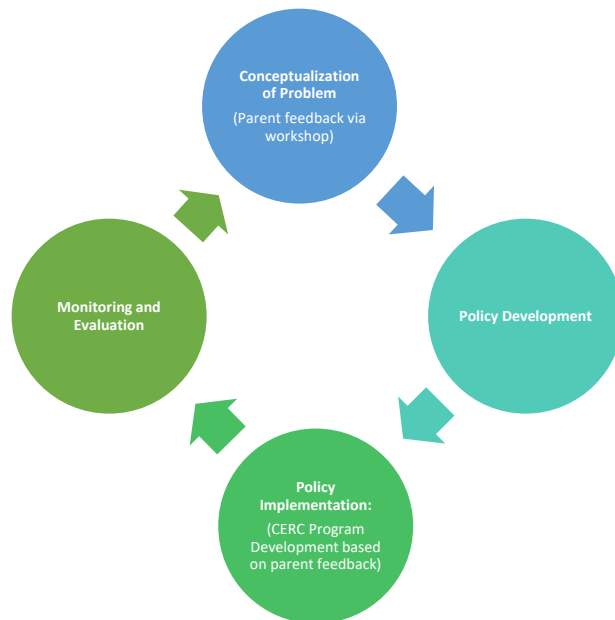


Theories of change:

http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2014/09/16/4_developing_program_theories_for_education_and_social_development_interventions.pdf



Title (20 word limit)

Parent Workshop: An Opportunity for Empowerment, Feedback, and Community Inclusion

Proposal Program Description (70 word limit)

This presentation discusses the Parent Workshop, an annual event held at Montefiore Medical Center, The University Hospital for Albert Einstein College of Medicine. This workshop was established with the intention of providing support and education to parents, reducing social isolation, and including parents as stakeholders in program development. Feedback from the 2018 Parent Workshop and plans for incorporating parent input into program development are discussed.

Abstract

Objective: To describe how our UCEDD’s annual parent workshop implements the Programmatic Theory of Change Logic Model. Each year since 2013, the Rose F. Kennedy Children’s Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center (CERC) at Albert Einstein College of Medicine has conducted a full-day Parent Workshop. This workshop offers a platform for parents to provide feedback, voice concerns, and act as key stakeholders in program development at CERC.

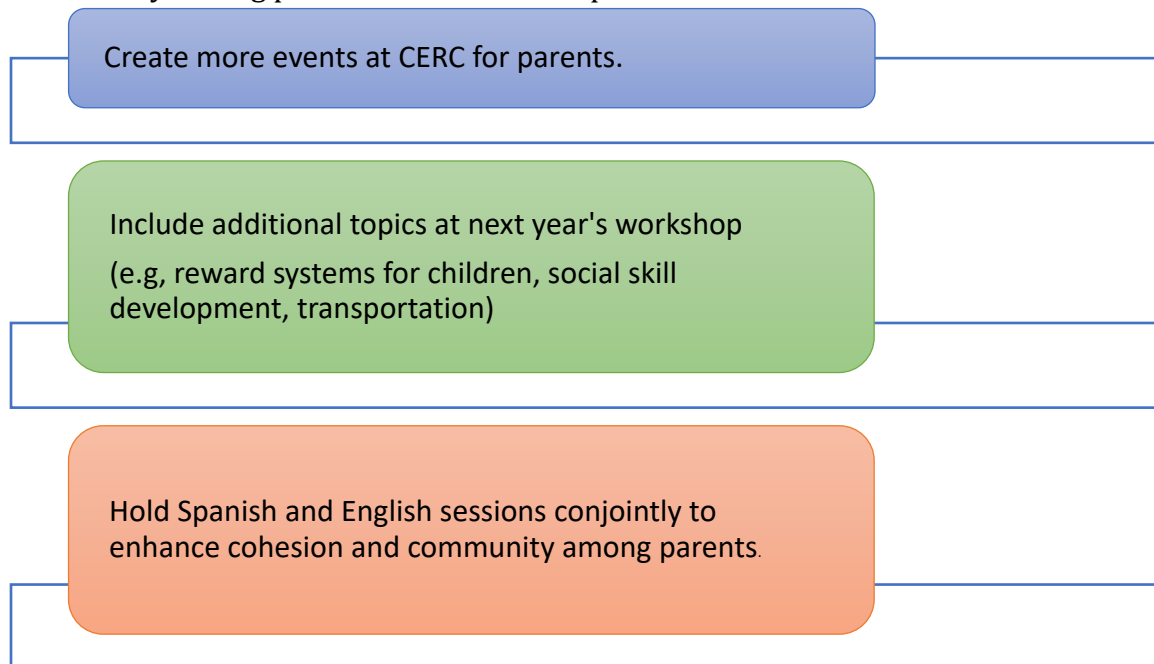
Background: In 2013, the clinical staff at CERC first developed the Parent Workshop in response to the expressed needs of the families with whom they worked. The workshop is a full-day annual event consisting of a keynote speaker, lectures, and parent focus groups. Overarching topics include parent coping skills and strategies, education on diagnoses, social and skill development in children, and enhancing the family dynamic. All

presentations and handouts are provided in both English and Spanish. This workshop was created with several goals in mind: 1) to empower parents to become advocates for their children, 2) to foster collaboration between clinicians and parents, 3) to reduce parental social isolation, and 4) to provide a forum for parents to voice their feedback and concerns.

Parent feedback and subsequent programmatic change is a pivotal component of the Parent Workshop. Clinical staff utilize feedback conveyed during the workshop and via post-workshop surveys to develop and improve services at CERC. For example, monthly parent informational sessions at CERC were implemented in response to parent's requests from the 2017 workshop. This direct feedback loop allows parents to not only voice their perspectives, but also to become active stakeholders in programmatic change and development at CERC.

Methods: The theme of the 2018 workshop was "You are a Superhero" and featured sessions on stress management, family communication, transitioning from adolescence into adulthood, managing disability through adulthood, adolescent social media presence, and academic success. At the end of the workshop, parents were asked to complete a 15 item survey featuring Likert-scale and open-ended format questions.

Results: The 2018 Parent Workshop was very well-received by parents who completed the post-workshop survey (n=27). Among respondents, 81.8% strongly agreed that the information was easy to understand, 90.9% strongly agreed that they would recommend the workshop to other parents, and 86.4% strongly agreed that they learned new information. In their comments, parents expressed a desire for additional parent events at CERC and requested specific topics for next year's workshop sessions (e.g., reward systems for children, school transportation, and social skill development). Parents also requested that Spanish and English sessions be held conjointly to enhance cohesion and a sense of community among parents at the workshop.



Conclusion: Overall, parents were greatly satisfied with this year’s workshop and offered specific suggestions for programmatic improvement. These suggestions include adding sessions on transportation and behavioral strategies, merging the English and Spanish sessions, and hosting additional parent events at CERC. Parent feedback was discussed among staff and plans to implement these changes have been made. These changes include merging the Spanish and English groups at next year’s event, holding parent informational sessions over the summer, and including parents in the curriculum planning for the 2019 workshop.

Connection to the Conference Theme (550 word limit)

The CERC Parent Workshop pertains to this year’s conference theme, “We All Belong Here: Achieving Inclusive Communities” in two important ways. First and foremost, the Parent Workshop was developed with the primary mission of including parents in their child’s care and offering parents an opportunity to voice their concerns. Through a continual process of parent input and subsequent policy and program changes at CERC, parents act as key stakeholders in the organization. In this way, parents serve as the springboard for change within CERC and the programs it offers.

Including parents in the decision-making processes at CERC proves beneficial not only to the parents, but to the staff at CERC as well. Forums such as the parent workshop create a space for both clinicians and parents to share their insights and areas of expertise. Clinical staff are able to share pertinent knowledge from their field, while parents can offer unique insights into disability, parenting, the special education system, and much more. The collaborative and inclusive nature of this relationship is intended to both improve the quality of care at CERC and to help parents develop an increased sense of agency.

The Parent Workshop pertains to theme of inclusion in a second important way. Creating a space for parents to become stakeholders in their child’s care is not only intended to increase parental inclusion within the CERC community, but within the broader community as well. By helping parents enhance their skills and become advocates for both themselves and their children, it is hoped that parents will feel more included within their own community. Increased self-advocacy and connection with other parents can pave the way for broader social inclusion for both parent and child.

Workshop Goals:



Empower parents to become advocates for their children.



Foster collaboration between clinicians and parents.



Reduce parental social isolation.



Provide a forum for parents to voice their feedback and concerns.