THE KEMPE CENTER PRESENTS

2020 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

Innovations in Family Engagement

BUFFALO
NEW YORK
SEPTEMBER 29-October 2, 2020

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: April 1, 2020

Kempe
An Invigorating Learning Platform Since 1997

For more than two decades, this annual international conference has brought together a global audience of 500-strong committed innovators to **re-envision how child welfare and other systems can meaningfully engage families** in planning and decision making. It attracts child welfare and other human service system professionals, allied partners, courageous leaders, and people who envision systems working differently, more effectively and in partnership with families.

As a stimulating learning arena for leaders at all levels within human service organizations, you will find numerous opportunities to support you as you innovate in how you serve children and families. You will network with other leaders, share innovative practices and policies, create a link between research and practice, understand implementation successes and challenges, explore voice and participation of children/youth, and dialogue about system change with a **special focus on power differentials, marginalized groups, disparities and disproportionality**.

Family Engagement History

Since the early 1990s, public human service agencies, community-based organizations, and other institutions have implemented numerous family engagement strategies, system reforms, and decision-making models. The field of child welfare has made great strides to implement various inclusive and culturally responsive processes in how they serve families.

The basic belief is that **outcomes improve when service providers productively and positively engage with the family group in matters that directly or indirectly involve them**. This construct holds true across many systems including child welfare, juvenile justice, aging and adult protection, education, and mental health.

"...you will find numerous opportunities to support you as you innovate in how you serve children and families."
Family Engagement Defined

Engagement is an inherently complex topic. It is defined as collaboration, partnership, inclusion, involvement, and cooperation. But what does it really mean and how do you know when it is happening meaningfully and effectively? What we know is this: when human service systems meaningfully engage children, youth, parents and extended family members, positive outcomes for children, families, and systems are likely more attainable.

The engagement process begins with the first “hello,” knock on the door, or telephone call, and it must continue throughout the entire relationship between service providers and families. In most instances, it is imperative that the widest circle is created, extending far beyond engaging with the parent/caregiver and child/youth to including the extended family, and the family’s community and their informal networks.

“...when human service systems meaningfully engage children, youth, parents and extended family members, positive outcomes for children, families, and systems are likely more attainable.

supporting values

With this conference, we will identify and showcase practices, policies, procedures, and protocols that lead to best-practice implementation, advocacy and research that elevate these values:

1: FAMILIES AND THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
At a minimum, family groups need to be included in decision-making processes. To the extent possible, formal systems should strive to implement processes whereby family groups lead decision-making.

2: FAMILIES AS EXPERTS ON THEIR OWN LIVES
Families know their histories and dynamics, and they use that information to make thorough decisions and plans.

3: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IS A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
Engaging with families is a collaborative process that brings together the extended family system and their natural supports with formal systems and community partners.

4: FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS
Child welfare and allied systems are more successful when they combine agency and community resources with informal resources and supports.

5: GREATER CHILD SAFETY AND WELL-BEING
Through partnership and engagement with the family and their support systems, greater child safety and well-being is possible.
For engagement to be effective, systems have to be structured to work collaboratively and respectfully with parents, child/youth and broader kin networks. This requires systems to create the space, flexibility, creativity, and courageous leadership so that **systems adapt to the uniqueness of each kin network rather than each kin network adapting to the system**.

Actualizing family engagement starts with building relationships and rapport, forming the foundation for all practice areas including prevention/early help, investigations/assessments, safety planning, and service planning. The family group should have a role in decision making throughout their involvement with public agencies.

At the front-end of child welfare systems, many innovations and reforms have been created and implemented that embody family engagement principles and processes. For example, with the implementation of **differential response** (also called alternative response, or family assessment response), front-end CPS systems are restructured, creating at least two different pathways to respond to child abuse and neglect reports that increase the intentional engagement of families. CPS systems have an increased emphasis on safety organized practice, signs of safety, comprehensive family assessments, trauma-informed care, and other innovations that engage with caregivers, children, youth and their family networks in determining their needs. Throughout all stages of families’ involvement with child welfare systems, various family engagement strategies and techniques, including some form of **family meetings** are now consistently being embedded into child welfare practices. Such models as family group conferences, family team meetings, team decision meetings, family team conferences, child permanency mediation, child and family teams, family decision meetings, restorative conferences, family safety planning meetings, wraparound services, family finding, and family team decision making are some commonly used family meeting models. **The common thread woven throughout all of these approaches is that none of them are possible without seeking out and engaging with the family.**

All of these family meetings and other engagement practices rely on comprehensive policy and systemic supports to enable successful implementation and sustainability. This includes a focus on organizational readiness and workforce issues. Attending to the following three implementation drivers is critically important for implementation fidelity: **Competency driver** (coaching, training and selection), **Organizational driver** (systems intervention, facilitative administration and decision support/data system) and the **Leadership driver** (technical and adaptive).

**This is only the beginning. Many formal and informal opportunities to advance family engagement practices remain untapped and under-utilized.**
submitting a proposal

Our goal is for this conference to create transformational learning experiences that participants can use to make improvements in their home communities. We believe the learning experiences provided will enhance innovation across all child and family serving system levels and that will ultimately result in better outcomes for children, youth and families, as well as the workforce. Therefore, we invite you to use the following guidance to develop your workshop submission. To submit a proposal, please review the following steps, as shown below and detailed on the following pages.

1 : REFLECT ON TOPIC QUESTIONS
2 : DEVELOP A TOPIC
3 : DETERMINE TRACK FOR SUBMISSION
4 : DETERMINE TYPE OF SESSION
5 : DETERMINE LENGTH OF SESSION
6 : DETERMINE METHODOLOGIES
7 : SUBMIT PROPOSAL

Submitting a Proposal : Step 1
reflect on topic questions

To facilitate innovative change in the field, we encourage you, as a potential presenter, to reflect on the following questions regarding innovations in family engagement as you prepare your submission:

LEARNING
What major learning, innovation, insight, or discovery do I want to share?

CHANGE
Why am I motivated to do a session about this topic? What change, if any, am I promoting? What does the learner need to know, do, or feel to enact this change?*

ENGAGEMENT
What will make this learning experience energizing, engaging, and interactive?

*Example of change: The impact I hope to have is a change in attitudes towards families involved in child welfare. Behavior with a family often reflects a belief about a family. This must change and my session will help participants recognize the importance of their attitude when working with children and families.
Examining models that assemble teams and initiating family engagement at the beginning of a family’s involvement with the system

Exploring successes and challenges with the implementation of a plethora of family meeting models and other evidence-informed/evidence-based practices (e.g., Signs of Safety, Safe and Together, Family Team meetings, Team Decision Making, Family Group Conferencing, Family Finding)

Implementing models, such as Family Finding and other practices that strive to build lifetime networks to support children, youth and families

How to improve child-parent-family visits through such strategies as Coaching Family Visits

Effectively engaging fathers and paternal relatives

Supporting the right to voice and participation of children and youth in all decisions that affect them

Using protective factors to bolster families and their communities

Implementing strategies to effectively engage families impacted by domestic violence

Innovations in Fostering and Adoption Certification/Licensing, including the impact on kinship caregivers

Strategies to enhance child and youth engagement and relational permanency

Striving for practice and model fidelity of various family engagement strategies

Strategies to keep families together and support healing when coping with addiction to opioids and other substances

Sibling connections: ways to maintain and nurture these connections

Engaging kinship and adoptive families in creating plans to maintain ‘openness’ to previously existing relationships for continuity and connection benefitting children and youth

Family voice in decision making and service planning

How the U.S. Family First Prevention Services Act and Ontario’s Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) can be leveraged to implement family engagement strategies

Family engagement as an effective early prevention/early help effort

Truth and Reconciliation journey in Canada: how is it actualized in practice and how might it impact system engagement with Native families?

Cross-border ICWA/CYFSA practices: effective ways to engage tribes and family groups

Implicit and explicit bias: how it impacts engagement with families

Using various family engagement and decision making approaches throughout all stages of system involvement, rather than repeatedly using the same form of engagement/involvement

Engaging families to prevent children/youth from entering into foster care and to support reunification of children/youth within their family and community networks
Collaborating with community partners to engage children, youth and families in decision making and planning processes

How to build a complementary, rather than competitive, relationship between multiple family engagement models (e.g., FTCs and FGC) to enhance and deepen family involvement in decision making

Developing and using practice models (e.g., NY State Child Welfare Practice Model) as a mechanism to enhance child/youth and family engagement

The interplay between family engagement and family assessment tools [e.g., Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP), Family Led Assessment Guide (FLAG)]

Creating space and resources in the system so that kin networks can actualize their love, wisdom and power to give their children/youth the best possible outcomes (e.g., kinship care, kinship supports, kinship navigators)

Building and utilizing peer support and/or parent partner approaches in family engagement processes

Scaling promising engagement practices from small/local ‘backyards’ to become effective state-/province-wide practices: implementation strategies and results

Engaging Family Systems of Marginalized Populations

Engaging families of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)

Engaging family members who may be incarcerated or gang-involved

Working with undocumented families: innovations, challenges, legal aspects, how to find and engage family members

Engaging LGBTQIA+ children, youth and their families/natural support networks

Understanding the role of racial and ethnic identity development, how it affects service providers, children, youth and families, and impacts family engagement efforts

Striving for Racial Equity: considering outcomes and practice through a race equity lens

Human Trafficking: Engaging and supporting impacted families in solution building and healing

Using family engagement processes with older youth

Developmentally disabled parents and children/youth: effective resources and working towards permanence

Parents and children/youth dealing with significant mental health concerns: how to maintain connections/relationships and achieve permanence

Families challenged by addictions: innovative ways to engage and involve in decision making

Implementing FGC with youth offenders through a restorative practice lens (e.g., Crossover Youth Practice Model)

However, you are not limited to these topical areas, and we encourage you to use your own experiences in deciding on a topic.
In order to best facilitate learning for our diverse participants, we strive to offer an array of topical areas to choose from when selecting sessions to attend. On the application, you will be asked to identify the track in which your submission best fits.

**PRACTICE**

Focus on what participants need to know, do, or feel to **forward a change in themselves, their team or agency, or their community**, in serving families through direct practice.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Focus on what is needed to **develop and sustain a robust and thriving workforce** with healthy organizational culture and climate that supports family engagement practices.

**SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE**

Focus on **aligning systems with family engagement principles** requires attention to infrastructure, policies, implementation, partnerships, and collaboration.

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

Share findings from research and evaluation efforts that can **inform the implementation and sustainability of family engagement** practices, processes, policies, and system reforms.

*It is important to consider that a good session does not necessarily limit its focus to success stories or positive findings. **Challenges and roadblocks** to successful implementation, and how you overcame them, as well as how you achieved sustainability, are valuable to the field as well.*
Those applying under this format are encouraged to narrowly define their proposed sessions to provide sufficient depth on their topics, while leaving adequate time for questions and group dialogue.

**LEARNING CIRCLE**

The learning circle provides a space for participants to work as a group, sharing insights/experiences about a specific topic or issue, and organizing their collective knowledge towards a shared outcome. Facilitators should set up the discussion with a brief 5 to 10 minute presentation to set the context and come prepared with questions/prompts for the group to discuss. An example of a learning circle may be strategies to supervise some type of family meetings, or how your agency builds resiliency in the workforce. You can also build a learning circle by asking yourself: what wicked problem or difficult challenge are we encountering in my community?

*At a minimum, we would expect that you would reserve 15-20 minutes for questions and dialogue with your audience.*

**Submitting a Proposal : Step 5**

**determine length of session**

The conference offers 3 options for potential presenters to select from. Longer sessions are expected to be more in-depth, “deep dives” into the content of that session with ample opportunity for participants to integrate learning and “road-test” some practice skills. Shorter sessions are better suited for quick introductions to or overviews of a topic, set of research, implementation strategy, etc. We encourage you to think critically about which length of session fits both your topic and your chosen mode(s) of content delivery (see step 6 below).

**3-hour**

These sessions will likely take place on Thursday morning, October 1, and need to be highly interactive with significant opportunities for participants to engage in discussion and content integration and application.

**90-minute**

At a minimum, we would expect that you would reserve 15-20 minutes for questions and dialogue with your audience.

**40-minute*”

This length of time is perfect for topics that lend themselves to brevity (a micro-learning) or for presenters who may feel more comfortable presenting in shorter increments.

*occurring late afternoon Thursday, October 1, 2020*
PARTICIPATORY

A learning experience that is participatory, allowing attendees to have active and practical understanding of the concepts, ideas, and practices presented in the workshop.

PRACTICAL

A learning experience that is practical, using case scenarios and examples that participants can relate to and that refer to direct life, work, and social experiences to bring meaning to the learning.

POWERFUL

A learning experience that is powerful, utilizing methods that stimulate the senses with a variety of methods such as audio, visual, reading/writing, and kinesthetic to engage various learning styles.

We strongly encourage presenters to develop a session that employees multiple modalities to attend to peoples’ learning styles, and therefore we are providing the following partial list of methodologies for you to consider.

- Traditional lecture
- Videos
- Skills practices
- Learning games
- Scenarios or case studies: an in-depth description of a case that participants can apply to their work.
- Micro-learning: any brief and targeted learning object between 3 to 6 minutes in length; a way of teaching and delivering content to learners in small, very specific bursts. Learners are in control of what and when they are learning. Click here for more information on micro-learning.
- Interactive learning journals: learner-centered journals (or handouts) used during the learning experience to encourage learners to understanding the content in relationship to themselves in real time using powerful inquiry based questions to foster reflection and deepening of their learning. Click here for more information on interactive learning journals.
- Problem-based learning (PBL): learners are provided an open-ended complex problem, situation, or case to learn from and follow throughout the workshop. Learning objectives unfold through the experience of the learner collaborating in small groups, conducting research, and engaging in discussions or other activities that support the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The facilitator guides learners in a manner through the process of learning rather than delivering the content. Click here for more information on problem-based learning.
- Small group, peer-to-peer roundtable discussions or paired discussions: facilitate participants’ application of knowledge, collaboration amongst peers, and foster a deeper awareness of practice related attitudes and behavior.
- Polling: use of some form of group polling technology to understand the participants’ experiences with and knowledge of a subject matter.
Submitting a Proposal: Step 7

Submit Proposal

Be prepared to include the following information about your proposed session:

1. **Presenter Information**
   Name, organizational affiliation, city, state/province and email of all session presenters

2. **Session Title**
   We welcome your creativity with session names – however, we encourage you to develop a title that is brief and clear about your session’s topic

3. **Session Description**
   150 words or less (this is what will be listed in the program brochure if your session is selected)

4. **Target Audience**
   Identify those who will benefit most from the information shared in your session

5. **Session Specifics**
   The track, type of session, length of session and planned delivery methodologies (pick list)

Click here to submit a proposal.

Questions

- What are the learning objectives for your proposed workshop or learning circle? List a minimum of two.

In 250-500 words, tell us your innovation story. We want our Abstract Review subcommittee to get a good understanding of your proposed intervention. Use our questions as a guide and add those that are meaningful to you so that the work you are or have been doing comes alive.

- What is the innovation that you want to discuss?
- What child/family, agency or community need does this innovation address?
- How long, deep, and wide has this innovation spread in your state, province, county, locality?
- How has your innovation been designed to support underrepresented and underserved populations and marginalized groups?
- What story do your data tell about the impact of the innovation?
- If you could press the restart button in regards to your chosen innovation, what might you want to do differently and why?
Thank you for your interest in presenting at the 2020 International Conference on Innovations in Family Engagement!
If you have any questions about the call for proposal process please contact Kempe using the information below. Also, please be aware that we will be offering webinars to presenters whose sessions are accepted to facilitate the development of strong and engaging workshops that adhere to adult learning principles.

ABOUT THE KEMPE CENTER

- The Kempe Center improves the lives of children and families.
- We believe that abuse and neglect are preventable and people are resilient.
- We are curious. We take a stand. We test assumptions.
- Our leadership in advocacy, research, education and clinical work drives innovative strategies that transform the field.
- Through our work we strengthen families, communities and the systems that serve them.
- We are a catalyst, connecting people, information and best practices to translate knowledge into action.
- Our vision is to create a world without abuse and neglect.

Kempe fulfills its mission through the four pillars of research and evaluation; training, technical assistance, and education; clinical service delivery, and advocacy. Through their work across these four pillars Kempe Center faculty support innovation in systems and communities that work with vulnerable children, youth, and families in a variety of ways. Kempe is proud to house innovative efforts around family group decision making (FGDM) and differential response (DR) in addition to many others.

2020 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON Innovations in Family Engagement

SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 2, 2020

www.kempeconference.org

Contact

KempeConference@ucdenver.edu