



Tips for Family Friendly Meetings

in BRIEF

Briefs are provided as a best practice reference or topic example to support communities in developing the family partner role.

INTRODUCTION:

Intentional work towards creating an environment where youth and families can have meaningful participation and active engagement during meetings is crucial to obtaining the positive outcomes families, communities, and providers desire. In this technical assistance brief we will explore some foundational tips for increasing our mindfulness around what can be done to give families and equitable and safe space “at the table”, as well as how to reduce the barriers that can hinder family inclusion.

ENSURING A FAMILY FRIENDLY MEETING:

- Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the agenda, how the meeting functions, who will be there and answer any initial questions
- Review the minutes of the previous meeting with family members and be sure to answer any questions about actions or decisions of the group
- Debrief the meeting, discuss any questions or observations
- Plan the meeting in family friendly locations that reduce re-traumatization (i.e., local coffee shops, their home, child friendly settings)
- Bring fidgets like silly putty, chenille sticks, coloring pads/pencils, etc.
- Start the meeting with some type of icebreaker that allows all participants to share some part of themselves (along with name and role). Be clear in stating that guests may pass on sharing if they wish to.
- Bring healthy snacks and drinks to the meeting
- Keep meetings relevant and transparent, eliminate acronyms
- Ensure that there is a mentor, advocate or support person at the meeting to check for understanding with the family member periodically
- Always reflect on how the subject being discussed is applicable to families and support that in the discussion
- Invite family members to bring a natural support to the meeting
- Invite family members to participate in brainstorming and task delegation
- Schedule meetings at times that family members can attend (i.e., when kids are in school, evenings when child care can be provided, etc.)
- Make child care available or provide stipends for families to be able to accommodate child care needs
- Reduce barriers such as transportation for families (i.e., provide a gas card or taxi ride, etc.)
- Use strengths based and person first language