FAMILY, FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR
MYTH BUSTERS: Engaging Families in Early Learning

Starting Strong Institute | August 2, 2016
WELCOME

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WHAT YOU’LL LEARN

• Myths about Family, Friend and Neighbor care … BUSTED

• Principles and approaches you can use right away
PAIR SHARE

Who took care of you when you were a young child (in your first five years)?
Why do you think your families chose this type of care?
“Family, Friend and Neighbor care is a new name for the most ancient and widely practiced form of child care.”

Betty Emarita
Development and Training Resources, Minnesota
MYTH 1

Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers see themselves as child care providers.
• It is the most widely used form of child care in this country

• About half of all U.S. children are cared for primarily by extended family and friends

• Use of FFN care varies by culture and age of the child
MYTH 2

Family, Friend and Neighbor care is none of our business.
WHERE ARE CHILDREN, BIRTH TO AGE 5?

In licensed child care and/or preschool: 24%

In the care of family, friends and neighbors: 76%
FFN & PARENT CARE VARIES BY:

- Age of the child
- Family culture and language(s)
- Presence of a special need
- Availability of licensed child care
MYTH 2A

Families choose to have children cared for by extended family because they have no other choice.
FAMILY PREFERENCE IS THE #1 REASON
BOLD GOAL

90% of young children ready for Kindergarten
Large number of children in FFN Care
+ Cultural preference for FFN Care
- Support to children & families

= Early learning opportunity gap

→ Early learning opportunity
“Used by families that are rural and urban, and across all income levels, and racial and ethnic groups, family, friend and neighbor care offers a remarkable opportunity to develop a shared vision for family friendly policies that support early education.”

Betty Emarita
Development and Training Resources, MN
MYTH 3

Parents and Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers don’t want to be engaged in children’s education.
EFFECTIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Meet families where they are – literally and figuratively
- Commit to being culturally responsive
- Commit to strength-based approaches
- Be transparent about your agenda
- Support parents and caregivers as a child’s first teachers
- Involve the whole family
- Honor the characteristics of the adult learner
- Deliver information through relationships, peer education, mentoring, dialogue, and experiential learning – gradually, over time
- Listen, learn, and adapt
- Develop relationships and collaborations with all stakeholders
OUR DEFINITION OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:

Family engagement occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based and culturally-sensitive partnership between families and their children’s caregivers and educators.
PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Program strategies that:
- Facilitate friendships and mutual support
- Strengthen parenting
- Respond to family crises
- Link families to services and opportunities
- Facilitate children’s social and emotional development
- Observe and respond to early warning signs of child abuse or neglect
- Value and support parents

Protective Factors
- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Strengthened Families
Optimal Child Development
Reduced Child Abuse & Neglect

www.cssp.org
When we recognize FFN care as a valid choice for childcare, we:

- Honor parents’ choices for their children
- Respect cultural practices and traditions
- Acknowledge that people define their own extended family
- Value family and community assets
- Support communication between generations
MYTH 4

There aren’t effective programs, models or approaches to reach Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers.
Taking Care of Our Children: Early Learning Conversations

Artwork created by Chris, Julia, Nick, Salome and Zhen.
KALEIDOSCOPE PLAY & LEARN VIDEO
RESULTS

• 83% talked more often with the children in their care about numbers, shapes and sizes

• 82% described things they do and see with their children more often

• 88% gave their children more opportunities to learn and try new things
Taking Care of Our Children:  
*Early Learning Conversations*
Examples of New Learning

They know the songs.
Children are counting.
Recognizing letter patterns.
• Caregivers have an important role in children’s development and early learning. They don’t need advanced degrees to have a positive impact.

• Children learn through play, relationships, and interaction.

• Children don’t need expensive toys or equipment to play and learn.

• Everyday activities are full of “teachable moments.”
My 5 Senses

- My child can think of more than one way to solve a problem.
- My child shows curiosity and seeks answers to questions.
EARLY LEARNING CONNECTORS
What myths did this workshop bust for you?
Additional Resources


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