



*Parent Partner Programs:  
Understanding the Value,  
Research, Impact and Application*

Wednesday, May 12, 2021  
2:30pm - 4:00pm EDT /  
12:30pm – 2:00pm MDT/  
11:30am – 1:00pm PDT

casey family programs

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STRONG  
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safe children | strong families | supportive communities

# Our Mission

To provide and improve — **and ultimately prevent the need for** — foster care.

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

# Objectives

- Describe key program components of parent partner programs
- Present research findings and positive outcomes
- Discuss benefits, challenges, and opportunities for family engagement & family centered practice
- Hear from parent and program leaders directly about the key benefits
- Consider opportunities to further share research findings and/or sustain existing programs or replicate parent partner models

# What are Parent Partner Programs?

- Parent partners are parents with lived experiences who mentor parents newly involved, or at risk of becoming involved, with the child welfare system.
- Parent partners help parents navigate the system and connect them to supports.
- Founded on the belief that parents with shared experiences can motivate and build trust with parents.



# What are the benefits?

- **Instill** hope in parents
- **Promote** self-advocacy
- **Connect** to services
- **Build** protective factors
- **Shift** the way the parents are perceived
- **Address** power and cultural dynamics
- **Provide** fulfillment and career advancement

# What are the key components?



# What does the research tell us?

- Peer mentor programs in other fields have **well-established research base**
- Parents from peer networks **affirm the importance of these programs**
- Evidence base is growing with several published **rigorous evaluations**

# Peer Mentors in Behavioral Health & Substance Abuse Recovery

- Lived experience of recovery from a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder
  - Provide non-clinical, strengths-based support
- Associated with Positive Outcomes:
  - Increased quality of life and life satisfaction, decreased hospitalization, and reduced use of inpatient services
  - Reduced relapse rates, re-hospitalization rates, and substance use

# What does the research tell us?

- **Higher rates of reunification** for parents who have participated
  - 70% of participants reunified versus 53% of non-participants (P4P study)
- **Lower rates of reentry** for children involved in the program
  - 13% of participants re-entered care within 12 months as compared to 22% of non-participants (Iowa study)

# What does the research tell us?

- **Prevent children** from entering into care
  - Participants were 50% less likely to enter into care than non-participants (KY START study)
- **Return on Investment (ROI)**
  - For every \$1 spent, the state saved \$2.22 in OOHC costs (KY START study)

*“As a parent partner, it’s really not my job to save people from themselves.*

*It’s my job to help them figure out how to help themselves. And to walk alongside them, to guide them, to give them tools, coach them, and help them learn how to advocate for what they need.”*

–Toni, Parent Partner

# Interviews w/ Parent Partner Staff

- Conducted in-depth interviews with leaders of 7 parent partner programs with existing evidence.
- Asked about key components of a successful program, current challenges, lessons learned from implementation, and how to build the evidence base.



# Opportunities to Consider: Strengthening & Advancing Programs

- Advance sustainability and replication of programs to promote successful prevention and timely reunification
- Transformation efforts to ensure agency/system meaningful and equitable engagement of those with lived experience & expertise
- Support networking and peer learning across programs
- Leverage the implementation of Family First

# Family First Prevention Services Act

- Shift with Title IV-E funding for prevention services
- Established clearinghouse of programs and services
- Promising rating: Has at least one contrast in a study that achieves a rating of moderate or high on study design and execution and demonstrates a favorable effect on a target outcome
  - Iowa Parent Partner Program
  - START





# Thanking our panelists...

- **David Sanders**, Systems Improvement Executive Vice President, Casey Family Programs
- **Alise Morrissey**, Director of Family Impact, Parents for Parents
- **Ebony Chambers-McClinton**, Chief Family & Youth Partnership Officer, Stanford Sierra Youth & Families
- **Julie Farber**, Deputy Commissioner, NYC Administration for Children's Services, Division of Family Permanency
- **Sara Persons**, Statewide Parent Partner Program Director, Children & Families of Iowa



# Resources

- [How do parent partner programs instill hope and support prevention and reunification? \(with Appendix\)](#)
- [What are the key elements for sustaining, expanding, and spreading parent partner programs?](#)
- [How does the Parents for Parents program help parents reunify?](#)

# Next Steps

- Casey intends to support jurisdictions wishing to develop Parent Partner Programs.
- We will seek feedback from interested jurisdictions regarding preferences for structure, key topics, duration, and timing.
- If you are interested in connecting with Casey and other jurisdictions to discuss implementation of Parent Partner Programs, we ask that you please complete a short survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParentPartnerPrograms>

# Closing

- *Thank you for your participation!*
- *Questions or feedback, please contact us at: [KMresources@casey.org](mailto:KMresources@casey.org)*