Suspending Expulsions: Engaging and Supporting Families

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Introductions and Overview

Why are you here?

Today’s Agenda: Engaging and Supporting Families
- Prevent Expulsion
- Support Children and Families
- Resources for Struggling Families
Feeding the Piggy Bank
Why do we engage families?

- Mutual support
- Understand individual needs of child and family
- When parents and caregivers feel supported, children are more relaxed and ready to learn
- When times are hard, the relationship will hold
- Expulsion Prevention
How do we do this?

- Initial Contact and Every Day
- Casual Approaches
- Formal Systems
What does family engagement look like?

- Developmental Screening at Orientation with regular follow ups for ALL children
- All About Me/Family Based Activities
- Information Sharing at Drop Off/Pick Up
- Use of Technology and Social Media
Parent Engagement Activities

- Home visits and parent-teacher conferences
- Planning with families for school transitions
- Leadership opportunities: committees, policy development, event planning, etc.
- Access to comprehensive services parenting supports
Who Are Our Families?

- Diverse and Individual Needs
- Challenges
- Skills and Resiliencies
- Complex Needs
  - Homelessness
  - Child Welfare Involvement
  - Immigration challenges
  - Poverty/Deep Poverty
  - Teen parents
  - Disabilities
Engaging and Supporting Families with Complex Needs

- Identification
- Respond to practical family needs
- Remove barriers
- Engage in strategic collaborations
- Consider need behind behavior
  - Behaviors can often be functional
  - Both parents and children!
Tools for the Program

For children/families
- Validate feelings
- Offer choices
- Give space
- Redirection and connection
- Adapt environment
  - Quiet/safe space
  - Open snack table
- Visual timers
- Picture schedules

For caregivers
- Remain calm—set the tone
- Take a break
- Self-care and self-reflection
- Scripts
- Behavior logs, developmental screening, sensory checklists, etc.
  - Identify and remove triggers
  - Understand child needs
- Embrace creative solutions
Key Partners

- Child and Family Connections (EI)
- School District--special education, McKinney-Vento
- Food pantries
- Faith community
- Legal aid

- Mental health agencies
- Public assistance agencies
- Public Health Department
- Housing/homeless service agencies
- Crisis services
Resources

- Caregiver Connections
- Early Intervention
- Chicago Child Find
- Ages and Stages Questionnaires
- Parenting Resources and Supports
  - Neighborhood Parents Network
  - Family Focus
  - Metropolitan Family Services
  - Mujeres Latinas en Accion
Thank You!

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