

Family Engagement Policy Template

When co-creating policies with families, use the Family Engagement Policy template to include the elements of a written policy guide and ensure that policies consider families' needs and circumstances.

Introduction and Commitment

Share your organization's mission and values.

[Organization's name] is committed to including family perspectives and leadership in [initiative goal], for example "improve the health outcomes of children and youth with disabilities." We want to establish meaningful and lasting partnerships with families and with the community. We believe [vision for family engagement] when [organization's name] and the community work together to [organization's vision].

Example of completed Introduction and Commitment section

ABC Health is committed to including family perspectives and leadership in **improving the health outcomes of children and youth with disabilities**, which aligns with our mission to **support the health of children in the Z state area**. We want to establish meaningful and lasting partnerships with families and with the community. We believe **everyone benefits** when ABC Health and the community work together to **promote health access for the well-being of our children**.

Purpose

In order to [why the policy exists], [Organization's name] has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes [Organization's name]'s goals and objectives for meaningful family engagement. This policy guides the strategies and resources that strengthen the services offered and the partnerships developed with [Organization's name] and describes our commitment to engage families in co-creation and collaboration to achieve our mission of [Organizational mission]. [Value statement about the intended impact of family engagement].

Example of completed Purpose section

In order to **strengthen community awareness of our services and improve our policies**, ABC Health has developed this parent and family engagement policy that establishes ABC Health's goals and objectives for meaningful family engagement.

This policy guides the strategies and resources that strengthen the services offered and the partnerships developed with ABC Health and describes our commitment to engage families in co-creation and collaboration to achieve our mission of **promoting access to high quality care for children with disabilities and their families in the metro area**. Families play a crucial role as children’s caregivers. **Engaging families in the development of our programs is critical to achieving positive health outcomes.**

Definitions

[Organization’s name] understands or defines family engagement as [co-created definition of family engagement]. [Define the term used to describe family participants].

[Organization’s name] recognizes that [term used to describe family participants] are experts and know what works and does not work for their children. [Term used to describe family participants] [how family participants contribute to the work].

A champion is a staff member of our organization who [co-created champion role description]. [Organization’s name] will assign champions from our staff who will guide and mentor family leaders.

At [Organization’s name], we define partnership as [co-created definition].

Example of completed Definitions section

ABC Health understands or defines family engagement as **the active inclusion of family perspectives to inform our work, as well as family participation on decision-making Boards and committees across our organization**. We refer to the family members we engage as “family leaders.” ABC Health recognizes that family leaders are experts and know what works and does not work for their children. Family leaders **share their stories and lived experience** to help ABC Health **improve our services and understand the impact of our policies and processes**.

A champion is a staff member from our organization who **serves as a consistent point of contact and provides mentorship to family leaders engaged in our initiative(s)**. ABC Health assigns champions from our staff who guide and mentor family leaders.

At ABC Health, we define partnership as **working together with families as equal decision makers to develop policies and practices that serve all families and support our mission**.

Procedures

[Organization] takes the following actions to involve [term used to describe family participants] in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of our programs and services:

- Regular monthly meetings
- Promoting family participation in decisions relating to [services, program]
- Responding to suggestions as soon as practicably possible
- Offering materials and communications in different languages and formats as participants request
- Providing translation services and disability accommodations upon request
- Compensating families for their expertise

[Term used to describe family participants] will be involved in the development and improvement of the family engagement policy by contributing their feedback during follow-up meetings. [Term used to describe family participants]' input will be utilized in planning, reviewing, and improving parent and family engagement programs.

During [specific timeframe], [program or organization] will hold at least [meeting frequency] facilitated by the staff champion to discuss [topics related to the initiative] and contribute to updating and creating policies and processes.

Example of completed Procedures section

ABC Health takes the following actions to involve **family leaders** in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of our programs and services:

- Regular monthly meetings
- Promoting family participation in decisions relating to [services, program]
- Responding to suggestions as soon as practicably possible
- Offering materials and communications in different languages and formats as participants request
- Providing translation services and disability accommodations upon request
- Compensating families for their expertise

Family leaders will be involved in the development and improvement of the family engagement policy by contributing their feedback during follow-up meetings.

Family leaders' input will be utilized in planning, reviewing, and improving parent and family engagement programs.



During year one of the XYZ initiative, [ABC Health](#) will hold at least **one meeting per month**, facilitated by the staff champion, to discuss **child health, health care access, and family well-being** and contribute to updating and creating policies and processes.

Responsibilities

The [role or position] is responsible for implementing the family engagement plan, with the support of the [supporting department or area].

[Term used to describe family participants] will participate according to their role descriptions and advisory group bylaws.

Example of completed Responsibilities section

The staff champion is responsible for implementing the family engagement plan, with the support of the patient experience department.

Family leaders will participate according to their role descriptions and advisory group bylaws.

Building capacity

For Families

[Organization's name] will build [term used to describe family participants]' capacity for strong engagement to ensure their effective involvement and to support a partnership among the [organization] and the community to [why the policy exists *from Purpose section*]. [Organization name] will do this by training [term used to describe family participants] on topics like:

- [Co-created list of topics for family training]
- Other topics identified by the organization and family participants

For staff

[Organization's name] [ABC Health](#) will train staff about:

- [Best practices for](#) family engagement and mentorship
- Other topics identified by the organization and family participants

Example of completed Building Capacity section

For Family Leaders

ABC Health will build **family leaders'** capacity for strong engagement to ensure their effective involvement and to support a partnership among the [organization] and the community to **strengthen community awareness of our services and improve our policies**. ABC Health will do this by training **family leaders** on topics like:

- Introduction to XYZ initiative and ABC Health
- How to work in groups to improve policies and processes
- How to tell your story to support systems change
- Technical skills needed to participate in the initiative
- Other topics identified by the organization and family participants

For staff

ABC Health will train staff about:

- Best practices for family engagement and mentorship
- Culturally responsive family engagement
- Supporting families in telling their stories for systems change
- Other topics identified by the organization and family participants

Evaluation

[Organization's name/program] will conduct a [interval] needs assessment with families served by the organization to learn about their needs and concerns. The needs assessment will include [tools used to evaluate family participation]. These tools will be developed by [process and participants].

[Organization] will continuously track participation of families in activities, including advisory and workgroup meetings, training, and other activities.

Evaluation findings will be used to inform the outcomes of the proposed family engagement plan, develop new strategies, and create or improve policies.

Example of completed Evaluation section

ABC Health will conduct a needs assessment **every other year** with families served by ABC Health to learn about their needs and concerns. The needs assessment will include **surveys and focus groups**. These tools will be developed by **family leaders, with the support of the staff champion**.

ABC Health will continuously track participation of families in activities, including advisory and workgroup meetings, training, and other activities.



Evaluation findings will be used to inform the outcomes of the proposed plan, develop new strategies, and create or improve policies.