

Family Leadership Self-assessment Tool for System-building Collaboratives¹

The purpose of this tool is to help multi-agency collaborative system-building initiatives to assess whether they are supporting giving family members, such as parents, opportunities to develop and exercise leadership skills. A collaborative that is supportive of parent leadership encourages the active involvement of parent leaders in system building, program management, implementation, and assessment, and nourishes the development of leadership qualities among family members. Parent leaders and other family members who play a leadership role represent the needs and perspectives of families to a government entity (e.g., state or county government), collaborative group, agency or organization. While agency administrators or staff may have children and be parents, as employees within the system they take the role of practitioners or policy makers. Being supportive of family leadership requires seeking input and giving authority to the parents and family members that health and social service agencies or organizations serve or to people living in similar circumstances to those that receive those services.

Directions: This assessment tool is best completed as a group activity among participants in the collaborative so that everyone is able to contribute. If there are parent/family leaders who work with your collaborative, 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. You can then follow that with a candid discussion about how the collaborative can better support family leadership. Once you have completed the tool follow the directions below to develop goals and action steps to strengthen the family leadership element in your collaborative.

Collaboratives that value family leadership take action to promote such leadership. Review the following statements and indicate which one best characterizes the work of your collaborative (Place an X in the appropriate box)	We have done this and it has been <u>effective</u>	We have done this and could do better	We have done this and it has been <u>ineffective</u>	We have not done this
Communications				
Our collaborative actively seeks input from family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have helped develop forums in which parents can work together to address concerns and solve problems (e.g., parent café's; family-to-family networks; parent circles)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our collaborative respects the opinion of family members and works with them to respond to their ideas and concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent Involvement/Leadership in the Collaborative				
Parents or family members are actively involved in our collaborative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents or family members play a leadership role in our collaborative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our collaborative has established mechanisms to provide for the special needs of parent leaders such as stipends, assistance with transportation, and child care	<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 upon the work of the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee.

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Inclusiveness				
The family members who take leadership roles in our collaborative are representative of the larger community in terms of race, culture, language, income, and education				
Opportunities for family member involvement, input, and leadership in our collaborative are offered at times and locations that are convenient for family members				
Family members who are asked to play a leadership role in our collaborative have clear roles and expectations				
Training and Leadership Development				
We have sponsored or provided support for parent/family leadership trainings or workshops				
We have provided resources so parents or family members can participate in leadership development activities (e.g., training sessions, conferences, etc.)				
Principles, Policies, and Practices				
We have adopted principles, objectives, or goals that stress the importance of parent/family leadership				
We have worked with agencies or organizations to create policies or practices that support parent/family leadership				
We have actively encouraged the adoption of policies at the state, county, or other jurisdictional level that support parent/family leadership				
We have worked to develop policies and/or processes that enable family members to review and suggest changes to agency or collaborative materials that are being sent to families				
Evaluation and Assessment				
Our evaluation and monitoring of our collaborative initiative includes measures of the quality of parental/family involvement (intensity and meaningfulness)				
Our evaluation and monitoring effort seeks input from parents and/or family members				

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 collaboratives 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/family leadership in health and human services agencies. As more and more people look at this issue they have come to see that promoting parent and family leadership is critical to developing effective systems 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