

# Is Your Team Ready to Engage Families?

## Discussion Guide: Readiness for Family Engagement

Family engagement requires not only the desire, but also the structures, planning and leadership to sustain their involvement. This discussion guide can help your team understand how ready you are to engage families in your work.

The levels – baseline, questioning, interested, and buy-in – can inform your efforts and help your team reach the next level of readiness for family engagement.

### Baseline



- The organization or team does not currently engage families.
- The organization or team is not aware of organizational policies that support family engagement.
- The staff members have minimal understanding of the processes behind family engagement.
- Families have shown interest in participating in initiatives but have no support from the organization or team to engage.

### Questioning



- The organization or team does not have an action plan to engage families.
- There is no strategy to support family engagement long term.
- No staff member is assigned to support family leaders.
- The organization or team has barriers to engaging families but does not recognize them or have a plan to overcome them.
- The organization or team does not recruit families to improve their policies or initiatives.
- The organization or team does not budget to compensate families.
- The organization or team does not have a budget for champions or mentors.

## Interested



- The organization or team wants to recruit and work with families.
- The organization or team has a clear understanding of the value of families' perspectives.
- The organization or team has a plan to engage families and compensate families.
- The organization or team values the family voice at early stages of an initiative.
- The organization or team partners with other organizations to recruit diverse families.
- Family engagement is promoted across the organization and included in budgets.
- The organization or team has more than one parent leader and avoids tokenism.
- The organization or team collaborates with others to improve family engagement.

## Buy in



- The organization or team has a genuine interest in engaging family leaders as part of their mission and values.
- The organization or team has family representation from, and relationships with, community-based organizations.
- The organization or team has policies that sustain family engagement, including equitable compensation and consistent staff support for families.
- Family leaders participate in decision-making to improve programs, policies, and services throughout the organization.
- The organization or team reports outcomes to the families who participate in their initiatives.
- The organization or team shares plans and strategies to improve family engagement with their community and the families they work with.



**Find tools to plan, assess, and improve your family engagement efforts at [www.familyvoices.org/FESAT](http://www.familyvoices.org/FESAT).**