for reflective discussion.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency does not separate data by race/ethnicity, and therefore does not have the capacity to address gaps between different groups	☐ Agency collects data by race/ethnicity in programming but does not analyze the data to address gaps in participation, satisfaction, or outcomes for different groups.	☐ Agency collects, breaks out, and analyzes data by race/ethnicity in programming, but does not consistently take action to address gaps.	☐ Agency collects, breaks out, and analyzes data by race/ethnicity in programs and operations and uses this information to guide program strategy and organizational policy.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Most staff interacting with families do not represent the cultures of the community the agency serves.	☐ At least half of staff interacting with families represent cultures of the community and/or speak the primary language spoken by families.	☐ Most of the staff interacting with parents represent cultures of the families in the community and/or speak the primary language spoken by families.	☐ Program staff and leadership represent cultures of the families in the community and parents have access to formal pathways to become leaders and employees.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency leadership does not initiate conversations about race, equity, diversity, and inclusion.	☐ Agency leadership initiates staff conversations about race, equity, diversity, and inclusion in response to complaints or incidents, but not on a regular basis.	☐ Agency leadership encourages and skillfully facilitates staff to talk about issues they encounter with families and in the community related to race, equity, diversity, and inclusion.	☐ Staff meetings and supervision one-on-ones include time and process for reflection and learning about race, equity, diversity, and inclusion and the role of the agency in addressing or perpetuating inequities.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

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Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency does not provide translation and interpretation.	☐ Agency provides translation and interpretation in one non-English language.	☐ Agency provides translation and interpretation all languages spoken in the community, as needed.	☐ Program staff are representative of the community, and most families can be welcomed in their own language by a staff member, community member, or interpreter.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency has no formal practice for evaluating organizational policies and practices to ensure they are not creating and perpetuating inequities.	☐ Agency leaders talk about the importance of ensuring that organizational policies and practices do not create and perpetuate inequities, but have no practice to do so.	☐ Agency leaders and staff periodically evaluate organizational policies and practices to ensure they are not creating and perpetuating inequities, but stakeholders are not included or informed.	☐ Leaders and staff regularly evaluate organizational policies and practices to ensure they are not creating and perpetuating inequities; stakeholders are included and informed of results.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency designs programs to be welcoming and inclusive of diverse populations.	☐ Staff design programs and activities to be welcoming to and inclusive of diverse populations.	☐ Staff ask parents for feedback on how well programs address core equity issues.	☐ Staff and parents co-create program strategies to ensure they are welcoming and inclusive.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency designs programs to address racial inequities.	☐ Staff design programs to address racial inequities, such as "know your rights" trainings.	☐ Staff works informally with parents of diverse backgrounds to get feedback on program design.	☐ Staff and parents co-create program strategies to ensure they address priority equity issues.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence of the agency's effort to learn about families' home cultures.	☐ Staff members talk with and learn from parents about their home cultures, but have no system for consistently applying this information to improve programming and operations.	☐ Staff has periodic conversations about insights and information about parents' cultures and tailor programs to be more culturally and linguistically responsive.	☐ Issues of equity and racism are regularly discussed in staff, team and supervision meetings, creating ongoing dialogue and support for developing capacity in these areas.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency makes an effort to provide books, games, artwork, and other learning materials that reflect families' cultures.	☐ Staff makes an effort to ensure that books, games, artwork, and other learning materials for parents reflect families' cultures, but there is no process for soliciting feedback from parents.	☐ Staff regularly invite parents to provide feedback about culturally responsive and relevant learning materials and invites parents to suggest other materials.	☐ Parents and staff co-create culturally appropriate and relevant learning materials and activities together, using the process to strengthen parents' engagement with the program and with their children.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence that the agency adapts its data collection methods to be responsive and relevant to diverse cultures.	☐ Agency and programs use at least one culturally relevant data collection method, such as stories, focus groups, and parent interviews.	☐ Staff regularly invites parents to give feedback on the cultural relevance of data collection methods.	☐ Staff and parents co-design and implement culturally relevant data collection methods.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ When parent leaders are invited to represent the agency at a working group or meeting, they do not receive a stipend.	☐ When parent leaders are invited to represent the agency at a working group or meeting, they do not receive a stipend unless another agency offers it or it is funded by a grant.	☐ Agency sometimes gives parent leaders stipends when they work alongside professionals in interagency working groups, but there is no policy.	☐ Agency has a specific policy stating that parent leaders always receive stipends equal to a living wage when they work alongside professionals.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no evidence that the agency surveys parents about whether they feel welcome and respected when they participate in agency programs.	☐ Program staff regularly survey parents about whether they feel welcome and respected when they participate in agency programs.	☐ Agency sometimes conducts focus groups or listening sessions to understand how parents of different racial and ethnic backgrounds experience programs and policies.	☐ Agency leaders regularly listen to parents representing marginalized communities about their experiences with agency policies, practices, and programs and directs changes to address concerns.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

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☐ The agency makes no apparent effort to celebrate diversity, promote cross cultural dialogue, or address issues of racism in parent trainings and meetings.	☐ Parent trainings and meetings include activities that celebrate diversity and promote cross cultural dialogue, but do not delve into issues of racism or equity.	☐ Parent trainings and meetings include discussion of issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity, but not in depth.	☐ Parent trainings and meetings take time to facilitate understanding and dialogue about how racism in all its forms affect outcomes for children and families.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Parents do not voice complaints to program staff about equity issues, although equity issues exist in the agency.	☐ Parents voice complaints to program staff about equity issues, but there is no process for these complaints to be addressed by agency leaders.	☐ Supervisors regularly ask staff about feedback they have received from parents about equity issues and relay this feedback to agency leaders.	☐ Parents are encouraged to voice complaints about equity issues and there is a formal process to address them.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ The agency has no internal or external process to work on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.	☐ Internal staff committee works on issues of diversity and inclusion at the management level and does not include parents.	☐ Parents of diverse backgrounds have an advisory role to staff committee working on equity issues, but are not voting members.	☐ Parents are have decision-making roles on committees to address equity issues within the agency, and participate in evaluation of organizational policies and practice.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

COMPREHENSIVE VERSION

PILLAR 3: COLLABORATIVE

Agencies develop strong partnerships with parents and parent-led organizations to support families to build their power, develop their leadership, and advocate for their children and community.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency does not state publicly that it values collaboration with community partners.	☐ Agency states publicly that partnering with parents and developing their leadership is a value.	☐ Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan to expand and strengthen its efforts to work in partnership with parents and develop their leadership.	☐ Agency's mission and goals include collaboration with parent-led organizations.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency does not state publicly that it values partnering with parents and developing their leadership.	☐ Agency states publicly that partnering with parents and developing their leadership is a value.	☐ Agency has specific goals in its strategic plan to expand and strengthen its efforts to work in partnership with parents and develop their leadership.	☐ Agency's mission and goals include partnering with parents, developing their leadership, and supporting them to build their power to change systems.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ The agency does not allocate resources toward community partnerships and parent leadership development.	☐ Agency provides some resources toward community partnerships and parent leadership development and has fundraising goals to fully resource these efforts.	☐ Agency allocates necessary funds to achieve strategic goals.	☐ Agency prioritizes resources for developing strong partnerships with parents and community and developing parents' leadership skills.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no evidence that the agency supports parents to develop a strong community among themselves.	☐ Agency supports parents to develop a strong community among themselves. For example, agency trainings encourage sharing personal stories and teach active listening.	☐ Agency supports parent leaders build relationships with other parents. For example, it offers training to build their skills to help other parents find resources and supports and communicate across race, class, and cultural differences.	☐ Agency supports parent leaders to build relationships with agency staff and leaders, as well as system leaders and policy makers. For example, it supports them to approach agency and system leaders with concerns and ask questions about issues that affect all families.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency makes no effort to help parent leaders learn to participate in policy change processes.	☐ Agency helps parent leaders learn to participate in policy change processes by offering or connecting them to training on civic skills, such as running meetings and public speaking.	☐ Agency helps parent leaders learn to propose policy change by offering or connecting them to trainings on reading budgets, collecting and analyzing data, and identifying key policy makers.	☐ Agency helps parent leaders advocate for policy change by offering or connecting them to opportunities to build skills in planning a rally, delivering testimony at a hearing, and attracting media attention.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency does not coach or connect parents to training on how to navigate processes and access resources.	☐ Agency helps parents better understand systems by coaching them or connecting them to training on how to navigate processes and access resources.	☐ Agency helps parents advocate for their children by coaching them or connecting them to training on their rights and how to ask questions and address concerns.	☐ Agency helps parents advocate for their children by offering coaching, training, and mentoring to advocate for their children and in systems and policy change efforts.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no expectation that agency program leaders build relationships with community and parent-led organizations.	☐ Agency program leaders are expected to build relationships with community and parent-led organizations.	☐ Agency program leaders and staff have explicit job expectations to build relationships with community and parent-led organizations, provide parents with information about them, and facilitate connections when appropriate.	☐ All agency staff and leaders understand the importance of building partnerships with parent and community led organizations and work together to strengthen these relationships to benefit parents.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency staff do not collaborate with parent-led and community organizations.	☐ Agency staff occasionally collaborate with parent and community organizations, but not around policy issues.	☐ Agency staff collaborate with parent and community organizations working to advance common policy goals.	☐ Agency staff work closely with parent and community organizations to advance parent-friendly policies as well as to recruit, support and mentor parents, and develop their leadership.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Parents do not have opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	☐ Parents sometimes have opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	☐ Parents have regular opportunities to connect with parent and community organizations.	☐ Parent leaders are encouraged to become active in other community organizations, coalitions, committees, and work groups.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Parents do not have opportunities to contribute to the development of agency activities and programs.	☐ Parents have occasional opportunities to contribute to the development of agency activities and programs, but agency staff drive the process and make final decisions.	☐ Parents have regular opportunities to contribute to the development of agency activities and programs and feel their contributions are meaningful.	☐ Parents work in partnership with agency staff to develop programs and activities and largely drive the process.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There are no opportunities for parents to volunteer or become leaders in the agency.	☐ Parents are invited to volunteer in agency activities and programs.	☐ Agency develops formal roles for parents to mentor and educate other parents (e.g. Parent Partner, Family Advocate).	☐ Parents in formal roles receive stipends and are recruited for open positions.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Parents are not invited to attend conferences or agency meetings, participate in working groups, or be presenters in settings where they might share perspectives or expertise.	☐ Parent leaders are sometimes invited to attend conferences agency meetings.	☐ Parent leaders are regularly supported to participate in intra- or inter-agency working groups to provide their perspectives on programs, policies, and practices in agencies and systems.	☐ Parent leaders are supported to present and lead discussions at conferences, meetings and work groups discussing policy, and systems change.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

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Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ Agency has no evident track record of collaborating with parents.	☐ Agency has some track record of collaborating with parents, no formal process or structure to do so.	☐ Agency has a Family Advisory or similar committee, but it has no decision-making power.	☐ Parent leaders of diverse backgrounds are well represented and supported in decision-making roles affecting agency policies and practices.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency does not involve parents in advocacy efforts.	☐ Agency sometimes invites parents to join advocacy efforts to share their experiences with decision-makers, but they do not shape the agenda and are not educated about the process.	☐ Agency regularly invites parents to join advocacy efforts to share their experiences with decision-makers, and parent leaders receive training to educate them on the issues and policy process.	☐ In addition to integrating parents into agency advocacy efforts, agency leaders join and support advocacy efforts led by parents and community organizations.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

COMPREHENSIVE VERSION

PILLAR 4: TRANSPARENT

Agencies ensure parents have access to information that allows them to fully participate and influence agency and system-level change processes.

Commitment: How is the agency's commitment to authentically engaging parents represented in agency communications, policies, and resource allocation?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no evidence that agency leaders value openness to and inclusion of families in decision-making.	☐ Agency leaders talk about the importance of openness to and inclusion of families, but does not include it in core values.	☐ Agency has a core value expressing the importance of openness to and inclusion of families, but does not apply it consistently in practice.	☐ Agency identifies supporting openness and inclusion as a core value and that value is expressed by the way the agency works with staff, parents, and external stakeholders.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ There is no evidence of a policy to promote openness to and inclusion of families.	☐ Agency leaders talk about the importance of openness to and inclusion of families, but does not have a written policy.	☐ Agency has a written policy that outlines the agency's commitment to openness and inclusion, but it was created without parent input.	☐ Agency has a written policy, co-created with a representative group of parent leaders, that outlines the agency's commitment to openness and inclusion.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency leaders do not talk about the importance of parent participation, openness, and inclusion in decision-making.	☐ When agency leaders talk about parent engagement, there is no mention of the need for transparency and inclusion in decision-making.	☐ Agency leaders occasionally use language in public communication that lifts up the importance of parent participation, openness, and inclusion.	☐ Agency leaders frequently use language in public communication that lifts up the importance of parent participation, openness, and inclusion.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.
☐ Agency leaders do not question the practices for openness and inclusion proposed by the coalitions and work groups they participate in, even when these standards exclude full participation of parents.	☐ Agency leaders usually accept the practices for openness and inclusion proposed by the coalitions and work groups they participate in, even when these standards exclude full participation of parents.	☐ Agency makes efforts to shift the practices of coalitions and work groups they participate in toward greater openness and inclusion, but not comprehensively and usually behind the scenes.	☐ Agency leaders publicly advocate for practices supporting openness and inclusion all coalitions and work groups they participate in, so that parents can participate fully.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

Capacity: How has the agency expanded its capacity to effectively support parent engagement?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
☐ There is no expectation that agency staff adjust meeting formats to emphasize the strengths of parents and the context of the communities they represent.	☐ Agency staff attempt to facilitate professional partners' understanding of families and communities, but don't have much influence to change practices.	☐ When parents are specifically invited, agency staff work to facilitate understanding of the strengths of families and the context of communities they represent, but there is not full buy-in from professional partners.	☐ Agency staff, professional partners, and parents work together to design meetings that are accessible to everyone.	☐ Don't Know/ N.A.

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There is no evidence that agency leaders model core practices of openness and inclusion in the way they treat staff. Staff are not given opportunities to influence change strategies. As a result, staff don't feel encouraged to engage parents.	Staff are sometimes included in executive-level conversations about challenges or opportunities facing the agency, but do not have meaningful input on strategies to address them.	Program directors are included in executive-level conversations about challenges or opportunities facing the agency and have meaningful input on strategies to address them.	Agency leaders include staff at all levels in planning and problem-solving, providing them with information they need to participate fully. As a result, staff feel confident in their efforts to engage parents in agency change efforts.	Don't Know/ N.A.
Staff are unclear about the agency's stance on openness and inclusion when working with parents and have no training to support best practices in this area.	Agency leaders talk about the importance of openness and inclusion when working with parents, but staff do not have a written protocol or training to guide them.	Agency staff have training and written protocol regarding openness and inclusion in parent engagement, but their supervisors are not equipped to mentor them or set clear expectations.	Agency staff are expected to uphold the values of openness and inclusion in their interactions with parents and receive training on behaviors and practices that support these values.	Don't Know/ N.A.

Practice: How do the agency's practices and programming and advocacy advance parent engagement and leadership?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
Committees, boards, and other groups with defined structures do not have any representation of parents.	Committees, boards, and other groups with defined structures have only one position for representatives of parents.	Committees, boards, and other groups with defined structures have at least two positions for representatives of parents.	There is an ongoing effort to develop the leadership of parents to serve on committees and boards, and parents from diverse backgrounds are well-represented.	Don't Know/ N.A.
There is no effort to make materials, presentations, and meeting minutes accessible to parents—they use acronyms and professional terms, and materials are not translated.	Staff decide which documents are "relevant" to parent representatives and make those documents accessible, but other documents related to the issue or process are not made accessible.	When parents are invited to participate, most documents are made accessible to parents—acronyms are spelled out, presenters use plain language, and materials are translated.	Agency regularly includes parent leaders in the planning of events and meetings. As a result, all aspects of the meeting, including materials, promote transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.	Don't Know/ N.A.
When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders do not explain how decisions will be made.	When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders sometimes explain how decisions will be made, but this is not a universal practice.	When parents participate in planning or other processes, agency staff and leaders clearly explain how decisions will be made.	Parent leaders participate in the design of the decision-making process.	Don't Know/ N.A.

Influence: How much influence do parents have in program, agency, and system-level change and governance?

Not Evident	Developing	Progressing	Integrated	
When parents are asked about their needs or feedback, agency staff do not inform them how the information influenced the program or agency.	When parents are asked about their needs or feedback, agency staff sometimes inform a core group of parent leaders how the information influenced the program or agency.	Agency leaders regularly report back to parent leaders how their feedback and ideas influenced decisions.	There is a defined process for including parents in a "feedback loop:" parent leaders are involved in the effort to get parent input from the beginning and included in the agency's report back to parents about how their feedback influenced decisions.	Don't Know/ N.A.
Parents are not involved in agency decision-making.	Parents are asked for input on program quality from time to time.	Parent leaders are involved in agency decision-making about programs in a meaningful way, but do not have all of the information they need. For example, they do not have access to the budget or internal policies affecting the decision.	Parent leaders are involved in decision-making roles affecting programs, policies, practices, and budgets and have access to all of the information they need to participate fully.	Don't Know/ N.A.
Parent leaders are not involved in agency decision-making about programs, policies, practices, and budgets.	Parent leaders are asked for their feedback on agency plans and strategies to address issues.	Parent leaders help identify issues with agency staff and leaders, but not usually involved in shaping or implementing solutions.	Parent leaders are informed and asked for their input when agency is defining a problem, coming up with a solution, putting the solution into action, and learning what worked and didn't work.	Don't Know/ N.A.