Keeping Up with What’s Going Down:

Effective Professional Development & Supervision Strategies for Parent Center Staff

STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY

Topics for Today

**UPDATES:** How can Parent Center staff keep current with new information coming out all the time?

**COMMUNICATION:** How can we ensure that Parent Center staff are aware of new resources, case law, OSEP guidance and policy letters, state complaint decisions, and other developments that influence the information parents need?

**TRAINING:** What are some effective/cost-effective/time-effective strategies to make sure Parent Center staff “keep up with what’s going down”?

**OVERSIGHT:** How can supervisors monitor the extent to which “line staff” are up-to-date on federal and state laws, policies, etc.?

STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY

**UPDATES:**

How can Parent Center staff keep current with new information coming out all the time?
**Sources of Updates/Information**

**Websites**
- Parentcenterhub
- Other PTACs
- US agencies
- State agencies
- Disability & advocacy groups
- State nonprofit management centers

**E-Newsletters:**
- CPIR Buzz from the Hub
- RPTAC
- Military & Native American PTACs
- State agencies
- Disability & advocacy groups

**Groups/Listserves:**
- OSEP Ideas That Work Collaboration Spaces
- Workplaces
- Facebook
- Twitter
Sources of Updates/Information

Blogs:
- US ED & others
- Exceptional Parent
- The Film Collaborative (Dan Habib)

Other Sources
- Regional Community of Practice
- Parent Center Hub Workgroups
- Professional organizations
- Other?

Assigning responsibility for gathering updates
- Executive Director
- Training Director/Coordinator
- Individual Assistance Director/Supervisor
- Identified staff member(s)
- Volunteer(s)
- Partner(s) – P&A, Coalition, etc.
- Others?
Managing the Information

Now that we've identified multiple data sources – how do we manage it?
• Find efficient ways to organize, store, use and share the information
  • Google Drive
  • Smartsheet
  • Intranet

Domains of Information
STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY

COMMUNICATION:

How can we ensure that Parent Center staff are aware of new resources, case law, OSEP guidance and policy letters, state complaint decisions, and other developments that influence the information parents need?

Knowledge Sharing

• Knowledge sharing is an activity through which knowledge (namely, information, skills, or expertise) is exchanged among people, friends, families, communities, or organizations.
  • Knowledge shared by individuals (ie: a video shared on Facebook or YouTube)
  • Knowledge shared by organizations (ie: the RSS feed of an online weather report)
  • Knowledge shared between colleagues (ie: resources for families or a new data report)
Knowledge Sharing
Create an knowledge sharing culture in your organization:
• Greater knowledge base among staff
• Easy access to information leads to increased sharing at all levels
• Open communication builds trust among staff and fosters a sense of community
• Increased productivity
• Inspires leadership

Benefits of Knowledge/Information Sharing
• Cost-effective ongoing learning experience
• Ideal solution for employees who don’t absorb information well in a classroom setting
• Encourages employees to be leaders and teachers instead of knowledge hoarders
• Improves individual and team effectiveness
• Contributes to nurturing a culture of learning, sharing and collaboration above competition
• Enables employees to constantly improve their capabilities
Informal Information Sharing

- Informal information sharing can help to build a sense of social connectedness, particularly for companies with remote workers.
- Informal knowledge sharing can and should be an everyday activity.

Tips for Improving Information Sharing

- Develop and maintain an information sharing platform
- Transparency avoids information "hoarding"
- Maintain opportunities for face to face interactions
- Engage staff in conversation
- Seek out personal stories

Knowledge Sharing Platform

A management platform which connects an organization, enabling colleagues to share information and collaborate instantly in a secure and social environment.
Information Sharing Platform

- Accessible by staff at all levels
- Easily searchable
- Mobile access
- Integrates with other software/platforms
- Reporting or analytical features

Increased Information Sharing

Increase information/knowledge sharing by asking:
- Who else has access to this resource/report?
- Who else can benefit from this information?
- How did this project/activity help you?
- Have you discussed this information with others? If so, what was the feedback?

Strategies to Share Information/Updates

- Consistent use of one platform to store information
- Use of multiple modalities to disseminate information
  - Weekly calls with staff who provide info/assistance to families
  - Formal staff development at intervals throughout the year (in-person & virtual)
  - On-line collaboration meetings
- Share information on both a defined schedule and intermittently
How to prioritize updates

- Who is involved in identifying priorities?
- What criteria are used to prioritize?
- Do different staff need different updates?
- Other?

Group Activity

Questions | Discussion
TRAINING:
What are some effective/cost-effective/time-effective strategies to make sure Parent Center staff “keep up with what’s going down?”

Why is Professional Development Important to Staff?
• Develop new skills
• More capable team members
• Supports succession planning
• Improves:
  • Productivity
  • Retention
  • Recruitment

Professional Development

“Education is a highly social activity. Humans learn by modeling the behavior and internalizing the experiences of others. When people learn in social settings they retain information better.”

- Reid Hoffman, co-founder and executive chairman of LinkedIn
Professional Development Plan

• Seeks to identify and address the necessary skills and resources to support the organization’s operational needs and staff career goals.
• Sets out the goals, strategies and outcomes of learning and training
• Plans vary between individual staff

STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY

Things to Consider

Best practices when creating a staff development program:
• Use multiple modalities
  • In Person
  • On line webinars in real time
  • Online learning (Google Classroom)
  • Knowledge sharing
• Reward learning
  • Staff evaluations
  • Leadership opportunities

STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY

Leadership Opportunities

Purpose: Build capacity to lead within the group, not confined to senior staff members
Strategy: Rotate line staff to attend professional development opportunities and then provide them with the opportunity to summarize and inform the entire group
Example: Henry went to the ICE · Immigrant Rights presentation, which he summarized and presented to the staff group

STRENGTHENING Parent Center CAPACITY
Leadership Opportunities

**Purpose:** Expand pockets of expertise  
**Strategy:** Identify primary & secondary staff who can develop more intensive expertise in particular areas  
**Example:** Garima attended transition webinars (her area of interest) and reported back to the group. When the Transition Coordinator was on family leave, she was the logical choice to coordinate the SPAN Dare to Dream transition conferences effort.

Leadership Opportunities

**Purpose:** Emphasize that everyone is important and has something to contribute  
**Strategy:** Offer opportunities for staff members to take responsibility for some aspect of the work on a topic of their expertise  
**Example:** Susan’s knowledge of ADHD—even as the newest PTI staff member, she was able to add to our existing PTI Brief on ADHD, displaying her competence and adding value to the team.

Leadership Opportunities

**Purpose:** Provide general opportunities for line staff to lead  
**Strategy:** Develop the team as a group of leaders supporting one another  
**Example:** Staff had a choice to attend OSEP calls - High Expectations and IEPs, or Alternatives to Guardianship. We had a follow up call to share what we learned.
**Things to Consider**

- Make in-person trainings engaging – use varying methods:
  - Instructor led
  - Peer to peer
  - Coaching/mentoring
- Train everyone on basic organizational processes and procedures
- Survey staff for input prior to development

---

**Group Activity**

---

**Questions?**

---
OVERSIGHT:
How can supervisors monitor the extent to which “line staff” are up-to-date on federal and state laws, policies, etc.?

How can we ensure understanding & use of updated information?

- Updates/New Info
  - Do staff understand the updated information? Do they understand what's the same vs. different?
  - Can staff explain the updated information to families?
  - Can they apply the updated information with families?

How do we know?

- "Tests" following training
- Practice with scenarios
- Supervision – direct observation; review of CMS records
- Self-assessment
- Feedback loops
- Other?
Learning Outcomes

Measure in four dimensions:
1. Knowledge outcomes
2. Skills outcomes
3. Attitudes and values outcomes
4. Behavioral outcomes

What learning outcomes have you found useful in your center?

Brainstorming Activity

Planning Essentials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding updates</th>
<th>Specific steps to gather updated information critical for staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminating updates</td>
<td>Specific steps to ensure staff are provided updated information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring understanding</td>
<td>Specific steps to ensure staff understand the updated information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring application</td>
<td>Specific steps to ensure staff can and do apply the updated information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions?