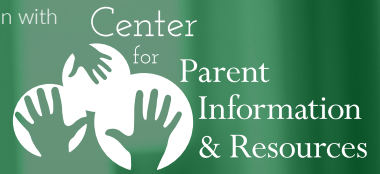




CENTER ON
PBIS Positive Behavioral
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In collaboration with



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIP: COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL PARENT CENTERS

DIANA AUTIN, CAROLYN HAYER, NICOLE PETERSON,
KATHERINE MEYER, & BRANDI SIMONSEN

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An Opportunity for Partnership: Collaboration with Local Parent Centers

Authors Diana Autin, CPIR
Carolyn Hayer, CPIR
Nicole Peterson, UCONN

Katherine Meyer, UCONN
Brandi Simonsen, UCONN

CPIR = Center for Parent Information and Resources;
UCONN = Center on PBIS, University of Connecticut

Purpose

This brief provides information about Parent Centers, a key resource for PBIS teams who aim to strengthen family engagement in their schools. Included are examples from the field of how partnerships allowed for stronger, more equitable PBIS implementation by prioritizing family engagement.

Parent Centers

A valuable (and often untapped) resource for PBIS teams seeking to strengthen family engagement are local Parent Centers, whose community connections, experience with data collection, and capacity to lead training position them as key partners who are aligned with PBIS efforts. For information about strengthening parent engagement see [Leveraging the PBIS Framework to Promote Equitable Family Engagement](#)¹ and the [Center on PBIS Family Page](#).²

Parent Centers—including Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs)—are family-led, family-serving non-profits funded under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). There are 96 Parent Centers across the country serving every state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. By statute, Parent Center Boards and staff must be a majority parents of children with disabilities aged birth to 26, who have lived experience navigating the early intervention (EI), special education, and transition to adult life systems.

What Do Parent Centers Do?

Parent Centers have significant reach and impact. They provide individual assistance; facilitate parent, youth, and professional development; develop and disseminate resources; and represent the parent voice on advisory groups. Specifically, they

- provide information, training, assistance and support to families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth/young adults with disabilities to help

Key Takeaways

- Parent Centers are non-profit organizations located in every state and U.S. Territory.
- Parent Centers have strong community connections, capacity to collect and manage data, and expertise in lead training for a variety of interest holders, making them a valuable resource for PBIS teams.

them understand their rights, the rights of their children, the special education processes, and best practices;

- provide information, training, and assistance and support to the professionals who serve students with disabilities and their families;
- share information about the needs of families, especially those who are underserved, low-income, and/or Limited English Proficient (LEP), with local, state, and federal agencies to improve services to and outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, youth, and young adults with disabilities; and
- work with both families and professionals to improve their capacity to partner at the individual, school/district, and systems levels.

How Can Parent Centers Support Family Engagement in PBIS?

Discipline and positive behavioral supports are consistently among the top issues on which Parent Centers receive calls, and thus, are among the top priorities of every Parent Center across the nation. Parent Centers can support parent engagement in PBIS initiatives in a variety of ways.

Team membership

Parent Centers can support team efforts to ensure representation of parents including those who are historically underserved. Their connection to the community may also allow for a more nuanced understanding of local contexts, perceptions, and need. Additionally, Parent Center liaisons may be able to regularly or periodically join PBIS team meetings to support efforts and engage in regular information sharing.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Use

Parent Centers engage with data every day and can be partners in identifying a range of tools and strategies to collect, analyze and use data from a variety of perspectives and for a range of purposes (e.g., surveys, focus groups, one-on-one conversations).

Parent Centers can help teams ask key questions, such as: What do we really want to know? What do we know? What else do we need to know? How can we find out? Further, they may have systems to support data collection that extend beyond what is available to schools.

Parent Training and Leadership Development

A key focus of Parent Centers is building parent capacity and leadership, especially for underserved families; their knowledge of strategies on how to accomplish this effectively can be of great benefit to PBIS teams. Parent Centers are staffed primarily by parents who themselves have navigated the special education process. Their lived experience on how to



develop both individual advocacy skills and the skills needed to advocate at the program and policy levels provides a model and inspiration for emerging parent leaders.

Other Parent Professional Development

Parent Centers provide a wide variety of training to parents, youth/young adults, and the professionals who serve them. Training topics include the legal requirements and rights contained in federal laws such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and education state laws, regulations, and policies. These trainings typically also address effective communication and collaboration skills; best practices (such as PBIS); and useful tools and

resources. Parent Centers can also provide training and support for parents and professionals to help both work more effectively together. Thus, partnering with Parent Centers to provide training to educators and families can expand and enhance schools' professional development efforts.

Examples from the Field

The following scenarios describe authentic collaborations between schools and their local Parent Centers and highlight the value that this partnership can provide.

A school was looking to gain a better perspective about the experiences of their families of students with disabilities. Though they regularly used data from climate surveys, they were interested in a more nuanced understanding to increase partnership with this particular group. Working with their Parent Center, the school was able to plan and conduct focus groups, where parents had the opportunity to answer specific questions about barriers to engagement and what ideal partnership looked like. The Parent Center liaison assisted in identifying a location for the focus group, setting up translation services, and used their media channels to promote recruitment. As a result, the school identified several areas to increase engagement including providing additional resources at school-based events, establishing communication norms with case managers, and increased knowledge of paraprofessional staff.



The Tier 1 team expanded their team membership to include a liaison from their local Parent Center. During a monthly PBIS team meeting, the Parent Center liaison shared that many of the recent calls to the Center support line in their region have been related to seeking information on the special education eligibility process and parental rights. Many team members were unaware of the support line or the parent-led support groups that the Center runs. Assuming that parents may also lack information about these resources, the team collaborated with the school's eligibility team to draft a resource flyer to be included in the information packet received by families at the start of the eligibility process.



The PBIS team was excited about successfully recruiting two new family members to serve on the Tier 1 team but was unsure how to onboard new members in a way that felt inclusive and inviting. In addition to orientation sessions that described the purpose and features of PBIS lead by the PBIS Coach, the Parent Center liaison prepared a series of brief trainings for the team, delivered during the first 15 minutes of each meeting. The content was from two professional learning series: [Serving on Groups](#),³ a professional learning series that prepares and empowers families to serve on decision-making groups, and [Leading by Convening](#),⁴ designed to bring diverse groups together to work collaboratively. As a result, the team had the foundations necessary to promote authentic engagement and ensure relevant participation.

Action Steps and Resources

The following steps and accompanying resources can help teams partner with their local Parent Centers and strengthen their PBIS implementation:

- 1. Find your local Parent Center:** Visit the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR) [Parent Center Hub](#)⁵ to identify your local center.
- 2. Explore resources and connect:** Review your Parent Center website to see what resources exist (e.g., training, community events) and connect with the representative about partnering.
- 3. Consider what partnership could look like:** For example, invite them to join the PBIS team by sharing meeting dates/times and existing materials; establish a system for regular information sharing).



Embedded Hyperlinks

1. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/leveraging-the-pbis-framework-to-promote-equitable-family-engagement>
2. <https://www.pbis.org/topics/family>
3. <https://spanadvocacy.org/serving-on-groups/>
4. <https://ncsi.wested.org/collection/leading-by-convening/>
5. <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

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