

Six Valued Practices

Appendix 1: Six Valued Practices

In this appendix you will find a summary of the Six Valued Practices that are detailed in *Working to Make a Difference: Guidelines for Best Practices in Family Resource Programs*. Because this material informed the development of these standards, FRP-BC felt it important to include this summary in a separate appendix.

What follows in this appendix is not a list of standards, nor are these policies. These Six Valued Practices provide the basis for the values that support the work of Family Resource Programs throughout the province.

If you would like to read more about these Six Valued Practices, please refer to *Working to Make a Difference: Guidelines for Best Practices in Family Resource Programs*, available from FRP-BC.

Six Valued Practices

1. Valued Practices in Physical Space and Design

Design includes the physical space and program detail that makes the program inviting and accessible to families. This includes spatial design that considers both children and adults, play equipment and creative play materials, location, hours of operation, and an environment that reflects the culture of families in the community.

Examples:

- ❑ Be open with flexible hours (i.e., evenings and weekends, as needed by the community).
- ❑ Consider transportation issues (e.g. transit, traffic patterns) and other practical barriers (e.g. typical naptimes).
- ❑ Utilize décor and resources that reflect the local community's cultural diversity.
- ❑ Create a physical environment that is:
 - ✓ *Inviting and comfortable*
 - ✓ *Child-proofed*
 - ✓ *Clean and well-maintained (toys are regularly sanitized)*
 - ✓ *Accessible for people with disabilities*
- ❑ Provide a variety of spaces or areas within the environment, which includes:
 - ✓ *A space for parents to gather informally*
 - ✓ *Meeting area for group activities*
 - ✓ *A place to prepare and cook meals*
 - ✓ *Places for private, confidential conversations*
 - ✓ *Creative play areas for babies and preschoolers*
 - ✓ *An outdoor play area*
- ❑ Make sure that bathroom facilities are appropriate by providing:
 - ✓ *Change tables and a diaper bin*
 - ✓ *Stepping stool in the bathroom so that children can use the sink.*
 - ✓ *Potty or toddler seat for the toilet*
- ❑ Include many different centres for learning and play:
 - ✓ *A child library and reading area*
 - ✓ *Sand or water table*
 - ✓ *Puppet theatre or dress-up area*
- ❑ The play areas are arranged to:
 - ✓ *Allow children to make choices*
 - ✓ *Encourage cooperative play*
 - ✓ *Meet a wide range of developmental needs*
- ❑ Provide quality toys, supplies, and resources for children and caregivers. Change or rotate the available selection of toys and resources often. Find the optimal balance in your physical space. "Just the right number" of toys:

Six Valued Practices

- ✓ *Is easier to keep organized and thus is more accessible*
- ✓ *Is less overwhelming*
- ✓ *Promotes the children's involvement in clean up – thus helping to develop "responsible behaviour"*

How have we crafted our physical space so that it encourages participation and social interaction?

What changes or improvements could we implement to make our program more accessible and inviting to our community?

Six Valued Practices

2. Valued Practices that Promote Engagement

Promoting engagement ensures that parents/caregivers and children are effectively engaged in the early stages of their involvement in the Family Resource Program. The old adage that you never get a second chance to make first impression holds true. Once families are engaged, they are involved. Once involved, participants increase their potential to gain and give within their community.

Examples:

- ❑ Offer drop-ins frequently; provide a parent-child drop-in at least two or three times per week. The regular availability develops the habit of attending.
- ❑ Staff and volunteers reflect the cultural makeup of the community and can communicate in appropriate languages other than English.
- ❑ Staff make a point of introducing themselves to new participants and orient parents and families to the drop in and its existing social network.
- ❑ While it is important to open the doors to as many families as possible, be mindful of the ratio of staff to participants. Make sure that the numbers are such that staff are able to meaningfully connect with each participant.
- ❑ Nametags for staff are useful tools that help parents remember staff names, and promote familiarity as well as professionalism.
- ❑ Staff demonstrate respect at all times, being particularly mindful not to exhibit or tolerate subtle forms of racism or discrimination.
- ❑ Staff make a special effort to connect with families needing more supports on a personal level at each drop-in.
- ❑ With tact and sensitivity, offer occasional incentives to encourage potentially vulnerable families' ongoing participation.
- ❑ Provide coffee and snacks and other amenities for parents and caregivers.
- ❑ Offer – and advertise – recognized parent education programs. The “name recognition” factor may attract new participants (and possibly funders!) It is essential that qualified staff facilitates such programs. It is well worth the investment in training.
- ❑ Promote the involvement of fathers by implementing specific strategies to engage and involve fathers/male caregivers.
 - ✓ *Hold special events geared for fathers*
 - ✓ *Offer a weekly or monthly Dads'n'Kids games night or pizza party*
 - ✓ *Offer a “Dads’ Drop-in”*

Six Valued Practices

- ✓ *Offer a support group and resources for non-custodial fathers*
 - ✓ *Include references to fathers and male caregivers in brochures, newsletters and other promotional material*
 - ✓ *Consider offering programs in alternate locations or times*
- Ensure all families including blended, same sex, grandparents raising grandchildren, feel welcome and engaged.

How are we successfully engaging and involving a wide range of the community – including a range of ages, ethnic populations, neighbourhoods, and caregivers?

What additional strategies can we implement to engage an even more diverse group?

Six Valued Practices

3. Valued Practices that Promote and Build Relationships

Promoting and building relationships in Family Resource Programs allows for a better understanding of the child as an individual; enables adults to learn from each other, promotes a safe environment to share family functioning issues; facilitates sharing of cultural knowledge and traditions.

Interpersonal relationships form the foundation for personal, family and community well-being and growth.

Examples:

- ❑ Staff engage in positive interactions on an individual level, recognizing the unique strengths and needs of each family, as well as their personal readiness for growth.
 - ✓ *Use language that emphasizes strengths, not problems*
- ❑ Staff form trusting, respectful relationships with families by working together to establish partnerships based on equality and respect.
 - ✓ *Respect confidentiality*
- ❑ Staff maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with participants, recognizing that theirs is a professional, not personal relationship.
 - ✓ *Staff is there to listen to and support the participants, not share their own personal information*
- ❑ With a family that appears more in need or vulnerable, one staff should take the lead in establishing a strong connection with the parent.
 - ✓ *Recognize that it takes time to build and develop a meaningful therapeutic relationship*
- ❑ Peer counsellors or mentors are an invaluable resource, which can enable key informal relationships as well as interdependence.
 - ✓ *Peer counsellors need to be adequately screened, trained and supervised*
- ❑ Promote social connections among participants. Introduce participants to each other and stimulate conversation.

How do we effectively and professionally help to build relationships with and between participants?

“The relationships we have in our lives — including the support we receive from our family, friends and community — are directly associated with general health. Effective responses to stress and the support of family and friends act as buffers against health problems. Conversely, studies have shown that low levels of emotional support and low social participation have a negative effect on health and well-being.”

Additionally, what further strategies could we implement to further enhance relationship building between participants?

Six Valued Practices

4. Valued Practices that Promote Family Development

- A. Encourage Family Interaction
- B. Promote Parent Education
- C. Support Families in Addressing their Needs
- D. Promote Child Development

A. Encourage Family Interaction:

Key to the healthy development and growth of a child is a stable, responsive and responsible environment. The hub of a young child's world is most often his or her family. Children who have a solid base of emotional security created by the experience of sensitive and responsive early nurturing will be more likely to have strong and enduring personal relationships later in life.

Examples

- ❑ Frequent parent-child drop-in times offer families the opportunity to participate together. This promotes strong and warm relationships between family members.
- ❑ Observe participants' social skills, parent-child interactions, and discipline.
 - ✓ *Trained staff interact and respond appropriately*
- ❑ Staff not only engage with parents and children, they model effective parenting and problem solving skills.
 - ✓ *Specific parenting skills include warmth, acceptance of individuality, active listening and behaviour monitoring*
- ❑ Provide a variety of books suitable for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
 - ✓ *Offer a library corner and encourage parents to read to their children*
- ❑ Play should be child-directed, but is more effective in terms of learning when adults are involved in a supportive way. This helps to ensure that the activities allow for challenges yet also a sense of accomplishment or mastery.
 - ✓ *Provide activities that involve both children and their parents*
- ❑ Design and set up crafts and activities that require parents to work with their children not "do" for their children.

Six Valued Practices

B. Promote Parent Education:

According to current research based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, positive parenting is positively correlated to their child's normal to advanced scores on school readiness tests. Furthermore, parents need a solid understanding of their child's developmental needs to provide an age-appropriate balance of stimulation, challenge, guidance and protection.

- Through formal parent education opportunities as well as informal ones, the Family Resource Program assists parents in continuing to develop parenting skills that support a positive relationship with their child.
 - ✓ *Provide parent education programs that promote positive and effective parenting practices and increased knowledge of child development*
 - ✓ *Offer a variety of workshops and programs on various topics, including stages of child development, temperament, personal growth, discipline, health care and nutrition*
 - ✓ *Offer programs in a variety of formats and times, such as afternoon or evening workshops, full-day programs, and multi-session series, off-site offerings*
 - ✓ *Provide parent education programs that are culturally relevant and appropriate for a wide range of parents (For example, bear in mind differences in literacy levels, fluency in English, or cognitive abilities)*
 - ✓ *Provide child-minding to promote attendance and participation*
 - ✓ *Ensure the staff and outside professionals providing the parent education programs are qualified*

C. Support Families in Addressing Their Needs:

When parents have difficulty coping with life, work, family needs or parenting, they may be unable to provide their children with the necessary emotional, social and physical support that they need to flourish. Parents are people first; effective programs recognize that they cannot focus on supporting family development without providing support to alleviate social and economic stressors.

- Provide parent education opportunities that teach parents and children about nutrition and healthy behaviours:
 - ✓ *Involve the public health nurse and existing community resources as much as possible*
- Design programs with sensitivity, assist families to access community services and supports that are needed. These may include affordable housing, addictions counselling, and income supports:
 - ✓ *The community kitchen is an effective way to engage parents, promote relationship building, promote skill development, and provide healthy food to families*

Six Valued Practices

- ❑ Provide programs and services that promote the development of life skills and household management skills, including budgeting, cost-effective grocery shopping, and nutritious low-cost meal preparation.
- ❑ Promote access to affordable, healthy food:
 - ✓ *Offer children a healthy snack at drop-ins*
 - ✓ *Offer a food cupboard that parents can utilize as needed*
 - ✓ *To encourage use and reduce stigma, resources for caregivers and parents -- such as food cupboards, clothing exchanges, and parenting resources -- should be free (or available at minimal cost), easily accessible, and self-selected*

Providing emotional and community social support to the parent is associated with consistent, nurturing child-rearing, which in turn is associated with lower levels of anti-social behaviour among low income children.

D. Promote Child Development:

The commitment to lifelong learning starts young. "Early learning revolves around relationships. It is recognized that key relationships for most children are based within their families." Quality early childhood programs have a solid understanding of what children are capable of learning and how they learn effectively. Furthermore, they have specific goals that support and increase parents' active participation in their children's early learning.

"Vocabulary skills and recognition of letter-sound combinations and print, numbers concept understanding, and organizational abilities are particularly important to later social and academic achievements."

- ❑ Programs should help parents recognize and understand the relationship between play-based activities and promotion of a child's readiness for school.
- ❑ Structure the program to include predictable routines, including circle time and a sit-down snack. These promote the child's ability to focus on and pay attention to individuals as well as routines.
- ❑ Create a learning environment by focusing on some key learning goals within the context of child-centered play.
 - ✓ *Provide a variety of manipulative tools (e.g. scissors, glue sticks) and mediums (e.g. sand or water table) to promote physical development*
 - ✓ *Provide toys suited to group play (play house, dress-up clothes) in order to promote interaction, sharing and taking turns; supporting the development of social skills*

Six Valued Practices

- ✓ *Utilize teaching resources that encourage recognition of numbers, alphabet, colours, animals, etc.*

What specific resources and services do we offer (or connect families with) that enable families to develop their skills and meet their needs?

What activities do we offer that promote parents' interactions and relationships with their children either at or outside of our drop-in?

Think back to a specific interaction with a parent or family. Identify the values and principles underlying your work with that person (or family).

Six Valued Practices

5. Valued Practices that Strengthen Communities

Valued practices that build community:

- A. Involve Parents
- B. Involve Community
- C. Welcome Diversity

Social attachment and relationships are vital to the optimal well-being of children and adults. Families who are socially connected and involved in their communities experience greater resiliency and higher functioning.

Family Resource Programs are “community hubs” which promote social cohesion and help to create communities.

A. Involve Parents:

Relationships between staff and families can be promoted and supported by parent involvement in such areas as planning and evaluation, governance, and volunteerism. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate at every level, as a culture of collective ownership creates an empowering environment.

- ❑ Staff should actively develop opportunities for participation, encourage and build confidence in parents, and act as coaches and mentors.
 - ✓ *Provide a variety of ways for families to participate and contribute:*
 - Preparing materials for crafts
 - Volunteering during program activities
 - Planning and organizing specific events
 - Peer counselling
 - Advisory council
- ❑ Try creative and flexible strategies to encourage involvement.
 - ✓ *Encourage families to participate by providing:*
 - Meals or snacks
 - On-site childcare
 - Transportation
- ❑ Peer counselling is an excellent way to engage parents with their community and facilitate relationship building amongst families.
 - ✓ *Parents require training and ongoing support as peer counsellors*
- ❑ Provide training opportunities to parents. Skill development increases self-esteem and equips participants to take on meaningful work opportunities as full partners in the organization.
- ❑ FRP staff and volunteers should have intimate knowledge of the community.

Six Valued Practices

- ❑ Ensure that parents sit on the Board of Directors or on a Parent Advisory Committee and are encouraged to actively participate in the governance of the program.
 - ✓ *Parents need to have sufficient information and orientation about activities and the operation of the Family Resource Program in order to effectively contribute*
- ❑ Be inclusive of all parents/caregivers.
 - ✓ *Involve fathers in a variety of roles: as program volunteers, or as a member of a parent advisory group*

B. Involve Community:

The involvement of community in identifying local issues is critical.

- ❑ Provide information to and seek input from community members on issues relevant to the local community.
- ❑ Involve community members in program design, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- ❑ Promote and support volunteerism. This helps to build both individual and community capacity.
- ❑ Tailor programs and activities to the unique needs and strengths of the community.

C. Welcome Diversity:

Both new and established immigrant families need timely, accessible and culturally appropriate community services to support the evolving needs of their families. Family Resource Programs recognize and respect the multi-cultural nature of their communities and follow practices that promote tolerance, honesty, respect and openness.

- ❑ Programs and services are offered in languages other than English, based on the community's needs.
- ❑ Family Resource Programs develop specific strategies to reach out and engage with Aboriginal families.
- ❑ Programs and activities include and honour a variety of cultural practices.

“Establishing trust and safety through caring relationships, providing guidance and challenge, and ensuring opportunities for meaningful participation in family and community are all protective factors in a child's environment. These factors can alter or even reverse negative outcomes and help children to develop resilience and positive coping skills.”

How can we create additional opportunities to draw upon the strengths and abilities of parents and caregivers in our community?

What ethnic or cultural practices are reflected in the activities of our Family Resource Program?

Six Valued Practices

6. Valued Practices in Governance and Administration

Valued practices in administration address:

- A. Staffing Practices
- B. Governance
- C. Financial Management
- D. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
- E. Partnerships

To achieve overall success of the Family Resource Program there has to be a governance structure that clearly supports and defines its mission, vision, principles, and ensures stability both financially and organizationally.

The “mission of the organization is its overall purpose in the community”. From this mission, the organization sets several goals. Staff, in consultation with the board and parents, then develop and implement programs, according to best practices, that will achieve these goals.

A. Staffing Practices:

- Effective Family Resource Programs follow practices that encourage staff retention.
 - ✓ *Provides continuity and stability for families and community and thus supports relationship building*
 - ✓ *Staff are treated with respect and as valued members of a team*
 - ✓ *Staff are provided appropriate salaries and benefits and enjoy a respectful working environment*
- Staff have formal and adequate post secondary training in Family Resource Programming, early childhood education or a combination of training and relevant life experience.
- Staff participate in professional development opportunities, whereby they not only gain knowledge and skills, but are also encouraged to look within and identify their own biases and behaviours that may have a negative impact on their ability to intervene effectively.

Examples of effective training include:

- ✓ *Child abuse prevention programs*
- ✓ *Understanding and prevention of FASD*
- ✓ *Developing and supporting peer mentoring programs*
- ✓ *Positive parenting programs (e.g. Nobody’s Perfect, Parent Child Mother Goose)*
- ✓ *Food Safety*

Six Valued Practices

- Aggregate staff skill set includes expertise in:
 - ✓ Working with parents, infants, and preschoolers
 - ✓ Bilingual/multicultural settings
 - ✓ Planning, research, and evaluation

- Staff actively engage in **reflective practice**, whereby they regularly gather to:
 - ✓ Discuss their work with families and children
 - ✓ Review and monitor the program and its objectives; plan activities
 - ✓ Evaluate their own interactions with clients
 - ✓ Participate in professional development opportunities

- Establish and follow a plan for volunteer recruitment, retention and ongoing professional development.
 - ✓ *Volunteers need to receive training, orientation and ongoing supervision specific to their roles and, more generally, to the philosophy, mandate, vision of the organization*
 - ✓ *Manage volunteers appropriately, particularly regarding scheduling (don't ask too much or too little!) and provide adequate supervision of day-to-day duties*

B. Governance:

There is a direct relationship between good governance practices, a high degree of board involvement, and overall organizational effectiveness. The Board is accountable to key stakeholders, including the community and major funders.

- The organization has a board of directors, as well as clear policies and protocols:
 - ✓ Board composition
 - ✓ Type of board (Policy, Policy Governance or Administrative)
 - ✓ Number of directors
 - ✓ Parent representation on the board
 - ✓ Responsibilities of board members
 - ✓ Qualifiers/disqualifiers for board membership

Paid staff or those who stand to benefit from decisions of the Board cannot act as Directors.

- Determine board committees, such as:
 - ✓ Executive Committee
 - ✓ Finance Committee (ensure that two signatories are required for all cheques)
 - ✓ Personnel Committee
 - ✓ Board Development Committee

- Establish guidelines for General membership.
 - ✓ *Annual fee*
 - ✓ *Criteria for membership*

Six Valued Practices

- ❑ The organization will have clear policies and protocols relating to personnel issues:
 - ✓ *Develop formal policy defining roles, and responsibilities and entitlements for the Executive Director, directors, general members, staff, and volunteers*
 - ✓ *Clarify lines of communication between board and staff*
 - ✓ *Conduct annual performance reviews of the Executive Director and other staff, considering measurable objectives*
 - ✓ *Develop and adhere to a Code of Conduct for board members, staff and volunteers. This will include but not be limited to:*
 - “Freedom of Information” and confidentiality policies that are stringently respected by staff and volunteers
 - Conflict of interest guidelines

TIP: A good source for Board Governance information: www.boarddevelopment.org/importance.cfm

C. Financial Management:

Strive to achieve a balance between internal stability and adaptability to external environment.

- ❑ Establish a 3 – 5 year Strategic Plan and monitor progress over time through an annual work plan. This will include strategies for achieving stable funding and financial support, preferably from multiple sources.
- ❑ Develop an annual budget that is monitored monthly by the Board and is available for review by the general membership.

D. Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation:

There is a positive correlation between staff involvement in program design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and effectiveness of the program itself.

Programs and activities have clear goals and objectives. Progress is tracked; tools and methods are in place to do so. Families and community are involved in planning and evaluation. Feedback derived from evaluation and monitoring is incorporated into the program.

- ❑ Family Resource Programs plan programs within the Five Core Areas of Service. Although the activities may vary, they adhere to the core intent.
- ❑ Involve staff and participants in program development, monitoring and evaluation.

Six Valued Practices

- ❑ Evaluation should be a participant-led, collaborative process that includes both those receiving and those delivering services. This “participatory evaluation approach” provides valuable qualitative data.
- ❑ Use a variety of means to gather data. Issues relating to ESL and literacy may limit participation in the traditional written forms of input.
 - ✓ Written surveys
 - ✓ Interviews
 - ✓ Focus groups
 - ✓ Observation
- ❑ Quantitative data is essential as well, in terms of measuring participation, capacity, and activity level.
 - ✓ *Appropriate tracking tools should be used to obtain relevant data*

E. Partnerships:

Organizations need to work on building relationships with parents and families, social agencies, government officials, funding sources, and leaders in the community.

Successful approaches:

- ❑ *Identify leaders in the community and actively pursue a positive relationship.*
- ❑ *Identify key ministerial politicians and staff. Keep them informed and up to date on your work. Treat them as partners not adversaries.*
- ❑ *Take into account the cultural realities and organizational dynamics of each partner organization. Understand that parents are more than participants, they are partners.*
- ❑ *Support open, regular communication and feedback with partners.*

What are the key “knowledge areas” and skill sets of our staff?

What are our training and professional development priorities?

Who are our key partners? How can we further strengthen these ties?

How well does our family resource program achieve good governance practices?

What are our priorities for improvement in governance and administration?