

# Understanding and Evaluating Family Engagement in Out-of-School Time

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Community Schools National Forum  
Chicago, Illinois  
March 11, 2005



# Presentation Agenda

- What is Harvard Family Research Project?
- Findings about family involvement in out-of-school time (OST) programs
- Examples of OST programs and their efforts to engage families
- Measures to evaluate OST programs' family involvement strategies
- Small group session to brainstorm family involvement strategies and reflective practice



# Harvard Family Research Project

[www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)

- The Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)
- The Out-of-School Time Learning and Development Project



# Key Research Findings: Family Involvement in Out-of-School Time Programs

- Many programs lack a family involvement component.
- Programs face challenges in involving families.
- Programs use a variety of strategies to involve families.
- Programs with a designated family-involvement staff member engage families more.
- Family involvement in after school programs leads to family involvement in schooling.
- Family involvement adds value to after school programs.



# Examples From Practice

- Engaging Families Initiative
- Capital City Kids
- Examples from your own practice



# Program Evaluation

- Programs use a variety of data collection tools to reflect on their family engagement efforts.
- Three categories for assessing family engagement are:
  1. Type and frequency of activities
  2. Contextual factors
  3. Effectiveness



# 1. Type and Frequency of Activities

- Activities or services that programs provide to families
- Activities or strategies that support communication and relationship building
- Services parents provide for programs



## 2. Contextual Factors

- Parental attitudes toward their children's education or school
- Program factors that strengthen or limit programs' engagement with families
- Family factors that strengthen or limit programs' engagement with families



# 3. Effectiveness

- Levels of family participation in programs
- Programs' success in communicating and building relationships
- Improvement in families' engagement with their children's school
- Value added to programs by engaging families



# Self Assessment of Engaging Families in Your Program

- Using the worksheet provided, consider the ways in which you engage families currently, and brainstorm how you can be more effective in engaging families in the future.
- Describe five action steps for how you would strengthen your program's ability to reach out to and support families.

