

CHALLENGES FACING PARTNERS

The challenges for service providers and parents alike involve establishing reasonable expectations for themselves and for those with whom they partner.

Service Provider Challenges

- Changing attitudes toward parents ("We know what is best for the family.")
- Responding positively to criticism about the services delivered to families
- Changing agency policies about parental roles
- Decreasing the use of jargon and improving communication
- Participating with families as peers
- Designing new professional development curricula
- Taking the time to involve families instead of making decisions without their input

Family Challenges

- Underestimating the contributions parents can make
- Overcoming fear of negative consequences if the parents speak up to service providers (such as losing a child to foster care)
- Feeling uncomfortable with or intimidated by jargon, complex procedures, or assuming more pro-active roles
- Setting aside skepticism that this partnership approach will be any different than previous methods
- Making time for family and for community activities

Challenges to be Faced Together

- Respecting differences and acknowledging their importance to producing change
- Changing attitudes about one another
- Learning to trust and rely on one another
- Learning to communicate more effectively
- Participating together in decision making
- Being flexible
- Tracking progress toward improving the partnership

Operational and Logistical Challenges

- Scheduling meeting times that work for service providers and for families
- Assuring child care access and availability
- Meeting transportation needs
- Developing expense reimbursement procedures