

Parent Leadership Self-assessment Tool¹

The purpose of this tool is to help agencies and organizations to assess whether they are giving parents opportunities to develop and exercise leadership skills. An agency that is supportive of parent leadership welcomes the active involvement of parent leaders in program management, implementation, and assessment, and nourishes the development of leadership qualities among parents. Parent leaders represent the needs and perspectives of parents to an agency. While agency administrators or staff may have children and be parents, as employees of the agency they take the role of practitioners. Being supportive of parent leadership requires seeking input and giving authority to the parents your agency or organization serves or to parents living in similar circumstances to those you serve.

Directions: This assessment tool is best completed as a group activity among agency leaders and key staff so that everyone is able to contribute. If there are parent leaders who work with your agency or organization you may want to give them an opportunity to complete this tool separately so they can be as candid as possible in their responses without worrying about hurt feelings or negative repercussions. Once you have completed the tool follow the directions below to develop goals and action steps to enhance parent leadership in your organization.

Please indicate whether the following statements are true of your agency or organization always, most of the time, sometimes, or rarely or never (Place an X in the appropriate box)	Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely or Never
Communications				
We value parental involvement and provide opportunities for parents to engage in conversation with agency practitioners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We create opportunities for parents to engage in conversations with each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration, program staff, and day-to-day practitioners respect the opinion of parents and work with them to respond to their ideas and concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy and Practice				
Our agency or organization devotes resources such as money and staff time to promoting parent leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We ensure that all the information we share with parents is free of jargon and can easily be understood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agency decisions are made with the involvement of parent leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training and Leadership Development				
Our information sessions and training opportunities for agency staff are co-facilitated by both parents and practitioners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ This tool was developed by the Altarum Institute with support from the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau. It draws heavily upon the work of the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee.

Please indicate whether the following statements are true of your agency or organization always, most of the time, sometimes, or rarely or never (Place an X in the appropriate box)	Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely or Never
Training and Leadership Development (continued)				
Our information sessions and training opportunities for parents are co-facilitated by both parents and practitioners				
Parent leaders are given the opportunity to participate in staff enrichment workshops or training sessions				
Inclusiveness				
The parents who take leadership roles in our organization are representative of the larger community in terms of race, culture, language, income, and education				
Opportunities for parental involvement, input, and leadership are offered at times and locations that are convenient for parents				
Parents who are asked to play a leadership role have clear roles and expectations				

Agencies and organizations that value parent leadership have policies and procedures in place to promote it. Review the following statements and indicate the status of your organizations current policies and procedures in these areas	We have them and they are <u>effective</u>	We have them and they could be better	We have them and they are <u>ineffective</u>	We do not have them
We have mechanisms to provide for the special needs of parent leaders such as stipends, assistance with transportation, and child care				
We provide opportunities for parents to develop leadership skills by giving them support to participate in workshops, meetings, or other events where such skill development is offered				
We provide internal and external resources to help parent leaders develop and maintain their skills				
We have a process that enables parents to review and suggest changes to agency materials that are being sent to parents				
Our policy manuals include clear expectations that parents will have input and involvement in how we do our work				
Our evaluation and monitoring efforts include measures of the quality of parental involvement (intensity and meaningfulness)				

After You Have Completed the Self-Assessment Tool

Once you have completed the self-assessment tool you will want to review your answers paying particular attention to the areas where you put an X in a shaded box. These are areas you may want to address. Many agencies or organizations will have multiple areas that need to be addressed. The reality is that for many years now there has not been a major emphasis on promoting parent leadership in human services agencies. As more and more people look at this issue they have come to see that promoting parent leadership is critical to developing programs and building support for them. If you do have multiple areas that need to be addressed you should not feel bad or overwhelmed. Instead you should pick an area that needs to be addressed and develop a plan for beginning to move forward. You may want to use a form similar to the one below to set goals and develop action steps to achieve those goals.

Goal	Action Steps	Whose Responsible
1.	1a.	
	1b.	
	1c.	
	1d.	
2.	2a.	
	2b.	
	2c.	
	2d.	

Goal	Action Steps	Whose Responsible
3.	3a.	
	3b.	
	3c.	
	3d.	
4.	4a.	
	4b.	
	4c.	
	4d.	

If you want to review a list of strategies for promoting parent leadership and a discussion of why it is important, an excellent resource titled, *Parent Leadership: Successful Strategies* is available from the FRIENDS National Resource Center. You can download this resource at: http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/parent_leader_strategies.pdf