

Parent Leadership Month Frequently Asked Questions

What is Parent Leadership?

Parent Leadership occurs when parents gain the knowledge and skills to function in meaningful roles and represent a “parent voice” to help shape the direction of their families, programs, and communities. It is successfully achieved when parents and professionals build partnerships and share responsibility, expertise, and leadership in decisions that are made affecting families and communities.

How does Parent Leadership prevent child abuse?

Strengthening families is one of the best ways to prevent child abuse and neglect, and empowering parents to take leadership roles in their communities is one of the best ways to strengthen families. Parent leaders represent the “parent voice” and are strong advocates for all families in their community. They provide input into family support program and community decisions that affect families and serve as role models and resources for other parents; thereby enhancing factors proven to prevent abuse and neglect.

Who can be a Parent Leader?

Any parent has the potential to be a Parent Leader. They are parents, grandparents, foster parents, and anyone else in a parenting role who speaks or acts from his or her perspective as a parent.

How does Parent Leadership help make a family stronger?

Parents who have opportunities to share their thoughts about issues that are important to them have increased self-esteem, are more confident, and are better able to develop and implement plans to reach their goals and take care of their families. They serve as role models for their children.

How does the community benefit from Parent Leadership?

Empowering parents to become leaders in their communities is one of the best things we can do to ensure children grow up to become self-reliant, self-sustaining individuals who contribute to society. Parent Leaders serve as resources and models for other parents in their community providing increased guidance and modeling about their newly learned behaviors. As a result, their children often take on leadership roles appropriate for their age, set and work towards goals, and model appropriate behavior for other children.

Can you give me some examples of Parent Leadership in action?

- Parents serving on community planning committees, advisory boards, and boards of directors
- Parents and staff advocating for greater resources for families and children in schools, communities and programs
- A parent and a teacher working together to ensure the most effective learning environment for a child
- Parents testifying before the city council or the state legislature regarding issues that affect families and children
- Parents taking the initiative to contact community organizations to seek assistance or provide input into decisions.

What do Parent Leaders need to be successful?

Parent Leaders are most effective when they have a strong foundation that includes:

- A defined meaningful role as a Parent Leader
- Access to training
- Opportunities to contribute to program development, implementation, oversight and evaluation, policymaking, training and technical assistance, public awareness and outreach
- Tangible supports such as assistance with child care and transportation and compensation for wages lost while contributing in a Parent Leader role
- Opportunities to work in partnership with staff and professionals in organizations that address key issues related to the Parent Leader's area of interest and commitment