

# Parents as Partners:

## Engaging Families to Ensure Student Achievement

Presented by Christine Tangel and Olivia Núñez, The GO Project



# Today's Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)
- What *IS* family engagement? (5 min)
- Family Engagement Diagnostic Exercise (10 min)
- Organizational Showcase: GO Project (10 min)
- Family Engagement: From Barriers to Solutions (15 min)
- Shifting the Culture (10 min)
- Give & Get: Small Group Exercise (15 min)
- Wrap-Up Q & A (5 min)



# How do you define Family Engagement?

*The GO Project believes parents and caregivers are partners in creating their child's academic, social, and emotional success.*

- What does ideal family engagement look like?
- How does your organization currently define family engagement?

# Questions to Consider

- What are your organization's goals around family engagement?
- How do you measure this progress?
- How are parents and caregivers introduced to your program?
- What activities, programs, or events are there for family engagement?
- How is your team expected to engage families?
- What training do you provide for the team around family engagement?
- What leadership opportunities does your organization have for family?
- How do you elicit parent and caregiver feedback?
- How do you address the concerns they raise?



# Family Engagement Diagnostic

Rank: each opportunity as Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory

Engagement Opportunities	RANK	NOTES
Contact with program staff		
Contact with partner organizations		
Providing face to face information about their child		
Providing written communication		
Having them volunteer		
Partner to create programing		
Asking for feedback		
Celebrating as a community		
Having a space at program where they are welcomed to gather		
Addressing their needs apart from those of their children		
OTHER:		
OTHER:		
OTHER:		

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## GO PROJECT VISION

The GO Project aims to close the achievement gap for all under-resourced families who have children that are struggling in their New York City public school.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING

By building long-term public and private partnerships within a defined geographic area we are able to secure necessary resources critical to program implementation. Our model relies heavily on volunteerism, community collaboration and strong family engagement. We foster healthy and responsive relationships with all stakeholders to integrate community support, educational resources, and cultural exchange.

#### Stakeholders Include:

- Independent Schools
- Public Schools
- Community Partners
- Volunteers
- Higher Ed Institutions
- Families
- Children

### OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

Strategically designed to serve UNDER-RESOURCED families with children who are UNDER-PERFORMING in schools that are UNDER-SERVED; our approach addresses the comprehensive needs of students who are struggling at the earliest stage of their academic career through year-round innovative, holistic and individualized educational programming.

### EARLY & CONTINUOUS INTERVENTION

- Early intervention
- Sustained participation
- Year round, intensive services

### RESPONSIVE & INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

- Academic skill-building
- Individualized Instruction
- Differentiated group instruction
- Low student to adult ratios
- Experienced, committed and Certified teachers

### HOLISTIC & INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

- Social emotional skill-building tied to academic learning
- Comprehensive student and family needs assessment
- Whole system involvement
- Accessible family support services

### IMPACT

#### 1. Academic Outcomes

- Increased proficiency on standardized test scores
- Summer learning gains
- On time/ advantageous school matriculation
- Proficient Report Card Grades
- Enrollment in “good” Middle School/High School
- Increased academic time on task

#### 2. Social-Emotional Outcomes

- Strong engagement with learning
- Increased confidence
- Positive personal/social development
- Productive classroom behavior
- Strong peer relationships

#### 3. Family Support Outcomes

- Strengthened advocacy skills
- Increase access/ utilization of opportunities and resources
- Strong parent collaboration with GO Project

# GO Project Overview



## Early & Continuous Intervention

- Start in K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
- Year-round academic & family support.
- 2,000 additional instructional hours by 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation.



## Responsive & Individualized Instruction

- 1:4 adult-to student ratio.
- Small group & differentiated instruction.
- Specialist support available.



## Holistic & Integrated Programming

- SEL integrated into academic instruction.
- Family counseling, workshops, SPED advocacy support, & referrals.
- Individual and small group counseling sessions at students' schools.

# GO Project Family Engagement

- Tours and interviews prior to being accepted
- Intake meeting with a GO Families social worker when enrolled
- Parent orientation
- Ongoing workshops
- Weekly newsletters
- Regular communication (Ex. Attendance calls)
- Translation support
- Counseling support
- Opportunities to volunteer (classroom support, translation, greeters, recruitment support)
- Parent Advocacy Leaders
- End of program surveys





# Why Family Engagement Matters

- Research has shown that when parents and caregivers are involved students have:
  - Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
  - Better school attendance
  - Increased motivation, better self-esteem
  - Lower rates of suspension
  - Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
  - Fewer instances of violent behavior
- Family participation in education was twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status.

Information from: [http://michigan.gov/documents/Final\\_Parent\\_Involvement\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_14732\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf)



# Factors Impacting Family Engagement

- Parents' and caregiver's beliefs about what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do with and on behalf of their children.
- The extent to which parents and caregivers believe that they can have a positive influence on their children's education.
- Parents' and caregiver's perceptions that their children and school want them to be involved.



# Barriers to Family Engagement

- Sense of welcoming organizational/school environment
- Language access
- Parents' and caregiver's understanding of the school system
- Variety of engagement opportunities
- Timing
- Communication of changes

# Family Engagement: From Barriers to Solutions

Check off all that you have heard and/or said about parents/caregivers

✓ Check Here	Misperceptions of Barriers	Solution-focused Responses
	We plan the meetings but parents /caregivers don't come	
	Parents/caregivers are not concerned or don't care	
	Parents/caregivers are too busy to come to the program	
	Parents/caregivers never want to go on field trips or volunteer with the class	
	Parents/caregivers don't read the materials we send home	
	Parents/caregivers say they'll come and then they don't show up	
	Parents/caregivers don't appreciate all that we do for their children	
	Parents/caregivers don't understand the impact our program has on their child	
	Parents/caregivers just drop off their kids and leave	
	Parents/caregivers rarely call me back	
	I only hear from parents/caregivers when they have a complaint	
	Parents/caregivers think this is a babysitting service	
	Parents/caregivers don't know what's best for their children	

*Adapted from The Youth Connection*

# Family Engagement: From Barriers to Solutions

✓ Check Here	Misperceptions of Barriers	Solution-focused Responses
	We plan the meetings but parents /caregivers don't come	Have them suggest times.
	Parents/caregivers are not concerned or don't care.	Everyone can show concern in different ways.
	Parents/caregivers are too busy to come to the program	Offer times that work for them.
	Parents/caregivers never want to go on field trips or volunteer with the class	They may be working or have other obligations. Also need to ensure they know of these opportunities in advance.
	Parents/caregivers don't read the materials we send home	Make sure they are translated and shared in various ways (email, letter home, in person)
	Parents/caregivers say they'll come and then they don't show up	Send reminders.
	Parents/caregivers don't appreciate all that we do for their children	Share appreciation. Organizational culture around appreciation.
	Parents/caregivers don't understand the impact our program has on their child	Share information on progress
	Parents/caregivers just drop off their kids and leave	Ensure there is a welcoming environment.
	Parents/caregivers rarely call me back	Determine what times are best to call.
	I only hear from parents/caregivers when they have a complaint	Make sure you are also sharing successes with the parent. They may feel the same.
	Parents/caregivers think this is a babysitting service	Ask for feedback on what they want to do.
	Parents/caregivers don't know what's best for their children	They are the experts. Ask them for feedback on their child's needs & strengths.

*Adapted from The Youth Connection*

# Shifting the Culture

- Include family engagement in onboarding & ongoing training.
- Include family members in important decisions.
- Get their feedback & ideas.
- Determine areas in which family members can lead projects or initiatives.
- Share both the positive feedback & areas for growth.
- Demonstrate appreciation.



# Give & Get

## Activity Instructions

- Jot down 3 family engagement opportunities that your organization does well.
- Get up and find someone near you.
- GIVE ONE idea from your list to your partner and GET ONE idea for your list from your partner
- Move to a new partner and repeat the process
- If your list and your partner's list are identical, you must brainstorm together an idea that can be added to both of your lists.
- Note: Exchange no more than one idea with any given partner

# Resources

- GO Project website: <http://goprojectnyc.org/>
- [Flamboyant Foundation Family Engagement Resources](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education Parent Involvement Fact Sheet](#)
- [NYC DOE: Family and Community Engagement Department](#)
- [SEDL: Family & Community Engagement Resources](#)





# Thank you!

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