



New England (HHS Region 1)

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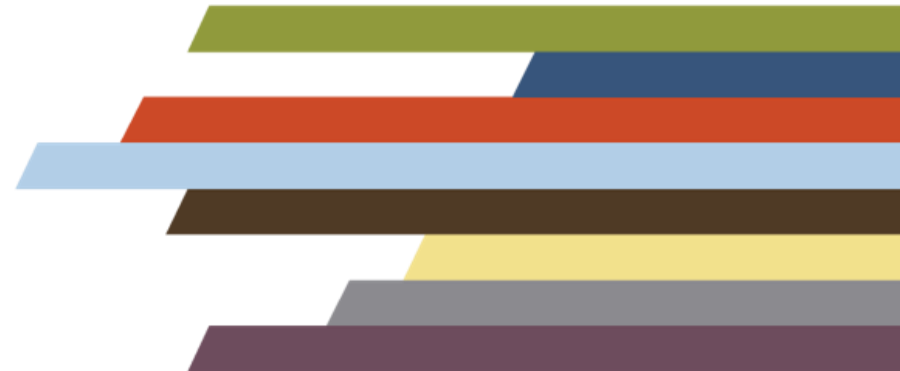
Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Mental Health and Children: Perspectives from Families on Screening, Diagnosis, and Support

Lynda Gargan, Ph.D., Executive Director
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Presentation Date/Time:
Thursday, September 26, 2019
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm



U.S. Department of Education

- Raising the next generation is a shared responsibility. When families, communities and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits.
- For schools and districts across the U.S., family engagement is becoming an integral part of education reform efforts.



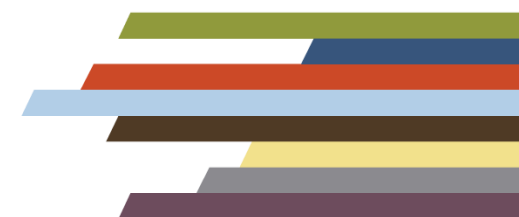
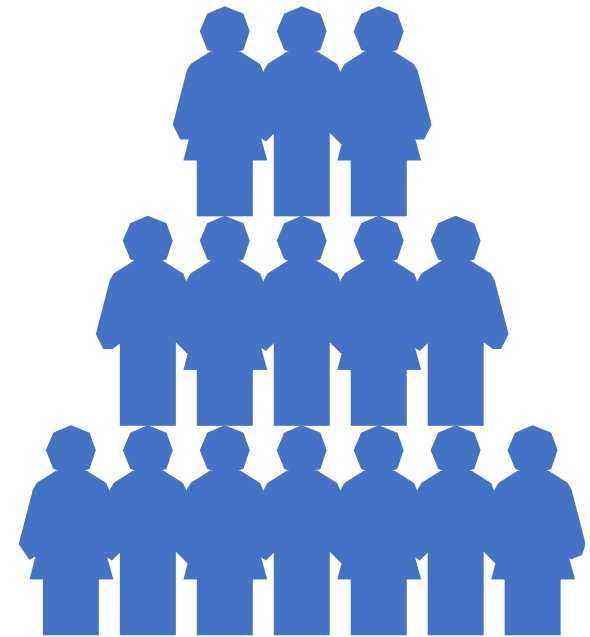
How Is Family Defined?

The concept of family has changed as our culture has evolved.

Family units now self-define to reflect their unique characteristics.

Youth and young adults may add members to their family unit, based upon their experiences.

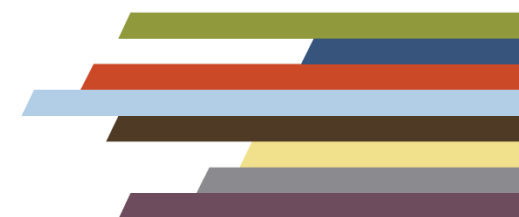
The “family” must be respected as defined by its members.



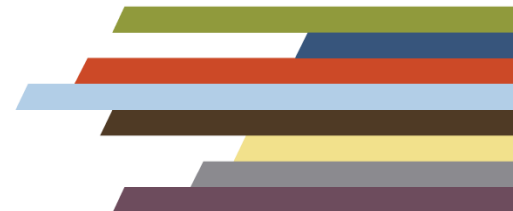
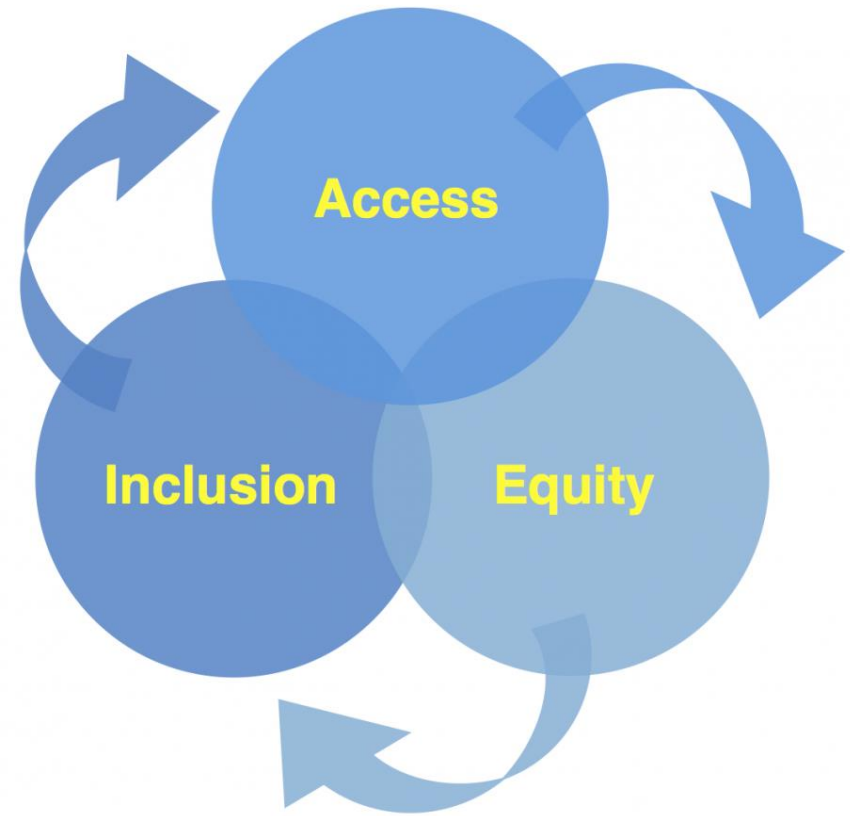
What is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships.

It is a shared responsibility of families and staff at all levels that ***requires mutual respect*** for the roles and strengths each has to offer.



Engaging families is more than just having them at the table or keeping them informed.





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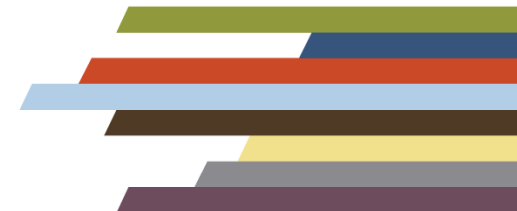
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Why Does It Matter?



Why Engage Families?



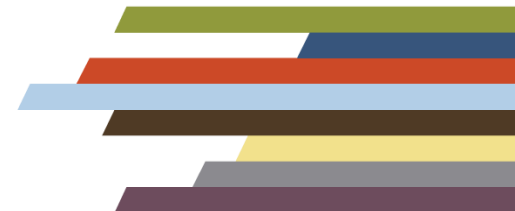
PROFESSIONALS
COME AND GO IN
A CHILD'S LIFE.



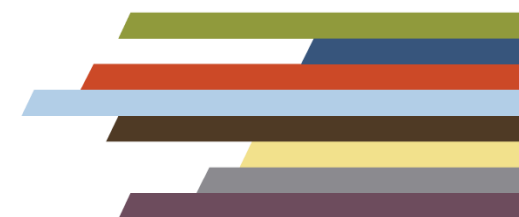
FAMILIES ARE THE
ONLY TRUE
CONSTANT.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT HELPS TO
ESTABLISH SUSTAINABLE
PRACTICES AND PROVIDES A
SENSE OF STABILITY FOR THE
CHILD.



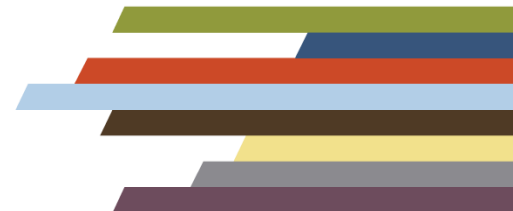
Strategies for Meaningful Family Engagement



Screening



- If screening is suggested, meet with the parents to discuss their questions or concerns. Use this opportunity to engage and partner with the family.
- No matter what the results are, call the parents to discuss. Ask for input – i.e., “Does this sound right?” “Did we miss something?” “Is there anything you would like to add or redact?”
- **Never** place blame or shame on the student or the parent.
- **Never** predict what the results of a full evaluation might be.





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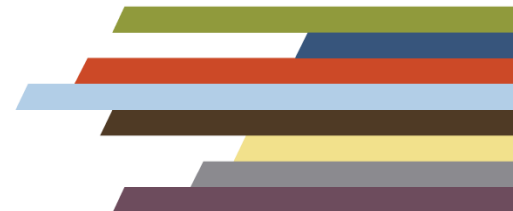
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insights
& Elaboration

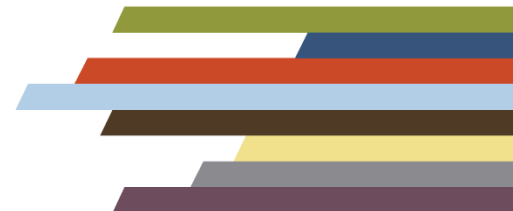
Today's Presenter Dr. Lynda Gargan
C-TLC Project Director Dr. Christine Mason





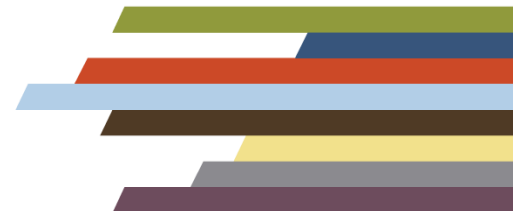
Evaluation

- This can be extremely anxiety provoking for both the student and family. Even though they may agree that something seems amiss, this process is intrusive and may trigger stress.
- Meet with the family and student to explain each step in the process.
- Always include a family interview and the results of the interview in an evaluation summary.
- **It's our job to make this a positive, supportive process.**



Diagnosis

- Meet with the family and student to explain the diagnosis and its implications.
- Don't use jargon. Families and students aren't clinicians, they need common sense language. Avoid using acronyms.
- Never underestimate the intelligence of the family or student. Do not “talk down” to them or tell them what's best for them.
- Stop often and encourage the family/student to ask questions.
- Ask the family/student if they agree with the diagnosis. Did we get it right?
- Remember that the diagnostic process is not linear and is as much art as science. Family input is critical.





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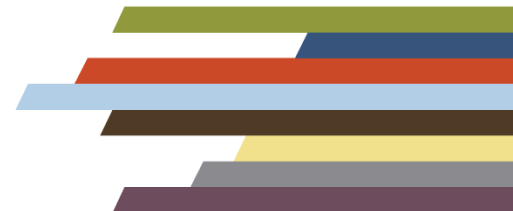
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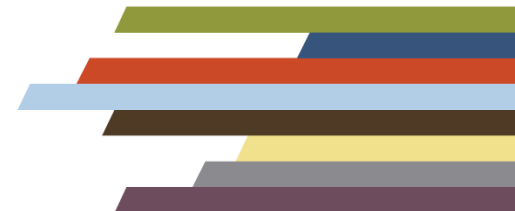
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Creating a Culture that Encourages Meaningful Family Engagement

- Make your first contact personal, introducing you as a partner in their child's success.
- Be deliberate in communicating that your desire is to help and change the narrative.
- Be mindful that parents are extremely busy. Try not to disrupt their routines.
 - *Tip: Avoid contacting families at work whenever possible.*
- Follow up a phone call with a text or email that includes your contact information.



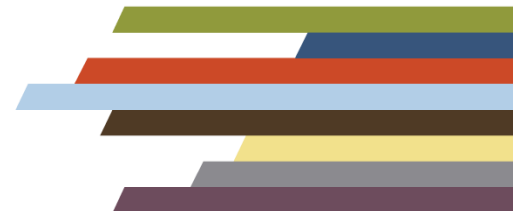
Creating a Physical Environment that Encourages Family Engagement



- Meet with students and families in a setting that encourages engagement and that doesn't separate you from the family.
 - *Tip: Get a social worker to design your meeting space.*
- Smaller spaces encourage relationship building and intimacy because people are arranged in close proximity.
- Please don't bring coffee, etc. into a meeting unless you offer refreshments to the family/student.
- Have a pen and paper available for parents to take notes.
- Have tissues nearby in case the meeting is difficult for a family/student.

Creating a Relational Environment that Encourages Family Engagement

- Establish relational ground rules (how they prefer to be addressed).
 - Use titles, i.e., Mr., Ms., etc.: desire for a more formal relationship.
 - Use first names: desire for a less formal relationship.
 - *Tip: Follow suit in the way that you address yourself.*
- Establish time limits up front and indicate that you would like to set a timer or other method to remind everyone when there are only 5 minutes left. Ask the family if they are comfortable with this.
- Ask the family for their agenda for the meeting before sharing yours.



Why Families May Be Hesitant to Engage



FEELING
BLAMED
OR A LACK
OF
RESPECT



PAST
EXPERIENCES
WITH
SCHOOLS –
EITHER WITH
OTHER
CHILDREN OR
WHEN THEY
WERE IN
SCHOOL



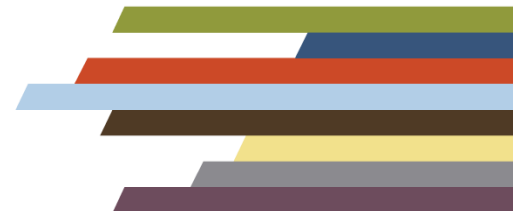
FEELINGS OF
INTIMIDATION -
TEACHERS ARE
PERCEIVED AS
PROFESSIONALS
AND THE
EXPERTS



FEELING
OUTNUMBERED IN
MEETINGS



FEELINGS OF
INCOMPETENCE
DUE TO NOT
KNOWING THE
JARGON, THE
INS AND OUTS
OF SYSTEM, OR
WHAT THEY CAN
CONTRIBUTE



Why Schools May Be Hesitant To Engage?



Past experiences with parents and families



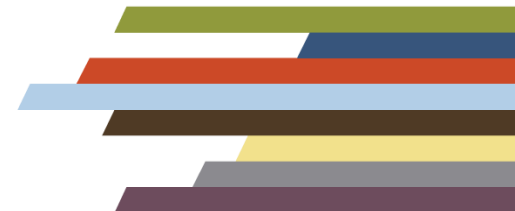
Liability concerns



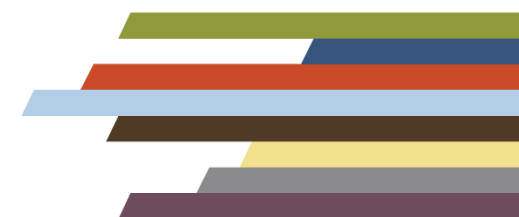
It is time intensive



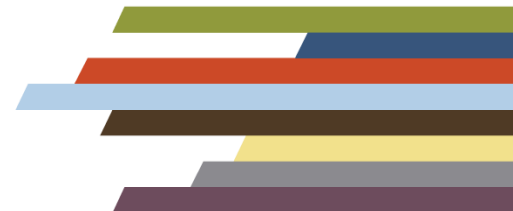
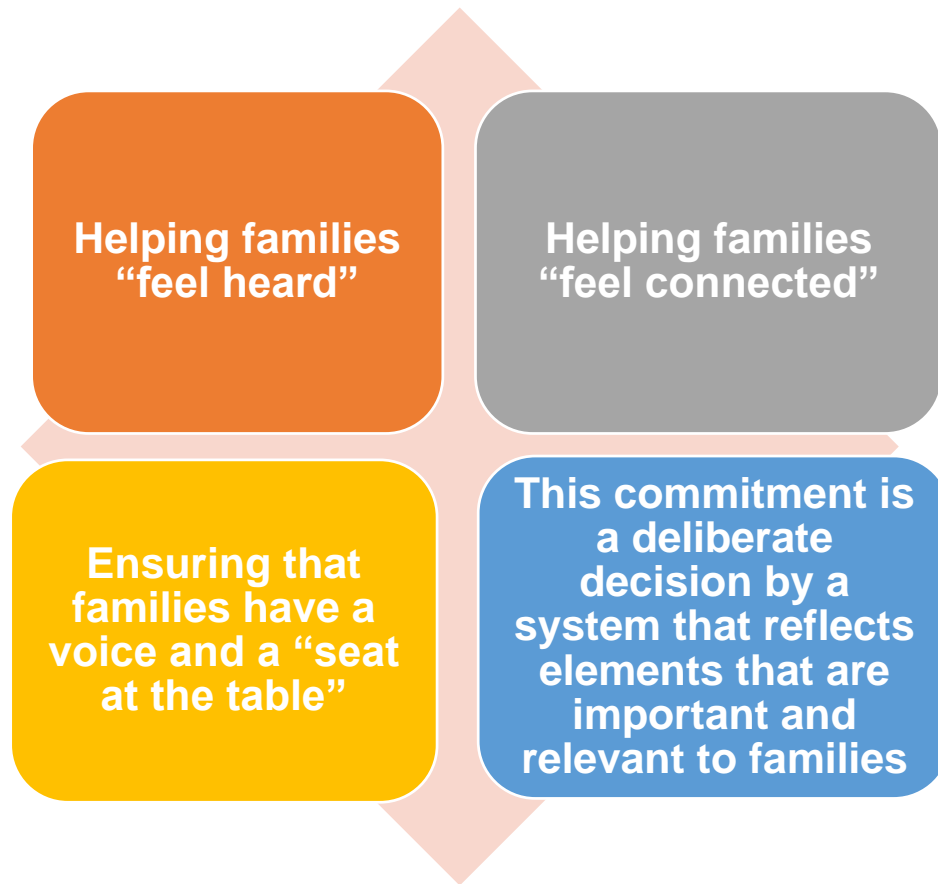
Lacking meaningful training on engagement



Family Engagement Requires Commitment



This commitment isn't about getting family "buy in," it's about...



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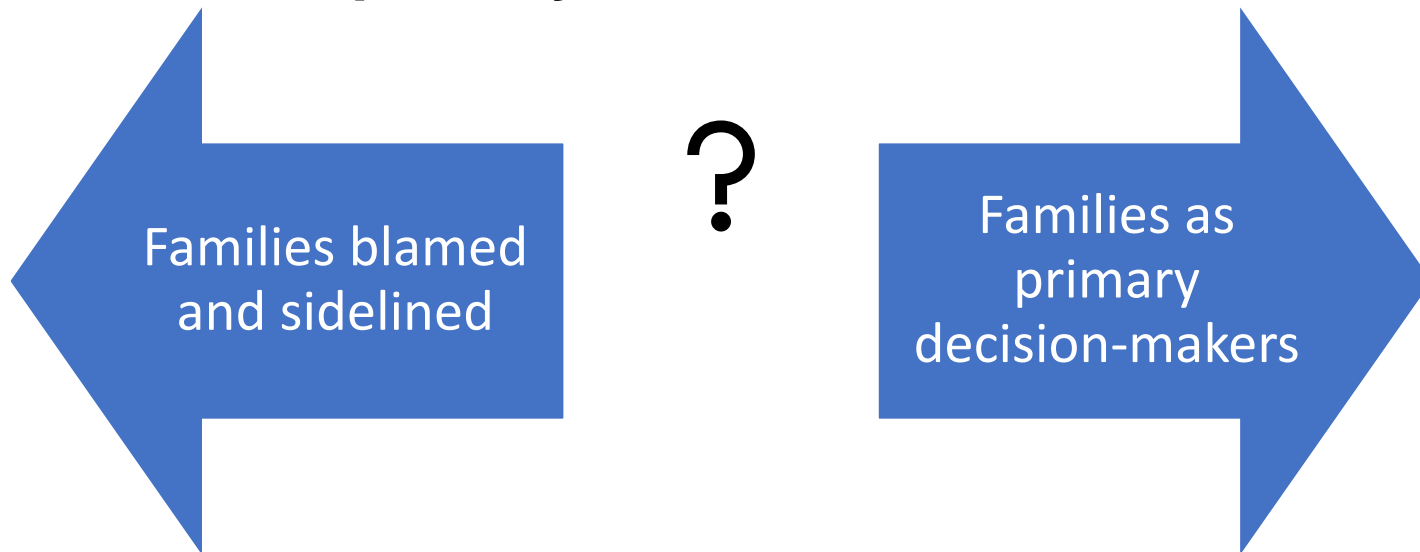


*National Federation of Families
for Children's Mental Health*

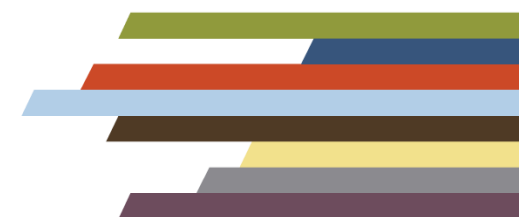


Celebrating Families for 30 Years

Family engagement can be evaluated on a continuum – from families being blamed to being primary decision-makers.



Ask yourself “Where does my work fall on this continuum?”



In Summary...

Families **and** schools are extremely important in the lives of our children.

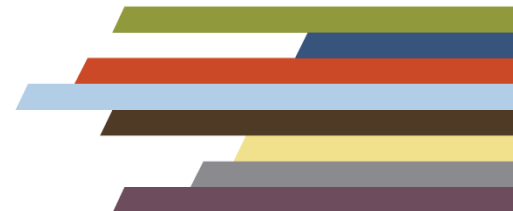
School cultures are rapidly evolving, and many requirements are being placed upon the educational community.

Families are the most consistent adults in children's lives.

Families have important information to share with schools which may improve the behavioral health of their children.

Every educator wants to enhance the lives of their students, but many have not been trained in effective engagement strategies.

If we all work in a true partnership, we can improve our children's behavioral health.





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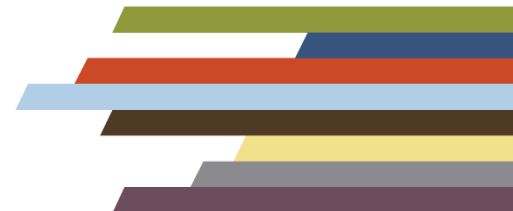
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Childhood-Trauma Learning Collaborative (C-TLC) Upcoming Events

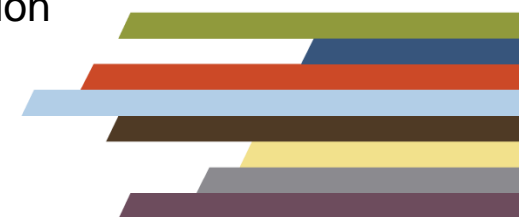
Is your school trauma-informed? Are you/your colleagues looking for mental health resources to better support your students? Join the Center for Educational Improvement (CEI) for a series of online events hosted by the [New England Mental Health Technology Transfer Center \(New England MHTTC\)](#).

Our complimentary webinar series is designed to strengthen mental health supports that address the needs of children who have experienced/art at risk of experiencing significant trauma.

Next Webinar: November 7 @ 4:00 pm

*Poverty, Brain Development, and Early Interventions
with Kimberly Noble, Ph.D.,*

Associate Professor of Neuroscience and Education
Teachers College, Columbia University.





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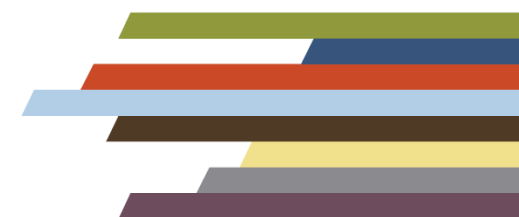
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Celebrating Families for 30 Years

Thank you for attending!
**Mental Health and Children: Perspectives from
Families on Screening, Diagnosis, and Support**

Questions? Contact Us:
Center for Educational Improvement
info@edimprovement.org



Resources

- <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement>
- <https://www.ed.gov/parent-and-family-engagement>
- <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/family-engagement.aspx>
- <http://www.uscrossier.org/ceg/wp-content/uploads/publications/Family-Engagement-in-Education.pdf>
- <https://www.familiesandschools.org/blog/the-importance-of-parent-engagement/>
- https://www.michigan.gov/documents/Parent_Involvement_Part_1_12-16-04_111426_7.pdf
- <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/family-engagement/principles>
- <https://oregongearup.org/sites/oregongearup.org/files/grant/meetings/fall2016/authenticfamilyengagement.pdf>

