Capturing the Ripple Effect: Theory of Change

1. PARENT LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE BUILDS CAPACITY.

Through hands-on learning and support, parents develop knowledge and skills: for example, developing a strategic plan, giving testimony before public officials, analyzing a budget, and running a committee meeting. The initiatives strengthen civic values, such as respect for others’ opinions and appreciating cultural differences, and broker connections among parents, public officials, and community leaders. Supported by this “second family,” parents gain confidence as they apply their skills.

“I was just a mom. I had no platform to work from.”

“We've become like family, and my family holds me accountable!”

2. PARENTS UNDERGO PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION.

Applying what they learn to solve problems, watching their inner strengths unfold, attracting recognition as a trusted information source, and building networks that bridge race, class and culture, parents say, leads to profound personal transformation.

“I can create the life I want, need, and deserve for me and my children!”

Parent leaders speak across race and class in a voice that is effective and authentic.

3. PARENTS TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES.

When parent leaders see opportunity gaps, they know the consequences for their children and take action, forming networks and joining forces with other groups. Using their own stories, backed by data and told in their authentic voices, they offer ideas that lead to more equitable policies and practices.

“We brought officials, providers, and parent leaders together to talk through the challenges and come to concrete solutions!”

4. PUBLIC OFFICIALS SEE PARENTS AS ASSETS.

As public officials listen to parent leaders, they gain new information, create new opportunities to learn from diverse parents about local issues, and consider parents’ ideas. Support grows for greater opportunities for all children.

“We're not “just parents,” we're someone public officials want to listen to!”

My agency learned that important resources for children just don't exist!

5. PARENT LEADERS INVIGORATE DEMOCRACY.

As parents become key informants, community leaders open new forums for dialog, providing a platform to increase public support for better children’s outcomes. Parents step up to be decision-makers on committees, boards, and task forces. Some parents run for public office; others join the staff of public agencies to provide a family perspective.

“We pushed for improved standards and increased quality of childcare – and won!”

Well-coached parent leaders can make points that lobbyists can’t, and they are much more passionate about it than lobbyists are.

http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report and the diagram that illustrates the “Capturing the Ripple Effect” Theory of Change truly were co-created with a wide variety of parent leaders; directors of parent leadership initiatives; experts in the field of parent, family, and community organizing and engagement; and others familiar with the benefits of broad civic participation. Every one made an invaluable contribution, and we deeply appreciate their insights and suggestions.

Participants at the two think tank meetings on evaluating parent leadership development programs in Hartford on March 13 and August 14, 2014, greatly enriched this draft with their thoughtful advice. We thank Bill Campbell (PLTI graduate and school board member, Alexandria, VA), Joanna Geller and Sara McAlistor (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University), Dawn Homer-Bouthiette and Elaine Zimmerman (Connecticut Commission on Children), Patti Keckes and Donna Thompson-Bennett (National Parent Leadership Institute), Cathleen Love (University of Connecticut), Elisabeth O’Bryan and Robin Stern (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), Lynda Parmely (Hagedorn Foundation), Ada Sanchez (Peppercorn Foundation), and Ron Thomas (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities). Extra thanks to Eileen Forlenza (Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment), Arthur McFarlane (Children’s Hospital of Colorado), Karen Mapp (Harvard Graduate School of Education), and Deloris Vaughan (Everyday Democracy) for their thoughtful suggestions.

We also want to thank the parent leaders who attended the two focus groups with established programs, Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and Parent Ambassadors.


On March 11, 2015, we held a focus group with Parent Ambassadors stakeholders. All who attended gave us additional understanding of the program and its impact on state agencies, policies, and resources: April Messenger (Washington State Department of Early Learning), Maggie McKenna (evaluation consultant), Nubia Lopez (Puget Sound Educational Service District), Hana Gregory (Washington State Head Start Association), Holly Wyrwich (Thrive Washington), and Hannah Lidman (Early Learning Policy Council). We thank Lori Pittman, coordinator of the Parent Ambassadors program, and Joel Ryan, director of the Washington State Head Start Association, for their expert and cordial help organizing these sessions and for their ideas and insights.

The third focus group review was held on March 16, 2015, at the Parent Leader Network meeting in Alexandria, Virginia. We thank the parent leaders for participating in a two-hour review of our Theory of Change and Will Fay for his excellent note taking:

- **COFI** (Community Organizing and Family Issues)/Chicago: Rosalza Grillier, Maria Cristina Martinez, Rosalva Nava, and Trevonda Towns.
- **OLÉ** (Organizing in the Land of Enchantment)/New Mexico: Reina Acosta, Kris Buchanan, Juperi Johnson, and Royal Sexton.
- **PLTI** (Parent Leader Training Institute)/National: Tojin Anderson Willis, Clarisse Harris, Patti Keckesien, and Mariemee Rodriguez Aviles.
- **PIQE** (Parent Institute for Quality Education)/California: Socorro Fernandez, Lilia Perez-Mejia, and Julia Sosa.
- **PARENT VOICES**/California: Lourdes Alarcon, Aaleyah Gaphoor, Eloise Rossiter, and Jessica Wood.

We wish to extend our deep appreciation to all the parent leaders in these three groups. Their insights, personal testimony, family stories, and accounts of their experiences were both inspiring and deeply informative. We also conducted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of Parent Leadership Training Institute (Alexandria, Virginia), Parent Ambassadors (Washington State) and Parent Voices (California). We are thankful for their time and candor:

- **PLTI**: William Euille, Mayor of Alexandria, Virginia; Margaret Lorber, Director, Bi-Lingual Family Services, Alexandria City Public Schools; Fay Slotnick, Director, Alexandria PLTI; Joyce Woodson, former member, Alexandria City Council.
- **PARENT AMBASSADORS**: Sarah Bolton, Education Counsel for Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), on the U.S. Senate HELP Committee; Mike Gentile, staff, U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, GOP-Majority side; Ruth Kagi, Washington State House of Representatives/Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee; Frank Ordway, Government Affairs Director, Washington State League of Education Voters.
- **PARENT VOICES**: Elizabeth Fuller, Consultant, the Legislative Women’s Caucus, California State Assembly; Nancy Strohl, Consultant, California State Senator Holly Mitchell; Debra McMannis, California Department of Early Childhood Education and Support.

Thanks to James Haley, Joanna Geller, and Haewon Kim for their brilliant work conceptualizing the Theory of Change Diagram.

Finally, we wish to thank Ada Sanchez of the Peppercorn Foundation and Lynda Parmely of the Hagedorn Foundation for their far-sighted vision and leadership in advancing parent leadership on behalf of children whose life prospects have been limited by social, racial, and economic inequality. Their financial support and thought partnership have been invaluable.

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