



# Family Engagement: The Value of Relationships

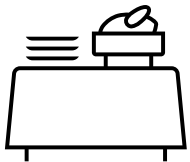
# Housekeeping



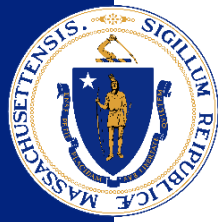
**Please feel welcome to ask questions**



**Please silence electronic devices and step out of the room to take any calls**



**Lunch will be on your own**



# Today's Agenda

## Principles of Engagement

- Introductions
  - Family Engagement
- Lunch**
- Principles of Change & Customer Service
  - Contract Monitoring

# Introductions:

## EEC Family Access & Engagement Team

### Child Care Financial Assistance:

- **Bethanie Glass**, Director of Child Care Financial Assistance
- **Elyse Tibbetts**, Priority Access Manager

### Family Engagement:

- **Haji Shearer**, Associate Commissioner of Family & Community Supports
- **Ayesha Rodriguez**, Family Engagement Manager

# Agenda

1. Relationship building barriers & best practices
2. Review Guiding Principles from the Framework
3. Develop a plan to strengthen family engagement



# Goals

1. Participants explore the value of relationship building when engaging families, staff and others
2. Participants learn about the Guiding Principles and Core Elements of the Family Engagement Framework
3. Participants develop a plan to strengthen family engagement in their organization

# Icebreaker: what do you hope to cover regarding family engagement

- Small groups of 2-3 people
- Make introductions (name, organization, and role)
- Identify a couple of hopes for today's training
- A few large group share outs

# Relationship Building: Reciprocal and balanced communication

## What does this look like?

- Ask families about their preferred ways to communicate and/how where they go to access information.
- Invite families to share their perspectives, insights, questions and experiences
- Your interactions should focus on celebrating strengths
- Develop a two-way cadence



# Relationship Building: Create shared agreements

## What does this look like?

- Provide space for discussions about mutual collaboration and contribution.
- Express and demonstrate your commitment to the value of the family voice.
- Develop partnership agreements related to hopes, expectations, requirements, and overcoming known barriers.
- Be patient: Take space – make space

# Relationship Building: Maintain trust and transparency

## What does this look like?

- Build trust through a series of authentic interactions that are meaningful to all parties.
- Communicate important information in a timely manner (written or verbal).
- When having difficult conversations discuss behaviors or actions.
- Ensure a gossip and label free zone.

# Relationship Building : Recognize power dynamics

## What does this look like?

- As much as possible, share power and decision making
- Outline the organization's decision-making process, naming the people who holds final decision making power
- Leave plenty of room for parent feedback and input
- Consider developing and supporting a family leadership group or council

# Identify some barriers to building relationships with families

# Relationship Building: Common Barriers

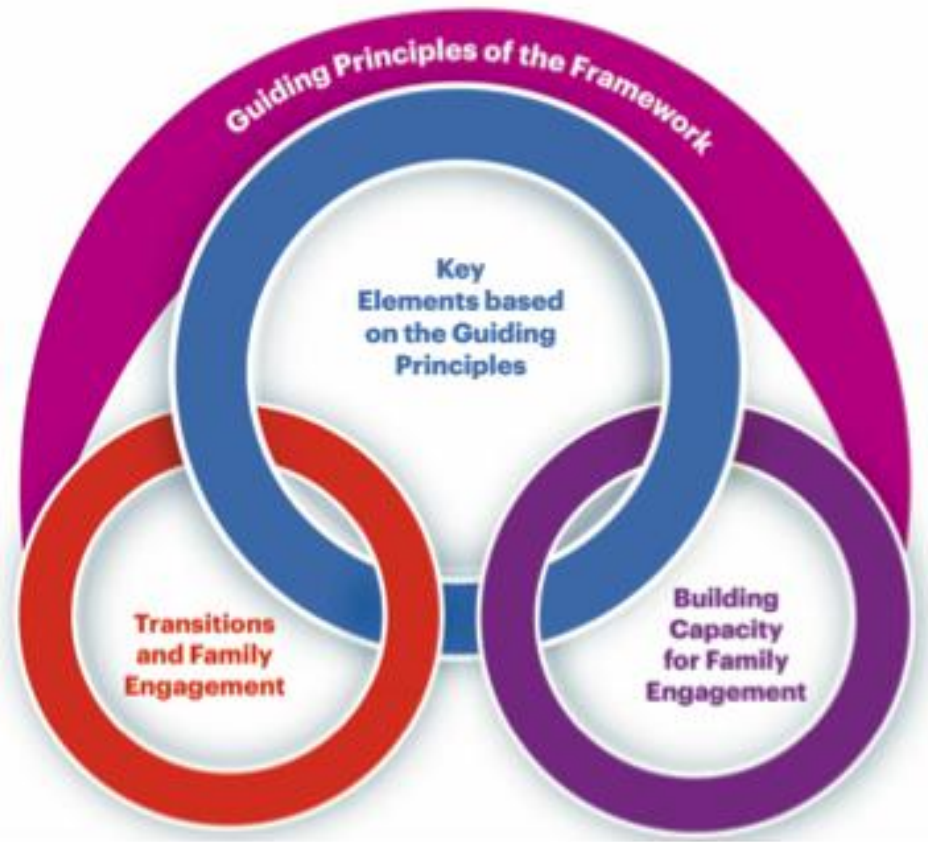
- Parent work schedules
- Busy or overwhelmed educators
- Language and cultural differences
- Parent behaviors when interacting with staff

# Relationship Building

## Small group breakout

- Choose one of the identified barriers
- Choose one of the best practices we discussed
- Strategize ways to implement the best practice to address your selected barrier

# 5 Guiding Principles



Five Guiding Principles form the basis of this Framework. These principles provide a foundation for creating, within systems and organizations, a culture that values and thrives on family engagement.

Guiding principles strengthen shared connections with individuals and families.

# Guiding Principle 1

**Each family is unique, and all families represent diverse structures.**

- Center family and youth voices
- Plan & implement with, not for
- Zone in on unique qualities
- Highlight family contributions
- Make Joint decisions





# Guiding Principle 2

**Diversity is expressed and experienced at multiple levels.**

- Acknowledge and accept the need to engage all families.
- Recognize the strength that comes from families' unique backgrounds.
- Approach diversity from a strengths-based perspective.



# Guiding Principle 3



**Building a respectful, trusting, and reciprocal relationship is the shared responsibility**

- Individual family's strengths are at the center.
- Relationships are a two-way process.
- Building trust isn't always easy but it's always worth it.

# Guiding Principle 4

**Families are their child's first and best advocate.**

- Recognize families as the best champions of their child's success.
- Engage families in all decisions made with regards to their child.





# Guiding Principle 5

**Family engagement must be equitable.**

- Equity is the eradication of privilege, oppression, disparities, and disadvantage.
- Explore inclusion, power dynamics, and growth opportunities.



# Guiding Principles Breakouts

## **Strengths:**

Discuss a Guiding Principle that is strongly reflected in your work

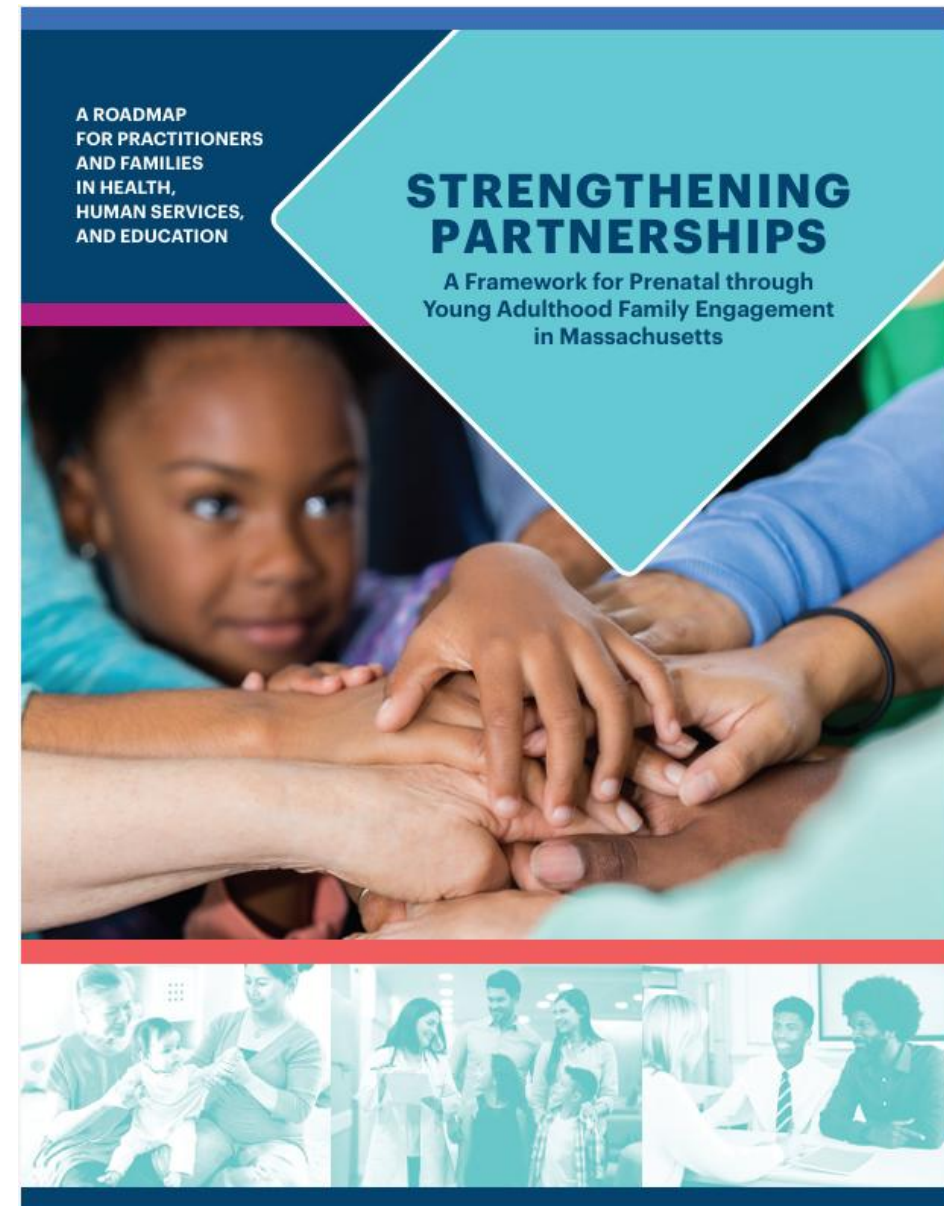
## **Growth Opportunity:**

Discuss a Guiding Principle that could be better represented in your organization

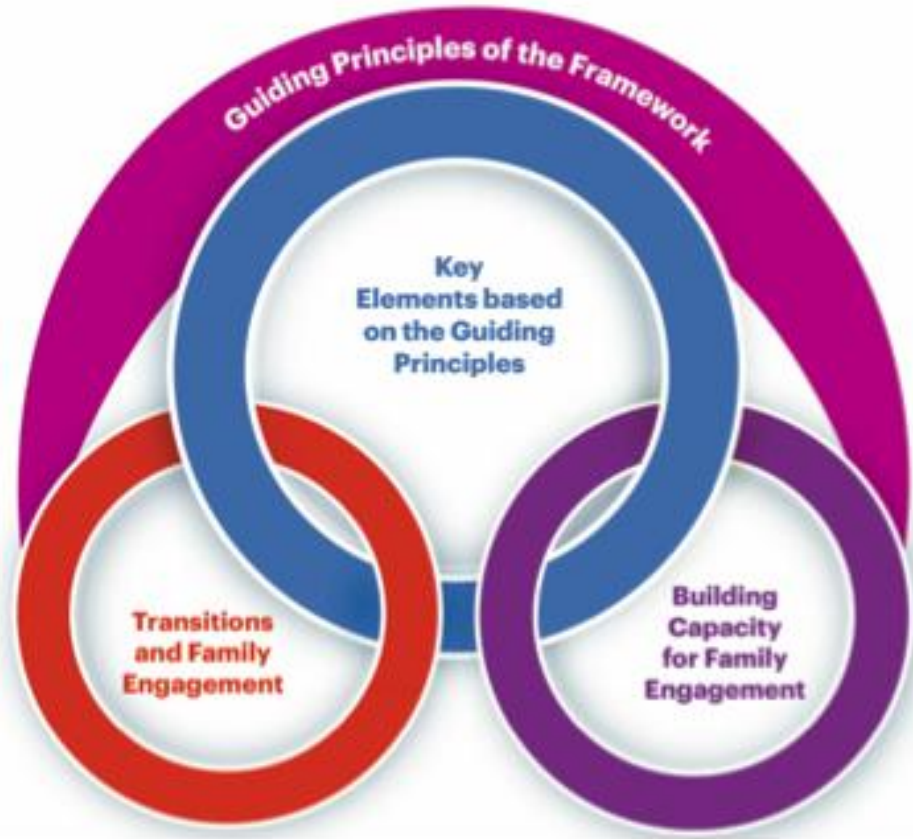
# Large Group Share Out

- What did you hear?
- What do you think about what you heard?
- What can you add?

# A Walk Through the Framework



# Overview of Components



The Framework consists of multiple sections that include:

- Five Guiding Principles
- Four Key Elements that translate the Guiding Principles into practice
- Focus on transitions
- Strategies for strengthening the family engagement capacity of organizations.



# Recall: What is a Guiding Principle?



The 5 Guiding Principles provide a foundation for family engagement

- Within systems and organizations
- Promotes a culture that values families and strong, healthy connections

# What are the Elements? (How)

The elements are represented by icons. Sometimes you will see more than one element next to an area in the framework.



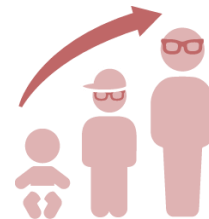
**Building Positive Relationships**



**Promoting Pathways for Partnerships with Families**



**Promoting Family Well-being**



**Supporting Child and Youth Development and Learning**

## Transitions and Family Engagement

- Prenatal through early years
- Elementary to middle school
- Adolescence through young adult
- **Transition practices**
  - Health related
  - Human services
  - Education

## Strengthening Capacity for Family Engagement

- **Strategies**
  - Staffing
  - Training and professional development
  - Resource development
  - Evaluation

# Develop a Plan to Strengthen Family Engagement

1. Identify **key staff** responsible for family engagement\*
2. Develop your organization's **vision** for family engagement
3. **Assess** your current family engagement policies and practices
4. Decide what **Guiding Principles** and practices your team will prioritize
5. **Schedule time** among stakeholders to advance family engagement
6. **Document** progress, challenges and successes *in some form*

# Wrap-up and reflection

- Were your expectations meant?
- What are your next steps?
- What did we miss?



# Principles of Change

# Key Goals

Modernize Child Care Financial Assistance Programs as human and family-centered focused on treating families with dignity and respect.

1



Prioritize family  
needs and  
experience

2



Increase overall  
system efficiency

3



Modernize and  
update system



# Guiding Principles

**Alleviate burdens on families** by streamlining and reducing duplication through the child care financial Assistance process.

**Streamline and clarify roles/responsibilities** of Family Access Administrators to shift the burden away from the families.

**Improve and simplify communication with families to include online applications, email and text notifications.**

**Extend timelines to ensure stability of care.**

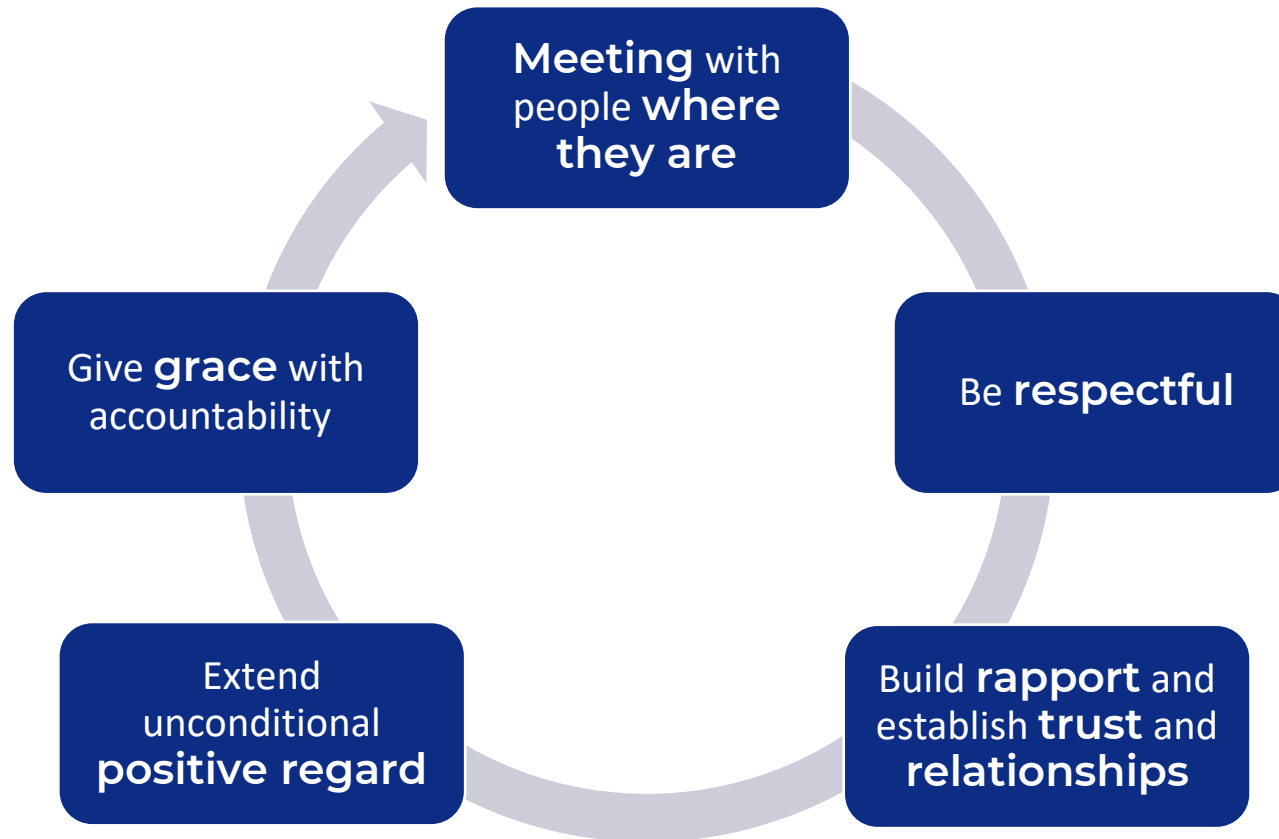
**Use more inclusive and accessible language to ensure policies and regulations are written in simplified, clear language.**

**Build stronger local and regional relationships** that support collaboration and co-case management to ensure stability and smooth transitions across programs and in accessing supportive services



# Engaging with Partners in the Change

All change work requires thoughtful engagement across partners that begins with FIVE CORE Principles.



# What does this look like in practice?



Assuming the best  
in complicated  
situations



Asking questions vs  
making statements



Being mindful of  
tone in emails



Picking up the  
phone to reach out  
to partners

# EEC Commitment



Human and family centered **quality customer service** for families.



Being a **partner** in family and provider engagement.



**Meet regularly** with Family Access Administrators to support positive outcomes and program improvement.



Proactive partnership to **identify and implement solutions** and enhancements to meet the holistic needs of families.



Provide **training and technical assistance** support services.

A background image featuring a collection of colorful wooden blocks in shades of red, yellow, blue, and green. One red block is prominently centered in the foreground, while others are scattered and blurred in the background. A dark blue horizontal bar with rounded ends is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# A Customer Service Approach

# Let's Discuss



# EEC Customer Service Expectations

- Being kind, courteous, and professional
- Listening carefully to our families' needs and concerns
- Doing everything in our power to efficiently and accurately serve each eligible family

## In Practice this looks like....



A respectful, consistent experience during the eligibility determination process.



Timely and dignified services and supports from application to eligibility determination to selection of a provider and enrollment.

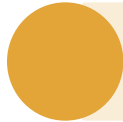


Positive and responsive communication with families where they know what to expect at each stage of the process, and have questions answered clearly and promptly.





Building and sustaining strong community to partnerships, in order to support families and providers in communities and regions across the Commonwealth.

# What do our Families need from us?

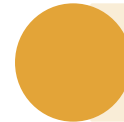
 Understand their needs


 Be listened to


 Have available options


 Find solutions to problems


 Efficiency

 Be proactive


 Be kind, caring and understanding

 Warm and friendly responses

 Make them feel important

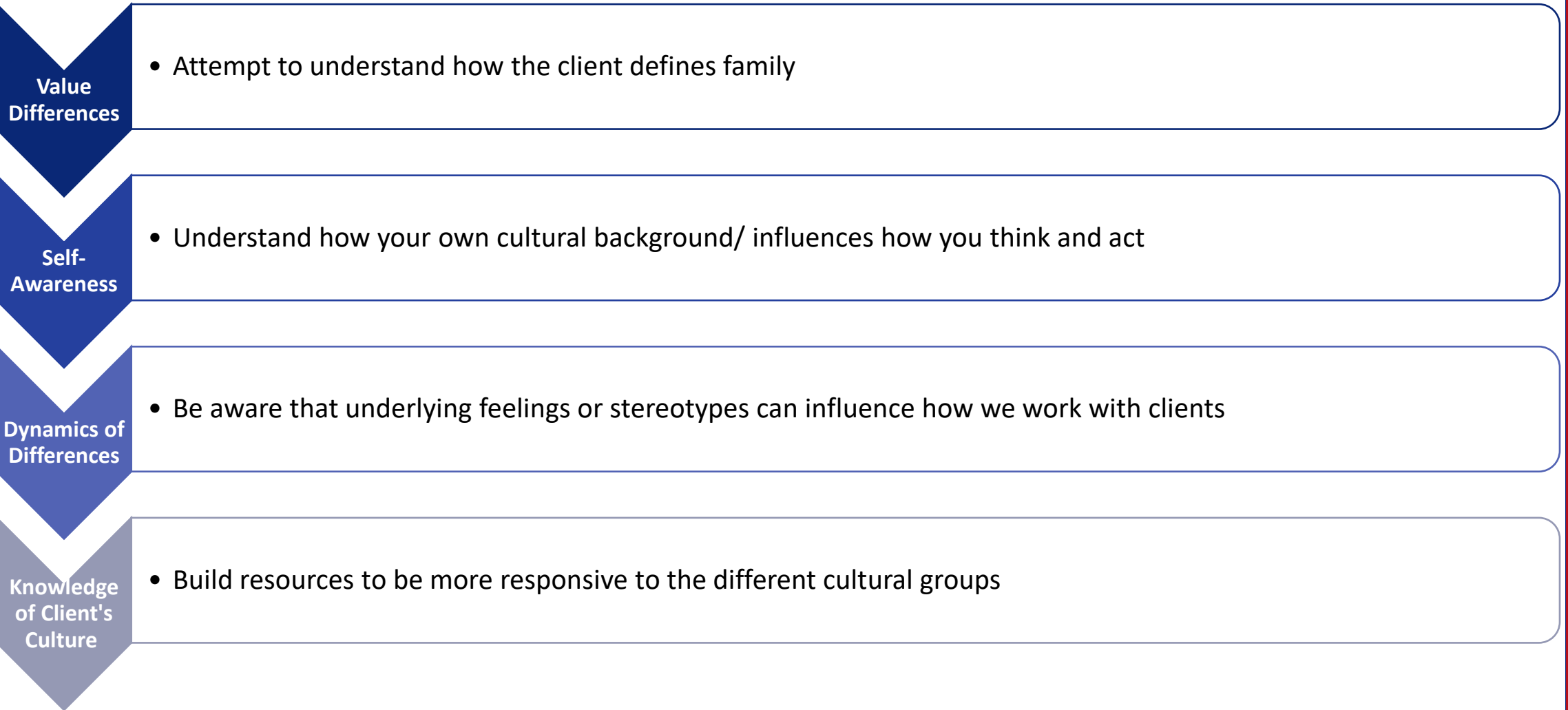
 Pleasant experiences

 Transparency

 Reliability

# Cultural Competency

Here are **four elements** that can help reinforce cultural competence with all our families:





# Necessary Skills to Provide Exceptional Customer Service

Empathy	Communication Skills
Positive Language	Listening Skills
Patience	Positive Attitude
Knowledge of services	Attentiveness
Professionalism	Responsiveness

**A willingness to go the extra mile**

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# Contract Support & Monitoring

# Service Components



## Eligibility

- Reviewing and determining a family's eligibility
- Ongoing Eligibility Reviews, Redetermination and Case Closing
- Internal Controls and Other Responsibilities



## Family Services

- Resource Services
- Referral Services
- Financial Assistance Services
- Communication with Families



## Provider Services

### Eligibility

- Provider Management and Finance
- Provider Monitoring
- Maintaining Provider Information
- Provider Recruitment and Capacity Expansion
- Supporting Funded Informal Child Care Providers
- Training and Technical Assistance



## Community and State Agency Coordination

- Connecting and partnering with state and community organizations to meet the holistic needs of families.

# Your EEC Support Network



# EEC Supports

## Family Access and Engagement

### Family Access Specialists

- Act as point of contact for day-to-day contract management support

### Financial Assistance Unit

- Support programs through policy and technical support

### Family and Community Supports

- support family engagement

## Program Quality and Work Supports

### Program Quality Specialists

- Support programs with continuous quality improvement and professional development plans

### Behavioral Health Specialists

- Support programs to promote inclusion and social-emotional health and well-being of children, families and educators

## Financial Management & Audit Resolution

- Fiscal Monitors
  - Ensure compliance over record keeping, internal controls, fiscal management, and transportation
- Contracts/Accounts Specialists
  - Billing, payments, contracts and amendments

## Licensing

### Regional Licensors

- Licenses and oversees educational program health and safety
- Provides technical assistance and support
- Connects educators and programs to supports

# EEC's Collaborative Monitoring Approach

EEC will be further developing an approach to contract management that looks at all key areas of the contract.

Monitoring practices may include:

- ☐ Documentation Review
- ☐ Program Visits
- ☐ Reports
- ☐ Meetings



# Contract Meetings & Touchpoints

EEC is committed to meeting with contracted providers individually and collectively for the duration of the contract.

Annually  
or Bi-  
annually

Quarterly

Ongoing

Ad Hoc



# What's Next

# What's Next: Spring through Summer



## Topic-Specific Trainings

Topic-specific training modules on core services, family engagement, and contract requirements



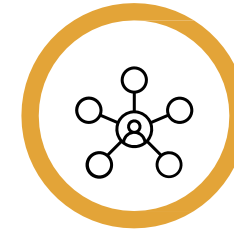
## Drop-In Sessions

Bi-monthly Friday Drop-Ins with the EEC team to ask questions related to any aspect of the contract



## Technical Assistance

Trainings and resources for IT and systems



## Topic-Specific Trainings

Topic-specific training modules on core services, family engagement, and contract requirements

**Collaboration & Partnership Throughout**

# Important Training Reminders

- Have all staff attending trainings register for StrongStart
- Please check StrongStart for training updates
- Log on to StrongStart to see completed trainings and obtain a certificate of completion for your records.

