Hands & Voices
Family Leadership in Language & Learning Center

The Stepping Stones to Valuing Yourself as a Parent Leader

December 14, 2023
Christine Griffin, WA H&V
Cora Shihad, CA H&V
OBJECTIVES

List identifiable traits of future parent leaders

Define capacity building techniques and strategies

Explain the benefit that parent voice has on system change
1971 EDUCATION FOR ALL
The First Disability Rights Law in the US

Together They Were Stronger-
Thriving Communities
IDENTIFYING TRAITS OF FUTURE LEADERS
Parent Leader Survey Responses
Leadership Is...
- Not simply something we do
- It comes from a deeper reality within us
- It comes from values, principles, life experiences and essence
- Leadership is a process, an intimate expression of who we are
- It is our whole person in action
- We learn what we achieve, not how to achieve

Cashman, Kevin Leadership from the Inside Out
RECOGNIZING FUTURE LEADERS

Provides a Calm Safe Space
A Good Listener
Encouraging
Compassion/Empathy
Think Creatively
Sense of Commitment
Passion
Resourcefulness

Parent Leader Survey Responses
THE LEVELS OF PARENT LEADERSHIP

In the System
- Parent participation through advocacy...

For each other
- Parent-to-Parent...

For their own child
- Parent led, centered, involved, directed...
PARENTS LEAD BY:

• Caring for self
• Advocating for their child
• Connecting with families
  ⚬ Modeling, Supporting, Listening
  ⚬ Providing Family Events
  ⚬ Encourage Self-Determination
• Outreach to professionals
• Participating as a stakeholder
• Sharing their story in a meaningful way
• Ongoing Professional Development
• Connecting with legislators
CAPACITY BUILDING TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENT LEADERS

Opportunities
Personal invite
Interests
Thank You & Reach Out
No Judgement
Understand

Parent Leader Survey Responses
Parents are more likely to become parent leaders when they...

- Feel accepted
- Are recognized
- Receive positive feedback
- See other parents like themselves
- Find a community to grow skills:
  - Deaf and Hard of Hearing infusion
  - Deaf Plus
  - Latino Council
INCLUDING DIVERSE PARENT LEADERS

Explore
Incorporate
Access
BELONGING

Accessibility
Getting into the building

Diversity
Being invited to the table

Inclusion
Having a voice at the table

Belonging
Being heard at the table
BALANCING FORCES IN CHANGE

Anxiety

In Charge of Change

Bordom

Risk and Uncertainty

Skill and Confidence

High

Low

High

Low

BOUNDARIES

What is the task?
What is the time commitment?
Who will be supporting me?
What are the expectations or outcomes they are looking for?
Is this volunteer or paid?
CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PARENT LEADERS
THE THINGS WE TELL OURSELVES

No Way! Never in a Million years

Well, what do you know, I Am Leading!

I was Born to Lead! Bring it on

DesGeorges, J. 2012
CLEANING YOUR FILTER ACTIVITY
LEARNING TO LEAD:
HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD AND WHY?

Ubuntu:
I am because we are

ME. YOU. US. I/WE. ALL.

Berry, B. 2021
INTERNAL BARRIERS

Beliefs literally create our reality; they are the lenses or filters through which we interpret our world.

Beliefs can transform our life in either life enriching or life limiting ways.

Our goal is to consciously engage them vs. unconsciously being driven by them.

Cashman, Kevin (2008) Leadership from the Inside Out
TAKE TIME TO SELF-REFLECT

When people often give us feedback inconsistent with how we see ourselves. (mirroring)

When we feel stuck or blocked our inner critic may be holding us back.

When we are not open to new information, or other people’s views.

When we react to a situation disproportionate to the situation.

Cashman, Kevin (2008) Leadership from the Inside Out
Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity, and change.

Tedtalks: Brene Brown—*Listening to shame*. (2012).
Let ourselves be seen
Love with our whole heart
Practice gratitude and lean into joy
Believe we’re enough

Tedtalks: Brene Brown--Power of Vulnerability.
(2010).
THE BENEFIT OF PARENT VOICE ON SYSTEM CHANGE
“Parents have been under-represented at the level where decisions are being made about programs and services for their children. But parents remain the consistent, long term “case manager” for their child; overseeing the programming and ‘watchdogging’ its quality.”

Wright, 2001
SHAPING SYSTEMS THROUGH PARENT LEADERSHIP

- Representation
- Collaboration
- Advocacy
- Legislative
- Accountability
PARENTS IMPACT SYSTEMS

Assuring parent input…
• Built/budgeted into the system
• Includes both individuals & organizations
• Support for training & development

Influencing through leadership:
• Early Identification & Intervention
• Educational Systems
• Medical/Health Systems
• Professional Training Systems
• Pre-service and In-Service

copyright (c) Hands & Voices 2007
WHY IS PARENT LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?
“I’m so aware of how much we have to do... the absence of effective advocacy, like the kind of strength and commitment that I saw in Janet, Katie, Evelyn and Cecile...without continued advocacy the gains we made will be lost. ... We need that commitment and passion for another 50 years if the change is going to be meaningful.”

William Dussault-
Special Needs Attorney and Advocate
Together They Were Stronger
What will you do to value Parent Leadership in 2024?
WHAT’S ON OUR BOOKSHELF


RESOURCES


Hands & Voices, www.handsandvoices.org

Hands & Voices Family Leadership In Language and Learning https://handsandvoices.org/fl3/

