

What is Parent Leadership?

Meaningful Parent Leadership occurs when parents gain the knowledge and skills to function in meaningful leadership roles and represent a “parent voice” to help shape the direction of their families, programs and communities. Parent Leadership is successfully achieved when parents and professionals build effective partnerships and share responsibility, expertise and leadership in decisions being made that affect families and communities. The parents involved in these collaborations are called **Parent Leaders**.

Throughout the country, parents and professionals are working together in new ways. They are participating jointly in local, regional and national planning processes, collaborating as grant reviewers and program evaluators, and serving on advisory boards and coalitions. Working together, the voices of parents and professionals are shaping policy and practice to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

Who Is A Parent Leader?

A Parent Leader...

- ◆ May be a parent, grandparent, kinship care provider, foster parent, or anyone else in a parenting role
- ◆ Has personal experience in using resources/services to strengthen his or her family
- ◆ Is speaking and acting from his or her perspective as a parent
- ◆ Is not speaking and acting in a staff role for an organization or institution.

Parent Leaders can be most effective when the following supports provide a strong foundation for their work:

- ◆ A defined meaningful role as a Parent Leader
- ◆ Access to training
- ◆ Clear 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 from work 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.