

## Family Engagement Toolkit Descriptions

*Family engagement strategies are recognized as promising practices in achieving child welfare outcomes. The Center offers four family engagement toolkits that include classroom orientation, online videos, interactive activities, blogging Q & A's, and classroom-based skills practice. Training is part of a broader implementation process to facilitate integration of approaches into the agency's day-to-day practice. Following a meeting with the agency's leadership, an implementation workgroup is established and continues to meet until the practice is integrated and sustained.*

**The Family Meetings Toolkit** includes the philosophy and beliefs supporting family meetings and their benefits to families and caseworkers. The toolkit presents strategies for partnering with family members to identify those they would like to invite to the family meeting. Preparation of all family meeting invitees is demonstrated and stressed as essential to success. The toolkit presents the steps and processes for conducting a family meeting, including possible agenda items and facilitation skills and strategies. Participants get to see and discuss a real family meeting, and they are coached during a simulated family meeting.

**The Locating and Engaging Fathers Toolkit** begins with an exploration of attitudes and barriers related to locating and engaging fathers. There is a focus on the importance of fathers in the lives of children, including the impact of fathers on child development and the prevention of high risk behaviors; strategies for locating fathers; an overview of legal terminology and considerations; engaging fathers through understanding gender relationships; mutual understanding with fathers about how they want to father; and strategies for coaching fathers to improve relationships with their children. Participants practice engaging mothers to assist with locating fathers and role play strategies for engaging and coaching fathers.

**The Coaching Family Visits Toolkit** presents coaching visits as an effective alternative to traditional supervised visits. Participants learn the following: how to partner with parents by explaining the concept of visit coaching; how to engage parents to focus on identifying and meeting each child's needs; strategies and tools to help parents explore the feelings, needs, and strengths that a child may be expressing through his or her behavior during visits; how to engage parents in using this information to plan each visit; and how to help parents keep their negative feelings outside the visits. The toolkit focuses on the end of the visit, a challenging aspect of visits, plus a process for debriefing and planning the next visit.

**The Child-Centered, Family-Focused Practice Toolkit** focuses on enhancing staff capacity to engage and empower families throughout the life of a case. Areas of focus include the following: engaging families in promoting safety and reducing risk, solution-focused techniques, cultural empowerment, and broadening family involvement. Other aspects of the toolkit include the development of skills for engaging families in permanency planning through full disclosure, relative placements, shared parenting, and adoption; child well-being; wellness recovery action planning; and documenting family engagement.