

Pathways to Quality

Family and Community Engagement Tools (FaCET)



► Project Description



Family and Community Engagement Tools (FaCET) provide a vehicle for parents and staff from diverse cultures to better understand each other and to create an environment where all children thrive. The FaCET survey for early care and education programs promotes and measures family engagement via questions that reflect what families care most about. Think Small's involvement in the implementation of this model aligns with our strategic plan of ensuring parents and caregivers are engaged in supporting and preparing their children for kindergarten. Using these tools increases and deepens parent engagement in program design and in policy decisions that affect them, helping to prevent problems rather than correcting them after they occur. The tools give providers practical information,

“ Thank you so much for developing this needed tool—it will make an impact. ”

“ Thank you for giving voice to staff and parents through this opportunity. ”

—QUOTES FROM TRAINERS

► Impact

Think Small worked with Betty Emarita, the designer of the training on FaCET, to develop a Training of Trainers session and get it approved through the state's early learning professional development system. Afterward, seven trainers attended a Training of Trainers and can now deliver the training throughout the state. This is a huge step toward bringing this model to scale. To date, these trainers have nine providers have gone through the FaCET process and are implementing it in their early childhood programs.

We noticed significant impacts to trainers and to providers based on this work. For trainers, many of them showed a deeper understanding of the tools and processes associated with FaCET. Further, we noticed that many trainers began sharing information with one another as a learning cohort. Providers seemed to engage with the survey results and gained a deeper understanding of the children and families in their program. We also noticed that providers and parents began engaging in rich dialogues as a result of the survey and process. Trainers have had the unique opportunity to conduct continued training with staff and families based on the direct survey results. Families have had the opportunity to provide input and build stronger relationships with their early childhood education program staff based on something other than their child's relationship. Finally, parents have received additional information beyond the normal, day-to-day consumer services.



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► Challenges/Opportunities

Think Small partnered with FaCET to try to scale it throughout the Child Care Aware early childhood system in Minnesota. It was a good start, but programs cited the high cost of the training as a barrier. Think Small worked with them to request reimbursement through their Quality Improvement Support dollars. We also note it is possible to ask for funds through Regional Grants to pay for this training. Ultimately, we recommend a revamping of some of the technical aspects of the program to bring down the costs.

► Next Steps

We believe that the FaCET tool is a very effective practice to increase authentic parent engagement within early childhood settings. In addition, the data collected on issues parents face within their early childhood settings and also how they like to be engaged could potentially inform policy changes at the administrative legislative levels. Think Small will continue to partner with Betty Emarita to look for funding opportunities for FaCET to reach more providers.



To learn more about Pathways to Quality, visit ThinkSmall.org/pathways

