FACE Family Circle Planning Guide

FACE Family Circles (Group Connections) are designed so that families build social connections with each other, engage in parent-child interaction, and increase their knowledge of ways to support children’s development. FACE Family Circles can also serve as a great recruitment opportunity for FACE programs by inviting potential families to offer them the opportunity to learn about your FACE Program, meet other families, and reduce any hesitation the family may have about participating in home visits.

FACE Family Circles provide a unique and very positive way to facilitate information of child development and educate parents on a variety of topics. FACE Family Circles support parents in having appropriate expectations for their child’s developmental age. Parents are given the opportunity to practice their learning through activities with their child so they become better observers of their child’s development status. FACE Family Circles also provide a safe space for parents to build relationships with other parents where they can learn from one another, share common experiences, and develop a support network.

Delivery of the FACE Family Circle

How often do FACE Family Circles take place?
FACE Family Circles are offered to families at least once a month. If you are delivering services 10 months out of the school 10 months out of the year (August-May), then you will need to conduct 10 FACE Family Circles. For months that are missed, be sure to make up in the next month or when possible.

Who plans and delivers FACE Family Circles?
Parent educators will take the lead in planning a FACE Family Circle for home-based families. If FACE Family Circles are intended and planned for all FACE families including center-based, then center-based staff is involved in supporting the planning and facilitating of the FACE Family Circle.

Where are FACE Family Circles held?
FACE Family Circles can take place at the school or at a local community center. Be sure to choose a venue that provides enough space for families to engage in the activities. Consider space for children and parents to interact.

Components of a FACE Family Circle
In order to count as a FACE Family Circle, the group connection must meet all of the following criteria:

- The FACE Family Circle is planned and promoted in advance.
- The FACE Family Circle is designed to include one or more of the three areas of emphasis: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being.
- One of these formats (or a combination of them) is used: family activity, ongoing group, presentation, community event, or parent café.
- The FACE Family Circle is staffed by at least one model-certified parent educator or Parents as Teachers supervisor.
- The planning and delivery of the FACE Family Circle is documented.
These requirements align with and support the Parents as Teachers Model. For more information on the importance of Group Connections (FACE Family Circles) and how it builds social capital for families refer to the Parent as Teachers Model Implementation Guide found within the Portal on the Parents As Teachers website.

**Contents of FACE Family Circle Binder**

Each program is required to plan and document every FACE Family Circle offered. It is important to gather and store all information related to the planning and facilitation of the FACE Family Circle in a binder. The FACE Family Circle Binder is important for documentation reasons, but also for future parent educators to review what items have been covered with families in the past.

During the FACE Home-based Technical Assistance site visit, the Parents as Teachers FACE Technical Assistant will ask parent educators to provide the FACE Family Circle Binder to review the content of each FACE Family Circle Binder. The Technical Assistant will review the binder for documentation status as well as review the content of each FACE Family Circle to ensure that FACE programs meet the above mentioned components of FACE Family Circles.

The following items should be included in your FACE Family Circle Binder:

- **Group Connections Planning Guide and Record** (completed in Penelope, printed and inserted into Binder)
- Flyer used to advertise FACE Family Circle
- **Group Connections Sign-In Sheet**
- Agenda for families
- Parent Handouts given to families
- **Group Connections Feedback Form** (completed by each family in attendance)
- FACE Family Circle Task Sheet
- Optional: Requisitions, copies of notes from team meetings, presentation notes, presenter bio and contact information, photographs, etc.

To support FACE parent educators in ensuring all documentation is included in their FACE Family Circle Binder, be sure to print off the checklist (last page of guide) and insert into your FACE Family Circle Binder. Check off items as you finalize them and place them into the binder.

**Preparation Tips**

There are many ways to prepare for a FACE Family Circle. FACE programs already have existing planning processes that work well for program staff. Below are some important items to consider when planning the content of FACE Family Circles. The information found below mirrors the **Group Connection Preparation Checklist** found in the Foundational Curriculum.

1. **Intent of the FACE Family Circle**
   - Discuss what topics would benefit parents. Parent educators might find that all parents are having difficulty naming parenting behaviors during parent-child interaction or understanding transitions from home-based to center-based. In these cases the intent of the FACE Family Circle
will be “improving the understanding of parent behaviors” or “provide an opportunity to discuss transitions”. For a list of words to guide you in the intent of the FACE Family Circle see Appendix A.

- Review the Group Connections Feedback Forms from the previous FACE Family Circles. Parents are asked to comment on what information they would like to know more about.
- **NOTE:** Parent educators are welcome to use the content/concepts found within the FACE Family Circle Planner, but parent educators need to utilize the Group Connection Planning Guide and Record. The FACE Family Circle Planner should never replace the Group Connection Planning Guide. Much of the content found within the FACE Family Circle Planners stem from the Born to Learn Curriculum that is no longer used.

2. **Review Information in Foundational Curriculum**
   - Read the parent educator resources relevant to the topic and the targeted age range.
   - Choose parent handouts based on the topic intent.
   - Decide upon activities and determine methods for sharing them (posters, signs, or handouts, activity pages).
   - Once you know what resources will be used to aid in the FACE Family Circle, be sure to list them in the Group Connections Planning Guide and Record.

3. **Select FACE Family Circle Format**
   - The format and topics of the FACE Family Circle should meet the needs and learning styles of the families being served. For more information regarding each format visit the Model Implementation Guide (page 178-179).
     - Family activity: Designed primarily to focus on parent-child interaction as parents engage in active learning with their children.
     - Presentation- Useful when specific information is needed and a parent educator, supervisor, or member of the community is able to provide knowledge on a particular issue or developmental topic.
     - Ongoing group- Small groups of parents facing similar issues. Group members build strong social connections and support networks over time. Example: teen parent groups or embracing fatherhood groups.
     - Community event- Will take place at various locations either as an event an affiliate hosts or as organized outings which build greater community awareness. Community events primarily focus on family well-being while often incorporating developmental topics. Example: health screenings.
     - Parent Café- Parent cafes are evenings of sharing, learning, and socializing in a space that appreciates all that parents have to offer and all that they need.
   - **NOTE:** Combining two or more formats is acceptable, for example, a family activity can be paired with a presentation. It is important to be intentional about the format.
4. Learning Activities
   - Prepare a written agenda that includes the format, topics to be covered, and space for families to take notes (if needed).
   - Consider where activities will take place in the venue.

5. Facilitation Methods
   - Welcome families to the FACE Family Circle with check-in tables, signs, sign-in sheets, name tags or tents, places for coats, stroller parking, and an icebreaker activity.
   - Introduce the staff and provide opening remarks.
   - Remember parents can serve as hosts or greeters when possible.
   - Provide an introduction and purpose of the FACE Family Circle.
   - Make time for families to share announcements. Staff should brief families on ground rules (cell phone use, raise hands, and/or side conversations)
   - Prepare discussion based on the topic, area of emphasis, child development, and parent behaviors.
   - Some words to include in the Group Connection Planning Guide and Record include “demonstrate”, “explain”, “Invite”, “suggest”, “encourage”, “pass out copies of…”, etc.

6. Items to Consider
   - Choose a venue location to host the FACE Family Circle
   - Order supplies for the activities, and plan for extra materials including supplies for participants and presenters such as microphones, projectors, pens, and craft materials, so on.
   - Discuss what content will be used to get the word out. FACE staff should always share a flyer with families and post flyers in the community.
   - Utilize parents as “leaders” when appropriate for learning stations, circle-time reading, etc.
   - Plan to provide transportation for families to and from their homes.
   - Snacks and potluck foods are a great way to get families to attend FACE Family Circles. Be sure to have healthy options available and limit the amount of soda and food and beverages containing large amounts of sugar.

7. Documentation and Evaluation
   - Ask families to complete the Group Connections Feedback Form.
   - Take photos throughout the event.
   - Complete the Documentation and Record portion of the Group Connection Planning Guide and Record in Penelope.
   - A written copy of the completed Group Connection Planning Guide and Record can be scanned and uploaded to Penelope.
Appendix A

The following list is an example of phrases and words to help frame the FACE Family Circle intent. The list is not exhaustive; there are many more ways to structure the intent of the FACE Family Circle.

- Provide an opportunity to...
- Explore...
- Improve the understanding of...
- Practice...
- Assist parents in developing...
- Assist parents in discovering...
- Encourage...
- Discuss...
- Continue to learn...
Appendix B
Recommended Resources

Parents as Teachers Model Implementation Guide, [www.parentsasteachers.org](http://www.parentsasteachers.org)

Fillable Forms: After logging into the Portal, click on the My Tools tab, hover and click on the Fillable Forms tab on the left side of webpage. Scroll down to Group Connections. There will be a list of documents to download.
- Guidance for Using the Group Connection Planning Guide and Record
- Group Connection Feedback Form
- Preparation Checklist for the Group Connection Planning Guide and Record
- Group Connection Sign-in Sheet
- Group Connection Planning Guide and Record

Webinar-FACEResources.org
- Using Penelope: A guide to documenting services in the web-based data management system
Appendix C
Tips for Completing the Group Connections Planning Guide and Record

Activities, presentations, discussions, or events

Areas of emphasis (check all that apply):
- Parent-child interaction
- Development-centered parenting
- Family well-being

Intent: What will we focus on at this group connection?
Enhancing parents’ knowledge of child development and parenting issues by providing information about parenting skills, parent-child interactions, child development, and community resources.
Providing opportunities for parents to meet together, share experiences, and support each other.

Topics and key points from parent educator resources and other sources:
Topics and key points can come from parent educator resources in the Foundational Curriculum or from other high-quality sources of information. This content may also come from presenters or community representatives.

Prompts and questions for sharing observations, questions, or reactions:
Prompts and questions invite input from the whole group. They encourage parents to share information, ideas, opinions, experiences, observations, and feelings—all of which can make the group more effective.

Learning activities (attach additional sheets as needed):
In an effort to convey information so that all types of learners are engaged, it is important to vary the types of learning activities within a FACE Family Circle. The more opportunities parents have to apply the information they have learned, the more meaningful and useful the information becomes.
Facilitation strategies (note additional staffing needs):
Facilitation strategies should take into account participants' diverse learning preferences in order to ensure that the chosen format works well for everyone. Examples include: Open-ended questions; opportunities to share information, ideas, opinions, experiences, observations, and feelings; active listening, coaching, observation by parents during family activities or other times when children are present; peer co-facilitators, etc.

Materials and supplies:
Supplies and materials run the gamut of logistical items—tables, signs, clipboards, checklists, pencils or pens, name tags, name tents, first-aid kits, informational brochures, tape, power cords— to program-specific paperwork like evaluations, surveys, and sign-in sheets.

Parent handouts:
Select parent handouts that complement the FACE Family Circle intent and topics discussed. Pull parent handouts from the Foundational Curriculum. This content may also come from presenters or community representatives.

Documentation and evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Number of families attending:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Program participants:</td>
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<td>&gt; Families on waiting list:</td>
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<td>&gt; Number of fathers present:</td>
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</tbody>
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| Families not yet enrolled: |
| Community members:         |

Budget shortfall or surplus (please explain):

Opportunities for feedback (from participants and presenters, including surveys):

Items for follow-up:

Other program considerations:

Successes and challenges:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Parent Educator</th>
<th>Parent Educator</th>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create Flyer and Advertise Event</td>
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<td>Create Agenda</td>
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<td>Complete Group Connections Planning</td>
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<td>Guide and Record</td>
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<td>Identify Activity</td>
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<td>Facilitate and Present Information</td>
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<td>Contact Presenter</td>
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<td>Gather Incentives</td>
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<td>Complete Budget Request</td>
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<td>Order/Gather/Purchase Materials</td>
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<td>Take Photos</td>
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<td>Gather Group Connection Feedback Form</td>
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<td>Organize Transportation</td>
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<td>Set Up</td>
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<td>Clean Up</td>
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FACE Family Circle Binder Checklist

Month: ____________________________

☐ Group Connections Planning Guide and Record
☐ Flyer
☐ Group Connections Sign-In Sheet
☐ FACE Family Circle Agenda
☐ Parent Handouts
☐ Group Connections Feedback Forms
☐ FACE Family Circle Task Sheet