



Family Engagement

Special Considerations and Tips for Providers: Working with Families of Children/Youth with Disabilities



*Does each of
your child/youth
& their family
have at least
1 meaningful &
trusting
relationship with
someone at your
agency?*



Knowledge

- Use student/parent friendly language
- Provide information and community resources to parents and assist in accessing if needed
- Aid parents in understanding rights and responsibilities
- Provide parents with periodic updates on the child's progress, goals, and objectives
- Provide any information relevant to the child's program, services and evaluation reports before a meeting to allow full participation

Relationship Building

- Get to know parents
- **Build relationships**- not acquaintances
- Ask parents what is needed to participate in the child's services
- Communicate often, not just when there are concerns
- Ask parents for the child's strengths and weaknesses
- Provide opportunities to engage in the child's service delivery **at all levels**
- View parents as equal partners
- Work collaboratively to solve problems



Events & Meetings

- Encourage parent participation in event scheduling and planning
- Host events at a time convenient for family participation
- Offer participation via alternate means; ex. virtually or by phone
- Provide alternate ways to contribute, even if the family is unable to attend the event
- Provide news and updates in multiple formats (e.g. social media and email)

Parents know their child best! Parents have a wealth of knowledge that will help the child/youth be successful!



Communication

Ask parents for preferred communication method
Examples: email, text or by phone



Reading Materials

Offer newsletter, the child's progress reports, service plans and other reading materials in simplified versions.



English Learners

Provide interpreters and translated materials in native languages.



Does the Family Need Accommodations?

If the parent discloses they have a disability, ask what accommodations they need to fully participate.



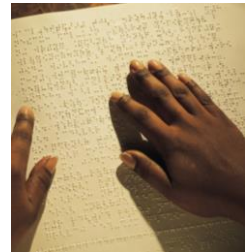
Avoid Assumptions

- Never assume a parent with a disability is not capable of participating fully in their child's program.
- Assume all parents have great knowledge.
- Provide assistance when requested.

Materials

Offer reading materials such as news, service plans and progress reports in formats that are easy to read and understand.

Examples: large print, braille, digital, infographics, videos, etc.



Communication

Ask the parent(s) their preferred communication method. Disabilities affect everyone differently, and some parents may prefer one communication method over another.

Events & Meetings

Host meetings in an accessible location, or if parent is unable to attend in person due to their impairment, offer participation through alternate means.



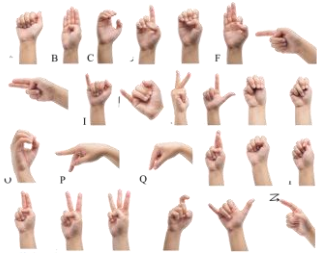
Accessibility encompasses many things, physical accessibility is just one type.





Accessibility Considerations for Parents with Disabilities

A parent's disability can affect their ability to fully participate in their child's program.



- Provide an ASL Interpreter for meetings or any other interactions involving the child (2-week notice provided by the provider).
- Ensure translation services and/or closed captioning is available and enabled for parents to see. Parents who are hard of hearing may need access to an FM system.
- Provide material in a variety of formats such as braille, large print or electronically for a screen reader.
- Address parents with respect and consideration.
- Be intentionally patient.
- Keep conversations simple and focused.
- Use alternate means of communication such as written text or images.
- Provide accessible parking, entrances/exits, wheelchair ramps, if possible round tables and assigning a staff member to the parent to assist with accommodations could be a huge benefit.
- Use spacious, comfortable rooms for events and meetings to accommodate appropriate spatial needs.
- Research the disability. Keep in mind that disabilities affects every person differently. Ask parents how to best support them. Understanding ways to interact, communicate, and clarification may be needed to help achieve success for the child.
- Provide choices when possible. Chunk information into small and understandable steps. Provide positive reinforcements and breaks. Use trauma informed practices. Allow individuals to voice any needs they may have.

Think Outside the Box

Check out KY-SPIN's Equity and Inclusion for Individuals with Disabilities Infographic ()

KY-SPIN can help!!

- Video/Webinar library
- Training for parents *and* professionals
- Extensive resource library, infographics, and more!

Follow us
@kyspininc on:



KY-SPIN

**10301-B Deering Rd., Louisville, KY,
40272 Toll Free: 1-800-525-7746**

Phone: (502) 937-6894

Fax: (502) 937-6464

E-mail: spininc@kyspin.com

Website: www.kyspin.com