

The Power of Parent Leadership in Child Welfare: Stories, Strategies, and Successes

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Infant-Toddler Court Program National Resource Center



Safe Babies
A Program of ZERO TO THREE





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Our time together:

1. Participants will develop a deeper understanding of why partnering with parent leaders is imperative in child welfare and early childhood systems.
2. Participants will gain strategies to support their partnership with parent leaders.
3. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on learnings and ask questions.



Difference Between Parent Mentors and Parent Leaders

Parent mentor/Parent Partner (Family-level)

Support parent in navigation of child welfare system

- attend Family Team Meeting w/parent
- attend court hearings
- transport to an appointment
- help parent make calls to schedule services
- participate with Site Implementation Team

Parent Leader (System-level)

Give voice to parent experience in the early childhood system, integrate parent voice into policy and practice, and ensure all families have decision-making power

- participate in Activity Community Team
- serve on State Advisory Group
- frequent communication with parent mentors regarding themes occurring at the family and site-level
- participate/advise the Site Implementation Team

Benefits of having a Parent Partner/Mentor for families:

- Support in navigating the child welfare system
- Emotional support
- Empower parents by supporting self-advocacy skills
- Help parent to recognize barriers that prevent them from moving forward
- Help them navigate resources (i.e. utilizing public transportation, going with them to an appointment, etc.)
- Showing the parent that someone cares about what's important to them



“We care for the parent so they can care for their children and not see everything as a threat.”

Benefits of Parent Partner/Mentor program to the community:

- Gives voice to parents' experience navigating the child welfare system
- Keeps the focus of practice and policy decisions on the child and family
- Creates more responsive systems
- Helps move to a more preventative system



“Nothing about us without us.”

Panel



Crystal Hallock
Parent Leader



Michael Huesca
Parent Leader



Kimberly Nabarro
Parent Leader



Christina Simmons
Parent Leader

Thank You!

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Early connections last a lifetime