

Family and Community Engagement Home Visiting Pilot

1) *Briefly outline your original goals and objectives, as stated in your proposal, and describe progress toward achieving them.*

The Minnesota Targeted Home Visiting Coalition asked Wilder Research and Development & Training, Inc. to adapt its Family and Community Engagement Tools (FaCET) and survey process for use with a subset of Coalition members in their home visiting programs. The FaCET survey process serves multiple purposes by:

- Collecting meaningful data
- Creating a platform for discussion among parents and staff
- Documenting what is going well and where improvements can be targeted
- Informing policy and practice
- Building capacity among trained Coalition staff to administer the surveys on a regular and periodic basis

The pilot project met its original goals to:

- Adapt the Family and Community Engagement Tool (FaCET) and survey process for early childhood services to meeting the needs of home visitors and home visiting programs.
- Test the redesigned FaCET with a select group of home visiting program.
- Gather feedback from FaCET test sites and adjust the tool accordingly.

Members of the Coalition subcommittee on Family Engagement participated in the adaptation of the tools, which took place over a two-month process. Adaptations focused primarily on ensuring that certain categories were clarified and appropriate to the home visiting context.

2) *Describe the population served or community reached during the grant period. Use numbers and demographics such as race/ethnicity, gender, or geographic location.*

The pilot engaged 67 parents and 40 program staff from five home visiting programs.

The 63 mothers and 4 fathers range in age from under 19 up to 59. These parents identify their child as Latino (36%), black or African American (30%), white (18%), Somali (9%), American Indian (8%), and Hmong (2%), including 51 percent from mostly first generation immigrant or refugee families. Ninety-two percent report household incomes of less than \$40,000 annually.

The staff include family support workers (48%); administrators (28%); and assistant teachers, teachers, and educators (25%). Most (90%) are full-time employees, and 88 percent are females. Staff respondents identified as white (50%), black or African American (28%), Latino (20%), American Indian (5%), and Asian (5%). About two-thirds (65%) have been with their programs for 2 years or less, 13 percent for 3 to 5 years, 10 percent for 6 to 10 years, and the rest (10%) for 11 or more years.

3) *Describe any unanticipated results, either positive or negative. What did you learn because of this grant?*

As a group, the programs in the pilot learned about both strengths and concerns. The clear strengths that emerged include:

- Parents and staff report clear strengths in transmitting character and values.
- Parents and staff feel that the advice they receive from professionals supports their own knowledge, experience, and values.
- Parents and staff feel they have the opportunity talk about the positive skills and abilities children demonstrate at home.
- Staff report partnering with culturally supportive community-based organizations to deliver services and to connect families to events and resources.
- Staff report changing program rules, requirements, and strategies in response to what is learned from families and communities.

The concerns to address include:

- Family members report little extended family support and connections. What can be done to strengthen and increase capacity within extended families and within communities?
- Parents feel the need to take extra steps to teach their child to be proud of his or her cultural, ethnic, social, or gender group identity. How can children be protected and families supported in addressing these concerns?

4) *How will you make changes based on these results?*

The programs in the pilot gained valuable insights from families from diverse backgrounds and experiences that have not been previously revealed by other surveys or assessment. The tools proved to be:

- **Identity-confirming:** The process and questions offered an authentic and respectful way to listen to what parents had to say about the extent to which home visiting programs are responsiveness to their values and culture.
- **Relationship-building:** The tools drove conversations in different and deeper ways and helped home visitors and parents talk openly about how to support families from their perspective.
- **Community-building:** The tools provided new and valuable information for better understanding the social isolation of many families and a vehicle for putting that information into action for helping families build social connections they can trust.

In sum, the home visitors in the pilot found the tools very helpful for understanding the experiences of families, particularly families from different backgrounds and cultures than the home visitors, and for interacting with families in new and deeper ways. They also thought the data and facilitated discussions generated unique information that can help improve both policies and practice, as well as contribute to evidence based programs. The programs in the pilot expressed enthusiasm for continuing to use the tools and for expanding the use throughout the coalition. They thought that could best be accomplished through more training, coaching, practice, and cross-program peer support.

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