

Family Agency and Voice: Designing the Next Generation of Family Engagement

ACTIVITY GUIDE

This activity guide is a supplementary compendium to *Family Agency and Voice: Designing the Next Generation of Family Engagement*.

COLLABORATORS:



Activity #1

Interviewing to put families at the center Developed by: Early Learning Lab

Goal

For participants to practice using the design thinking process to develop programs and services that are user-centered

Why it Helps

Gaining practice in interviewing others is an important skill in working with and listening to families

Time Needed

30 minutes

Materials

Guiding interview questions for participants to write on, paper, pens

Instructions

Step 1: Pair interviews (8 minutes): Have participants break into pairs, taking turns interviewing one another. Interview questions include:

- Where do you live?
- What kind of work do you do?
- What is your work schedule?
- What do you do to relax?

Step 2: Designing for the challenge (5 minutes): Explain to participants that they have been asked to design a work-based wellness program for their partner based on what they have learned about them in an interview. Everyone has 5 minutes to design their solution. Feel free to include a visual of the idea as well. Get creative and make sure to include information on the following design elements:

- The program activity should be 1 hour in duration and happen multiple times a week.
- The activity should meet the wellness needs of the partners, and could address stress management, fitness, healthy eating, or relaxation.
- Specify what time of day the activity will take place.
- Specify where the activity will take place.
- Specify if there are any materials or equipment needed for the activity.
- Include what the target outcomes are and quick thoughts on how they will measure success.

Step 3: Share your design (8 minutes): Ask participants to share their solution with their partner and begin to tweak and revise based on the feedback.

Step 4: Reflect and discuss (9 minutes): Discuss and reflect as a group what it was like to design taking someone else's perspective into account. Questions include:

- What did the process feel like?
- What did it feel like to be designed for and have someone ask you questions?
- What did it feel like to be the designer and need to ask questions?
- How might you use this process in the work you do with families?

Activity #2

Developing and playing games based on everyday materials Developed by: Ubongo/IRC

Goal

For participants to design learning games that children and families can play together while taking into account limited resources families might have available

Why it Helps

All communities have different access to materials and resources and use them in different ways. Creating games with simply the materials on hand can help participants see families' perspectives and the power and strength of the everyday resources families have—drawing attention to assets rather than deficits.

Time Needed

30 minutes

Materials

Only that which is already in the room or in participants' possession

Instructions

Step 1: How we play (10 minutes): Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5. Explain that using only materials they have in the room or in their possession (e.g., pockets, bags, etc.), they need to develop a game that they can play together and teach to others.

Step 2: Teaching others (10 minutes): Have groups share with other groups the games they devised.

Step 3: Reflect and discuss (10 minutes): Discuss and reflect as a group what it was like to design games with few resources. Questions include:

- What surprised you about the games you and other groups came up with?
- How did different views and perspectives on play influence the game you developed?
- How might you use this activity with families that you work with?

Activity #3

Creating parent-child storybooks centered on family routines Developed by: Ubongo/IRC

Goal

To contextualize a storybook to the community that the participants work and/or live in

Why it Helps

All children and families have routines, regardless of the situation they live in. By developing storybooks based on everyday lives, participants are more likely to put children's and families' experiences at the forefront.

Time Needed

30 minutes

Materials

- Common children's books
- Paper
- Crayons
- Pencils

Instructions

Step 1: Choosing and reading a storybook (10 minutes): Ask participants to divide into groups of 4 and 5 and read through a storybook. Ask the group to discuss what families from their community might and might not find relevant.

Step 2: Adaptation (10 minutes): As a group, spend time rewriting/drawing the storybook to create adaptations that would make the book more germane to families' lives.

Step 3: Share and reflect (10 minutes): Have each group share their adaptations and stories and discuss:

- What kinds of adaptations were similar across the groups?
- What adaptations were different?
- How might you engage families you work with in an exercise like this?
- How might you extend this activity to write original stories based on families' everyday lives?