



# STEP 1: PREPARE FOR THE MEETING



## TOOLS + RESOURCES

### PARENT TOOLS:

- N/A

### COACH RESOURCES

- **READY TO COACH TODAY CHECKLIST**
- **EVERYDAY STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES**

*In Step 1, you are preparing yourself to get into a family-centered coaching mindset before each meeting with a parent. Step 1 is an acknowledgement that being fully present for a parent requires preparation and intention by the coach. The two Coach Resources can help you do this; your days are busy, and these resources are a means to reset your mindset before each meeting. Take five minutes before each meeting to review the resources.*

## COACH RESOURCES

### READY TO COACH TODAY CHECKLIST

This checklist is a simple reminder of quick and easy things you can do to calm your mind, set an intention for the meeting, and be sure your physical space is welcoming and reflects your commitment to being fully present for the parent. Over time, you may find that two or three suggestions become your “go to” items that you turn into habits. As you become acquainted with using the tips, you may decide to share some with parents as examples of things that might be helpful to them.

### EVERYDAY STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES

This resource takes into account the things you can do as a coach to help reduce the impact of stress and trauma experienced by families, as a result of institutional racism, implicit bias, poverty, inequality, and other factors.

A quick review of this resource provides you with 10 practical steps you can take during a meeting with families to help mitigate the impact of stress and trauma. While over time these strategies may become second nature to you, it is helpful to review them daily to make sure you are not missing some that may be key to working with your parents.



# READY TO COACH TODAY CHECKLIST

Below are some things you can do before each coaching session with a parent to help you get into a family-centered coaching mindset and be fully present.

## HOW CAN I HELP CLEAR MY MIND TO BE FREE FROM DISTRACTIONS DURING THE COACHING SESSION?

- If your mind is racing, jot your thoughts on a piece of paper.
- Draft your to-do list.
- Make note of work you want to address after the parent leaves.
- Take a few minutes to practice mindful breathing. Take six deep breaths in and out.

## HOW CAN I GET INTO A FAMILY-CENTERED MINDSET?

- Think of two strengths you bring to the coaching session and two strengths the parent brings.
- Identify a phrase to support you such as, “I am ready to enter into an equal partnership with my parent,” or “The parent is the expert and the coach guides the process.”
- Spend a minute in self-reflection to explore whether you have any hidden biases (e.g., race, gender, or class stereotypes) that may impact the coaching conversation.

## HOW CAN I PREPARE MY SPACE?

- Turn off your electronics and silence your cell phone.
- Silence additional additional phones in the office.
- Clear away any clutter in the room and on your desk.
- Ensure that comfortable seating is available.

## ADDITIONAL THINGS TO DO TO PREPARE FOR COACHING (ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS TO GET READY BELOW):

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# EVERYDAY STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES

**Knowing that institutional racism, implicit bias, poverty, and inequality result in many families experiencing trauma and toxic stress on a daily basis, there are things you can do as a coach to help reduce the impact of this stress and trauma when meeting with a parent or family member.**

Programs can make environmental modifications, when possible, to eliminate hassle factors that may affect the parent's participation, such as distance to the coaching meeting location, length of forms that parents complete, convenience of hours, requirements for parents to participate in the program, and other issues.

Based on the insight into best and promising practices from behavioral economics, trauma-informed care, and executive skills building, here are **10 things you can do every day** as a coach to help reduce this stress and trauma on families.

- 1. Provide a comfortable, safe, and private space to meet.**
- 2. Ensure that the physical environment reflects/honors the diverse groups in the community.**
- 3. Prepare yourself before every meeting to be a calm presence.**
- 4. Divide action items into small manageable steps.**
- 5. Develop short timelines for completing small steps to support parents in experiencing success early and consistently.**
- 6. Provide choices for parents whenever possible, including when and where to meet, and how they would like to receive services or referrals.**
- 7. Identify with parents ways to set reminders for themselves.**
- 8. Make decisions together.**
- 9. Make information clear, culturally relevant, and easy to read so that it is easy to act on.**
- 10. Remember to stay positive and build on parents' strengths.**





## STEP 2: BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP



### TOOLS + RESOURCES

#### PARENT TOOLS:

- WHO IS IN MY FAMILY?
- MY HOPES AND DREAMS

#### COACH RESOURCES

- FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING
- STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING WITH PARENTS
- BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER

*These are tools you can use to begin to know a parent and their family. The information gathered through these tools may change as you work with them or as their family conditions or composition changes. They may decide to include or not include particular people in their family as their life changes, and as they become more trusting of the coach-parent relationship and of their own understanding of who is their family. It might be helpful to revisit the tools completed by the parent every six months to reflect on them and see if there are shifts or changes.*

### PARENT TOOLS

#### WHO IS IN MY FAMILY?

These are tools you can use to get to know a parent and how they define their family, and to begin to identify family strengths. You can use this in several ways.

- Use it to engage in a conversation with a parent during the meeting, perhaps starting to fill it in together to make sure the parent understands the directions. Then have them complete it at home and bring it back to the next meeting.
- Complete the tool together, asking questions as it is filled in. The parent can take it home to share with other family members, adding to it or changing it as needed. When the parent returns, you can follow up with additional questions.

As the parent talks about their family, listen for who the people are who provide continual presence and help on a day-to-day basis, such as with child care and transportation, and those who serve more



as emotional supports for a parent. Parents need both types of support. This tool provides insight as to the breadth and depth of a parent's support network and lets you know who to be sure to ask about in follow-up visits.

During the conversation about who is in their family, listen for the hopes and dreams the parent shares as this will inform the second tool, *My Hopes and Dreams*.

## MY HOPES AND DREAMS

This tool is used in conjunction with *Who Is in My Family?* Once you have a sense of the family, you can more easily talk with the parent about their hopes and dreams at three levels: for their overall family, children, and themselves. Be clear with the parent that the hopes and dreams may change as you work together, which is normal and expected. This is simply the starting place.

There are several ways you can use this tool:

- Coach and parent use it as a discussion tool to help the parent see that there are three layers of goals and that all of them are important. Know that sometimes it may be easiest for a parent to identify goals for their children, but hardest to do for themselves. Help them think about how all three goals tie together and support the overall well-being of the family. For example, if the parent has a goal of returning to school, but is concerned that it will negatively impact the children because she/he will be less available to them, be sure to help her/him understand how this goal helps the family in the long term.
- Discuss the tool, and have the parent complete it at home with the family, and bring it back to the next meeting.
- The parent's responses can help you understand their priority areas on *The Wheel of Life* in Step 3 and inform goal setting in Step 5 – Plan, Do, Review.

## COACH RESOURCES

### FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING

This graphic is a quick visual reminder of the six steps.

- Some coaches like to hang a copy by their desk for a quick check-in on the coaching process.
- Other coaches, depending on the design of their program, may want to share and discuss it with the parent. Be sure to note that the steps are a guide to the coaching process and the tools used. Explain that the parent and coach decide together on the use of the tools. This can be a good opportunity to talk about how the information gathered through the tools is used to inform subsequent steps and to help develop goals for family well-being. Provide a copy of the tool for the parent to share with the family as needed.



## **STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING WITH PARENTS**

This is a quick reference guide for how each coaching step unfolds. Before meeting with a parent, refresh yourself by reading this so you are comfortable describing the coaching process with the parent.

### **BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER**

Active listening lays the foundation for establishing trust and developing the relationship. Before each meeting, take a minute to review the five active listening techniques. Most of us use at least a few of these on a regular basis, and you may be more comfortable with some than others. Identify what those may be for you and try to expand or vary the techniques used.



# WHO IS IN MY FAMILY?

Remember that families can be created and thought of as a circle of support, not necessarily defined by blood or biology, and not necessarily permanent, since the people included and not included can change at different times.

## OUR FAMILY

**1. Write the name of each person who plays an important role in your family.**

Think about children, mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, as well as friends and neighbors that you really consider family.

**2. Draw lines to show your relationship to each person.**

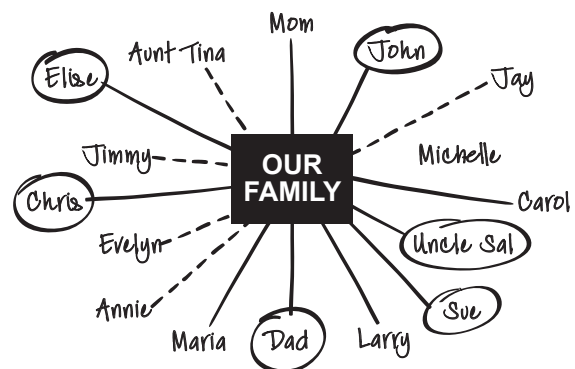
Draw a solid line to the names of people who are important in your day-to-day life, and a dotted line to those who are important to you but may not play as large a role in your day-to-day life.

**3. Draw a circle around the names of people who provide support for your daily activities.**

Think about who you are regularly engaged with and rely on, and who relies on you.

Consider which family, friends and neighbors are critical to helping manage your daily life.

**EXAMPLE:**



# MY HOPES AND DREAMS

## MY HOPES AND DREAMS FOR MY OVERALL FAMILY

What are your goals for your overall family? Are there things you would like to achieve in the next 3-6 months?

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## MY HOPES AND DREAMS FOR MY CHILDREN

Think about their physical well-being, social well-being, learning and thinking, communication, and ability to take care of themselves. What are some of their strengths and challenges/concerns?

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What short-term (3-6 months) hopes or goals do you have for each child?

What are your biggest worries about each child?

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## MY HOPES AND DREAMS FOR ME

What are your goals or hopes for yourself? Are there goals or things you'd like to do differently?

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# FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING



**STEP 1:**  
PREPARE FOR  
THE MEETING

**COACH RESOURCES:**

READY TO COACH  
TODAY CHECKLIST  
EVERYDAY  
STRATEGIES  
FOR WORKING  
WITH FAMILIES



**STEP 2:**  
BUILD THE  
RELATIONSHIP

**PARENT TOOLS:**

WHO IS IN  
MY FAMILY?  
MY HOPES  
AND DREAMS

**COACH RESOURCES:**

FAMILY-  
CENTERED  
COACHING  
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE  
TO FAMILY-  
CENTERED COACHING  
WITH PARENTS  
BECOMING AN  
ACTIVE LISTENER



**STEP 3:**  
FOCUS OUR  
WORK

**PARENT TOOLS:**

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

**COACH RESOURCES:**

CONTENT MODULES  
TEMPLATE FOR  
DEVELOPING A LOCAL  
RESOURCE GUIDE



**STEP 4:**  
ASSESS WHAT  
ROLE TO PLAY

**PARENT TOOLS:**

ROLES A COACH  
CAN PLAY

**COACH RESOURCES:**

THE SIX FAMILY-  
CENTERED COACHING  
STEPS: ROLES OF  
PARENT AND COACH  
WHAT APPROACH DO I  
USE? ASSESSING  
READINESS  
FOR CHANGE  
TRANSITIONING  
AMONG THE  
APPROACHES  
FAMILY-FOCUSED  
POWERFUL  
QUESTIONS



**STEP 5:**  
PLAN, DO,  
REVIEW

**PARENT TOOLS:**

PLAN, DO, REVIEW

**COACH RESOURCES:**

HOW TO HAVE  
EFFECTIVE  
BRAINSTORMING  
SESSIONS



**STEP 6:**  
PLAN FOR  
SUPPORT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY

**PARENT TOOLS:**

PLAN, DO, REVIEW

**COACH RESOURCES:**

HOW TO HAVE  
EFFECTIVE  
BRAINSTORMING  
SESSIONS



# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING WITH PARENTS

Below is a guide to working with parents using a family-centered approach that also aligns with a set of tools you can use when working with parents. You may not want to use every tool every time – rather, you can select whichever one you think would be most helpful to support the parent’s goals. These steps represent best practices informed by the behavioral economics, trauma-informed care, and executive skills fields.

## STEP 1 – PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

Before meeting with a parent, review your checklist on Ready to Coach Today.

Make sure you have a private and welcoming space to meet that is respectful of diverse cultures.

If needed, identify a child-friendly space for children to play when meeting privately with the parent.

### COACH RESOURCES:

- READY TO COACH TODAY CHECKLIST
- EVERYDAY STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH FAMILIES

## STEP 2 – BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP

Be sure to be on time to greet the parent and walk them to your meeting space.

Ask the parent, “What brings you here today?”

The answer will help identify if a parent is in crisis and needs to have that addressed before focusing on building the relationship. If the parent is not in crisis, explain the family-centered coaching process, then discuss and decide together the expectations for both you and the parent.

As needed, share the graphic of Family-Centered Coaching. Things to discuss include how often you will meet, preferred communication method, and any challenges such as transportation, limited time for sessions, and other issues.

Ask the parent about themselves and their family. Use the *Who Is in My Family?* and *My Hopes and Dreams* worksheets to guide the conversation. Explain that this step provides an opportunity for parents to identify some initial goals they have for themselves and their family.

### PARENT TOOLS:

- WHO IS IN MY FAMILY?
- MY HOPES AND DREAMS

### COACH RESOURCES:

- FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING
- STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING WITH PARENTS
- BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER

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### STEP 3 – FOCUS OUR WORK

Share *The Wheel of Life* and use it as a discussion tool. Ask the parent to complete it, or complete it with the parent (take the cue from parent about which way is more comfortable) and use it as a basis for discussing areas that may need further attention.

Discuss how the needs and interests of the parent and those of family members may impact each other.

Explain that this step in working together provides the parent an opportunity to identify areas where they and/or members of their family are strong and have had successes, and other areas where they may want to improve or make changes.

Using *The Wheel of Life* as a guide, ask the parent to identify the two or three areas they would like to begin to work on together.

Be explicit in asking how moving forward on identified areas helps the overall family and the parent's well-being. Ask the parent what other family members may think about focusing on these areas. As needed, use the Content Modules as guides for conversations with parents about different domains.

#### PARENT TOOLS:

- THE WHEEL OF LIFE

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- CONTENT MODULES (FOR THE EIGHT DOMAINS OF THE WHEEL OF LIFE)

### STEP 4 – ASSESS WHAT ROLE TO PLAY

During the discussion of *The Wheel of Life*, listen to the language used by the parent to begin to identify their stage of change. You can refer to the What Approach Do I Use? Assessing Readiness for Change tip sheet to help you identify the parent's stage of change and understand which approach can be most useful in moving them forward.

Share the handout Roles a Coach Can Play and discuss what they think would be useful to them. If a parent is uncertain as to what might be most helpful, ask if you can share your thoughts based on what you've heard from the parent. Then decide together what role you as a coach can best play to help them move forward.

Remember, for each content area identified, a parent may need a different approach to guide them toward readiness for goal-setting and making a change. Make sure to talk with them about which approach you will both agree to use at a given time.

You can return to this step at any time during the overall process (even during the other steps) if the parent encounters a crisis or urgent need, or demonstrates a need to reassess their readiness.

#### PARENT TOOLS:

- ROLES A COACH CAN PLAY

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- THE SIX FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING STEPS: ROLES OF PARENT AND COACH
- WHAT APPROACH DO I USE? ASSESSING READINESS FOR CHANGE
- TRANSITIONING AMONG THE APPROACHES
- FAMILY-FOCUSED POWERFUL QUESTIONS

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## STEP 5 – PLAN, DO, REVIEW

Once the parent has identified priority areas, and they have demonstrated readiness for goal-setting and interest in addressing a particular area, use the Plan, Do, Review worksheet to set goals and make a plan for steps to take toward the goal(s).

In the Plan phase, you work together to generate ideas to help move the parent toward the identified goals. Use the How to Have Effective Brainstorming Sessions tool to help parents freely generate options.

Then begin planning a series of small and manageable next steps to reach each goal. Establish a timeline for each step, ideally no more than a week ahead to help build small successes. Identify any obstacles, and develop a plan to address them. Be sure to brainstorm how to gain family support to help carry out the steps.

In the Do phase, discuss with the parent what kind of support is needed from the coach and what resources may be needed. Note that the two of you will discuss how and when your support is reduced or modified over time.

Explain that the Review phase is a way to provide supportive feedback to the parent and also a way to keep both you and the parent accountable for steps to be taken.

Explain that during the Review phase, you and the parent will look at progress made on the steps, make revisions to the steps, and address any obstacles encountered.

### **FAMILY TOOLS:**

- PLAN, DO, REVIEW

### **COACH RESOURCES:**

- HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

*continued →*



## STEP 6 – PLAN FOR ONGOING SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Discuss with the parent how each of you will be accountable in the relationship. Decide together what process of accountability will work best for both of you. This includes deciding how and when they will apprise you of progress made or support needed, whether it be through regular meeting times, email, or phone calls. It also includes how you will be timely and responsive in providing information or support requested by the parent.

If a parent doesn't complete the task they committed to, this is an opportunity for both of you to explore why, together. Perhaps the parent needs more support to complete the task. Did you provide the resources you committed to?

In addition, develop a support plan together with the parent that includes others such as family, friends, and co-workers.

Step 6 is also an opportunity for you and the parent to establish accountability for revisiting how the coaching relationship in general is working as noted in Step 2 – Build the Relationship.

### **FAMILY TOOLS:**

- PLAN, DO, REVIEW

### **COACH RESOURCES:**

- HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS



# BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER - FROM MINDTOOLS.COM

There are five key active listening techniques. They all help you ensure that you hear the other person, and that the other person knows you are hearing what they say.

## 1. PAY ATTENTION

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also “speaks” loudly.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don’t mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors -- for example, side conversations.
- “Listen” to the speaker’s body language.

## 2. SHOW THAT YOU'RE LISTENING

Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like “yes”, and “uh huh.”

## 3. PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. “What I’m hearing is,” and “Sounds like you are saying,” are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. “What do you mean when you say?” and “Is this what you mean?”
- Summarize the speaker’s comments periodically.

**TIP:** *If you find yourself responding emotionally to what someone said, say so, and ask for more information: “I may not be understanding you correctly, and I find myself taking what you said personally. What I thought you just said is \_\_\_; is that what you meant?”*



#### 4. DEFER JUDGMENTS

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don't interrupt with counterarguments.

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#### 5. RESPOND APPROPRIATELY

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.

- Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

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*These tips are excerpted from:*

<http://www.georgiadisaster.info/Military/fs%205%20military/Active%20Listening.pdf>





## STEP 3: FOCUS OUR WORK



### TOOLS + RESOURCES

#### PARENT TOOLS:

- **THE WHEEL OF LIFE**

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- **CONTENT MODULES**
- **TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING A LOCAL RESOURCE GUIDE**

### PARENT TOOLS

#### THE WHEEL OF LIFE

This tool helps a parent and coach explore a family's overall well-being in key areas. It allows the parent to assess different areas of well-being and identify which areas need the most attention.

This tool helps the parent prioritize where to set goals and which goals to set. It gives the parent the opportunity to decide what is important to them in this period of time. Encourage a parent to add other categories as needed, such as faith/religion, travel, art, music, or sports/recreation.

- Share *The Wheel of Life*, use it as a discussion tool, and have the parent complete it. Review the content areas to make sure the parent understands what each one is. Note that some areas may not apply to their life. Encourage the parent to add another category as needed.
- Discuss how the needs of the parent and those of family members may impact each other.
- Identify together areas where they and/or members of their family are strong and have had successes, and other areas where they may want to improve their level of satisfaction.
- Using *The Wheel of Life* as a guide, ask the parent to decide which two or three areas they would like to begin to work on together. For some parents, focusing on one area first may be most helpful.

Talk through together the first page of the tool using these guiding questions:

- As a parent ranks each content area using the scale of 1 to 5, get clarity on what a 5 or a 1 means for a parent – it will very certainly mean different things for different parents. A “5” in finances may mean that they no longer have a bill collector calling them, or it could mean that they have enough





money to cover bills each month and are saving for college. A “5” in housing may mean that they are not being evicted next month as they anticipated. A “1” in transportation may mean that they are taking public transportation to work, but that it is nearly an hour-and-a-half commute.

- As a parent talks about each area, listen for how this area may relate to different family members. For example, it may be that a parent has an added family member living with them who is in crisis and whose needs are overshadowing the goals a parent has for their children.
- Think about whether the hopes and dreams noted in the tools from Step 2 (*My Hopes and Dreams*) are aligned with what the parent is sharing in *The Wheel of Life*. If not, use that for further discussion with the parent. In addition, are there key family members or situations noted in the *Who Is in My Family?* tool from Step 2 that are not reflected in *The Wheel of Life*? If so, explore why.

For page 2 of *The Wheel of Life*, use the questions listed to guide further conversation with the parent and to begin to narrow down where they would like to focus their coaching work. Make sure the parent is clear on what the questions are asking. Here are some options for how to use page 2:

- As you and the parent talk, have the parent begin to write down their answers to the six questions or to make notes. Use that information to then have the parent identify the top three priority areas for your coaching work together. Note that these priority areas may change as you work together, but that this provides a good starting place. Remember that literacy levels may mean that you need to jot notes for the parents after checking in with them about it.
- Discuss the questions together and then have the parent complete the answers at home, maybe including family members in the conversation, and bring them back for the next meeting.
- The question, “*Are there ways that others can help with the areas of your life that are out of sync?*” provides an opportunity for the parent to reflect on the support network identified on the tool *Who Is in My Family?* and to think intentionally and strategically about how the parent can draw on their support network.

## COACH RESOURCES

### TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING A LOCAL RESOURCE GUIDE

*The Wheel of Life* identifies eight areas of a parent’s life – seven content areas and a category for “other.” While a coach is not expected to be a content expert in each area, they are expected to know where to find those coaches and/or organizations who are and how to make warm referrals. You probably already have some version of a resource guide in your program or agency. Use this template to expand the type of information that is included for your referral partners to promote “warmer” referrals and to add to the partners/resources needed for each of the eight areas of the Wheel.

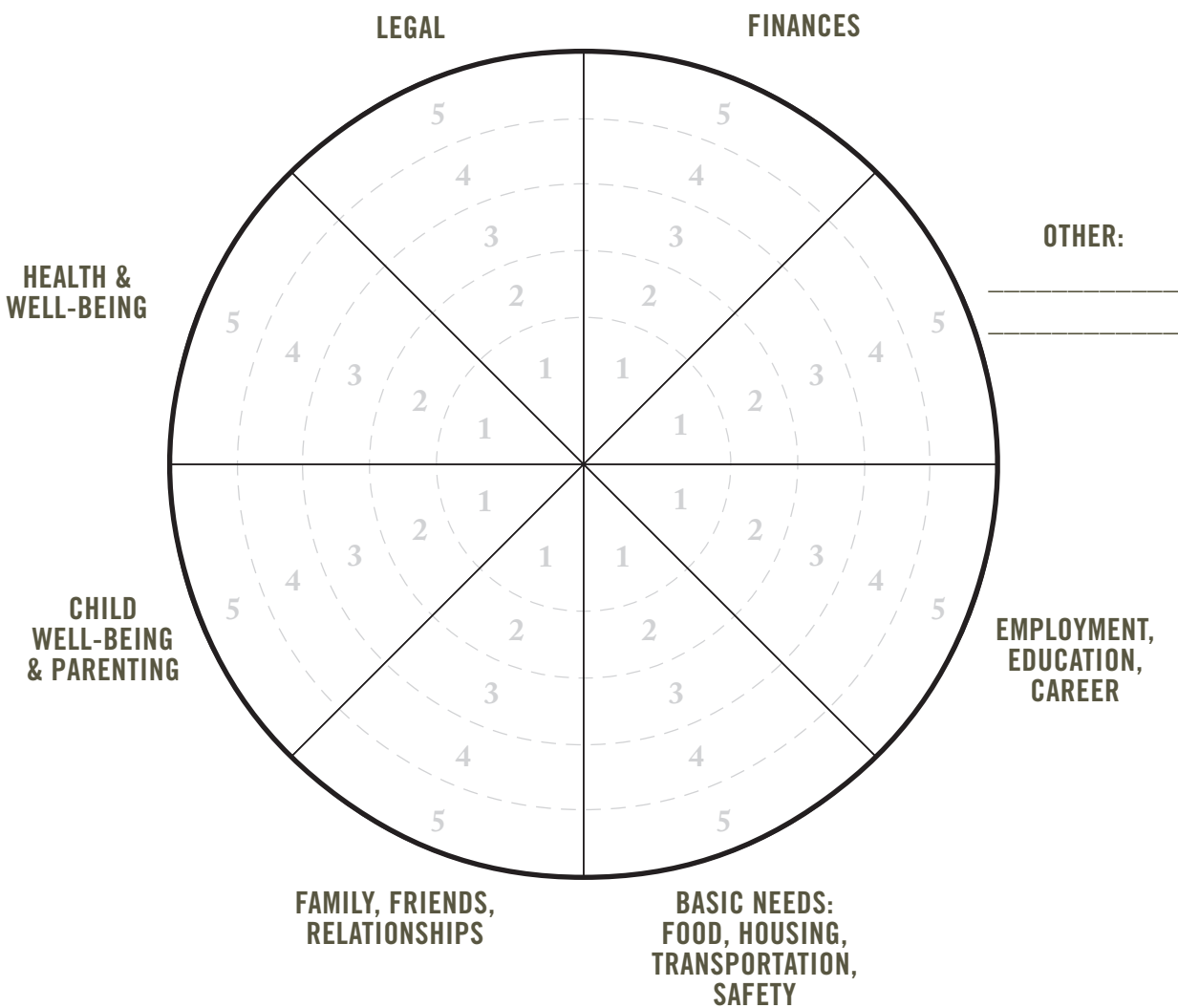
Share this resource guide with your families. They can also use the template for developing a list of their own resources that support their families.



# THE WHEEL OF LIFE

Fill in each of the eight slices in *The Wheel of Life* to gauge the level of balance in your life.

- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied, fill in the slice for each category up to the number that reflects your current level of satisfaction. You may use the slice labeled “Other” to add an additional category of your choosing.
- Leave blank any slice that you don’t believe applies to your life.
- Consider your completed wheel and what it says about your level of satisfaction in each category, answer the questions that follow, and then list your priorities for helping to bring your wheel into balance.



# MY WHEEL OF LIFE

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## LOOKING AT YOUR WHEEL, THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What's out of sync?

What if I looked at a piece of the wheel from a different perspective?

What if I let someone or others help?

What is my expectation for my family?

What would be realistic?

What's missing?

## PICK 3 TOP PRIORITY AREAS:

1.

2.

3.



# TEMPLATE FOR DEVELOPING A LOCAL RESOURCE GUIDE

This template is based on the LIFT-DC Referral Catalogue developed for use with participants in their programs. It intends to facilitate a “warm referral” when referring a parent or family for services such as job training and education programs, housing assistance, health and basic needs, and any other service needs identified.

Knowing that most services are local in nature, we encourage you to review and revise your current resource guide, incorporating the best practices which have helped provide for smoother and more transparent referrals for parents.

Use these steps as a guide to revise your resource guide.

- 1. Identify the types of resources your parents may find most helpful as they participate in family-centered coaching.**
- 2. Visit the sites to meet the staff person who will be the point of contact, learn about the program and resources, and take photos of both the contact person and the building.**
- 3. Develop one-page information sheets on each resource, including the following:**
  - a. Services
  - b. Eligibility
  - c. Contact
  - d. Ways to Connect (This includes walk-in hours and specific hours for orientation/intake. Include a photo of the building so parents can see exactly where they are going.)
  - e. Program Spotlight (This is an opportunity to highlight a program of particular interest to your participants. It can feature a logo and one or two lines of description.)
  - f. Staff Spotlight (This is a place to have a picture of a key staff person who your participants may be most likely to interact with and a one-line description of the program they are with.)





## STEP 4: ASSESS WHAT ROLE TO PLAY



### TOOLS + RESOURCES

#### PARENT TOOLS:

- **ROLES A COACH CAN PLAY**

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- **THE SIX FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING STEPS: ROLES OF PARENT AND COACH**
- **WHAT APPROACH DO I USE? ASSESSING READINESS FOR CHANGE**
- **TRANSITIONING AMONG THE APPROACHES**
- **FAMILY-FOCUSED POWERFUL QUESTIONS**

## PARENT TOOLS

### ROLES A COACH CAN PLAY

This tool supports the family-centered coaching principles of being transparent and peer-based. By being transparent about the different roles a coach can play, you keep the parent in the driver's seat, setting the agenda. Making the roles clear to the parent ensures the coach is operating from a peer-based perspective.

- Share this tool and explain to the parent that there are three main roles you can play as you work together, and that these can change in the course of a meeting and/or at different meetings. As the coach, these roles align with the three approaches of case management, readiness assessment, and goal-setting.
- Review the three roles and answer any questions the parent may have.
- Explain that at different times based on the conversation and information shared, you will be checking in with the parent to see which role would be most helpful to them. Let the parent know you will be asking permission to switch roles as they are the ones deciding what would work best.
- If a parent is uncertain about what might be most helpful, you can then ask if they would like your input.
- Programs may use alternate language to describe these three roles based on staffing patterns, and thus, can modify the tool to reflect that. For example, a program might have a Case Manager, a Career Coach, and a Family Advocate. Each may play one of the distinct roles.



## COACH RESOURCES

### THE SIX FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING STEPS: ROLES OF PARENT AND COACH

This tool may best be used as a training tool with staff. It outlines the six family-centered coaching steps from the perspectives of the parent and coach in each step. Some programs have a program design that mirrors the six steps but use different language. In that case, organizations or coaches can use the tool to see how their program aligns in practice with the steps outlined and integrate any missing approaches or steps.

- When using this as a training or refresher tool for a coach, point out that it clearly shows the parent is in the driver's seat.
- As you review the training tool, staff can discuss the importance of helping the parent see how and when it might be useful for the coach to play different roles at different stages of the family-centered coaching process.

### WHAT APPROACH DO I USE? ASSESSING READINESS FOR CHANGE

Review this tool before meeting with a parent to help you listen for words/phrases that identify their readiness for change. Think about what language they have already been using and see where it fits on the chart.

If you are having trouble gauging a parent's readiness for change, refer to the techniques listed in the *What Approach Do I Use* tool about eliciting more information or watching for other signs of change.

### TRANSITIONING AMONG THE APPROACHES

This tool is helpful for training purposes as it helps clarify language used by the coach when playing each of the three roles, and how they can move among the three approaches of case management, readiness assessment, and goal-setting.

On an ongoing basis and once you are working with a parent, it can be helpful to review this before a meeting to help prompt you and/or to refer to this tool after a meeting if the conversation was getting "stuck." What types of questions were you asking? Could it be that the parent is in a different stage of change and thus was not responding to those questions? Look to see if there are some other prompts for how to engage with the parent that may better reflect their stage of change.

### FAMILY-FOCUSED POWERFUL QUESTIONS

This set of questions can be used in this step and others. In Step 4, these questions can help you assess the role of family members and where some of them might be on the readiness for change scale compared to the parent. Doing so allows you to better converse with the parent and coach them on how to work with family members who are not supportive and/or harness the support of family members who are supportive of the changes proposed.



## ROLES A COACH CAN PLAY

As a parent, you can think about and decide what you would like from the coach as you work together in partnership. A coach can play three different roles to support and work with you. During each meeting, you decide what role would best support you. A coach can play different roles in the same meeting – you are the one who decides!

SHARING INFORMATION	EXPLORING	PLANNING
<p>A coach can provide their knowledge of specific information and access to services or resources that might be helpful to you.</p> <p>You decide when and if this is what you want.</p>	<p>If you might be feeling uncertain about next steps to take or maybe just feel a bit “stuck,” a coach can engage in a conversation with you to explore what is going on and how you can address your concerns.</p>	<p>When you are clear on a family goal, a coach can work with you to describe the goal and help guide you through a planning process to identify steps to take to move you forward toward your goal.</p>



# THE SIX FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING STEPS

## ROLES OF PARENT AND COACH

STEP	PARENT	COACH
STEP 1: PREPARE FOR THE MEETING		The coach takes time before each meeting to get centered and prepare the space for the meeting.
STEP 2: BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP	The parent identifies who is in their family and the hopes and dreams they have for their family and themselves.  <b>The parent sets the agenda.</b>	The coach and parent discuss and agree how they want to work together, taking into account the interests of the family.  <b>The coach guides the process.</b>
STEP 3: FOCUS OUR WORK	The parent identifies areas in their life in which they would like to achieve results supporting whole-family well-being.	The coach listens and asks clarifying questions to support the parent in identifying priority areas for the family.
STEP 4: ASSESS WHAT ROLE TO PLAY	The parent shares more about their desire for results and how they might achieve them. The parent and coach together decide whether the parent is ready to move forward with goal-setting for each area. If not, the parent and coach continue to work together toward readiness for goal-setting.	The coach listens to the parent and together they decide the role needed from the coach—case management, readiness assessment, or goal-setting, based on the interests identified by the parent.
STEP 5: PLAN, DO, REVIEW	The parent identifies goals that support whole-family well-being. The parent generates ideas and together with the coach makes a plan to achieve the goal, taking into account the interests of family members.	The coach provides support and access to resources as requested by the parent. The coach helps parent brainstorm and develop a plan how to gain support from family and others in support of their plan.
STEP 6: PLAN FOR SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY	The parent identifies and makes a support plan for how to gain support from family, friends, and others to achieve their plan.  The parent and coach together make a plan for how to be accountable to each other for their roles in supporting progress on steps.	The coach works with parent to develop a support plan that includes others such as family members, friends, and co-workers.  The parent and coach together make a plan for how to be accountable to each other for their roles in supporting progress on steps.





## WHAT APPROACH DO I USE? ASSESSING READINESS FOR CHANGE

This table outlines how the different stages of change are mapped to one or more of three suggested approaches – Case Management, Readiness Assessment, and Goal Setting. The first column, “Person’s Perspective,” provides examples of what language a parent might use during a meeting that would signal where they are on a particular topic. Once you have a better sense of a participant’s perspective, you can use this table to help determine their stage of change, and then map that stage to a suggested approach.

### STAGES OF CHANGE

PERSON’S PERSPECTIVE	STAGE OF CHANGE	SUGGESTED APPROACH
<i>“I need x.” or “I can’t think about change.”</i>	NOT READY FOR CHANGE	<b>CASE MANAGEMENT</b>
<i>“Change what?” or “I won’t.” or “I can’t.”</i>	PRE-CONTEMPLATION	<b>READINESS ASSESSMENT</b>
<i>“Change? Maybe.” or “I might.” or “I may.”</i>	CONTEMPLATION	
<i>“Yes. But how?” or “I will.”</i>	PREPARATION	
<i>“I’m ready. Let’s do it.” or “I am.”</i>	ACTION	<b>GOAL SETTING</b>
<i>“How do I keep it going?” or “I still am.”</i>	MAINTENANCE	<b>READINESS ASSESSMENT/ GOAL SETTING</b>
<i>“If I slip, what can I do?” or “I’m not sure.”</i>	RELAPSE/RECYCLE	

### TWO BASIC TECHNIQUES TO MAKE THE ASSESSMENT ABOUT A PARENT’S READINESS FOR CHANGE

#### 1. LOOK FOR SIGNS OF READINESS TO CHANGE

- The person seems to have “talked through” the area of concern and becomes more quiet and thoughtful.
- Some people may seem to have reached some resolve about the issue and may seem more



peaceful or settled. Others might be feeling some of the loss associated with the situation and could be tearful or resigned.

- The person increases how much they talk about making the change (reason for changing, intention to change, problems with the way things are, etc.).
- The person may start asking questions about change, such as what he or she could do about the problem, how other people change, etc.
- The person starts talking about how things might be if they made the change: both the positive outcomes and the challenges of making the change.
- The person tells you about trying out some new behaviors related to changing, e.g., cutting down on alcohol use.

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## **2. ASK DIRECTLY ABOUT THE PERSON'S READINESS TO CHANGE**

- Ask an open-ended question about readiness to change such as, “How ready do you feel to make some changes in this area?”
- Listen and reflect back what you hear. In general, people fall somewhere along the line of being “Not Ready,” “Unsure,” or “Ready.”
- Ask for more information: “What are some of the things that have got you thinking about making a change?” “What would have to happen for you to be more ready to consider making a change?” “What are some of the things that make you unsure about making a change?”
- Listen and summarize what the person says.
- If appropriate, ask a key question: “Where does this leave you now?”
- If the person does not appear to be ready for change, reflect this back to him or her and leave the door open for future discussion. Consider approaching the issue through one of the methods described above.

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*From “Tools to Strengthen Families and Communities: A Compendium,” National Program Office of Free To Grow Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, [www.freetogrow.org](http://www.freetogrow.org)*



# TRANSITIONING AMONG THE APPROACHES

What does it sound like when a coach moves from one approach to another? Below are some examples of the language used when applying each approach.

CASE MANAGEMENT	READINESS ASSESSMENT	GOAL-SETTING
<p>Staff-driven process for actively addressing issues that arise in parents' lives</p>	<p>Process to help participants explore what might be getting in the way of taking action toward the desired results</p>	<p>The parent sets the agenda to achieve change and the coach guides the process</p>
<p><b>The coach asks more “yes” or “no” questions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you or your family members need help with any urgent or pressing problem right now?</li> <li>• Do you need child care to be able to get to your new job?</li> <li>• Do you already have or need assistance paying rent?</li> <li>• Do you need help getting your medical care or medications paid for?</li> <li>• Does your income meet your basic expenses?</li> <li>• Do you have any serious outstanding bills?</li> <li>• Do you need any help applying for or keeping your benefits?</li> </ul> <p><b>The coach asks questions that have definitive answers.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other agencies are you working with?</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach asks open-ended questions or asks for elaboration or details such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways?</li> <li>• How are you going to do that?</li> <li>• Can you give an example of ____?</li> </ul> <p><b>The coach reflects what the person is saying:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounds like...</li> <li>• What I'm hearing is...</li> <li>• So you're saying that...</li> <li>• You're feeling like...</li> <li>• For you, it's a matter of...</li> <li>• From your point of view...</li> <li>• You are...</li> <li>• I would imagine you...</li> <li>• Must be...</li> <li>• Through your eyes...</li> <li>• Your belief is that...</li> <li>• Your concern is that...</li> <li>• It seems to you that...</li> <li>• You're excited about...</li> <li>• You're thinking about...</li> <li>• The important thing as you see it is...</li> </ul>	<p><b>The coach asks questions to help someone achieve a defined goal.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would be the most helpful thing for you to take away from this conversation?</li> <li>• Can you explain what you mean by ...?</li> <li>• What have you tried so far?</li> <li>• Do I have that right?</li> <li>• What are some possible ways to get the answer you need?</li> <li>• What are other possible ways to get the answer you need?</li> <li>• What additional support or resources do you need?</li> <li>• How/when will you implement this?</li> </ul>



# FAMILY-FOCUSED POWERFUL QUESTIONS

## ASSESSMENT

- What will your family think is best?
- How will your family feel about your goal?
- What about your goal will resonate most with your family?

## ELABORATION

- What other ideas might your family have?
- What else would your family say?
- What more would your family want?

## EVALUATION

- What is the opportunity for your family?
- What is the challenge for your family?
- How does this fit with your family's plans/way of life/values?

## EXPLORATION

- What can you explore with your family?
- What part of the situation have you not yet explored with your family?
- What other angles would your family suggest?
- What is just one more possibility?
- What are your other options?

## IMPLEMENTATION

- What role can your family play in your action plan?
- How can your family support you?
- Which family members will you ask to support you?
- When will you do it?

## OUTCOMES

- What do you want for your family?
- If you got it, what would you have?
- How will you know you have reached it?
- What would it look like?

## PREDICTIONS

- How do you suppose it will impact your family?
- Where will this lead your family?
- What will your family gain or lose?
- What are the chances of success?

## REOURCES

- What resources can your family provide to help you decide?
- What do you know about it now?
- What do you need to know and how can your family help you access this information?

## TAKING ACTION

- What action will you take?
- What actions will family members take?
- And after that?
- What will you do? When?
- By what date or time will you complete these steps?
- By what date or time will your family members complete their





## STEP 5: PLAN, DO, REVIEW



### TOOLS + RESOURCES

#### FAMILY TOOLS:

- **PLAN, DO, REVIEW**

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- **HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS**

### PARENT TOOLS:

#### PLAN, DO, REVIEW

This tool helps the parent to begin making a specific plan to reach a goal.

- Refer back to The Wheel of Life tool where the parent identified two or three priority areas. Using that as a starting place, ask the parent if those are still the priority areas. If so, then explain that together, you will be setting a separate goal with steps for each priority area.
- Based on your previous conversations with the parent, you will have some understanding of the strengths and challenges the family brings to each priority area.
- Review the sections of the tool with the parent. If this is the first session to develop a plan, note that you will be focusing on two sections of the tool – setting the goal and developing the plan. Review the Do and Review sections of the plan so they know how this tool will be used in follow-up meetings, and what is expected of both the parent and coach in between meetings.
- If this is the first time a parent has done goal-setting, it can be helpful to start with the priority area that lends itself most easily to defining a goal and action steps. This builds confidence, skills, and experience to then set goals for the other areas.
- As the coach, you may want to refer back to the content modules (aligned with each of the eight areas of The Wheel of Life) for each priority area to help ask powerful questions as you work together with the parent to refine the goals. You may also want to review any of the resources listed for the content area prior to the meeting so you can have information readily available to share if needed.



- Let the parent know that this session will involve a lot of brainstorming together to generate ideas and that there are no bad ideas! It is important to leave judgments aside. Use the tips on How to Have Effective Brainstorming Sessions located in the Coach Resources section.
- Note that the goal is to help improve family well-being. Together, you may want to review the previously completed tool *My Hopes and Dreams* to think about how or if the goal for the content area takes the parent's concerns and goals for their children into account. As the coach, refer back to the list of Family-Focused Powerful Questions (found in Step 4 Instructions and Tools) to inform the setting of the goal.
- As you begin to formulate a plan together, you may want to look back at the parents' *Who Is in My Family?* tool (found in Step 2 Instructions and Tools); think about how best to harness the support of family members; and identify any additional people who might be of support in the implementation of the steps.
- Once the parent has set a goal and developed a list of steps under the Plan section, be sure to review it and decide how or if the parent may want to check in between meetings.
- Continue setting small goals with a short time frame (one week or less) for the other key content areas identified by the parent.
- This tool is useful for keeping both yourself and the parent accountable for action steps between meetings. It reinforces the family-centered coaching operational principle of being peer-based by keeping the relationship collaborative.

## COACH RESOURCES

### HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

- This tool is most useful for training purposes. It can also be useful to review before meeting with the parent to review what to say to set the stage for brainstorming, how to conduct a brainstorming session, and what to do once you've generated lots of ideas.
- Share the process for brainstorming with the parent so that they can use it with their family. This modeling provides transparency and also supports the family in building their skills and strengths, recognizing that the work of achieving a family's goals is led by the family.



# PLAN-DO-REVIEW TOOL

This tool helps parents to refine goals and make concrete plans to achieve them. First, identify your big goal, also known as a milestone, and then use the tool that follows to plan for each smaller goal to get to your milestone.

**MAJOR MILESTONE:**

**What are you are trying to improve and how will it benefit your family?**

**What is the first goal under this milestone?**

**What are the small steps toward your goal? Keep the steps small so they are manageable and progress can be made.**

*For each step needed to reach the goal, have a separate Plan-Do-Review sheet, found on the following page.*

STEP 1:

STEP 2:

STEP 3:

STEP 4:



STEP # : \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN**

What actions will be taken? What role will family members play? Who will do it (include family members)? When will it be done? Where will it be done?

**DO**

The parent and their family implement the plan and carry out actions.

**REVIEW**

**YES:**

**NO:**

How did it go? Did things happen according to the plan? How did the plan work for your family? What was successful? Were there any unexpected developments or outcomes?

Celebrate and continue the plan. Continue to check and adjust as needed.

What changes are needed? What will you do next to keep the plan on track?

How did the plan impact the family? Were any action steps added or missed? Did things happen on time?





# HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

## PURPOSE OF BRAINSTORMING:

- To open the parent's creative energy
- To produce as many ideas as possible without evaluating
- To generate a lot of ideas in a short period of time

## BRAINSTORMING GUIDELINES:

- All ideas are okay; there are no bad ideas
- Defer evaluating ideas or expressing judgment during the brainstorming session
- Include other family members, if possible, for a robust brainstorming session
- Parent and family members can build upon each other's ideas

## THINGS TO SAY TO START THE BRAINSTORMING PROCESS:

- "We are going to get all of the ideas out without evaluating them. "
- "Let's come up with 15 ideas in the next 10 minutes."

## TIPS TO USE WHEN PARTICIPANTS GET STUCK:

- **Assess what is behind the silence:**  
Sometimes participants are silent during a brainstorming session because they need room to think. They may be on the verge of a great idea! However, if the silence goes on too long, suggest an idea to get the conversation going in a new direction, and to get people excited and talking again. Consider using one of the tips below to come up with an idea to share.

- **Suggest the opposite of what you want to achieve:** Get participants to describe, in detail, the opposite of what you want to have happen. As the energy in the conversation builds, shift the discussion by asking, "How do we achieve the opposite of this"? New, creative ideas may emerge.
- **Encourage big ideas:** Encourage participants to think big and to eliminate any constraints on their ideas. Tell participants that to imagine there are no limits on time, money, or other resources. What is possible without constraints? Removing roadblocks may open up a whole new direction of ideas. To elicit more creative thinking, you can ask, "What would be an unexpected idea? A bold idea? Something you've never tried before?"

## AFTER THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION:

Brainstorming sessions generate many possible ideas to pursue. The next step is to review the ideas, and refine the list to identify the ideas the parent is most interested in pursuing. Although the parent should drive the process to identify ideas to pursue, he or she should be invited to involve other family members in the process. The parent may choose to focus on the ideas where they feel the most energy and excitement, or the parent may want to develop some simple criteria for evaluating the ideas, go through them, and rank them.

If the brainstorming session doesn't generate any useful ideas, consider refining the question or problem, and try another brainstorming session. Also consider if it might be better to ask the parent to work on generating ideas on their own.





## STEP 6: PLAN FOR SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY



### TOOLS + RESOURCES

#### FAMILY TOOLS:

- **PLAN, DO, REVIEW**

#### COACH RESOURCES:

- **HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS**

### PARENT TOOLS

#### PLAN, DO, REVIEW

In Step 6, you and the parent are meeting to see how things went with executing the Plan that you set during Step 5.

- Share the original completed Plan, Do, Review tool with the parent. Start by asking, “How did it go?” Provide an opportunity to explore what went well and what was challenging, using the questions under the Review section.
- If things didn’t go as planned, reassure the parent that this is typical and part of the process. Let them know that together, you will reassess and change the plan as needed. Starting fresh is always an option!
- Listen for any issues that arose for the family during this time which might need case management. Be sure to address this with the parent during the meeting.
- Together, identify how to continue to build on the successes. Was a family member particularly helpful in carrying out the plan? Were family members able to see small positive changes?
- For the challenges, brainstorm together to address them. Was the timeline too short to carry out the steps? Were outside resources through other agencies not available as planned?
- Once you and the parent have evaluated how things went, refine the goal as needed and develop new steps for the Plan section.
- In addition to reviewing the execution of the Plan, discuss how each of you were accountable to each other between meetings. Did the coach check in with the parent as planned? Was it through



an agreed upon communication mode (e.g., text, email, phone)? Was the coach responsive when the parent asked for help? Did the parent check in with the coach according to a determined timeline? Did the parent carry out their assigned steps in the plan? If either of you were unable to be fully accountable, what got in the way? Ask “how can I support you to succeed?”

- This is also the time to check in with the parent about how the coaching relationship itself is working for both of you.

## COACH RESOURCES

### HOW TO HAVE EFFECTIVE BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

As goals and steps for plans change, review this tool from Step 5 to for tips on how to generate new ideas that can help a parent succeed in reaching their goals.

