



# Family Engagement

<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p>“...positive involvement in the helping process” (Yatchmenoff, 2005)          “A strengths-based approach and a defining characteristic of family-centered and team-based decision-making” (Child Protection Best Practice Bulletin, 2007)</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>To help the family achieve their goals and provide close support while working together to make plans for children to have safe, stable, and permanent living arrangements; combining the strengths of the family with the resources of the community to resolve issues and build on ongoing supports.</p>
<p><b>Affecting Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Receptivity:</b> openness to receiving help</li> <li>• <b>Expectancy:</b> the perception of benefit; a sense of being helped</li> <li>• <b>Investment:</b> commitment to the helping process</li> <li>• <b>Working Relationship:</b> interpersonal relationship with the caseworker</li> <li>• <b>Mistrust:</b> a negatively related factor, defined as the belief the agency and/or worker is manipulative, malicious or capricious, with intent to harm</li> </ul>
<p><b>Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family resources and permanent connections are maximized.</li> <li>• The family actively participates in outcome focused planning and makes decisions- based on needs- and strengths..</li> <li>• Interactions with families are open, transparent, and non-judgmental.</li> <li>• The relationship between families and professionals is viewed as a partnership.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased empowerment</li> <li>• Improved care and services</li> <li>• Improved child or family outcomes</li> <li>• Improved access to services</li> <li>• Greater family voice in advocacy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Elements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to each family member, and including fathers in the conversations</li> <li>• Demonstrating respect and empathy for the family members, understanding the family’s past experiences, current situation, concerns and strengths</li> <li>• Responding to concrete needs quickly, validating the family’s role in the process</li> <li>• Being aware of one’s own biases and prejudices, being reliable, consistent, and honest ( <b>ChildWelfare.gov</b>)</li> </ul>