



Parent Engagement and Partnerships in Early Childhood: Research from Across the Big Ten

Hosted by the
Big Ten Early Learning Alliance:
*Strengthening Early Childhood Policies and Practices
through Science*

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Family Engagement: Defined

- An umbrella term describing the *social dynamics and interaction patterns* between families and educators
- Reflects the *joint influences and the collaborative efforts* of parents and educators working in alignment to support child success
- *Family-centered* and grounded in cultural values, beliefs and practices



Family Engagement as a Multidimensional Construct

- Engagement as a practice
 - Actions and co-actions that support learning and development (*what* parents do)
 - Structural features including behaviors and contexts
- Engagement as a relationship
 - Relational and affective features influencing learning opportunities and outcomes
 - Quality of interpersonal dynamics between parents and children, and parents and teachers (i.e., *how* they interact)



The Evidence for Family Engagement

- Correlational and experimental research speaks to the importance of alignment and collaboration between families and educators
- Relevance in ECE and as children (and families) transition to school is well documented
- Despite all we know, family engagement practices and policies are largely regimented by minimal standards to “involve” parents, not partnerships



Big Ten Presenters

- Susan Sheridan, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (moderator)
- Lisa Knoche, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Karen Bierman, Pennsylvania State University
- Jimena Cossa, University of Maryland
- Charis Wahman, Michigan State University



Key Takeaways: The Charge

- Parse the indicators of family engagement that influence learning and development
 - As an interpersonal and dynamic construct, will likely be driven by quality and relational features
- Redefine best practices in ways that are family centered and recognize the many ways of family engagement
- Infuse into ECE policy an engagement approach that is scientifically supported, partnership-oriented



Thank You!!

Q&A