

**A 2016 Environmental Scan of Parent/Family and  
Youth/Young Adult Engagement Practices  
in New Hampshire**

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# A 2016 Environmental Scan of Parent/Family and Youth/Young Adult Engagement Practices in New Hampshire

## **Introduction and Methodology**

The New Hampshire Endowment for Health and the New Hampshire Office of Student Wellness, within the New Hampshire Department of Education, have partnered to support a project to assist New Hampshire stakeholders to expand and improve parent and youth engagement in community and state activities that promote the social-emotional development and behavioral health of New Hampshire's children. The first step in this project was a Study of Best Practices in parent/caregiver engagement and leadership development and in youth/young adult engagement and leadership development. That step was fulfilled with the submission of "A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development" and its companion document, "A Study of Best Practices in Youth Engagement and Leadership Development." The second, simultaneous step in this project is the preparation of an Environmental Scan which presents information about current New Hampshire practices related to parent and youth engagement and leadership development; this document is that Environmental Scan.

Information presented in this Environmental Scan was gathered utilizing four primary strategies:

- 1) The State Management Team for the Safe Schools/Healthy Students and Project AWARE initiatives set up a Work Group to address issues of parent/family engagement. One act of the Work Group was to create and disseminate a detailed Survey seeking information about the entities promoting parent and/or youth engagement and the efforts each is making to promote effective engagement.
  - 2) The author of this Environmental Scan conducted phone interviews with individual members of the Work Group and other entity representatives seeking additional information about the work of their organizations and the systems within which they work.
  - 3) Entities completing the Survey provided the address for any websites describing their programs; the author explored each of those websites for additional programmatic information.
  - 4) Broader internet searches were conducted to find additional examples of relevant New Hampshire programming, seeking to better understand any engagement activities taking place outside the networks of entities to which surveys were sent.
- 1) The Survey tool was set up on Survey Monkey, and the link to access the Survey was disseminated to individuals, organizations, and lists of individuals by various members of the Work Group.<sup>1</sup> Responses were entirely voluntary. The raw data obtained from the surveys are presented in this report. Of the 65 surveys completed, 5 were duplicate entries, in each case submitted by two different individuals associated with the same entity. For the most part, the answers provided to questions by the two respondents from each entity were different, so those surveys are treated as distinct survey responses. However, the differing responses raise questions about the overall accuracy of survey responses.

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<sup>1</sup> The Survey was created and initially disseminated prior to the proposal and contract guiding this Study.

- 2) Sixteen individual phone interviews created opportunities to gather more detailed information and clarify survey answers that were confusing or incomplete. When possible, individuals representing sets or networks of entities (e.g., DOE staff overseeing 21<sup>st</sup> Century CLC grants) were interviewed on behalf of the members of that set or network, rather than conducting individual interviews with each member of the set or network. Interviews were open-ended and interactive, guided only by a goal to identify relevant information about family and youth engagement activities and leadership development programming.
- 3) Every website identified by referral respondents was explored, seeking information directly related to strategies, policies, practices, or programs in support of parent/family engagement, youth/young adult engagement, and leadership development. Whenever possible, the internal search function of each identified website was utilized to seek information on these topics.
- 4) Internet searches were conducted on keywords including “family engagement,” “parent engagement,” “youth engagement,” “young adult engagement,” “parent leadership,” “parent leadership development,” “family leadership development,” “youth leadership development,” and other related topics, all referencing New Hampshire. Quite often, these searches led back to the websites explored under strategy #3 above or produced no new, distinct New Hampshire results.

Finally, an initial draft Environmental Scan was provided to the Work Group and their feedback was solicited. Seven members of that group provided additional and/or clarifying input based upon their review of that draft, and the group as a whole made recommendations about the organization and presentation of information in the document. This version of the Environmental Scan reflects all of that input from the Work Group.

## **Organization and Presentation of Information**

The purpose of this document is to present information about relevant activities and programs in New Hampshire. No assessments, judgments, or analyses are offered in this document—the next product in this project will be a Gap Analysis in which the information in this Environmental Scan is compared to the findings of the Best Practices reports, and that document will include assessments about current programming and analysis of the extent to which best practices are, or are not, being used in New Hampshire.

The Survey responses provided a great many specific data bits across a spectrum of entities, allowing some aggregation across similar entities. Those data are presented first, primarily in summary form, with no assessment of quality or interpretation of the aggregated data.

Following the Survey data summary, specific program, practice, and strategy findings are presented, organized under categories similar to those used to present Best Practice information in those previous reports. The intention in this organizational scheme is to show the practices that take place directly with children and families and then those that take place at levels moving farther away from individual children and families but still affecting the practices they experience. Those findings are organized under the following four headings:

- 1) Parent/Family Engagement Models in Use
- 2) Practices to Directly Serve Individual Children and Families
- 3) Practices Implemented in Individual Schools and Agencies
- 4) Practices Implemented at the Community, Regional, and State Levels

Several important caveats apply:

- 1) Information about programs is organized according to the author’s perceptions of where such information fits in this organizational scheme. No judgment is implied by the placements.
- 2) Some information presented here is likely to be incomplete and/or inaccurate. Such errors are the author’s responsibility and/or the result of an inability to access complete information.
- 3) A number of entities submitting Surveys are not represented in the strategies and practices presentation. While most Survey submissions suggested that family engagement activities are taking place, validation for some of those submissions could not be obtained from interviews, websites, or materials describing the work of those programs. They are therefore not included.
- 4) The information presented herein is not expected to comprehensively describe every strategy and program contributing to current family and youth engagement in New Hampshire.

The information under each heading is presented in a consistent table format, as shown here:

<i><b>Name of Organization or Entity</b></i>	<i><b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice Name – in some instances multiple names are listed in this column</b></i>	<i><b>Brief descriptions and/or notes about the model, program, practice, or strategy, highlighting relevance to family or youth engagement or leadership development</b></i>	<i><b>Location: Statewide, a region, or specific county(ies)</b></i>
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Nothing is implied by the order in which information in each table is presented.

## Survey Findings

### Respondents

Overall, 65 Survey responses were provided. Five were duplicate entries, with two persons from the same entity submitting separate responses. In all five cases the information submitted by two informants was different, so all duplicates were treated as separate, distinct responses.

Among the 65 responses, the sources included the following groups:

- 15 21<sup>st</sup> Century CLC sites (out of 24 awarded sites across the state), plus two TA/support organizations
- 12 separate school districts (two duplicates); 3 included 21<sup>st</sup> Century program information
- 2 Head Start centers
- 3 private agencies that contract with DHHS to provide CW and/or BH services
- 6 Family Resource Centers (FRCs) affiliated with Family Support NH, plus a TA/support organization
- 4 family advocacy organizations; 1 youth organization
- 3 ethnic-led organizations

## Responses to Questions

In response to Question 4: *Is it a priority for your organization to lead activities that have increased family engagement and leadership as their goal?*

44 out of 65 (5 duplicates, but answered differently) said “We regularly lead/offer trainings or activities that have increased family engagement or leadership as our primary goal.” [68% affirmative response]

In response to Question 5: *What is the age group you typically provide support to? Check all that apply.*

Surveys indicated (duplicate entries didn’t always agree):

38 out of 65 (58%) offer programming to children 0-6 and their families;

50 out of 65 (77%) offer programming to elementary age children and their families;

38 out of 65 (58%) offer programming to middle school age children and their families;

33 out of 65 (51%) offer programming to high school age youth and their families;

17 out of 65 (26%) offer programming to youth in college or otherwise transitioning to adulthood.

In response to Question 6: *What is your organization’s primary focus? You may check all that apply if your focus is in multiple areas.* (all five duplicates gave different answers)

15 - Public health

20 - Special education

22 - General education

13 - Mental health

24 - Early childhood education

7 - Substance misuse treatment recovery

11 - Substance misuse prevention

11 - Transition to adulthood

6 - Employment

11 - Child care

7 - Recreation

23 - After school programming

18 - Family/caregiver education

4 - Financial benefits

3 - Military families

14 - Advocacy

7 - Immigrants and refugee families

27 - Family engagement

18 - Summer learning programs

17 - Education/school resources

11 - Content related to a disability area

In response to Question 7: *What types of supports or trainings do you offer to families that are designed to increase their engagement or leadership in their schools or communities? Check all that apply.* (all five duplicates gave different answers)

- 27 - Trainings on effective self-advocacy for themselves/their child
- 20 - Family to family peer support: 1 to 1
- 10 - Youth peer support: 1 to 1
- 12 - Training in specific content related to disability area
- 14 - Training in advocacy at the regional or state level
- 13 - Training in public systems and how they work
- 17 - Training in financial benefits (health care, public financial support, etc.)
- 13 - Online webinars/workshops
- 22 - Support groups
- 27 - Training in increasing family engagement
- 29 - Education series
- 42 - Printed materials
- 30 - Telephone/email support: information and referral
- 20 - Leadership training
- 30 - Family networking events
- 15 - Social media sites
- 25 - Website
- 9 - Text messaging for information and referral

In response to Question 8: *Is there a fee to families for your services?* (two duplicates answered differently)

- 7 – yes
- 44 – no
- 14 – sometimes

Of all these responses, 16 added notes indicating flexibility in fees, availability of scholarships, and information about fees that only applied to certain programs.

In response to Question 9: *What specific things is your organization doing to advance health equity, improve access for underserved populations, or to help eliminate health disparities and increase broader participation in your or other health and education supports? Please include any specific strategies you think other would find helpful.*

A summary of the responses, pulling key words and concepts, includes:

- Partnerships with other community organizations;
- Community meetings;
- Focus on addressing causes of poverty;
- Reach out to underserved populations, make accommodations, and individualize referrals;
- Advocacy;
- Sliding fee scale and scholarships;
- Home visiting;
- Revised data collection tools; all staff CLC training; Disparity Impact Plan; BH Equity Work Group;
- Focus on health disparities;
- Language Access Policy and Plan; focus on homeless families;
- Family health nights;
- Remove barriers to full participation;

Work toward medical homes and broad health insurance access; nutrition education; Mentoring; emphasizing use of natural supports in community.

In response to Question 10: *Is your organization a family run organization? For our purposes, a family organization is one whose board is 51% or better family members, and which gives preference for hiring to people with lived experience as family members and/or youth who have received services in the area of the organization’s mission.*

9 – yes

56 – no

## Parent/Family Engagement Programs, Strategies, and Practices

### Parent/Family Engagement Models in Use

The conceptual models around which systems and organizations organize their work are critical in shaping policies and practices within those systems and organizations. The models break complex ideas into linked, manageable components, provide a language that can be used to learn about and explore the components, and reflect fundamental values and principles embraced by the model proponents. In large systems and organizations, models are used to unify practice strategies across disparate programs and services, while also guiding communications intended to link those programs and services together into a whole. Most broadly, the models are used within core child- and family-serving systems to standardize practices across communities and states, assuring that all members of this society access similar and equitable services no matter where they live. Perhaps most important to family engagement, the conceptual models frame how staff in any service role view their own role in relation to the system in which they work and to the people—children and families—they serve.

The document, “A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development,” described the role of models to order and guide the development of family engagement practices and policies, and offered detailed descriptions of four different models. Research for this Environmental Scan revealed the following models in use in New Hampshire.

### Models in Use

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
Parent Information Center (Parent Training and Information Center Grant)	Dual-Capacity Building Framework	Offers training for parents linked with training in the schools to support capacity development on both sides of partnership	Statewide

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
NH Connections (a program of PIC)	Dual-Capacity Building Framework	Builds capacity for family-school partnerships in special education; helps district develop self-improvement plans, provides resources and strategies, provides professional training	Statewide - All districts can access
Head Start	Parent, Family, & Community Engagement Framework	Highly organized and resource-rich model at national level; drives conceptual model for all Head Start programming	All Centers
Family Support NH – FRCs	Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework	Parental Resilience is identified as first of five Protective Factors; FRC Operational Standards (draft) include requirements that staff have completed training in Framework and its application to their jobs (among other standards)	All Centers
Childcare Facilities	Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework	Child Development Bureau (in DHHS) – implementing Quality Rating Improvement System that includes requirements that staff have completed training in model	All licensed facilities
NH Children’s Trust	Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework	Promotes this approach across all supported programs (such as Family Support NH – above)	All programs
NH DHHS - DCYF	Solution-Based Casework Model	Model is built on the premise that a “full partnership with the family is a critical and vital goal” in casework planning and implementation	Statewide
NH DHHS – Developmental Services	Person-Centered Planning Model	Individuals and service providers work in full partnership to guarantee that each person’s values, experiences, and knowledge drive planning and services – this assumes family involvement for non-adults	Statewide
Granite State Federation of Families	Multi-Tiered System of Support Model	Based on the reciprocal relationship between academic performance and social-emotional-behavioral performance in schools; tiers are based on the relative intensity of the response to the student’s needs; model promotes family engagement and leadership at all tiers (levels)	Statewide

## Practices to Directly Serve Individual Children and Families

Practices at the level of individual children and families are the most direct and meaningful in promoting parent and family engagement in the experiences of their children. These practices are conducted face-to-face and one-on-one – they take place in the context of basic, social relationships in which communication styles, non-verbal cues, and a commitment of time and self provide the foundation for a partnership designed to help each child succeed. These relationships stand above the rhetoric of public relations campaigns, and they are more important to individual children and families than a set of principles by which systems and organizations attempt to describe their basic missions. For the purposes of this Environmental Scan, those direct practices with parents and families to promote or build family engagement are presented from two perspectives:

- First, the practices promoted or employed within service systems and organizations that guide the system side (staff training, supervision, and management) of these personal relationships;
- Second, the practices utilized by various organizations, especially including family advocacy and support organizations, that build and support the parent/family side of these relationships.

For the first perspective, NH resources are organized below to show a) practices trained and promoted within various systems, b) team-based care planning and monitoring, and c) system-sponsored Parent Support Partners in which parents with lived experience are employed and supported by systems to engage other parents.

For the second perspective, NH resources are organized to show the many organizations using peer support strategies and practices to engage and support parents in the care and education of their children.

In presenting best practice information regarding family engagement, “A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described strategies utilized across multiple child- and family-serving systems to promote active family engagement in all system actions about their children. The various systems build strategies around different models for family engagement (listed above) and use different tools and tactics to build family engagement competencies within system staff. Nonetheless, it is clear that most service and education systems within New Hampshire promote the development of these competencies among the staff who interact most directly and regularly with children and their families.

Research for this Environmental Scan showed the following practices, strategies, and approaches in place focused on *developing the competencies of system staff* to engage effectively with individual families on behalf of the needs of their children.

**Practices Trained and Promoted within Various Systems**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
All CMHCs	Treatment planning Outpatient services	All centers train clinical staff to involve youth and family in treatment planning; at least 3 centers offer in-home therapeutic services; 4 centers have very family-supportive language on websites	All Centers
Schools – Title I “Priority” and “Focus” Schools	NH School Innovation Planning	Schools with lowest reading/math scores or biggest achievement gaps prepare staff using Seven Innovation Keys, which includes Family Engagement in Leadership Team, bringing family voice to the school transformation process	Districts across the State
Schools – Special Education	Dual-Capacity Building Framework	Activities designed to build competencies among front-line school staff to engage productively with families, while also building parental capacity to engage effectively with school staff	Statewide
Head Start	Parent, Family , and Community Engagement Framework	All center staff regularly trained in the Framework emphasizing the primacy of the relationship between staff and parents for child success	All centers
Family Support NH	Family Resource Centers of Quality	Establishes a process to designate “family resource centers of quality” to create confidence among families, funders, and staff and to promote quality practice; standards are driven by the Principles of Family Support and the Strengthening Families Framework	Statewide
Child Protection	Solution-Based Casework Model	All staff trained in this model during first three months on the job and repeatedly during service, building competencies in engagement with kinship, foster, surrogate, and adoptive families	Statewide
Juvenile Justice	Solution-Based Casework Model	All staff trained in this model during first three months on the job and repeatedly during service, building competencies in engagement in probation, parole, and facility staff	Statewide

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
Developmental Services	Person-Centered Planning Model	All system staff receive repeated opportunities to train in this model, which emphasizes engagement skills to draw out preferences of child and family	Statewide

*Team-based care planning and monitoring* is a specific approach identified in “A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” as a best practice strategy dealing directly with families and children to emphasize their active engagement in service processes. In that report it was already noted that the programs listed below are promoting the use of team-based care planning and monitoring, and no additional information about the specific uses of that tool was gathered in this Environmental Scan.

- RENEW program (UND-IOD)
- Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports (CEBIS)
- FAST Forward (DHHS)
- Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (DOE)
- Project AWARE (DOE)

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” presented information about the use of *Parent Support Partners*, a specific best practice using persons with lived experience in professional or paraprofessional service and support roles within agency programs. This best practice includes specific and comprehensive training and a licensure or certification process to validate the mastery of a minimum set of skills in order to deliver this service. While many New Hampshire programs use experienced parents to mentor or support other parents in a variety of ways, no specific programs were identified using a licensed or certified Parent Support Partner approach.

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described *peer-to-peer support programs*, used in a variety of ways, which enable experienced parents to give support to other parents without the intensive, formalized programmatic structure described above for Parent Support Partners. Nonetheless, in these programs parents who will offer support one-to-one or lead support groups do commonly receive some training and ongoing support from the host organization. Research for this Environmental Scan found the following programs offering this type of support.

#### Peer-to-Peer Support Programs

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
NH Family Voices	Parent to Parent Support	Trained parents with lived experience support other parents	Statewide

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Parent Information Center (Parent Training and Information Center Grant)	Parent Support by PIC staff  Volunteer Advocates	PIC staff with lived experience provide support around early supports and services, special education, and other disabilities, and offer a range of educational programs; Trained parents with lived experience assist families to advocate for themselves	Statewide
Head Start	Family Advocates	Social worker (often previously a Head Start parent) serving one or two classrooms functions as Family Advocate for families with children in that class; works with each family to create a family plan	All Centers
NH Family Ties	Support Parents  Maneuvering the Maze Resource Guide	Family support when children have disability or special needs; training for Support Parents; supports statewide network of peer parents; Resource Guide provides listings of organizations and resources, starting with birth into adulthood, for persons with physical, mental health, developmental, and chronic health conditions	Statewide
NH Connections (a program of PIC)	Family-School Partnership Groups	Assists families and school districts to start, support, and strengthen family-school partnership groups	Many communities
Granite State Federation of Families	Parent Peer Support	Direct contact with parents of children with mental health issues via phone, face to face, and social media contacts	Across the State
NAMI NH	Family Support Specialist  Structured courses: Parents Meeting the Challenge  Guidebook for Caregivers of Children and Adolescents with SED	Family Support Specialist offers one-to-one support to parents and caregivers seeking assistance; Parent-led courses to offer self-learning and gain insight from each other's experiences – courses often lead to informal, continuing support groups; Guidebook contains robust resource information and promotes parent engagement and advocacy	Across the State

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
New American Africans	Community volunteers	One-to-one support to immigrant and refugee families to help them and their children integrate effectively into this culture	Merrimack; Hillsborough
Concord School District	ARCH – Multicultural Peer Support Program	Designed to support refugee families to increase coping skills, reduce isolation, enable personal growth, and provide social support through peer support from trained volunteers	Merrimack
Child & Family Services	Parenting Plus  Circle of Parents  F.A.S.T.E.R.	Parenting Plus program offers individual in-home parent skill training; Parent-led support groups to improve parenting and address special needs of their children; Parent-led support group for parents of offspring with substance use issues	Merrimack

#### Practices Implemented in Individual Schools and Agencies

Practices at the level of individual schools and agencies are also critical in determining the quality and outcomes of parent/family engagement on behalf of their children. These practices reflect the leadership at a specific site and how that leadership sets the immediate context in which the individual, face-to-face relationships between staff and parents play out. Policy and practice decisions at this level determine the physical environment in which interactions take place; the messaging sent to staff and families in posters, signs, and the content of websites; the extent to which the environment is welcoming and supportive of meaningful, one-to-one engagements; and the staff morale and attitudes, as encouraged on a daily basis by supervisors, principals, and agency administrators. (For example, the building principal who knows the name of each student, is deliberately visible before and after classroom hours, and makes an effort to greet parents coming into the school sets a tone and an example for other staff to emulate, which contributes to a high-engagement climate.) For the purposes of this Environmental Scan, information about individual agency or school practices is presented first, followed by brief information about the self-assessment tools that are in use in one or more agencies/schools within New Hampshire.

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described characteristics of best practices and identified a number of *best practice strategies intended to promote or develop family engagement at the individual school and agency level*. These various practices are generally aimed at impacting the environments within which services take place and the quality opportunities for the relationships between agency/school staff and parents/families. They may also include classes or groups intended to increase interactions between and among parents and with staff. Research for this

Environmental Scan identified the following programs and practices operating at this level in New Hampshire.

*It should be noted that much, but not all, of the information in the following table was obtained through responses to the voluntary survey disseminated by the SS/HS and AWARE Parent and Family Engagement Work Group. It can be assumed that many other schools, agencies, and organizations might have provided similar information about their programs had they completed a survey. Therefore, this table does not represent the totality of these types of practice strategies operating within New Hampshire.*

**Practices at Individual School or Agency Level**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Head Start	Policy Council	Each Center maintains Policy Council composed of parents elected within each site; a Council contributes to the center’s immediate environment and member parents receive copious training	All Centers
21 <sup>st</sup> Century CLCs - statewide	Surveys	Each funded site must survey parents annually for their input into a Needs Assessment process	All sites
21 <sup>st</sup> Century CLC – Individual Afterschool Programs	Programming information	Website information for a few centers states family involvement is important (example: Project SUCCEED (Conway) says, “Parent/guardian participation is strongly encouraged – we welcome your visit.”)	Hillsborough; Merrimack; Cheshire; Belknap; Coos; Grafton; Strafford; Carroll
NAMI NH	Teacher Training Curriculum	12-hr training program about mental illness, mental health, and engaging with families for school personnel	Open to all districts
Granite State Federation of Families	RENEW Facilitator Training	Developed family engagement segment for RENEW (team-based care planning and monitoring) facilitator training	Wherever implemented
Riverbend CMHC	Family Support Advisory Committee	Agency maintains a family committee to obtain family voice in program design and evaluation	Merrimack
Community Partners	Philosophy Training	Agency Model of Change emphasizes parental and family participation in all services; Specific 3-part program designed to facilitate schools and families to work together more effectively	Stafford

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
Seacoast MHC	Parent Education Series	1) In-agency education program aimed at informing parents about the dynamics of specific disorders their children may have; 2) In-agency parent support group	Rockingham
Berlin Public Schools	Mission Statement	“Community and Family Engagement” is one of seven strategies named in the Mission to “foster active, lifelong learners”	Coos
Family Resource Center of Central NH	Parent education Parent support	Supports to all families, with focus on early intervention and families with children with DD	Belknap
Franklin School District	Policy KB-R	“It is the responsibility of staff to develop and implement a school plan for parent involvement and to promote and encourage parent involvement activities.”	Merrimack
Good Beginnings of Sullivan County	Home-visiting Parent supports	Services designed to support families engaged by child protection system	Sullivan
Holy Cross Family Learning Center	Purpose statement	“a place where family values are strengthened.”	Hillsborough
Lakes Region Child Care	Child care Early education	All website language is very family-friendly and supportive	Belknap
New American Africans	Advocacy Education Relationship-building	Focus on refugee/immigrant families; monthly family support meetings; use college-age role models	Merrimack Hillsborough
Salem Family Resources	Playgroups Workshops Support groups	Focus on families with young children; organizes playgroups, provides information, offers grandparents as parents support group	Rockingham

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” also described the need for individual entities to conduct *self-assessments* around family engagement policies, practices, and strategies as an initial best practice and the basis for determining additional steps. Certain tools were identified by the Study for this purpose. Research for this Environmental Scan identified the following self-assessment tools in use in New Hampshire.

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**Self-Assessment Processes**

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
NH DOE	Integrative Programs	Offers Family Engagement Tool (ADI) self-assessment process to all districts; used with Title I; 41 NH schools currently required to self-assess	Open to all districts
NH Family Voices	Family-Centered Care Self-Assessment Tool	FCCS Self-assessment tool for providers, designed to increase awareness about family-centered care, assess current areas of strength, identify areas for growth, and track progress; companion tool for parents to assess provider on FCCS	Available for use

Practices Implemented at the Community, Regional, and State Levels

Practices implemented at the community, regional, and state levels reflect the global context in which individual schools, agencies, and organizations implement programming that directly touches children and their families. At this level, policies set both expectations for practices and boundaries around practices through licensure, certification, and other regulatory processes; most funding for public services and education flows through state regulatory structures, which then set expectations regarding the uses of that funding, which in turn set expectations for how staff focus their time and resources; and the primary missions and goals for most public systems are set at this level, with an expectation that local counterparts (falling under the regulation of and/or receiving funding through state entities/systems) will implement those missions and goals. When meaningful family engagement is an important goal at the state level, practice expectations and resource allocations from that level are set to support that goal at the direct service delivery level; when such engagement is not an important goal at the state level, staff practicing at the direct service level either invest less into engagement practices or invest their own time and resources to make engagement happen in spite of the larger system priorities.

For the purposes of this Environmental Scan, the information about practices implemented at the community, regional, or state levels is presented in several categories:

- a) Advocacy and support organizations, including statewide parent networks
- b) Statewide advisory groups
- c) Parent leadership development
- d) System training and/or expectation setting

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described *advocacy and support organizations* as a best practice commonly organized around specific disability or need populations. This category includes *statewide parent networks*, and these organizations may or may not

all be family-run. Research for this Environmental Scan identified the following organizations operating in New Hampshire.

**Advocacy and Support Organizations**

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
Granite State Federation of Families	Family Leadership, Voice and Perspective in System Transformation	Organization’s primary mission is to bring family voice to policy, planning, and CBH workforce development and training	Statewide
NH Family Voices	Parent/Family Support	Organization’s primary mission is to support families with children with chronic conditions and/or disabilities; empowers families and professionals to make confident choices about the care of their children	Statewide
NAMI NH	Parents Meeting the Challenge Family 2 Family	PMC – aimed at self-learning, learning about child’s needs, and connecting to other parents for support F2F – provides safe, trusting environment to develop insight, skills and emotional understanding; NAMI NH trains and supports leaders for each of these groups	Statewide
Manchester Community Health Center	Positive Solutions for Families (through Project LAUNCH)	Program uses an evidence-based training curriculum designed to increase the understanding of front-line staff about child development, childhood behaviors, and building relationships among parents and children, who in turn help parents gain understanding	Hillsborough (and preparing to expand)
New American Africans	Family Support	Organization’s primary mission is to give support to immigrant or refugee families to help them and their children integrate effectively into this culture	Merrimack; Hillsborough
Parent Information Center (Parent Training and Information Center grant)	Family Support	Organization’s mission is to achieve positive outcomes for children and youth, with a focus on those with disabilities and special healthcare needs, achieved through promoting partnerships between families, educators, youth, professionals, and organizations	Statewide

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
NH Family Ties	Support Parents	Training for Support Parents; supports statewide network of Support Parents	Statewide

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described *statewide advisory groups* that give parents/families a voice in system recommendations and/or decision-making. The examples in that report reflected parental participation on state-level, cross-system advisory groups, a practice not utilized in New Hampshire. However, research for this Environmental Scan identified the following groups operating in New Hampshire.

### Statewide Advisory Groups

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
Head Start	Parent Advocacy Committee	Parent representatives from each site’s Policy Council are selected; PAC gives guidance to state Head Start organization	Statewide
DHHS - DCYF	Statewide Steering Committee	Graduates of Better Together training; 50% are parents; meet 5 times per year; trying to support changes in system culture to improve partnerships with families	Statewide
DOE – Special Education	State Advisory Committee on the Education of Students with Disabilities (SAC)	SAC, composed of stakeholders including a majority of individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, advises the Commissioner of Education on issues related to special education	Statewide
DHHS - BDS	NH Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)	Federally-mandated advisory group to Bureau of Developmental Services regarding early childhood programming; six of 17 appointed positions are filled by parents; purpose is to promote and increase the quality of early intervention and preschool education;	Statewide
	Regional Family Support Councils	Ten regional councils composed of persons with family member receiving services from area agency; give advice and oversight to area agency	Regional

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described a number of different *parent leadership development* approaches as best practices, while also acknowledging that

the majority of parent leadership development approaches are idiosyncratic and unique to the organization supporting or implementing them. Research for this Environmental Scan identified the following practices currently operating in New Hampshire.

**Parent Leadership Development**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
NH Family Voices	Trainings	Training for families – topics such as healthcare financing, best practices, family/prof partnerships	Statewide
NH Connections (a program of PIC)	Parent Leader Training and Coaching	Trains and supports parent leaders in schools and school districts; Coaches parent leaders to serve on local and state advisory groups	Statewide
Head Start	Educational and Health Advisory Committees	Parents, with staff and community partners; meet 2-3 times per year; work with Policy Councils	All Centers
NH Children’s Trust	Strengthening Families	Training curriculum aimed at developing capabilities of parents to care for their own child and advocate	Through FRCs
Institute on Disability - UNH	NH Leadership Series	“Provides parents with state-of-the-art information and strategies to effectively impact local and state organizations on issues related to individuals with disabilities and their families.” 35 people in each annual class – 2/3 are parents of children with disabilities	Statewide
NAMI NH	It’s Your Move – Advocacy Training Life Interrupted	IYM – learn how to use personal experience/knowledge to influence decision-makers LI – learn how to change attitudes and open minds within the community	Statewide
NH DHHS - DCYF	Better Together	DCYF Bureau of Well-being coordinates 2-day training program with groups of 10 parents and 10 staff; explores relationships, tools, strategies in effort to make child protection staff partners with families; required training for all new staff in CPS and JJ	Statewide
YWCA NH	Parent education	Offers programming for parents, including education, resources, and links to FRCs	Hillsborough

“A Study of Best Practices in Parent Engagement and Leadership Development” described best practices at the regional or state level aimed at *system training and expectation-setting* that impact entire systems in regard to family engagement within those systems. Research for this Environmental Scan identified the following programs at the regional or state level in New Hampshire that reflect this type of training opportunity and/or set expectations within programs regarding family engagement practices.

**System Training and Expectation-Setting**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
NH Family Voices and Parent Information Center	Annual Conference – Partnering for Strength	For parents/families and professionals	Statewide
Head Start	Parents Advocacy Day	PAC offers annual conference of workshops for and by parents	Statewide
Head Start	Regional conferences	All Policy Council members invited to regional training events twice per year	Regional
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center	Basic Grant requirements	RFP language lists “promote parental involvement and families” as one of 12 eligible activities; requires applicants to describe specifically how “program will create a welcoming environment for families”	Statewide
Seacoast MHC	Annual Regional Conference	Every other year focus is on children and families, including workshops designed specifically for youth and/or families	Rockingham
SPARK NH	Family Engagement Task Force	Committee under SPARK NH Executive Council – meets monthly to ensure family voice in all early childhood activities	Statewide
Across NH	Afterschool programs	Across NH supports development of afterschool professionals, including 21 <sup>st</sup> Century CLC focus on parental involvement (above)	Statewide
NH DOE	Office of Student Wellness	Coordinator for Family Engagement – responsibilities to support FE across programs and in districts; offers Family Engagement Tool for district self-assessments: process for Principal to work with team composed of staff and families to assess and promote FE	Open to all districts

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative	NH DOE – 4 year Federal Grant	Goal 5: “Engage families and youth in decision-making at all levels”; being implemented in 3 communities	Belknap; Strafford; Merrimack
Project AWARE	NH DOE – 5 year Federal Grant	Promote child safety and mental health; Goal 4: Improve engagement of school, families, and youth in decision-making at the policy, practice, and individual levels; implemented in 3 districts	Merrimack; Coos
Family Support NH	Supports FRCs	All programs “seek to strengthen families by promoting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and positive parenting through support and education.”	Statewide
DOE – Division of Educational Improvement	E <sup>3</sup> Program – Education, Employment and Engagement	Teen fathers initiative to form network among all entities working with this population to promote active engagement with their child’s life and well-being	Statewide
Granite State Children’s Alliance	Child Advocacy Centers network	Foster justice, healing, equality and prevention for abuse victims; uses Stewards of Children program	Statewide
Granite State Federation of Families	Summer Institutes	Education and support opportunities for parents and families; includes track for and by youth/young adults	Statewide
NAMI NH	NAMI Affiliates  Annual Conference	Community network of parents with lived experience meet together to support one another and raise their advocacy voice locally; Annual opportunity for consumers, caregivers, and professionals to increase awareness, reduce stigma and prepare advocates to work for systems change	
NH CEBIS	Training workshop	Family Engagement – Fostering Effective 2-Way Dialogue: recent workshop offering – no current information	Statewide

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
NH Connections	Training and facilitation	Research-based best practice resources, training and technical assistance to schools and school districts on creating and maintaining family-school partnerships across the community	Offered to all districts and communities
Head Start	Family Advocates	Site Policy Councils are linked together through regional and state Parent Advocacy Committee; also regional conferences and state Parent Advocacy Day	All Centers

Finally, it is important to note that family/parent leaders across many of the advocacy and support organizations listed in many places throughout this Environmental Scan commit countless and unending hours to representing the parent/family voice on myriad committees, task forces, work groups, councils, and boards including and beyond those detailed in this Scan. At this point in time, virtually all federal and state programs require some form of advisory or governance group to ensure stakeholder input into those programs, and almost all such groups are expected or required to include consumer and family voices. The individuals leading entities such as NAMI NH, Granite State Federation of Families, Parent Information Center, Family Support NH, NH Family Voices, NH Family Ties, and others are the “go to” people to bring that voice to each and every table. There is simply no way to capture all of those groups on which these various individuals serve, steadfastly ensuring that someone at the table is speaking up for parents and families in ongoing efforts to transform systems to better serve the children, youth, and young adults important to those families.

It is just as important to note that sitting at these tables and representing parents and families does not mean that those points of view influence the programs or that the presence of “family voice” means those programs become more family-friendly and supportive in operation. The work of representing families is arduous, often thankless, and not always easy, and yet, collectively, these ongoing efforts to bring that voice to every table do make a significant difference in the extent to which publicly-funded programs strive to successfully and meaningfully engage parents and families in all aspects of their work.

### **Youth/Young Adult Engagement Programs, Strategies, and Practices**

Youth and young adult engagement is equal in importance to parent and family engagement at every level described above, but the efforts to promote these types of youth and young adult engagement are much newer and therefore less developed. Youth experiencing challenges are too often viewed as immature and/or unable to contribute to their own care or to the development of the systems responsible for that care, which leads education and service systems to sometimes treat them as the passive (or sometimes “non-cooperative”) recipients of the work done “to” and “for” them. Nonetheless, recent trends reveal a stronger effort to employ the tenets of Positive Youth Development (PYD), as described in “A Study of Best Practices in Youth Engagement and Leadership Development,”

across many of the public child-serving systems, and a number of PYD-type practices and strategies are now being utilized to empower youth and young adult voices, with a goal of bringing those voices to the impact level of parents/families and adult consumers.

“A Study of Best Practices in Youth Engagement and Leadership Development,” produced earlier in this project, identified best practices at achieving effective *youth and young adult engagement* at all levels of education and service system operations. The research conducted for this Environmental Scan identified the following practices in place at this time in New Hampshire. The relative lack of such practices resulted in no categorization of the practices – all identified practices are shown below.

### Youth and Young Adult Engagement

Name	Specific Program, Model, or Practice	Brief Description	Location
NH DHHS	Youth Advisory Board	Division of Children, Youth, and Families supports and coordinates YAB to obtain input from youth involved or previously in foster care system; as possible, train the youth to participate and to advocate	Statewide
Institute on Disability - UNH	RENEW	Transition planning and wraparound process focused on supporting each youth to design and pursue a plan for transition from school to adult life.	Implemented throughout the State
Parent Information Center	Youth development	Increasing activities to support and advocate for transition-age youth in context of parent programs, including 3-session series on self-advocacy	Statewide
Parent Information Center, NH Family Voices, and YEAH Council	Partnering for Strength Youth Conference	“Your Vision, Your Future: Creating the Life for You” – recent statewide conference for youth 14-26 with disability/special healthcare need; focus on youth empowerment	Statewide
Y.O.U. – Young Organizers United	Youth voice	Hosted by Granite State Organizing Project; “dedicated to strengthening multi-issue and multi-racial coalitions designed to overcome ethnic, racial, and political prejudices. . .” – strong social justice orientation	Hillsborough
Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success – ORIS	Youth Internship Program	Peer-supported job training, leadership development, and agricultural production and marketing	Hillsborough

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specific Program, Model, or Practice</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Location</b>
Bhutanese Community of NH	Youth Leadership Summit	Organization has hosted summer leadership summit at SNHU to promote leadership skills	Merrimack; Hillsborough
NAMI NH	In Your Own Voice	Speaker's Bureau – trained and supported by NAMI NH; includes college age youth	Statewide
NH Family Voices	Kids as Self Advocates (KASA)	Teens and young adults with disabilities trained and supported to speak out about their life experiences	Merrimack
North Country Health Consortium	North Country Prevention Network – Youth Leadership; Adventure program Leadership Conferences	Summer program promotes youth leadership development, self-governance, and substance-free lifestyle; Annual multi-day conferences aimed at leadership, facilitation, public speaking, self-awareness, coping, and problem-solving skills	Coos
YEAH Council	Youth Education, Advocacy, and Healthcare	Youth-run, youth-led monthly meetings aimed at developing independence at transition to adulthood	Statewide
YouthMOVE NH – supported by Granite State Federation of Families	Youth-led Advocacy  Youth Peer Support Model  Youth Leadership Development	Focus on youth/young adult voice by young people experienced in mental health issues and services; currently rebuilding; active FB page; Youth peer support now being piloted in FAST Forward and in the RENEW model of team-based care planning; Leads youth leadership strand at Multi-Tiered Services and Supports Summer Institute, and delivers stand-alone segments when asked	Statewide