

QUALITY INDICATOR

C.5. Family Engagement

POINTS AVAILABLE: 1 or 2

Because families are a child's first and most important teachers, it is essential for child care programs to have a vested interest in connecting with the families of the children that attend their program on a number of different levels. Understanding how to effectively engage families is an essential piece to building meaningful relationships. The family engagement criteria consist of five categories with at least three activities in each category. The five categories are:

1. Transition
2. Family involvement (engagement)
3. Family communication strategies
4. Family support strategies
5. Family/community connection strategies.

Within each of these five categories there are two tiers; Tier A and Tier B.

NOTE: For 2016, the family engagement criteria are optional. In 2017, programs will be required to earn at least one point for the family engagement criteria to earn 3 Stars and two points to earn a 4 or 5 Star rating.

For 1 point

To earn one point, programs must provide documentation of meeting the requirements of five activities from either tier in at least two separate categories.

For example, a program could earn one point for completing any the following:

- all five activities in Tier A in the Family Involvement category,
- two activities in the Family Involvement category and three activities in the Transition category, **or**
- the program could earn the point by completing three activities in Tier A in the Transitions category and two activities in Tier B in the Family Communication Strategies category.

For 2 points

To earn two points, programs must provide documentation of meeting the requirements of ten activities in at least three separate categories. At least five of the ten activities need to be at the Tier B level. For example, a program would earn two points if they completed any the following:

- Three activities in the Family Involvement category in Tier A
- Two activities in the Transitions category both from Tier A, and
- Five activities in the Family Support Strategies category in Tier B.

Star Level	Activities	Categories	Tier Level
3 Star	5	2	Tier A or B
4 & 5 Star	10	3	At least 5 activities must be from Tier B

Transition

Transition is an ongoing process to ensure that children and families have appropriate information and support whenever there is a change in their child’s placement. Transition activities may occur when children enter a child care program, change placements/classrooms within a child care program, or go to another program or on to kindergarten. To ensure a smooth transition of information between current and future placements, family involvement will be encouraged throughout the process, as the families are the primary advocates for their children.¹

C.5.1		Transition: Tier A	
	Activity	Example	Verification
a.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy that describes what the program does to support children and families during transitions within the program.	The program has a policy that outlines their plan for having children who are moving classrooms visit the new classroom occasionally during different daily activities and transitions over the course of two weeks. Examples of daily activities could include: naptime, lunch/snack, or specific “fun” activity.	The policy is available for verification by the Rater. Page # _____ Family programs should have a policy to provide to the Rater that outlines their transition policy.
a.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy stating that the program will transfer any child’s record to the new setting at the family’s request and with the family’s written consent.	The program has a policy stating that they will transfer any child’s records to a new setting.	The policy is available for verification by the Rater. Page # _____
a.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy encouraging the opportunity for the child and family to visit the program prior to regular attendance.	The program has a policy on how they encourage families to visit the program.	The policy is available for verification by the Rater. Page # _____
a.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy stating that primary caregiving is provided by one or two consistent staff	The program has a policy on primary caregiving AND can provide one other piece of evidence.	The policy AND at least one other form of documentation are available for verification by the Rater. Page # _____

¹ This paragraph is from the Lane County Head Start Policy and Procedure manual on transitions (1304.41 (c) (3) <https://www.hsolc.org/node/1443>.

	members who lead the group every day.	Examples of evidence could be a teacher's schedule, time sheets (if classroom specific), or a bulletin board.	
a.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written process that in their policies demonstrates they have intentional, age-appropriate activities for children to prepare them for the transition to a new classroom or educational setting over the course of at least three months.	The program has a policy outlining the transition process. Examples of a written transition process could be that prior to the child's transition: The child takes naps all week in the new classroom. The child eats lunch with the new class 3 times a week. The child visits the other classroom. The child visits during 4K "open house" The child attends child development days with the school district. Each room has a timeline: A 2 week transition process A 1 month transition process	The program provides the Rater with documentation of a policy showing that the program is planning for/preparing for the transition process three months prior to the transition occurring. Page #_____

C.5.1 Transition: Tier B			
	Activity	Example	Verification
b.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy and provides documentation of children remaining with one staff member and the same classroom for at least 12 months. This supports looping/continuity of care for young children in child care.	The program has a policy on supporting looping/continuity of care AND can provide one other piece of evidence for 25% of the children in at least one classroom for each age group. Examples of evidence would be 12 months of attendance sheets, individual child assessments, anecdotal notes, or portfolio entries.	The policy AND at least one other form of documentation are available for verification by the Rater. Page #_____ <p>The documentation provided must be for 25% of the children in at least one classroom for each age group for at least 12 consecutive months.</p>
b.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides	The program provides	The program will provide the Rater

	documentation of following the program's transitioning policies and procedures.	evidence that demonstrates how the program transitioned specific children within the program. Example: The program has a note in Billy's portfolio that says Billy loves a tractor and that he plays with it every day. The note says that when Billy went from the Teddy Bear room to the Tiger room, the tractor transitioned with him.	with three pieces of documentation that the program has followed its policy on transitions for at least two children in the last year. If the program has not experienced any transitions in the last year, the Rater can look back up to 24 months. If no transitions occurred within the last 24 months, the program is not eligible for this option. The documentation MUST be child specific activities to accommodate each child's personality and needs.
b.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides documents of a "face to face" meeting with all families during the first 45 days of <u>transitioning into</u> the program.	The program has signed documentation by both program staff (teacher, director or administrator) and one person from the family.	The program will provide the Rater with one piece of documentation that the meeting occurred for at least 50% of children entering the program for the first time within the last year. If the program has not experienced any transitions in the last year, the Rater can look back up to 24 months. If no transitions occurred within the last 24 months, the program is not eligible for this option. If a family refuses to meet, a signed refusal form is acceptable.
b.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program meets with and supports all children and their families <u>transitioning out of</u> the program including when children transition to another educational setting.	The program has signed documentation by both program staff (teacher, director or administrator) and one person from the family. Example: The meeting could take place during an exit interview or parent/teacher conferences (face to face).	The program will provide the Rater with one piece of documentation that the meeting occurred for at least two children within the last 12 months. If a family refuses to meet, a signed refusal form is acceptable.
b.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a policy describing a system in which a new family is paired with a more experienced family	Examples of evidence would be a letter describing the match between two families, a volunteer sign-up buddy sheet, bulletin board,	The policy AND at least one other piece of documentation that the policy was followed for at least two families within the last 12 months is available for the Rater to verify.

	to help the new family engage in the child care program and larger community setting.	pictures of events, entries in the child's file, newsletter article, or the program acknowledges the partnerships among families with an end of the year celebration.	Any documentation/evidence of a mutual agreement between families. Page #_____
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Family Involvement and Engagement

Family Involvement is the participation of families in the systems and activities of the program in ways that support them as the primary educators, nurturers and advocates for individual children and for all children enrolled in the program. Family involvement refers to opportunities for family participation in a variety of program activities that support child and adult development, including policy and program decision making.

Family Engagement is ongoing, goal-directed relationships between staff and families that are mutual, culturally responsive, and that support what is best for children and families both individually and collectively. Staff and families share responsibility for the learning and development of children, the progress toward outcomes for children and families, and for parent involvement in the program.

C.5.2 Family Involvement/Engagement: Tier A			
	Activity	Example	Verification
a.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a family handbook that describes the program's mission statement, educational philosophy, and expectations for families.		The handbook is available for verification by the Rater and has each of the following elements: Mission Statement: Page #_____ Educational Philosophy: Page #_____ Expectations for Families: Page #_____
a.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has at least three different types of opportunities for families to contribute to the child care program per year (in-class helpers, field trips, donated items, family functions).	Examples of evidence could be sign-up sheets, event flyers, pictures of the event, or non-profit donation letter.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation that the program has participated in at least three types of activities within the last 12 months.
a.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides information monthly to families about child development, parenting, and self-improvement	Examples of evidence could be: Handouts, flyers, brochures or a reading list.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation that information has been shared monthly for the three months prior to the verification.

	conferences, workshops and trainings through bulletin boards, newsletters, brochures, social media, etc.		
a.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has at least three pictures, three books, and three learning materials that reflect different types of diversity accessible to children. Each of the following diversity categories must be represented at least once: race, abilities, age, culture, gender in non-stereotyping roles.	The program will provide evidence of the items and categories represented. Examples of evidence could be posters, books in classrooms, dolls, pictures, skin tone paints or crayons, block people, or pictures on puzzles.	The Rater can visibly observe three pictures, three books and three other learning materials from any of the categories, in at least one classroom for each age group.

C.5.2 Family Involvement/Engagement: Tier B			
	Activity	Example	Verification
b.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program hosts at least two annual group activities for enrolled families. The activities should be intentional and developmentally appropriate for children.	Examples of evidence could be invitations, flyers, photographs of the activities, or a newsletter article.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation that at least two activities were offered to families in the last 12 months. (C.5.5)
b.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides and encourages at least two educational opportunities for families per year (child development, parenting, and health and wellness curriculum, Early Learning Standards).	Examples of evidence could be a flyer or invitation and sign-in sheet from a parent learning night, a book club, or teacher-led learning activities.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation of at least two educational opportunities offered in the last 12 months.
b.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program hosts and provides documentation of at least two activities that incorporate the cultures of both the enrolled families and the local or global community per year.	Examples of evidence could be invitations to the event or interview of director/provider on how it relates to their enrolled families.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation of at least two of the activities offered in the last 12 months.
b.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has	Examples of evidence could	The program will provide the Rater

	documentation of activities that includes diversity as a regular part of daily routines and play activities (ethnic foods for meals/snacks; music and songs from different cultures). The program should also encourage families to share family customs with children.	be menu items specific to ethnicity, music diversity, or some teacher/director interview.	with at least three pieces of evidence from activities that occurred in the last 12 months that incorporated diversity as a regular part of daily activities.
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Family Communication Strategies

Family Communication Strategies are the foundation to begin building meaningful relationships with the families that attend child care programs. One of the easiest ways to avoid miscommunication, support families, and eliminate negative biases is to know how to effectively communicate with families.

C.5.3 Family Communication Strategies: Tier A			
	Activity	Example	Verification
a.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program uses a communication system that uses families' preferred method of communication.	An example of evidence could be that there is a question on the intake form on the family's communication preference: text message, phone call, in writing or email.	The program provides the Rater with documentation of the preferred communication means of at least five families for group centers and half of the families enrolled for family programs.
a.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy that is available to families that details the program's philosophy. The materials for families are provided in their native language or resources are made available to families so that they can understand the materials. If evidence of materials in another language is not available, this is verified through the program		This is verified through the program having a written policy stating how materials and resources will be provided to families who speak other languages (C.1.5).

	having a written policy stating how materials and resources will be provided to families who speak other languages.		
a.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has documentation of at least two, annual, dated conference agendas with any additional notes from the meeting available for each child who has been enrolled for at least 12 months. Additional parent conferences are available by request or as needed.		<p>The program will provide the Rater with documentation of two dated conference agendas with any additional notes from the meeting available for 25% of the children in regular attendance from at least one classroom for each age group, for last 12 months.</p> <p>For family programs, this indicator verification would be for half the children in regular attendance. (C.5.3).</p> <p>Sign-up sheet or notes on calendar/planner is not enough to show that the meeting actually occurred; only that it was planned.</p> <p>If a family refuses to meet, a signed refusal form is acceptable.</p>
a.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	When an assessment tool for each child is completed, the program communicates the information with the family.	Examples of evidence could be the assessment, meeting notes, plan of action, or next steps.	<p>The program will provide the Rater with the completed assessment, and documentation of the meeting with the families for 25% of the children in regular attendance from at least one classroom for each age group, for the last 12 months.</p> <p>For family programs, this indicator verification would be for half the children in regular attendance.</p> <p>If a family refuses to meet, a signed refusal form is acceptable.</p>
a.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program intentionally interacts daily with each child's parent about individual child's day-to-day activities. The program has documentation of at least three types of communication with	Examples of evidence could be day to day communication forms, emailing photos and videos, text messages, sharing a daily activity log, and other non-traditional ways.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation of at least three types of communication in the last 12 months. The communication must be specific to the child (C.5.6).

	families on their individual child's activities, development and progress.		
a.6 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has documentation of frequent, on-going communication between staff and families. For this indicator, the program should ensure general information about the program is communicated to families. This could be changes at the center, changes in staffing, changes in procedures, new things happening, or family events upcoming- the large picture of the culture at the center. Three types of communication from the last 12 months must be documented.	Examples of evidence could be notes, emails, listserve, and social media specific for that program, newsletters, phone call logs, text messages and logs of face-to-face conversations.	The program will provide the Rater with documentation of at least three types of communication methods in the last 12 months (C.5.4).

C.5.3 Family Communication Strategies: Tier B			
	Activity	Examples	Verification
b.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a written policy available to families explaining how their input on program policies and procedures will be gathered. Families are given the opportunity to participate in advisory committee, board membership or other committees.	Examples of how the program could collect input from families could be through surveys, suggestion box, or director lead parent meetings.	The program will provide the Rater with the policy for verification. If the program uses family surveys and has a process for using the results of the survey to inform their practice, and notify families about the changes made as a result of the surveys, the program can earn the credit for this indicator. Family surveys alone (without follow up) do not meet this requirement. If changes to programming or policies were made as a result of a survey and that change can be documented and verified, that would meet the intent of this indicator (C.5.2).

<p>b.2 <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Developmental screening is completed by both the family and the program staff and findings are discussed with the families.</p>	<p>Examples of evidence could be the results of the developmental screening, meeting notes, plan of action, or next steps.</p> <p>A screener could be completed by another professional and the results shared with program. If the family has an alternative screener the program MUST use identical screener during the family discussed.</p>	<p>The program will provide the Rater with at least one completed screening tool, and documentation of the meeting with the families for 25% of the children in regular attendance from at least one classroom for each age group, for the last 12 months.</p> <p>If a family refuses to meet, a signed refusal form is acceptable.</p>
<p>b.3 <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The program provides at least two opportunities per year to engage fathers in a variety of ways to support a father's efforts like in a leadership opportunities, volunteering, etc. to connect with their child at various ages and stages of development</p>	<p>Examples of evidence could be flyers, sign-up sheets, or pictures of activities or events.</p>	<p>The program provides the Rater with documentation of at least two father specific engagement activities from the last 12 months.</p>

Family Support Strategies

Family Support Strategies. Families that receive support in areas of need, especially during challenging time which allows for the family to interact with their children in a way that enhances their physical, emotional, social, and educational development.

C.5.4 Family Support Strategies: Tier A			
	Activity	Example	Verification
<p>a.1 <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The program has a written policy that acknowledges families' cultures and values the family's rights to make decisions for their children, and outlines the programs method of gathering information about</p>	<p>Examples of how the program gathers information could be regular communication documented in the child's daily activities log, intake form, or a survey.</p> <p>The policy could include: information about routine care items, feeding, sleeping,</p>	<p>The policy is available for verification by the Rater. Page #_____</p>

	families.	and toileting.	
a.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides families quarterly with individual child-specific, home-based activities, and ideas based on child's talents and opportunities for growth for every child in regular attendance.	Examples of evidence could be tool kits, reading lists, letter to the families, literacy bag or take home bags that are specific to the individual child (activities around literacy, math, science, or physical activity).	The program provides the Rater with documentation of three activities provided to the families in the last 12 months for 25% of the children in regular attendance from at least one classroom for each age group. For family programs, this indicator verification would be for half the children in regular attendance.
a.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a dual purpose space where staff and families can meet.	An example of the policy could be that the program reserves a time to speak to the family at the family's request or as needed. An example of a dual-purpose space could be a both as staff resource room and be utilized for family conversations or could be used as a mother's room to support breastfeeding mothers.	The Rater can visibly observe this within the program or view the written policy in the family handbook.
a.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program supports families in contributing to a newsletter, parent discussion board, Facebook pages that are specific for that child care program that is disseminated to families and staff of the program.	An example of evidence could be an article in the program's newsletter written by a family member. Examples of family contributions could be recipes, arts and craft ideas, or community events and activities.	The program provides the Rater with documentation of families contributing to the program's newsletter, discussion board, Facebook page or some similar method of mass communication.
a.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides the families with at least two pieces of information about health and safety per year. This could include information around practices on SIDS reduction, breastfeeding, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Active Early, Healthy Bites,	Examples of evidence could be brochures, flyers, magazine articles, posters, newsletter articles, or Healthy Bites home edition.	The program provides the Rater with two pieces of documentation on health and safety in the last 12 months.

	etc.		
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C.5.4 Family Support Strategies: Tier B			
	Activity	Example	Verification
b.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program provides families monthly with child-specific, home-based activities, based upon the individual child’s talents and opportunities for growth for every child in regular attendance (activities around literacy, math, science, or physical activity).	Example of evidence could be pulling items from the resource library specific to the individual children, or addressing things that are on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or the Individual Family Serviced Plan (IFSP).	The program provides the Rater with documentation for 25% of the children in regular attendance from at least one classroom for each age group, in the last 12 months. For family programs, this indicator verification would be for half the children in regular attendance.
b.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a dedicated space where staff and families can meet confidentially.	Examples: a conference room with a sign-up sheet that is completed with staff member, family, date and time of the meeting; language posted on the door, an “in progress” sign, or reserving a time outside of care.	The Rater can visibly observe this within the program. For family programs to meet this indicator the program has to have a written policy outlining their plan for meeting with families.
b.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has a dedicated space that supports breastfeeding mothers.	Examples: the program can provide a breastfeeding mother with at least: A private room with a lock on the door, an electrical outlet, and chair, a small table, a waste basket, a sink nearby with running water, and a refrigerator or storage space for a small cooler nearby.	The Rater must be able to visibly observe at least: A private room with a lock on the door, an electrical outlet, and chair, a small table, a waste basket, a sink nearby with running water, and a refrigerator or storage space for a small cooler nearby in order within the program for this option.
b.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program works with families to implement at least two strategies to create consistency between home practices and the child care program’s culturally/linguistically appropriate practices.	Examples: a form created by the program for this specific use, an added question on the intake form, or a survey about what happens in the home. The information gathered is used in the child care settings in lesson plans, child’s file, place on the form for actions steps, or through	The program provides the Rater with documentation of how the program gathered the information from the families about home practices AND then how the program used that information to create consistency for the children. The Rater’s judgment should be used, and they have the ability to be flexible.

		teacher/director interview.	
b.5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Program offers library services for families to check out books, toys, videos and/or resource materials on parenting AND appropriate child development.	The program provides evidence of items available for families to check out. Examples of this evidence could be books, toys, videos and/or resource materials on parenting AND appropriate child development. The materials could come from school library, CCIC, CCR&R, or book mobile.	The Rater can visibly observe at least 20 books, toys, videos or resources that can be checked out this within the program.
b.6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Program completes the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Family Engagement training. The program must complete one section of the training per year.	The program provides a sign-in sheet and agenda or handout as documentation of the event. The program must be specific about which tip sheet the event was derived from.	Sign-in sheet and agenda or program materials such as PowerPoint slides, WMELS tips sheets or handouts that were given as part of the presentation.

Family and Community Connection Strategies

Family and Community Connection Strategies. By developing a strong relationship with communities and community service providers, early childhood programs can effectively connect families with what they need (Strengthening Families).

C.5.5 Family and Community Connection Strategies: Tier A			
	Activity	Example	Verification
a.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program demonstrates that they are a part of sponsoring or an active participant in relevant, local community events twice per year.	Examples of evidence could be pictures of the event, event board, sign-up sheet, or flyer.	The program provides the Rater with documentation of at least two events in the last 12 months The program provides evidence that the events took place and whether they sponsored the event or were actively participating.
a.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program invites community programs to share their areas of expertise with families and the community twice per year (librarian, local artists, police, story tellers, etc.).	Examples of evidence could be pictures of the community program and the families, handouts that were given during or after the event, invite letter to families or to a specific community member or program, art work by children during or after and	The program provides the Rater with documentation of at least two events in the last months.

		that showcases the event.	
a.3 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program relays at least three of the following to families per year: best practices, new research, and/or policy changes at local, state or national levels that effect early care and education services to families.	Examples of evidence could be newspaper articles, legislation, magazine articles, data board, or teacher-led learning activities based on best practices.	The program provides the Rater with documentation that at least three pieces of information was shared with the families in the last 12 months.
a.4 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program maintains at least five resources and referral linkages to crisis services, (food pantries, domestic violence services, shelters, respite care for children, alcohol and substance abuse services, senior center, ADRC, etc.).	Examples of specific resources could be a resource list, maps, phone number, brochures, informational posters, specific names of professionals and their titles, or business cards of professionals/organizations in the community.	The program provides the Rater with the referral list and the list has at least five different resources on it.

C.5.5 Family and Community Connection Strategies: Tier B			
	Activity	Example	Verification
b.1 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program has cultivated at least three working relationships with public and community-based services (health, education, and social services).	Examples of evidence could be that the program has a protocol in place, a system for providing a “warm handoff”, or the director is a member of a community taskforce (early childhood or school-age, or family support).	The program provides the Rater with documentation of at least three specific relationships within the community. Verified by interview with director.
b.2 <input type="checkbox"/>	The program collaborates with at least two community agencies that bring the program staff, children, and families together in a way that enhances program and family involvement in the community.	Examples of this evidence could be event flyers, pictures of the event, community calendar, sign-up sheets, or attendance logs. An example of a collaboration event could be taking part in the town parade.	The program provides the Rater with documentation of a specific collaboration event.

C.5 Family Engagement

Indicator Met: Yes Not Met

Point(s) Earned: _____/2

Indicators in C.5 must be verified to earn one point or two points.

To earn one point, programs must provide documentation of meeting the requirements of five activities from either tier in at least two separate categories. To earn two points, programs must provide documentation of meeting the requirements of ten activities in at least three separate categories. At least five of the ten activities need to be at the Tier B level. Record the identification number of the activities verified in each section.

Categories	Tier A	Tier B
C.5.1 Transitions		
C.5.2 Family Involvement /Engagement		
C.5.3 Family Communication Strategies		
C.5.4 Family Support Strategies		
C.5.5 Family and Community Connections		

Comments/areas for future work on overall family engagement:

Total points earned for Indicator C.5 _____/2