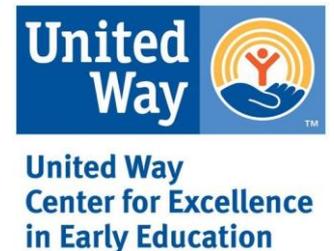




# We are in this together: Quick tips to keep families, staff and communities engaged

Luisa M. Cotto, M.Ed.  
Manager of Engagement and Communications  
[unitedwaycfe.org](http://unitedwaycfe.org)  
[ECEwebinars.com](http://ECEwebinars.com)

START **KIDS** BRIGHT  
Webinar Series



# Get to know me!

## Luisa Cotto



- B.Ed. in Elementary Education
- M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology
- Worked as a coach and family liaison in two early literacy grants
- Currently work as a manger of engagement and communications at United Way of Miami Dade
- Love to blog about early childhood and technology and use social media

@luisacotto

Resources: [unitedwaycfe.org](http://unitedwaycfe.org)

**ASK THE EXPERT**  
Ask questions. Get answers.  
Improve children's lives.

*early childhood?*

*education?*

*family?*

[unitedwaycfe.org/asktheexpert](http://unitedwaycfe.org/asktheexpert)

# Poll: Who is listening?



# Webinar goals

- Enhance the effectiveness of all staff members in engaging parents and community partners.
- Create welcoming and inviting environments that support families and the community in becoming early childhood advocates.
- Create family partnerships where staff and families build ongoing, respectful and goal-oriented relationships.



# The importance of engaging everyone

## Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory

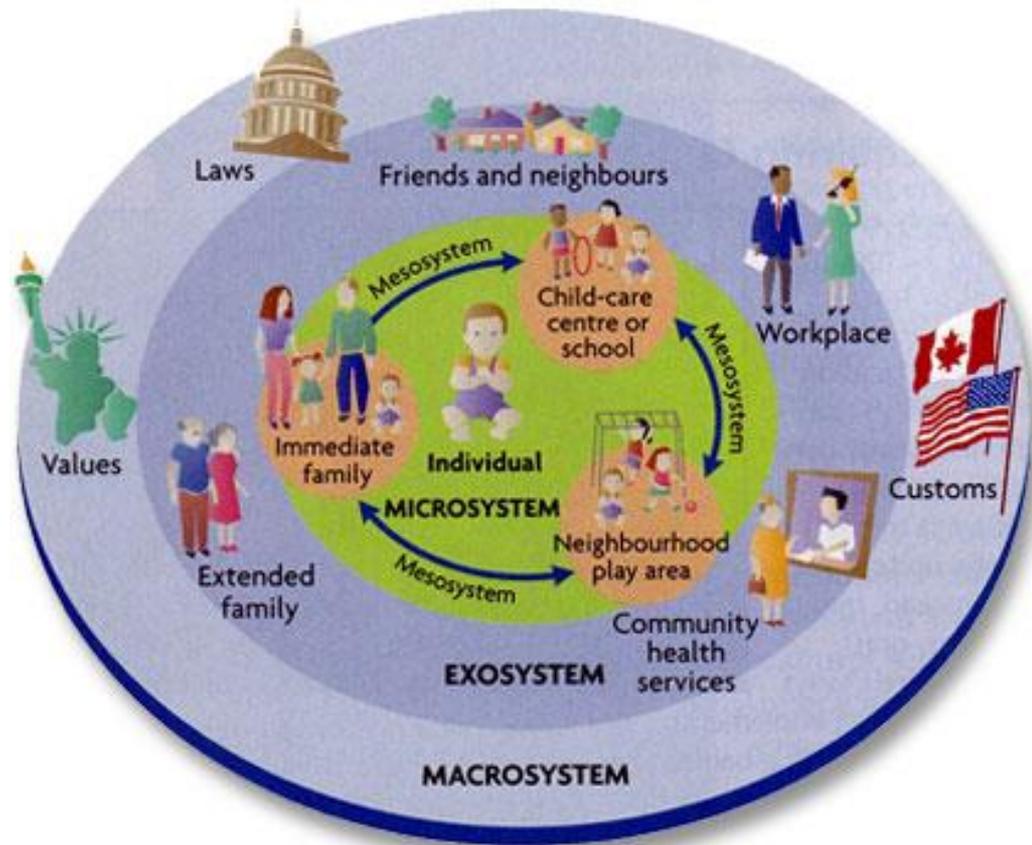


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory  
(in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

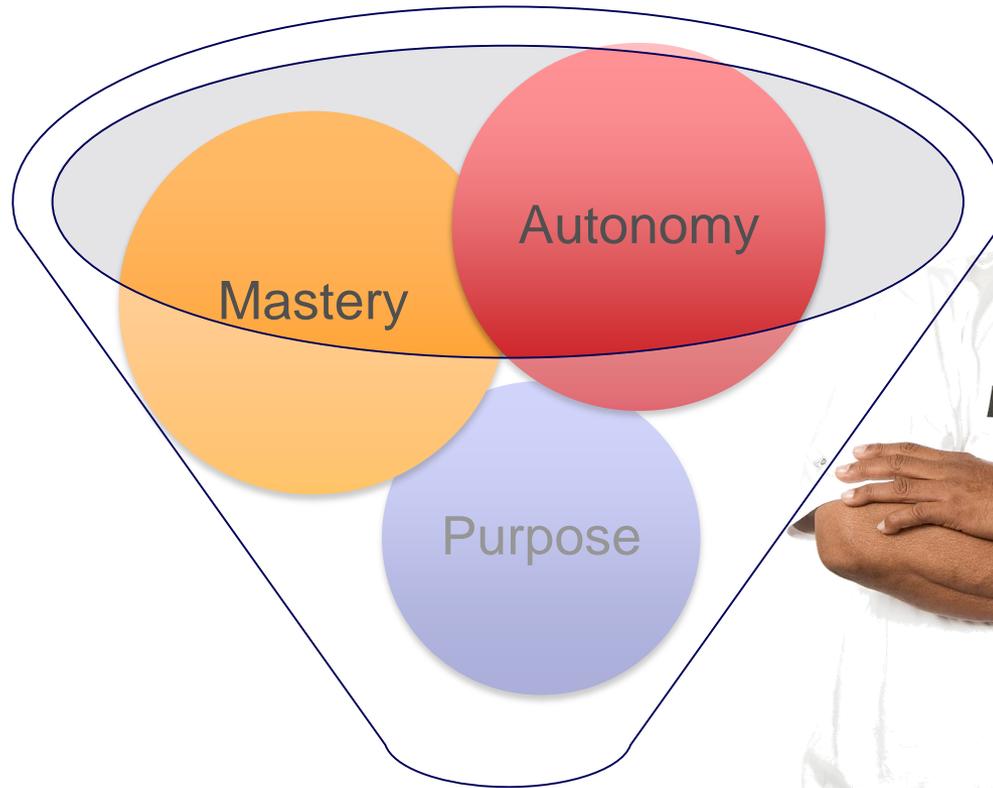
# What is engagement?

When people are emotionally committed to an organization or cause.

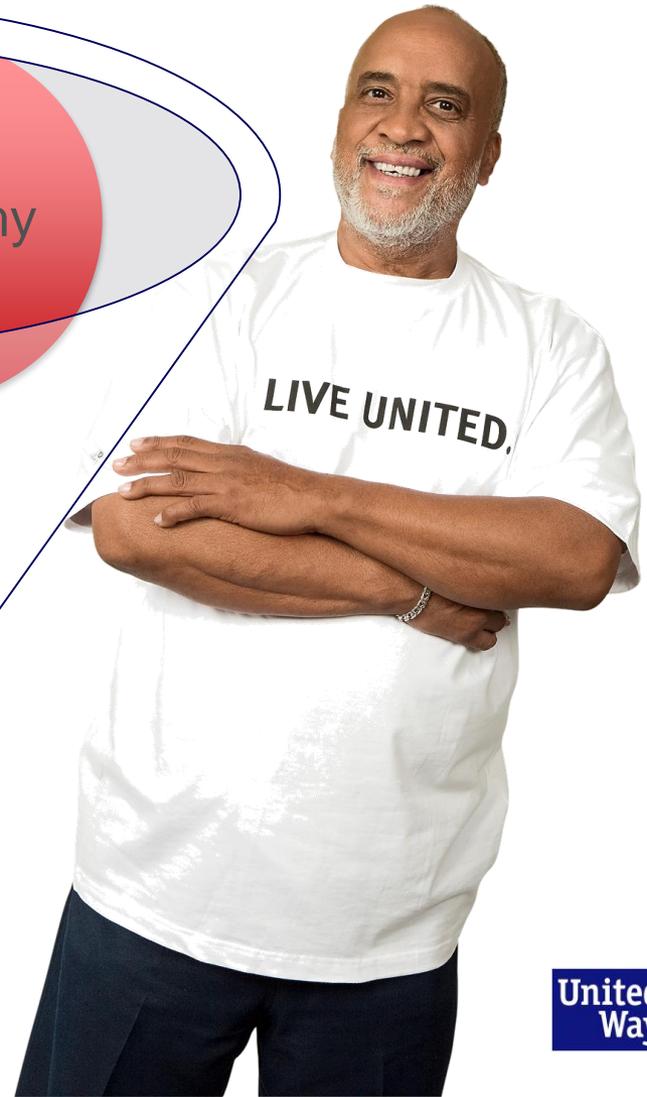


# What motivates people to be engaged?

**Motivation Trifecta** by Daniel H. Pink, author of *Drive*



**Engaged Individuals**



# What motivates people?

## Motivation Trifecta

**Autonomy:** Giving people real control over various aspects of their work or allowing for contributions.



TRADITIONAL  
MANAGEMENT

VS



SELF  
DIRECTED

# What motivates people?

## Motivation Trifecta

**Mastery:** The desire to get better and better at things.



# What motivates people?

## Motivation Trifecta

**Purpose:** Connecting to a cause larger than yourself.

When you do something with **purpose**, you do it with determination. When your activities have a purpose, you have an aim or intention in mind.

(vocabulary.com)

$$X + 3 = 2$$

$$X = 2 - 3$$

$$X = -1$$

WHY?



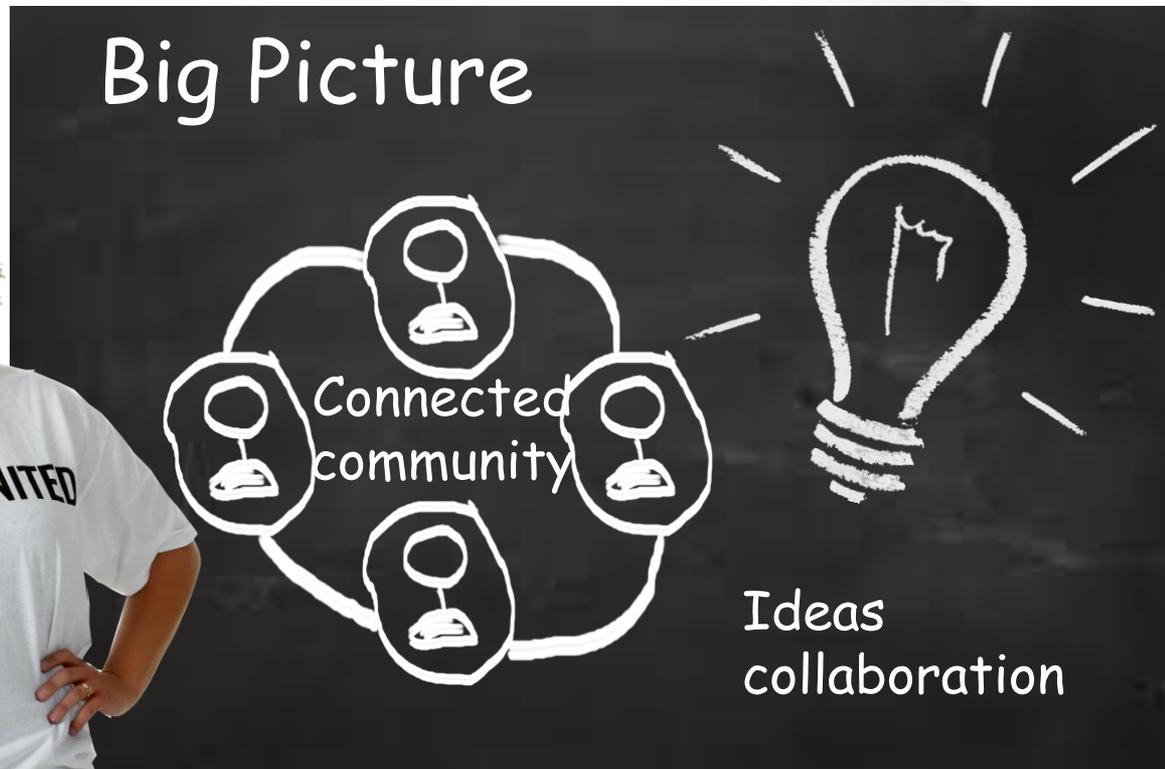
**Engaging Staff**



**United Way  
Center for Excellence  
in Early Education**

# Engaged teachers

An engaged teacher is equal to a productive, creative and intentional teacher.



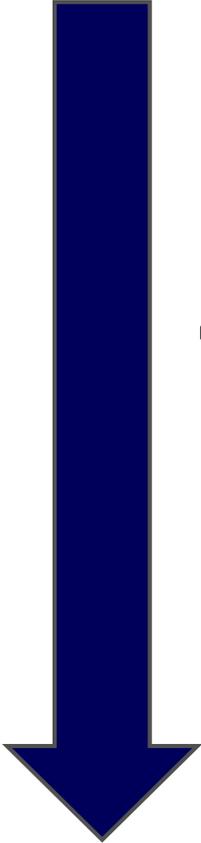
LIVE UNITED



# Creating a community within your school

“A true community is a place where **every** person belongs and is **known, valued, and supported**. It is a place where **ideas, skills, and feelings** are **shared** as members **work cooperatively** toward **common goals**.”

- Judith Leipzig (1994), faculty, Bank Street College



Administration

## Traditional: Power relationships



Teachers

# Poll: How many times are you part of a meeting that does not fully accomplish its goal?

- Often
- Never
- All my meetings are productive

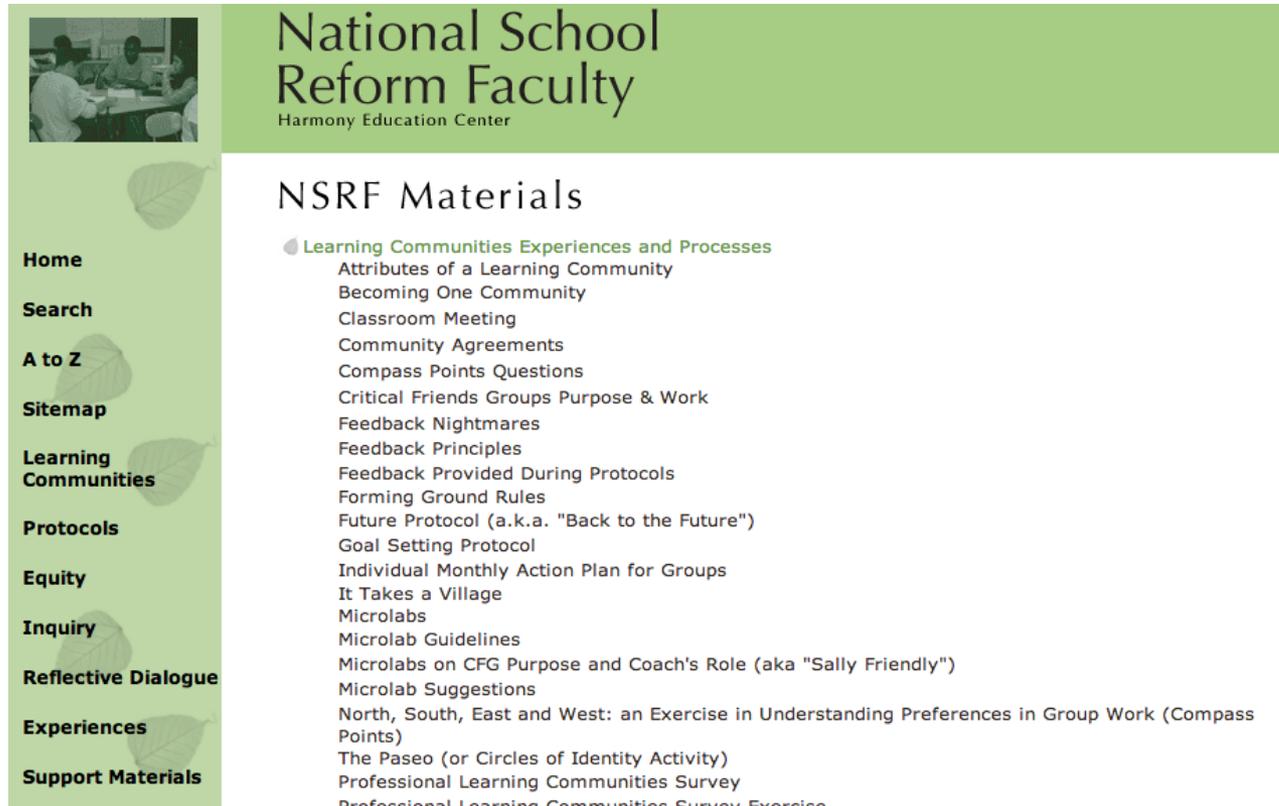


# Lessons learned from our own practices

## Circle Time



# Use protocols for your meetings



The screenshot shows the website for the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) at the Harmony Education Center. The page is titled "NSRF Materials" and features a navigation menu on the left with categories: Home, Search, A to Z, Sitemap, Learning Communities, Protocols, Equity, Inquiry, Reflective Dialogue, Experiences, and Support Materials. The main content area lists various materials under the heading "Learning Communities Experiences and Processes".

**National School Reform Faculty**  
Harmony Education Center

## NSRF Materials

- Learning Communities Experiences and Processes
  - Attributes of a Learning Community
  - Becoming One Community
  - Classroom Meeting
  - Community Agreements
  - Compass Points Questions
  - Critical Friends Groups Purpose & Work
  - Feedback Nightmares
  - Feedback Principles
  - Feedback Provided During Protocols
  - Forming Ground Rules
  - Future Protocol (a.k.a. "Back to the Future")
  - Goal Setting Protocol
  - Individual Monthly Action Plan for Groups
  - It Takes a Village
  - Microlabs
  - Microlab Guidelines
  - Microlabs on CFG Purpose and Coach's Role (aka "Sally Friendly")
  - Microlab Suggestions
  - North, South, East and West: an Exercise in Understanding Preferences in Group Work (Compass Points)
  - The Paseo (or Circles of Identity Activity)
  - Professional Learning Communities Survey
  - Professional Learning Communities Survey Exercise

<http://www.nsrffharmony.org/protocols.html>

# Story telling: A lesson from my dad



- Personal stories help us get a better picture and they are great for community building.
- Take time in meetings or during the day to share stories.

# Value each person in your school



# Agendas

## Meeting Agenda:

- Me,
- Myself,
- and I

## Meeting Agenda:

- Be flexible
- Ask for contributions
- Send it in advance

# Highlight your teachers and/or staff

- Feature a teacher on your newsletter
- Create a blog to showcase teachers' best practices in the classroom
- Send email to staff about what positive things are happening in the classroom



## Engaging Families



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in Early Education

Families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. . . . When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.

(Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7)







# Focus on family strengths



“Highlighting and appreciating families’ strengths is one of the key aspects of supporting families to enhance their own-efficacy.”

(Turnbull & Turnbull 2001, p.67)

## Community begins at home

“Family is the first social domain that teaches children how to interact with others”

-Joseph Shrand, MD



# It is all about relationships



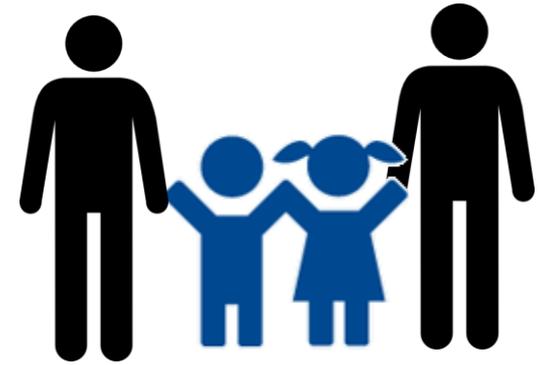
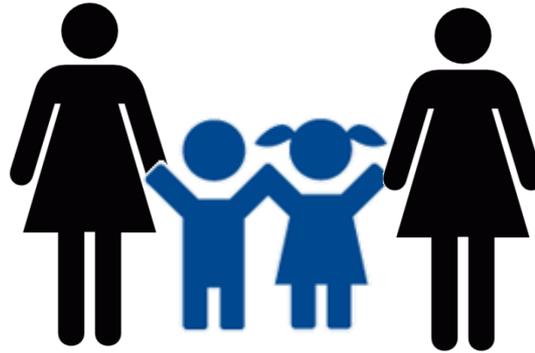
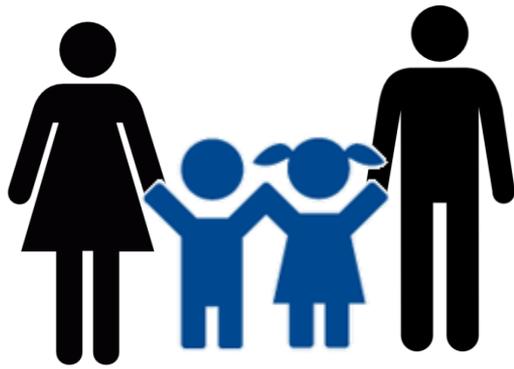
# How do we do this?



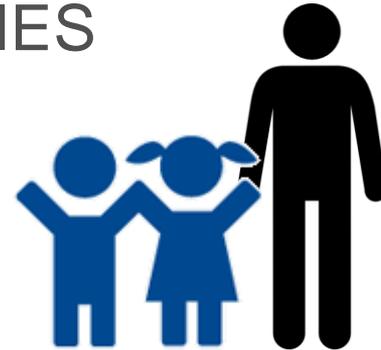
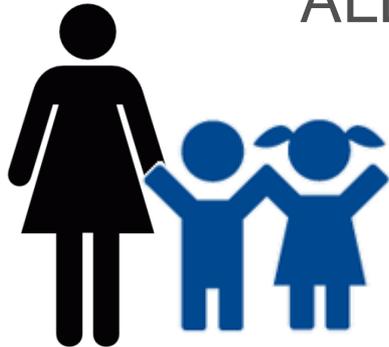
“We respect and understand that parents or guardians are experts in their own children.”



# Family



ALL KINDS OF FAMILIES



# Family

Family: “The people living in the children’s homes who love and care for them.” (Rieger, 2008)

# Family-Centered Care and Education



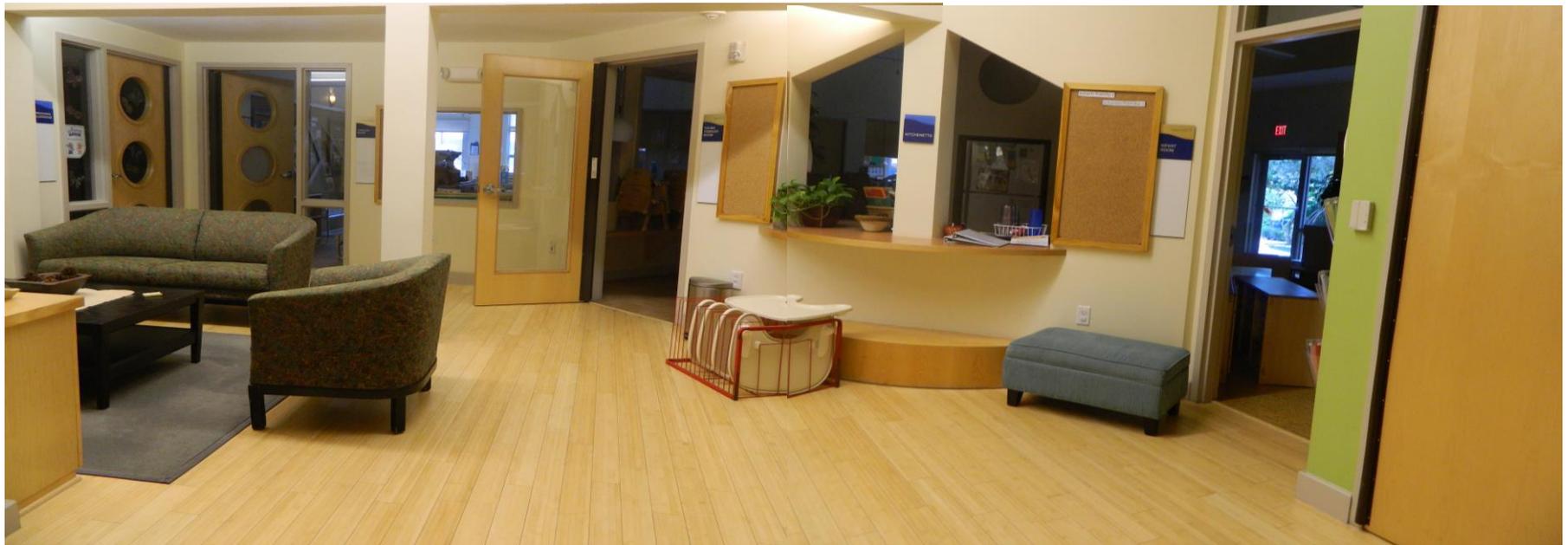
My mom, Ana, and baby Luisa

- You can't separate the child from the context of the family.
- Families influences are always present.

# Continuity of Care

**Attachment Theory** (Bowlby, 1969/2000)

Main idea: Continuity of care limits the transition children and families have to go through.



See our virtual tour at [unitedwaycfe.org](http://unitedwaycfe.org)

# Family Round Table



Family meetings are more effective when they are planned around what parents need rather than what the teacher or the early learning center think parents need.

# Create a family-friendly environment

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are there any barriers between school and family (e.g. language)?
- Do I have a way to know families preferred mode of communication (in person, email, phone, etc.)?
- Are the scheduled family considering families' input?
- Do families have transportation?
- Can children attend meetings or do I provide childcare at the school during meetings?



## Engaging the Community

Governor Rick Scott at the Center signing House Bill 7165



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in Early Education

# Engaged Community

An engaged community is aware and understands the needs of the community and your goals as an organization.



# Connect with others

## Early Learning: Quality for Florida's Future: 2014 United Way Position

*Florida's United Ways urge the 2014 Florida Legislature to provide access to high quality early learning programs for all children.*

**BACKGROUND:** The foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork - skills that employers nationwide cite as critical to workplace success - is developed by age five. [Research shows](#) that investing in high quality early education yields big returns. Yet school readiness funding has declined by almost \$100 million since 2001, and in Florida more than 60,000 children are on School Readiness waiting lists.

[According to a 2013 study](#), 68% of child care programs in Florida are of "minimally adequate" quality and almost 20% are "low quality". The [National Institute for Early Education Research](#) ranks Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program 35th among 38 states in per pupil funding and reports that the Sunshine State's VPK program meets only three of 10 nationally recommended standards.

Attendance in high quality afterschool programs is associated with [significant increases in reading and academic performance, attendance, positive behaviors, and parent workplace productivity](#). Yet afterschool funding has declined by 46 percent since 2007, even as research confirms the [critical importance of reading proficiency by third grade](#).

Florida [ranks 40<sup>th</sup> nationally](#) for the quality of its child care licensing program standards. Of the total number of childcare facilities in Florida over 1,400 (12%) receive no onsite inspection or oversight from the Department of Children & Families. These programs are eligible to receive state child care and/or VPK subsidies but are not required to meet minimum early learning health and safety standards. Requirements that all programs receiving state funding meet minimum health and safety standards, and authority to monitor these standards, are needed to protect the well-being of children.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES:**

**AMEND** the early learning statute to include explicit standards for the health, safety and well-being of children in all publicly-funded School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs.

**AMEND** the early learning statute to establish benchmarks for quality and education based performance standards for early learning and school age care to prepare children for school success, enhance the private business model of early learning, and ensure accountability of public funds

**SUPPORT** increased funding and equitable funding allocation for children Birth - 8 in early learning and school age care to ensure children's access to educational, enrichment programs that support working families. **SUPPORT** adequate levels of funding per child for Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) to ensure children have the academic, executive and social skills for kindergarten.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

School Readiness budget: **\$50 million** to reduce the SR wait list and fund quality improvements  
Voluntary Prekindergarten budget: **\$106 million** to increase the Base Student Allocation to \$3,000

Child success is essential to Florida's future, and taxpayer investments reflect hard-earned money that should be invested wisely. The benefits of early care and education are tied to the quality of the program, which requires adequate funding.

For additional information, please contact  
The United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.  
**LIVE UNITED** 



<http://www.unitedwaycfe.org/advocate>

# Let's take another look at Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

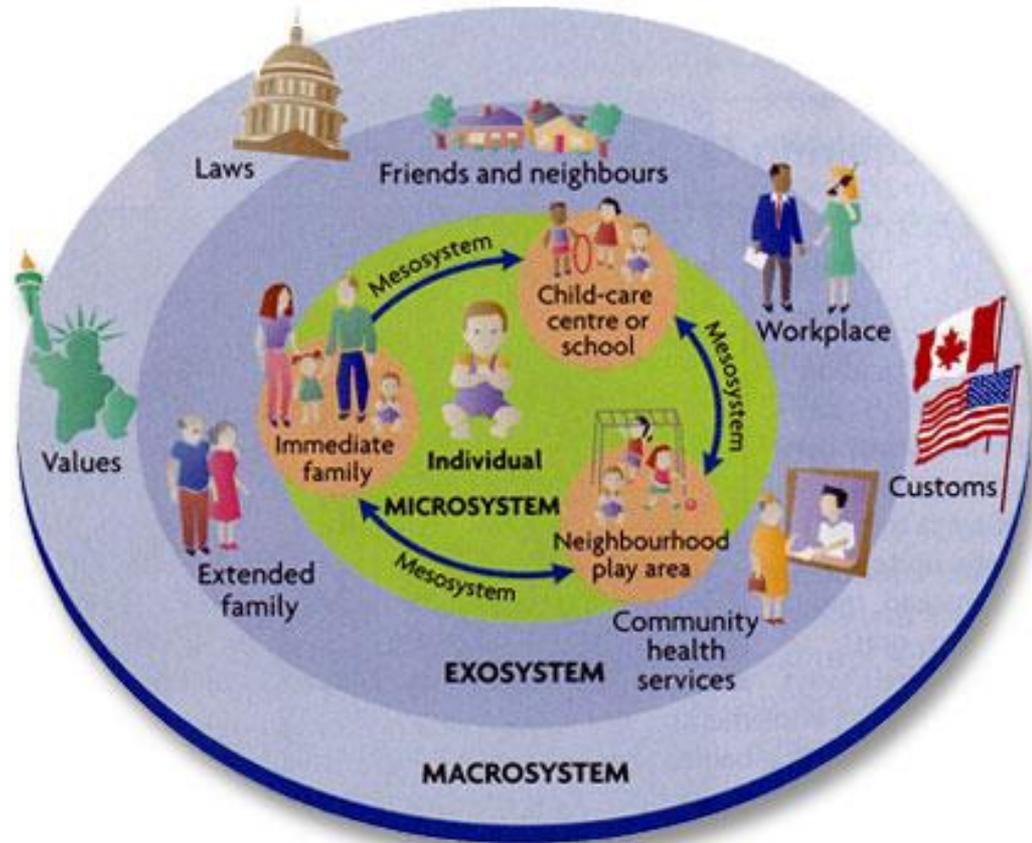
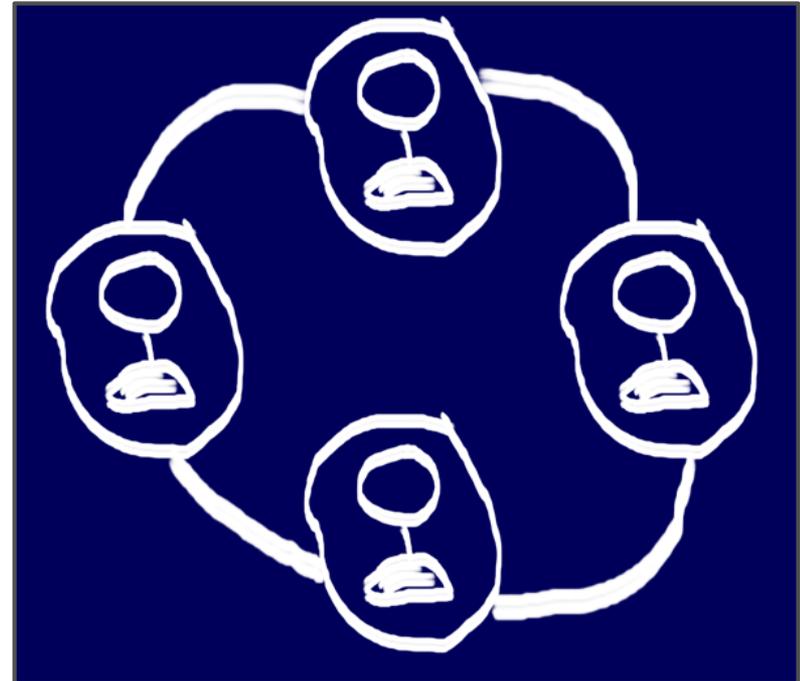


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory  
(in Berk & Roberts, 2009, p. 28)

“Community engagement can enable partnerships to develop programs and collaborate in ways that are consistent with people’s and a community cultural framework.”

(Airhihenbwa, 1995)



# Connecting with community organizations

- What community organizations in my area support early learning?
- What organization in the area can support projects that will impact children's learning?
- How may these organizations help communicate our center needs?
- How can these organizations help eliminate barriers for family participation our center?
- What other early childhood centers in the area have common issues?

# Building community by helping people care for one another.



United Way of Miami-Dade

Education

Financial Stability

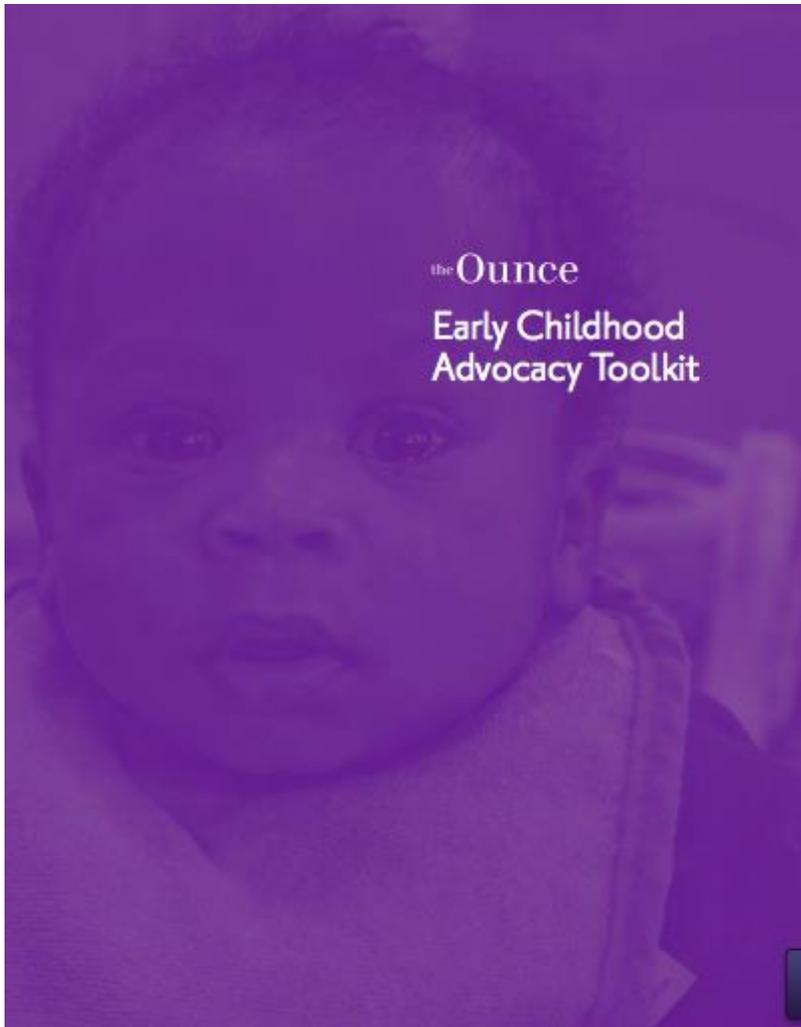
Health

# Poll: Advocacy

**How many of you have done one of these**  
(Select all that apply)

- Helped a family receive needed services?
- Stood up for someone who was being treated unfairly?
- Attended a parent/teacher conference at your child's school?
- Participated in a city council meeting?

# Advocacy



**Advocacy** is building support for an issue among audiences such as general public, elected officials, the media, and key opinion leaders.

-The Ounce of Prevention Fund  
<http://www.ounceofprevention.org/>

# Social Media Storm & TweetChat: #LiveUnitedFL



**Luisa Cotto** @luisacotto · Feb 3

Join all FL @UnitedWay TODAY at 2pm at #LiveUnitedFL to take action for #earlyed [pic.twitter.com/JExQwp5Ulv](https://pic.twitter.com/JExQwp5Ulv) #ecetechchat #kinderchat



Expand

Reply Delete Favorite More

#ActOnPrek, @firstfiveyears, #InvestInKids

# VIP Reader Series



# Tours



# Engage other teachers and administrators



# Engage by giving a purpose



# Recap

- Engage EVERYONE
- People get engaged if they have autonomy, mastery and purpose
- Empower teachers to be leaders
- Allow time in your meetings to reflect, share and collaborate
- Co-construct agendas
- Use families' strengths
- Respect and understand that families are experts of their own children.
- There are many kinds of families and our own notions of families can get in the way of making meaningful connections

# Recap

- Provide teachers, children and families with a place they can feel secure – develop relationships over time
- Leverage resources in your community
- Make sure that families and community members share the same understanding
- Advocacy can take many forms
- Use social media to push your message
- Welcome all kinds of people to your program

# Q&A



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# Connect with us!



[unitedwaymiami.org](http://unitedwaymiami.org)

[unitedwaycfe.org](http://unitedwaycfe.org)

<https://twitter.com/UnitedWayMiami>

[facebook.com/UnitedWayMiami](https://facebook.com/UnitedWayMiami)

[youtube.com/user/UnitedWayMiami](https://youtube.com/user/UnitedWayMiami)

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