Cambridge Kids' Council Community Engagement Team

Outreach and Family Engagement Survey

City Agencies, Schools and Community Organizations identify and address issues relating to creating and supporting genuine partnerships with our families.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The Kids' Council

The Kids' Council, officially known as the Coordinating Council for Children, Youth and Families was created in 1991. It is chaired by the Mayor, and its members include residents, elected officials, department heads within the City, community and non-profit leaders, business, early childhood, philanthropic, university, and youth representatives. The Council is dedicated to developing policy and program recommendations aimed at improving the quality of life for children, youth and families in the city of Cambridge. This year, the Kids' Council is focusing on "Family Engagement" and how it plays a vital role in helping us achieve our goals.

The Community Engagement Team (CET)

The CET, a multi-agency collaborative, reaches out to under-served Cambridge families and connects them to community events and resources, develops community leaders, and supports agencies in working with a diverse community. CET hires, trains and deploys immigrant and minority outreach workers. The CET outreach workers are members of the community who provide information about community services and activities to a diverse group of Cambridge families. CET outreach workers represent the American-born Black, Bangladeshi, Ethiopian, Haitian, Somali and Spanish speaking communities of Cambridge.

The Process

In April 2012, The Kids' Council agreed to develop strategic goals capable of making the greatest impact on children in Cambridge. The Kids' Council quickly identified "Family Engagement" as a top priority, and turned to the CET as one of our community's most vital resources in reaching families who are at risk of being alienated from opportunities and supportive services in Cambridge.

The Kids' Council developed recommendations and agreed to leverage its resources to enhance the capacity of the CET. Representatives of the Kids' Council, the CET and the Cambridge Public Schools created an ad-hoc working group to develop a Work Plan. The first step was to survey existing service providers and educators about opportunities, needs, and gaps in family engagement. The results of this family engagement survey are summarized on the following pages.

In May 2013, Kids' Council and CET hosted a networking event that gave providers in Cambridge an opportunity to review the survey results, share promising practices, learn new outreach and engagement strategies, develop means for overcoming barriers, and help shape the Kids' Council's policy and budget recommendations.

Simultaneously, the Mayor convened a group to discuss developing a city-wide Family Engagement policy. The results of the *Outreach and Family Engagement Survey* and provider input gathered at the networking event will inform the city-wide family engagement policy.

This report seeks to provide an overview of outreach and family engagement efforts in Cambridge today, highlighting the particular challenges of reaching the communities that the CET is most equipped to reach. The report aims to illustrate which strategies are effective, what assets we can build on, and areas where additional supports and resources will be most helpful. Finally, the information gathered here will help us develop and implement a city-wide family engagement policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is designed to be a resource to those in the community with an interest in reaching out and engaging with families. Our goal is for readers to examine the data through their own lenses and experiences, and use this information to identify and address issues relating to creating and supporting genuine partnerships with families. Drawing on the collective wisdom of our stakeholders, organizations may identify new strategies for effectively developing relationships with families, especially those families who are marginalized and under-served. In addition, this report offers policy makers, city, school and community based organizations a picture of the data that can shape future policies and programs. Most directly, the Kids' Council and CET will use this report to further their work around family engagement.

Some of the most interesting highlights in this report include:

- The top rated engagement strategies were individual meetings with families, families are
 welcome to visit, community meetings with families, phone calls and email. The data collected
 also highlights the importance of personal connections and developing strong relationships
 WITH families.
- The biggest barrier to engagement is definitely time. Most survey participants stated they find it
 challenging to find the time to do the work, supervise, coordinate, and evaluate the efforts.
 Also, many reported that lack of funding relates to time because providers do not have funds to
 hire additional staff or compensate current staff more for their time to do outreach and engage
 with families.
- 44.3% of participants indicated that language and translation issues were barriers to outreach and engagement with families.
- 70.5% of respondents stated that there are people in their agency/organization whose job description includes outreach and family engagement.
 - 42.9% of those respondents stated that there is family engagement training at their agency/organization
- 86.3% of the survey participants would like to collaborate with others regarding family engagement. Many of those respondents are interested in attending forums and workshops. The most popular topics include:
 - Share promising practices in outreach and family engagement
 - How to work effectively with specific cultures and communities
 - Learn about the resources and services available in Cambridge
 - Find out what resources and services are available in Cambridge
 - Share translation and interpretation services and resources
 - Organize focus groups or community conversations with families to find out what they need and want

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The *Outreach and Family Engagement Survey* was sent to members of the Kids' Council and CET, as well as providers from other agencies and organizations who work with our families and their children. Almost 90% of the 175 providers who took the survey stated that they serve city-wide rather than individual neighborhoods.

ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

Community Based Organizations	64	36.6%
Dept. of Human Services Programs	50	28.6%
Cambridge Public Schools	23	13.1%
Cambridge Public Health Department	14	8.0%
Other	25	14.3%
TOTAL	175	

POSITIONS

Director/Administrator/Executive	67	38.0%
Direct Service Staff	60	34.3%
Manager/Supervisor	31	17.7%
Other	11	6.3%
Direct Service Staff/Manager/Supervisor	6	3.4%
TOTAL	175	

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Community Based-Organizations

Alef-Bet Child Care	Associated Early Care and Education
Bigelow Cooperative	Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
Breakthrough Greater Boston	Cambridge Camping
Cambridge Community Center	Cambridge Creativity Commons
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee	Cambridge Energy Alliance
Cambridge Forum	Cambridge School Volunteers
Cambridge YMCA	Cambridge Youth Dance Program
Cambridge/Somerville WIC Program	Catholic Charities
Catholic Charities Family Child Care	CCTV
Charles River Conservancy	City Sprouts
Community Art Center	Community Legal Services & Counseling Ctr.
Community Servings	East End House
Families First Parenting Programs	Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts
Grow Native Massachusetts	Guidance Center
Homeless Empowerment Project/Spare Change	Homeowner's Rehab. Inc.
Jewish Family and Children's Service	Jose Mateo Ballet Theatre
Macky and Michael's House	Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House
Multicultural Arts Center	New Communities Services
New School of Music	North Cambridge Children's Center
Oxford Street Daycare Cooperative	Parents Forum
Peabody Terrace Children's Center	Riverside Community Care: Guidance Center
Salvation Army	Science Club for Girls
Shelter Legal Services	Sprouts of Hope
The Family Center	The Outdoor Church of Cambridge
The Possible Project	Transition House
TROMP	Tutoring Plus of Cambridge

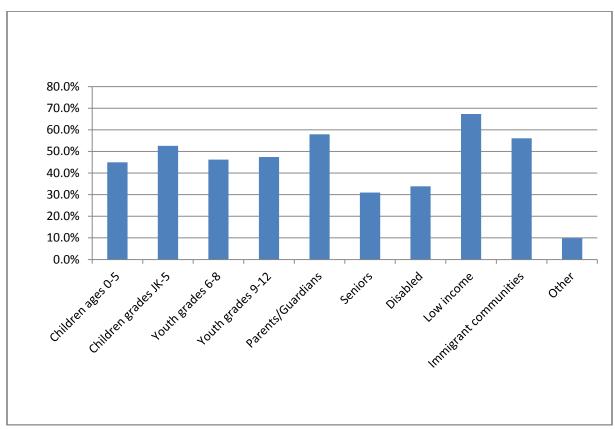
City of Cambridge

After-School Programs	Agenda for Children
Cambridge Haitian Services	Cambridge Housing Authority
Cambridge Peace Commission	Cambridge Police Department
Cambridge Public Health Department	Cambridge Public Library
Cambridge Public Schools	Cambridge School Committee
Cambridge Youth Programs	Center for Families
Community Engagement Team	Community Learning Center
Community Schools	Council on Aging
Department of Human Services	Healthy Playground Committee
Kids' Council	Mayor's Office
Office of Workforce Development	

Cambridge Community Charter School	Parents

COMMUNITIES PARTICIPANTS SERVED

Many Programs Serve Multiple Communities



N=171

OTHER **C**OMMUNITIES

- English Language Learners
- Special Needs
- Teen Girls
- Black/African American

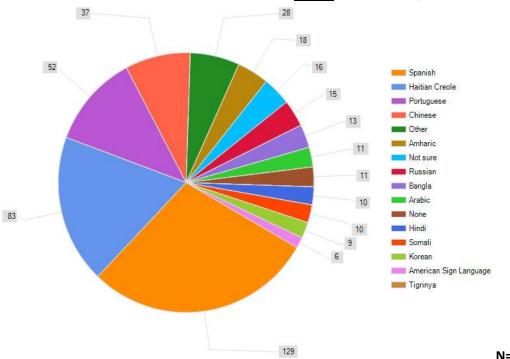
N=16

43 respondents stated they are not reaching the communities they strive to serve.

Many stated they wanted to expand their community. Those with more low income families want more middle to high income participants, and those serving middle to high income families want more low income participants.

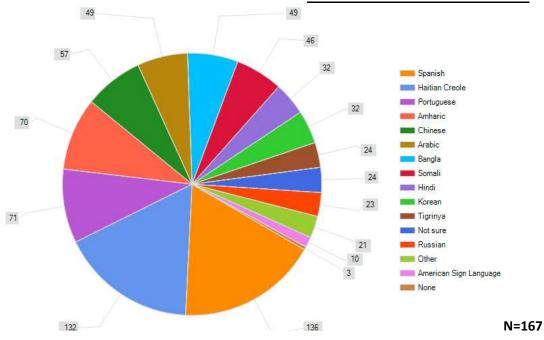
LANGUAGES

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN BY STAFF AT AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS



N=167

LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN BY PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES



Other Languages: Dari, Eritrean, French, German, Hebrew, Icelandic, Italian, Jamaican Creole and Patwa, Nepali, and Visayan

DEFINING "FAMILY ENGAGEMENT"

163 of the survey respondents defined the term "Family Engagement" by telling us what they think effective "Family Engagement" looks like. Here is a summary of their responses.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

- 2- way partnership
- Respect/Trust
- Welcoming
- Support students and their learning
- Family supports each other
- Support families
- Provide awareness and access to resources and services
- Connections and personal relationships with families

2-WAY COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

- Listen
- Get input
- Give voice to families

INVOLVEMENT/INCLUSION

- Events and activities are appropriate, accessible and meaningful
- Families are participating
- Families are reached

OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE "FAMILY ENGAGEMENT"

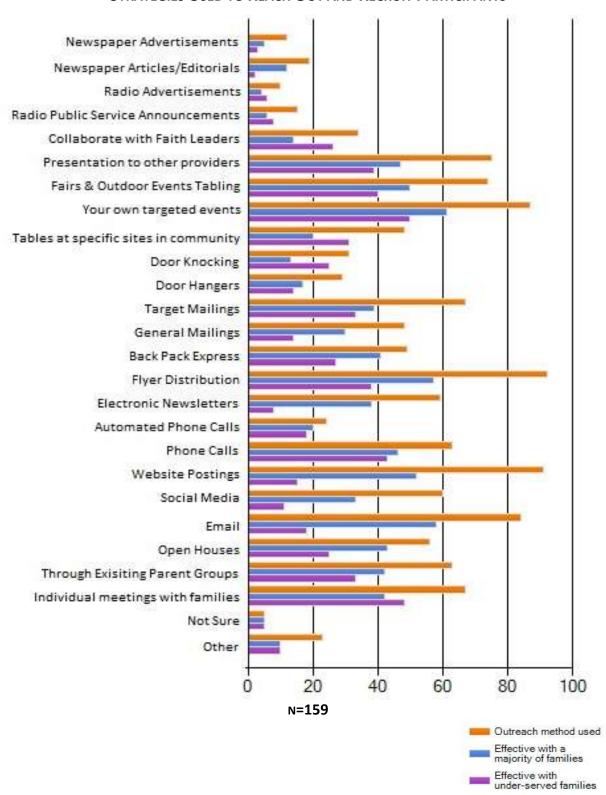
- Children and youth are healthy, safe, educated, and civically engaged
- Families are active in knowing their needs and how to get help
- Families are active in the community and support each other

OTHER

- Look at cooperative pre-school philosophy
- Develop a plan for Family Engagement
- Moving families along the "ladder" of participation
- Professional Development

OUTREACH

STRATEGIES USED TO REACH OUT AND RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS



OTHER OUTREACH STRATEGIES

In addition to this list of outreach methods, there are other methods of outreach that providers use to recruit participants.

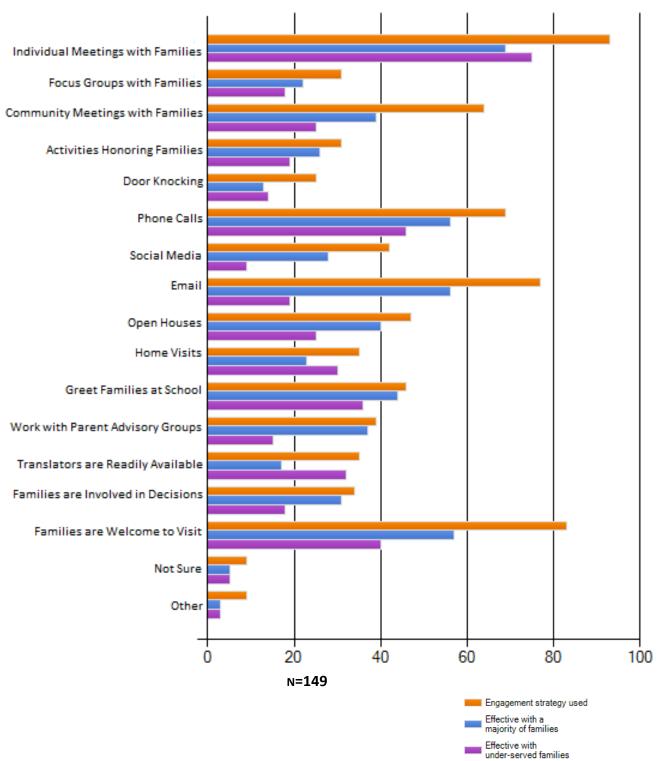
- Outreach by word of mouth
- Outreach workers and street workers recruit participants
- School-based outreach
- Outreach at events
- Referrals
- Collaborations with other agencies

Also, there are agencies/organizations that do not do much outreach for a variety of reasons; such as, need, time and confidentiality.

N=40

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT





OTHER FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In addition to this list of family engagement strategies, there are other methods of engagement that providers use.

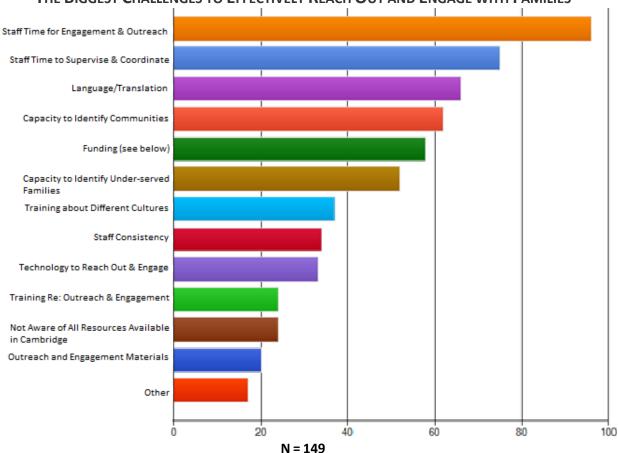
- Variety of school-based events
- Focus groups and surveys
- Collaboration with other agencies/organizations
- Have meetings at other location that are more welcoming and convenient for families

Also, there are agencies/organizations that do not do much engagement with families because of the nature of their programs.

N=20

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS





OTHER RESPONSES

Family Issues

- Families are busy, not interested in engaging, and/or feel a stigma if they engage
- Families don't have access to technology
- Families don't have access to transportation
- Families can't afford the program

Agency/Organization Issues

- Don't have connections to other agencies/organizations
- Don't have a systematic approach to initiate and/or sustain engagement
- Don't know what methods are effective
- There are not enough high quality programs

FUNDING ISSUES THAT ARE A BARRIER TO EFFECTIVE OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Time*	5. Advertising/Media
2. Staff*	6. Authority to write grants
3. Resources	7. Evaluate outreach and engagement efforts
4. Space	8. Plan events

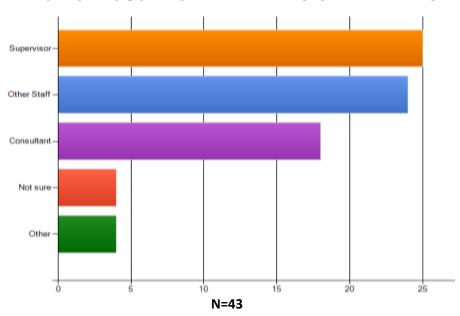
N=25 *Most popular responses

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STAFF

105 of the survey respondents stated that there are people in their agency/organization whose job description includes outreach and family engagement.

42.9% of the survey respondents stated that the people doing outreach and family engagement do receive specific training in outreach and family engagement strategies.





OUTREACH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOPICS

Cultural Competencies*	Parenting*
Immigrant Issues	Case Management
Boundaries	Inclusion
Child & Adolescent Development	Conflict Resolution
Safety	Karen Mapp
Nutrition	

^{*}Topics most often provided at trainings

N=43

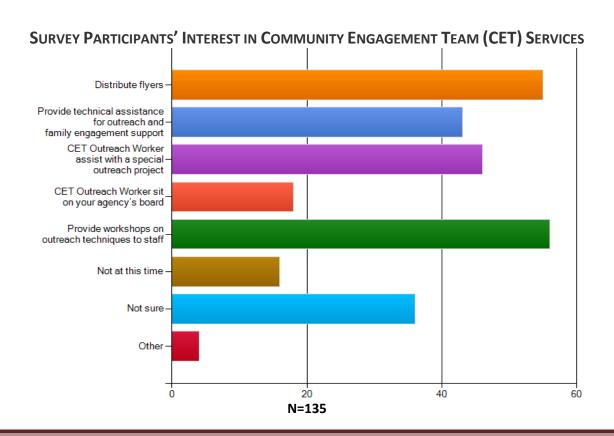
WHAT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

86.3% of the survey respondents are interested in collaborating with other Cambridge agencies to learn and share ideas about outreach and family engagement.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING:

Attending "best practices" forums where we all share what works for us	96	68.1%
Attending workshops on working effectively with specific cultures and communities	90	63.8%
Learning about the resources and services other agencies throughout Cambridge have to offer	89	63.1%
Sharing with other agencies in Cambridge what resources and services you have to offer	77	54.6%
Sharing translation and interpretation services and resources	71	50.4%
Organize focus groups or community conversations with families to find out what they need and want	68	48.2%

N=141



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM (CET)

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS AWARE OF CET

Yes	78	53.4%
No	56	38.4%
Not Sure	12	8.2%
TOTAL	146	

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS MEMBERS OF CET

Yes	15	10.3%
No	117	80.1%
Not Sure	14	9.6%
TOTAL	146	

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS ASSISTED BY CET

Yes	42	29.2%
No	48	33.3%
Not Sure	54	37.5%
TOTAL	144	

ASSISTANCE CET PROVIDED MEMBERS

Distributed flyers	29
CET Outreach Worker assisted with a special project	23
Provided technical assistance for outreach and family engagement support	14
Provided workshops on outreach techniques to staff	10
CET Outreach Worker sits on your agency's board	3
Other	2

N=39