

Family Engagement Initiatives Update

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – Spring 2019

Family Engagement Background

While the AAP has a long history of engaging patients and families in its activities, more concerted efforts have taken place over the past several years. Efforts around family engagement have been coordinated by 2 primary groups: (1) the Family Partnerships Network, and (2) a staff Family Engagement Workgroup.

Family Partnerships Network

The mission of the AAP Family Partnerships Network (FPN) is to represent family and youth perspectives, lead and facilitate youth and family engagement, and support ongoing youth and family involvement at the local, state and national level. Additional information about the FPN can be found at www.aap.org/fpn.

Staff Family Engagement Work Group

The staff Family Engagement Work Group includes staff representatives from nearly every AAP department who meet monthly to advance efforts related to AAP objectives on family engagement and to share information and resources.

Family Engagement Activities

Family engagement activities taking place at the AAP include the following:

- The FPN Executive Committee conducted strategic planning at their November 2018 meeting and developed 4 subcommittees to better organize and accomplish their work. Below is an overview of the 4 subcommittees, as well as some key highlights:
 - **National Strategy:** Goals include increasing family engagement and sharing family perspectives at the national level, providing peer support to national family liaisons, participating in the AAP policy development and review process, maintaining communication and linkages with AAP leaders and groups, and exploring advocacy opportunities.
 - **Policy:** The FPN is taking the lead on the revision of the AAP policy statement, “Patient- and Family-Centered Care and the Pediatrician’s Role”. The Committee on Pediatric Emergency Medicine was recently added as a co-author. The authoring committee will include a blend of diverse pediatricians and family leaders with the goal of developing an overarching statement about patient-and family-centered care, regardless of setting.
 - The subcommittee is finalizing some guidance documents around family engagement in the AAP policy process, which has been forwarded to the Board policy committee for consideration. One document provides guidance for authoring committees and will be distributed once finalized.
 - FPN Chairperson, Greg Schell will be participating in two panel presentations during the AAP Annual Leadership Forum around family engagement.
 - **Chapter Strategy:** The primary goal is to promote family engagement at the state/chapter level.

AAP FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. The family is the principal caregiver and the center of strength and support for children.
2. The AAP recognizes that perspectives and information provided by families, children, adolescents, and young adults are essential components of collaborative decision-making in the delivery of high-quality, safe, and compassionate care. Patients and their families are integral partners of the health care team.
3. The AAP recognizes the value of diversity among patients, families, and pediatricians. The delivery of care within the context of appropriate physician knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of cultural and population distinctions take into account families’ experiences, beliefs, values actions, customs, and unique health care needs.
4. Recognizing, valuing, and building on the strengths of individual children and families and empowering them to discover and communicate their own strengths, build confidence, and partner in making choices and decisions about their health care is vital to optimal health and development.
5. To promote improved patient, family, and physician experiences and outcomes, the AAP encourages and supports family engagement in its core competencies of education, practice, research, and advocacy.

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- During the NCE, the FPN sponsored a **Family Reception**, where family leaders and AAP leaders were able to connect and network with one another. As part of the reception, 3 posters (two related to chapter grants) were featured. A highlight was the Florida youth who took the lead in developing and presenting their poster.
- Analysis of the 2017 Chapter annual reports and chapter needs assessments will take place to assess progress in family engagement at the chapter level.
- **Education:** The primary goal is the education of both pediatricians/health care professionals as well as youth/families around family engagement topics.
 - In addition to Tamela Milan’s inspiring presentation during the Stockman lecture, another FPN Executive Committee member, Michael Hannon participated as co-faculty during a highly informative and interactive educational workshop entitled, “Don’t Forget the Dad”, which outlined how pediatricians might engage and connect with fathers more effectively.
 - One of the key activities will be the creation of family engagement tips, including the “Top 10 Tips for Connecting with Families” and “Top 5 Tips for CME Planners” (the latter resulted from a conversation with representatives from the Committee on Continuing Medical Education).
 - A webinar entitled, “[The Importance of Connection and Support: The Rest of the Story](#)” was held on February 19, 2019. The Webinar featured Tamela Milan-Alexander and Dr James Perrin, who discussed strategies for families and pediatricians to connect more meaningfully in health care settings. There were 120 registrants for this engaging conversation.
- **Award:** The primary goal is the exploration of an award/recognition to acknowledge pediatricians or practices that are engaging youth/families well. The FPN is currently developing draft award criteria and will be exploring potential collaboration with AAP groups.
- Staff facilitated a call with AAP youth/family liaisons in October 2018 to provide them with an overview of AAP priorities and update them on AAP family engagement activities. A facilitated discussion took place at the end of the call to learn more about the projects or committees family liaisons are involved with, lessons learned, and how AAP staff can best support family liaisons in their roles.
- During the January Staff Family Engagement Workgroup meeting, a representative from [Family Voices](#) provided an overview of its organization, including the National Center for Family/Professional Partnerships and state Family-to-Family Health Information Centers to AAP staff. A discussion took place on how the AAP and state AAP chapters can potentially partner with Family Voices and state [Family-to-Family Health Information Centers](#).
- Initial planning is underway to design and disseminate a survey to AAP staff on their family engagement efforts to help determine how best to support staff and to gauge whether family engagement efforts have increased over the past several years at the Academy. Results will be compared with past survey results.

What You Can Do

- Encourage youth or family advisors/leaders to join the Family Partnerships Network, particularly if your committee, section, council, or advisory committee has a family liaison. There is no cost to join, and family advisors/leaders can join by completing the online application at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPNApp>. Joining the Network will allow family advisors/leaders to receive information about AAP leadership or volunteer opportunities, other relevant child health updates, as well as engage with others who are working on child health-related programs or policy activities. Family liaisons who join the Family Partnerships Network will receive information about future family liaison calls.
- Consider how your group or your group’s activities could benefit from youth/family engagement. Reach out to the FPN and/or the staff Family Engagement Workgroup for advice or consultation. For additional information about the FPN or the staff Family Engagement Workgroup, contact Sunnah Kim at skim@aap.org or Christina Boothby at cboothby@aap.org.