



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION TOOLKIT





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Throughout this publication, we use content from the National Center for Families Learning’s *Place-Based Implementation Manual: Recruitment and Retention* (October 2021). The writing team participated in the design of this document to ensure it was as robust and inclusive as possible.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Recruitment and Retention Toolkit. The intent of this guide is to support program staff throughout the process of recruiting and retaining families. In the creation of this toolkit, we recognize that programs using this content are different and must adhere to a specific set of guidelines and regulations. Each program will engage in the process of recruitment and retention in the context of their program and unique community.

Overall, this guide aims to provide useful strategies, tips, and ready-to-print templates that will help your program recruit and retain participants. There are culturally responsive practices included throughout the guide.

The toolkit contains two sections:

Recruitment

Recruiting families to participate in programming is an ongoing team effort that involves all program staff. This is the first important step to bring families into programming. Recruitment is crucial to a program's existence and involves planning, strategizing, and communicating.

Retention

While recruitment focuses on getting families to enroll in the program, retention focuses on making sure the families stay in the program. The expectation for participation is determined by the intensity and duration of programming needed to achieve stated outcomes (i.e., kindergarten readiness, adult goal achievement, etc.). The team can create a retention plan to ensure the program is doing what was promised. Planning ahead with your team is the secret to success.

Recruitment and retention are vital to the success of a program. They require teamwork, knowledge of program requirements, and knowledge of the community served. As you work with families, the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) can be a great resource for any questions or concerns you may have.

RECRUITMENT

Definition:

Recruitment is the process of finding families to participate in a program. In a Family Literacy or Family Learning program, recruitment means pairing families with services that match the interests and goals they have identified.

Purpose

The purpose of recruitment is to provide families with the opportunity to enter a program so they can engage in planned activities designed to help them meet their goals and needs. The primary goal of a recruitment campaign is to reach adult family members who can most benefit from the support that is available through participation with family engagement program participation.

Planning for Recruitment

A carefully planned recruitment process ensures that a family receives all the information they need to make a commitment for enrollment in the program. Effective recruitment practices are ongoing and intentional. Staff members work together to create a written plan for recruiting new families. A highly effective Family Literacy and Family Learning program ensures that each team member is involved in recruitment efforts.

Where to Start

- Hold a team meeting with the program staff members and current participants. Together, define the purpose of recruitment. Clarify what makes this program different from other programs during the initial planning meeting.
 - Who is the program's target audience?
 - What are the recruitment goals?
 - How do we all describe and talk about the program?
 - What are the best methods for reaching families?
 - Into what languages should recruitment materials be translated?
 - What trusted community partners can promote the program and make connections to potential participants?
 - How can families help with recruitment once they have committed to participate?
 - What considerations should be made for the enrollment process?
- One tool to use when facilitating this meeting is asset mapping, outlined in this document.

Asset Mapping

Definitions:

Assets are esteemed people or things. An asset map shows people, businesses, and organizations within a community.

Purpose

Communities already have assets to address their own issues and needs. An asset map helps identify which resources are present and available in the community. These identified assets can help recruiting efforts and aid in the retention of families in programs.

Intended Outcomes

Using an asset map can increase recruitment numbers. It identifies people and resources who can help with connecting programs with potential families whose goals and needs align with what programs offer. An asset map can also assist in retention efforts because it helps identify resources families may need. This helps families achieve the goals they have within programs.

Facilitating Asset Mapping with Your Team

Having considered which trusted community partners can promote the program and make connections to potential participants, the first step in using an asset map is to identify who should be involved in creating the resource. When focusing on recruiting and retention, you want to have those who perform these duties involved in the map's creation. The administrator of the school, or the director of a program, and current or former adult family members should be involved as well. Inviting a school board member or someone from the district office could support the creation of the asset map.

Once the group comes together, follow these steps:

1. Start with stating the definition of asset mapping.
2. Next, each person lists their personal assets they think will help recruit and retain families.
3. Then, each person lists the assets they think are available in their community.
 - Some reflective questions for the group to ask themselves would be:
 - What do you value most in your community?
 - What are the strengths/assets in your community?
 - What groups/organizations/faith-based communities are you a member of?
 - Does anyone in your family or friend group work at or own any businesses that can help with recruiting or the retention of families in programs?
 - What special skills/talents do you possess to help with recruiting? (e.g., help make merchandising swag, great communicator, etc.)?
 - Where do you think recruiting families can happen in the community?

4. Each person can then take turns answering each question aloud. One person can be a recorder and write others' responses on chart paper or a whiteboard.
5. Once everyone shares, look at the list for each question. As a group, look at the similarities and differences between questions. Discuss the differences and decide if they will aid in the recruiting and retention of families.
6. Make a list of the group's responses for each question. There are many ways to record the answers to the question about where recruiting can take place in the community:
 - Draw a map of the community and label each place on the map.
 - Divide the piece of paper into four squares and label the squares north, south, east, and west. Put each identified place in the correct square according to its location in the community.
 - Simply make a list of all the places everyone identified as somewhere to recruit or retain families.
 - Use a template like the one provided in the example below. You can find the printable template in the Resources section.



(NCFL, 2021)

7. Once you've created the lists and the physical locations of where recruitment and retention efforts can take place are documented, talk about them. Below are some questions you can use in the discussion:
 - What surprises you?
 - Are all assets materials or goods?
 - What similarities and differences do you see in the combined list compared to your personal list?
 - Is there anything missing?
8. Based on these lists and physical location documents, create a plan for recruitment. Development of a recruitment and retention action plan takes place later in this toolkit.

Follow-Up

After the creation of the asset map for recruiting, decide who will communicate with or visit the assets identified on the map. Decide, as a team, how the identified assets can specifically help with recruitment. Consider creating a script to use on the phone when contacting assets. Create talking points detailing how the identified asset can help with recruitment for in-person visits. Also consider creating a fact sheet to leave with identified assets containing accurate and up-to-date information for potential families.

How often should teams revisit the asset map? That truly depends on each program. The recommended minimum is at least once a year. As a team, create a process to add ideas, suggestions, and locations for recruitment and retention to the asset map. A suggestion would be to have a place where someone can write ideas, suggestions, and new locations on a piece of paper. Put them in an envelope near the asset map. The envelope is then visited monthly during team meetings so everyone can see and hear the new ideas. You could also do this during weekly team meetings when there is a big recruiting effort happening for the program or school. Using a digital document, like a Google Doc, is a way for participants to continuously add to the asset map.

Recruitment Planning

Design a recruitment plan to give more detail to recruitment ideas. Reflect on the asset map that your team created. Consider how to incorporate newly identified assets into the plan. An example follows. You can find a blank template in the Resources section for your use.

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (SMART) Goals for Recruitment:				
Recruit 15 families by September				
<i>In the columns, plan several strategies the team will implement to achieve this recruitment goal.</i>				
Strategy	Timeline	Team Member(s) Responsible	How will we know when we have been successful?	Status
Develop recruitment materials, including flyers, to post in the community and send home with children.	July	Parent Facilitator and Early Childhood Teacher	A visually appealing flyer has been posted in ten community locations. Flyers sent home with all PreK-3 children in the summer program.	

Next, include recruitment ideas on a Recruitment and Retention Calendar. You can find a blank template in the Resources section. Remember to revisit the calendar during team meetings to review the effectiveness of each activity. The following is a three-month calendar example.

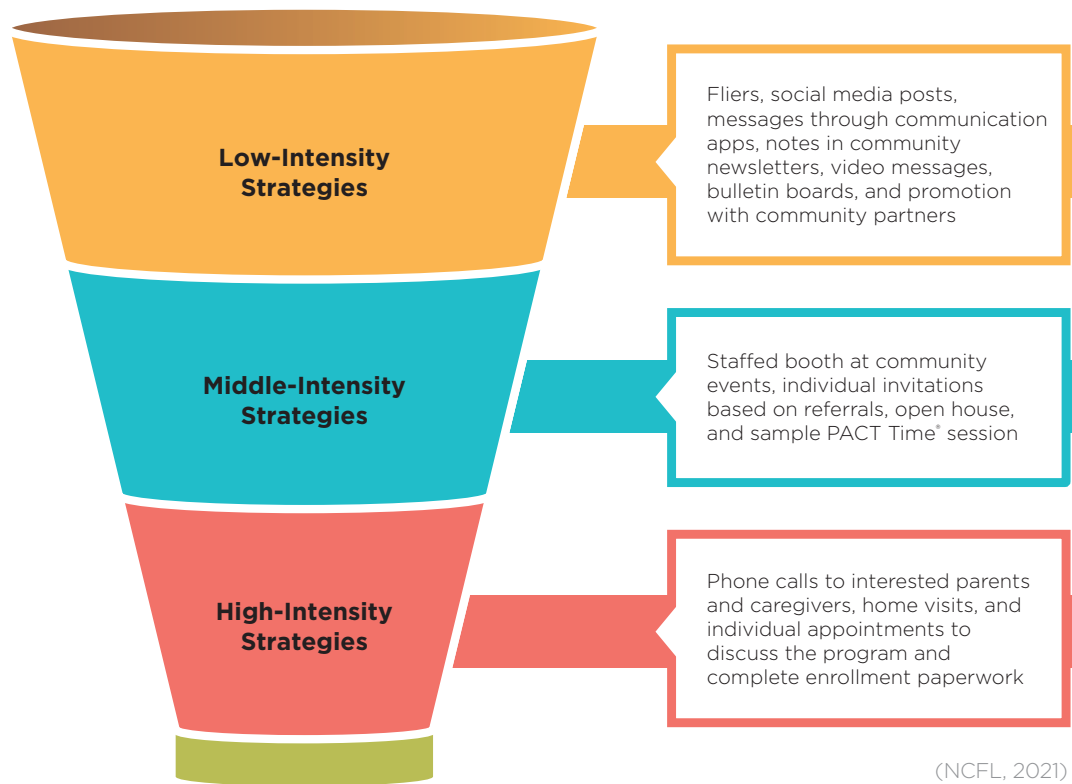
July	August	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a recruitment plan; ensure all staff have roles. • Develop recruitment materials, including flyers, to post in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host an open house. • Engage community partners who can refer families to the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a “bring a friend” day and encourage families to bring a friend who is interested in the program. • Encourage teachers to refer new families.

Strategies for Recruitment

Your team can successfully recruit families into your program by developing clear recruitment strategies. These can be an event in the community or at the school. It can be as simple as a flyer shared with families. Consider all available communication methods to increase program awareness and visibility, such as the program's website, text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Recruit families with retention in mind. Have open and honest conversations with each family during the recruitment process to ensure that every family fully understands the program benefits and requirements. Some families may not be able to commit to the program at this time. When a family is unable to make the commitment, the team can connect them to resources in the community. Develop a list of families who are unable to make a commitment to the program at that time but may enroll at a later date. Check in with them at a mutually agreeable time in the future.

Plan recruitment strategies with low, middle, and high levels of intensity. Low-intensity strategies require less planning and can reach all families. Middle-intensity strategies can reach a specific group of families. High-intensity strategies are for one-to-one contact between staff and families who are ready to join. The program team works together to create multiple ways to reach as many families as possible. Recruitment is a success when all interested participants feel valued and welcomed.



Low-Intensity Strategy Tips

- Have flyers available at school and community events.
- Incorporate writing strategies that reflect the language and reading level of new participants.
- Work together with program team members to script video messages.
- Ask past participants about information they recommend for inclusion in recruitment messages and flyers.
- Use social media to promote the program and community events.

Middle-Intensity Strategy Tips

- Work together with program staff team members to find community events that can promote and advertise events. The sample family interest form explanation appears in the next few pages, and a template appears in the Resources section.
- Tell all staff members about your program and how to refer a family to the program.
- Plan an event where a family can experience Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time®. This gives families the opportunity to observe and learn more about the benefits of play and engaging with their child in activities during PACT Time.

High-Intensity Strategy Tips

- Write a script for your staff to use when talking with families that gives consistent and clear information about your program. Review the sample follow-up contact survey in the next few pages; there is a template available in the Resources section.
- Consider the best way to meet with adult family members for an in-person visit. Is it at a program site or at the family home? Or is a virtual visit best?

Initial and Follow-Up Contact with Interested Families

Family Interest Form

The family interest survey is helpful when meeting interested families for the first time. With this template, you can create your own form containing questions related to the information you need to gather. Consider adding your program's logo to the form. You can find a printable template in the Resources section.

Sample Form (Full page version available in Resources section)

Family Interest Form

Tell Me About Your Children and Family

We do not share this information outside of our program without asking you. Your information helps us tell you about this program and how it can support your goals.

Parent/Guardian Name(s)

Children: Full Names, Ages, Grade Levels

Contact Information

What are the best ways to contact you?

Email

Text

Phone call

Other

What is your email address and phone number?

Phone Number(s): _____

Email Address: _____

What are the best times of day to reach you by phone or text?

Morning: before school

During the school day

Afternoon: after school

Evening: after 7 p.m.

Follow-Up Contact Survey

Make contact with an adult family member after they hear about your program. Follow-up contact helps them decide if this program is a good fit for their family. Below is an outline of information to share and collect during a follow-up call or meeting.

Sample Form (Full page version available in Resources section)

Follow-Up Contact Survey

“Hello, my name is _____ and I am from _____.”

I am calling to talk with you about our _____ program. Is this a good time to talk for a few minutes?”

- Brief program description:
- What the program offers:
- Program schedule:
- What interests you about the program?
- What questions do you have about the program?

You can contact me at _____. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about our program. I hope to hear from you soon!”

Next step(s):

Summary

The primary goal of recruitment is to reach adult family members who can most benefit from participation in Family Literacy or Family Learning programming. Keep the goals of your program and the goals of the families in mind as you set out to create your recruitment plan of action. Work together as a team to support one another throughout the process, to share ideas, and to help reach families in your community.

RETENTION

Definition:

Retention is the process of supporting enrolled families, so they persist and continue participating.

Purpose

Retention efforts are important from the beginning of programming. Thinking about retention from the start ensures that families have the support they need during the program. Procedures should include motivating families to be engaged and excited about the program. Center the focus on the strengths, interests, needs, and goals of families.

Recruit families with the intent to retain them. Retention is an ongoing process. The goal is to enroll committed families who will continue participating in the program. Some families might stop attending the program as life changes. Resources to plan ahead for this as a team are included in this section. Communication with families is key to understanding what is preventing adult family members from participating. With this understanding, the team can work together to create retention goals and a plan to accomplish them.

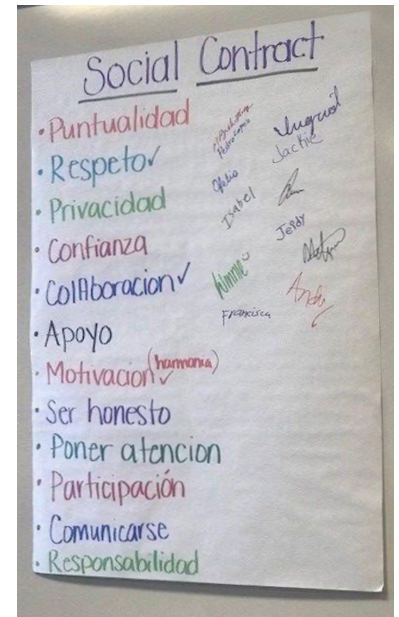
Motivate Families to Persist

Retention practices support enrolled families to persist and participate in the Family Literacy or Family Learning program over a period of time. This might be until the end of the program schedule or when a family achieves their goals.

Retention practices help program staff identify barriers to participation. The team works together to remove barriers and provide early intervention to keep families engaged. The focus remains: *How do we provide an engaging program that serves the needs of the families?*

Include past and present family participants in the retention process. They are your most important partners. Having a sense of ownership in the program creates buy-in. This helps to retain families and to recruit new families. When families share about the program with their friends and families, stories of success reach the community. You will find keys to successful retention listed below. These will support your team as you add retention strategies to your recruitment and retention plan and calendar. And you'll also find related strategies shared in this section under each topic.

- Strong Relationships, Strong Communities
- Consistent Communication
- Honoring Family Strengths, Interests, Needs, and Goals
- Strong Teams & Quality Services



Strong Relationships, Strong Communities

Building strong relationships with families supports every other retention strategy your team utilizes. Begin by establishing trust between team members and families who enroll. Support trust by following through on commitments, honoring confidentiality, and offering quality program services. Each and every day, welcome your community of families together in an inviting and safe environment. A comfortable, welcoming space will make families want to return. Show families your program values their lived experiences, strengths, and cultural backgrounds.



To establish trust and build a sense of community:

- Create an environment that is emotionally secure.
- Ensure that families feel valued and respected.
- Plan icebreakers and community-builder activities. Two examples are included on the following pages.
- Invite families to decorate the space with family photos, student work, or artwork.
- Incorporate families' strengths and lived experiences into program activities.
- Host regularly planned thank-you events. Show families that you appreciate their progress.
- Encourage adult family members to take on leadership roles.

Memory Cloud

Objective: Group sharing and bonding

What You'll Need: Whiteboard, sticky notes, markers

How to Play:

1. Write a general topic on the white board or on sticky notes posted to the wall: "My first day of school," "Community is..." or "Favorite memory," etc.
2. Pass out sticky notes and then ask everyone to write a short memory related to the topic. Invite participants to use words and/or pictures.
3. Then have everyone share their memory and post it on the wall, forming a positive memory cloud.
4. If sticky notes are not available, you can ask participants to journal a short answer and then share aloud.



(NCFL, 2021)

All About Me

Objective: Group sharing and bonding

What You'll Need: Slips of paper, pens or pencils, a cup or basket

How to Play:

1. Introduce the activity as a fun way to learn more about one another.
2. Pass out a slip of paper to each person. Ask everyone to write one unique life experience that they feel comfortable sharing with the group. Do not share yet!
3. Collect all slips of paper in a cup or basket. Shuffle.
4. Ask each person to take one slip that is not their own to read aloud.
5. The group takes turns guessing who wrote that experience.
6. Once everyone has guessed, the original writer claims it as their own.



Access more community builder ideas in NCFL's Community Builder Toolkit.

Consistent Communication

To ensure your message reaches families, keep communication clear, consistent, and welcoming. Families engage more when you share messages more than once and in more than one way (Baker, et al., 2016). Keep in mind that not all families prefer to communicate in the same way. The key is to continue communicating on a consistent basis in the way a family responds best. Let families know you are there to support them. Welcome their feedback and expertise.

To support consistent communication with families:

- Ask each family about how they prefer to communicate with you.
- Send messages more than once in a variety of ways (e.g.: print, text, email, social media, phone call, etc.)
- Send reminder messages about meetings and events at least once before the meeting or event.
- Share a weekly message through a newsletter or personal communication (printed, email, etc.)
- Write messages clearly and inclusively. Tips are included on the next page.
- Create a two-way communication plan that welcomes family feedback.
- Reach out to a family right away if they miss a session.
- Practice language justice. Share information in the language in which families are most comfortable.
- Co-create plans for holidays or programming breaks with adult family members.
- Ensure that families have materials and strategies to engage in learning anytime, anywhere during time away from the program.



(NCFL, 2021)

Tips for Writing for Families

Consistent communication with families involves written messages. This includes flyers for upcoming events, weekly newsletters, and other messages. It also includes virtual learning activities and directions for completing activities at home that you create. Here are some tips:

- Use *families* and *family members* rather than *parents*, *mothers*, or *fathers*.
- Write simply. Use only as many words as needed to help them understand.
- Give an example of what you expect.
- Use a large font and white spaces.
- Use one or two easy to read fonts: Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.
- Put the most important information in bold.
- Include short sentences and bullet points.
- Avoid idioms and phrases that are open to many interpretations. Readers may interpret your message literally.
- Avoid acronyms and jargon. Families may not be familiar with all educational terminology.
- Be repetitive. Repeating the same word can help avoid confusion. It supports readers with emerging literacy or English skills.
- Use active verbs rather than passive verbs. Focus on the reader's perspective: *Receive free meals* rather than *Meals are offered for free*.
- Use graphics to help illustrate content, but avoid extra decorations that can be distracting.
- Translate materials into families' preferred language(s).
- Use online tools to check for readability.
 - Example: www.prowritingaid.com can scan your writing for grammar, spelling, and jargon and calculate a variety of readability statistics. For families, try to write at or below a sixth grade reading level.
- Ask others to review your materials.

Honoring Family Strengths, Interests, Needs, and Goals

Effective retention efforts build on what motivates families. Successful teams recognize the strengths of participating families and work together to remove barriers. Funds of Knowledge are things that families and individuals know based on their lived experience as well as their role in their family and community. For someone who grew up near a farm, one of their Funds of Knowledge might be how to care for horses and how to identify when a horse is sick. When you learn families' Funds of Knowledge and include them in program activities, you honor the strengths that families bring to the classroom. This increases engagement and supports persistence over time. You want families to come regularly and stay long enough to meet their goals. Request feedback from enrolled families to ensure that the program is meeting their needs and goals.



To honor family strengths, interests, needs, and goals as a team:

- Include families' Funds of Knowledge, strengths and interests into the program planning and activities.
- Support adult family members in setting goals as part of Adult Education, Parent Time, and Children's Education.
- Break long-term goals down into short-term objectives so families can track their progress and see their success.
- Plan check-ins and ask for survey feedback from adult family members regularly.
- Celebrate family achievements with planned events.
- Share options for childcare for younger or older siblings during program hours.
- Facilitate asset mapping with families. You'll find steps included in the next section.

How to Facilitate Asset Mapping with Families

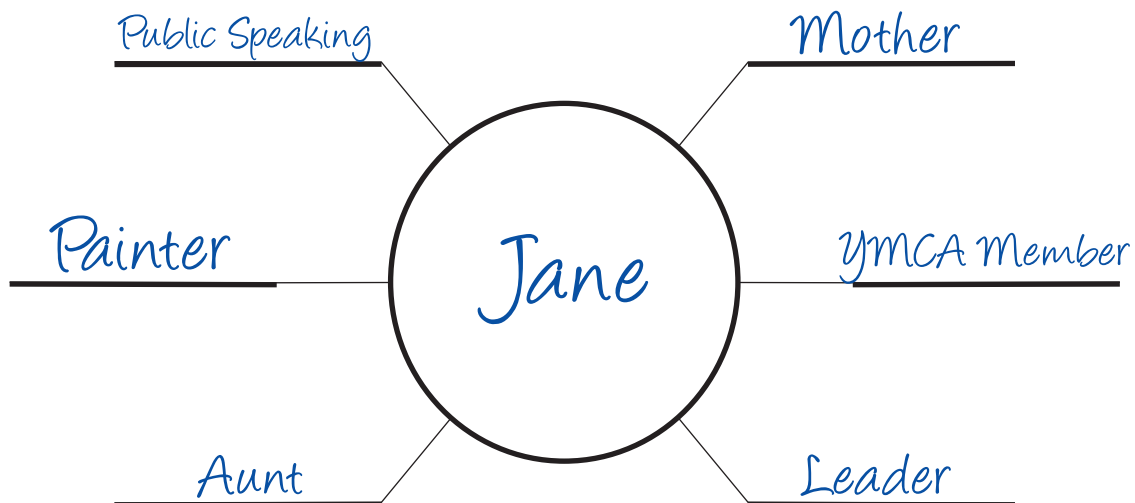
Asset mapping is a valuable retention strategy to use with families. Discuss with families that assets are not just materialistic things, but also a person's skills, talents, and personality traits as well. Families will then become more invested in attending your program and learning how the personal assets they possess helps strengthen their community. This helps with retention of families in your program. The following is the process for using asset mapping with families.

1. Start with stating the definition of an asset map.

Definitions:

Assets are esteemed people or things. An asset map shows people, businesses, and organizations within a community.

2. Lead a discussion about "What is an asset?" The definition of an asset is a "useful or valuable thing, person, or quality" (Oxford Languages, 2021). Write all responses on chart paper or a whiteboard. Consider asking questions like the ones below to begin the conversation:
 - Are all assets material goods?
 - Is having a brilliant smile an asset?
 - What other skills, knowledge, or personality traits can be seen as an asset?
3. After reviewing what adult family members say about what an asset is, model how to create a personal asset map. Create one for yourself and talk aloud as you write. You could, for example, write your name in the center of a piece of chart paper and put a circle around your name. Draw lines from the edge of the circle and write one asset on each line. Don't forget to write non-material assets like persistence or good listening. You can find a printable template in the Resources section.



(NCFL, 2021)

4. Next, invite adult family members to create their own personal asset map. Once everyone finishes, ask people to get in pairs and share their asset map with their partner. When everyone has had time to share with their partner, ask if there are any volunteers who would like to talk about one of their personal assets.
5. Give space for reflection about the personal asset map activity. You could ask adults to share orally or to write a journal entry. Write on chart paper or a whiteboard the following questions:
 - How did you feel when creating your personal asset map?
 - What did you learn about yourself?
 - What did you learn about someone else?
 - Do you think asset maps are useful? Why or why not?
6. Explore how adult family members can contribute their strengths to one another, to the program, and to the wider community. As a facilitator, find opportunities to incorporate their assets into activities.

Strong Teams & Quality Services

When a new family expresses an interest to enroll, the way team members communicate with one another is already sending a message to the family about your program. Effective and positive team communication, teamwork, planning, and facilitation directly impacts retention. It can either support or hinder family participation. Strong teamwork supports families through transitions, as they access community resources, and progress toward achieving family goals. Successful orientation efforts clearly communicate what the program offers and shares participation expectations. Orientation will include program components and highlight how each component supports the goals of enrolling families. When your team plans engaging activities together—with relevant topics based on family feedback—families participate more often. When programming is not relevant to a family’s needs, they will likely choose another program. Identifying barriers to participation and seeking solutions supports families. You can work together to find ways to help families continue participating in the program.

To support families through high-quality services as a team:

- Strengthen teamwork through staff team building.
- Model positive communication as a team while you recruit, enroll, and support families.
- Identify and address barriers to participation. In the following pages, you’ll find a tool to use with your team.
- Use the Recruitment and Retention Plan and Calendar to prepare months in advance. You’ll find an example included in the following pages.
- Plan and offer orientation after enrollment.
- Track attendance. Reach out to families who are not participating.
- Review attendance expectations after breaks and after extended gaps in participation.
- Provide incentives to participating families. Ask local partners for items that help families reach their goals.
- Create an environment where families feel comfortable and can create a community with the other families.
- Provide effective, well planned, interactive, and engaging activities.
- Choose relevant session topics based on feedback from families.

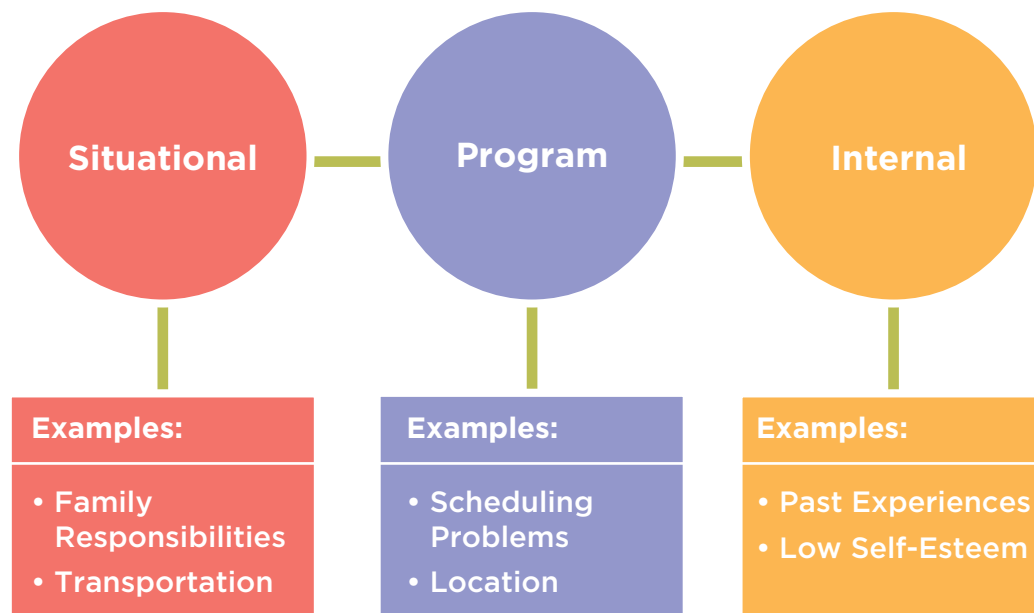
Barriers to Participation

Asset mapping highlights the strengths of a community. When adults choose to participate in a program, they arrive with current responsibilities. These might include:

- work
- parenting
- caring for family members
- medical appointments
- community activities
- leadership with a faith-based or community organization

Along with the many responsibilities each adult family member fulfills, they may also experience barriers to participation. These barriers impact adults' ability to stay in long-term programming. Program staff need to be aware of these three types of barriers:

- **Situational barriers** happen as the result of an adult family member's situation in life at any given time. These barriers can include a wide range of situations, from a flat tire to experiencing homelessness, from a new shift schedule to divorce.
- **Program barriers (Institutional barriers)** are roadblocks created by programs without realizing they've done so. These can include program schedules or program location.
- **Internal barriers (Dispositional barriers)** are a bit harder to figure out and define. These barriers are related to self-perceptions of oneself as a learner and arise from a student's internal thoughts, feelings, self-confidence, and combined life and school experiences.



(NCFL, 2021)

Barriers and Solutions Team Activity

Families may experience these and/or other barriers while participating in a program:

- Difficulty adjusting to the routine of the program
- Low self-esteem hinders adult from seeing progress toward their goal
- Wanted to focus on the adult education component and has difficulty meeting the Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time® or Parent Time commitment
- Prior negative experience with school
- Has to take care of other children or family members
- Members of family oppose participation; adult family member feels pressured to withdraw
- Personal conflict with staff members or other participants
- Learning disability necessitates additional support
- Change in employment status
- Transportation

This chart is an example of what your team can do to identify barriers and find solutions to overcome them with families. You'll find a blank template in the Resources section.

Barriers	Solutions
Low self-esteem hinders adult from seeing progress toward their goal	Facilitate effective peer coaching
Prior negative experience with school	Host family engagement events where families can meet school staff members and showcase school services
Has to take care of other children or family members	Consider alternate participation schedules
Change in employment status	Consider alternate participation schedules
Transportation	Provide public transit passes or gas cards as incentives

Retention Planning

As with recruitment, design a retention plan to give more detail to retention ideas. You can use the barriers and solutions tool to inform your plan. An example follows. The Resources section contains a blank template for your use.

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (SMART) Goals for Recruitment:				
Begin an incentive system for participating families				
<i>In the columns, plan several strategies the team will implement to achieve this recruitment goal.</i>				
Strategy	Timeline	Team Member(s) Responsible	How will we know when we have been successful?	Status
Approach businesses for incentives and resources.	July	Coordinator, Early Childhood Co-Teacher	Interested businesses have donated items for the program.	

Next, include recruitment ideas on a Recruitment and Retention Calendar along with the recruitment ideas you have already added. You'll find a blank template in the Resources section. Remember to revisit the calendar during team meetings to review the effectiveness of each activity. Below is an example of three months of a calendar.

July	August	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach businesses for incentives and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an attendance policy with participants and share information about the distribution of incentives. Work with families to set personal goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan a celebration for goals achieved and distribute incentives.

Conclusion

Creating strong relationships with participants, consistent communication with families and between staff members, honoring family strengths, interests, needs, and goals, and maintaining high quality services will help retain participants throughout the year as well as across program years. Even with a team's best efforts, a family may still leave the program. The goal of programs is to see families succeed—meeting their goals and moving on to the next stage of life. If they have an intention to return to continue working on their goals, let them know they can return to a higher level of participation when they are ready. Even after leaving the program, the program remains a resource in the community.

TOOLKIT TOP TEN TIPS FOR THE ROAD

Revisit your recruitment and retention action plan and calendar as a team on a regular basis. Discuss the effectiveness of each strategy. Create a process where the team can update the plans and communicate about the updates. Encourage adult family members to share information with the team about where they heard about the program. Ask which strategies helped them make their decision to enroll and stay with the program long enough to reach their goals. The ten strategies listed below recap highlights from the full toolkit.

Recruitment

- Invite program staff members, administrators, and program family members to create an asset map for future recruitment. Reflect throughout the creation process. Decide how often to revisit and update the asset map.
- Create a year-round plan and calendar. Outline strategies for ongoing recruitment.
- Be sure all organization staff learn about your program—especially staff who regularly interact with families.
- Keep up-to-date program information ready for families who visit the front office.
- Post flyers translated into the most common community languages so families can learn about the program in their preferred language.

Retention

- Identify and address barriers to participation as a team. Add identified retention strategies to your recruitment and retention calendar.
- Facilitate personal asset mapping with adult family members. Explore how each adult's assets and strengths are an important part of the community.
- Ask each family about how they prefer to communicate with you. Send messages more than once and in a variety of ways.
- Request and use feedback from families to help ensure program services match their goals.
- Provide incentives to participating families. Ask local partners for items that help families reach their goals.

RESOURCES

These previously referenced resources, mentioned in earlier sections, appear in an easy to print format here. Included, you will find:

- Community Asset Map Template
- Create Your Own Community Asset Map Template
- Personal Asset Map Template
- Recruitment & Retention Plan Template
- Full Year Recruitment & Retention Calendar Example
- Recruitment & Retention Calendar Template
- Family Interest Form
- Follow-Up Contact Survey
- Barriers & Solutions Team Activity

Community Asset Map Template

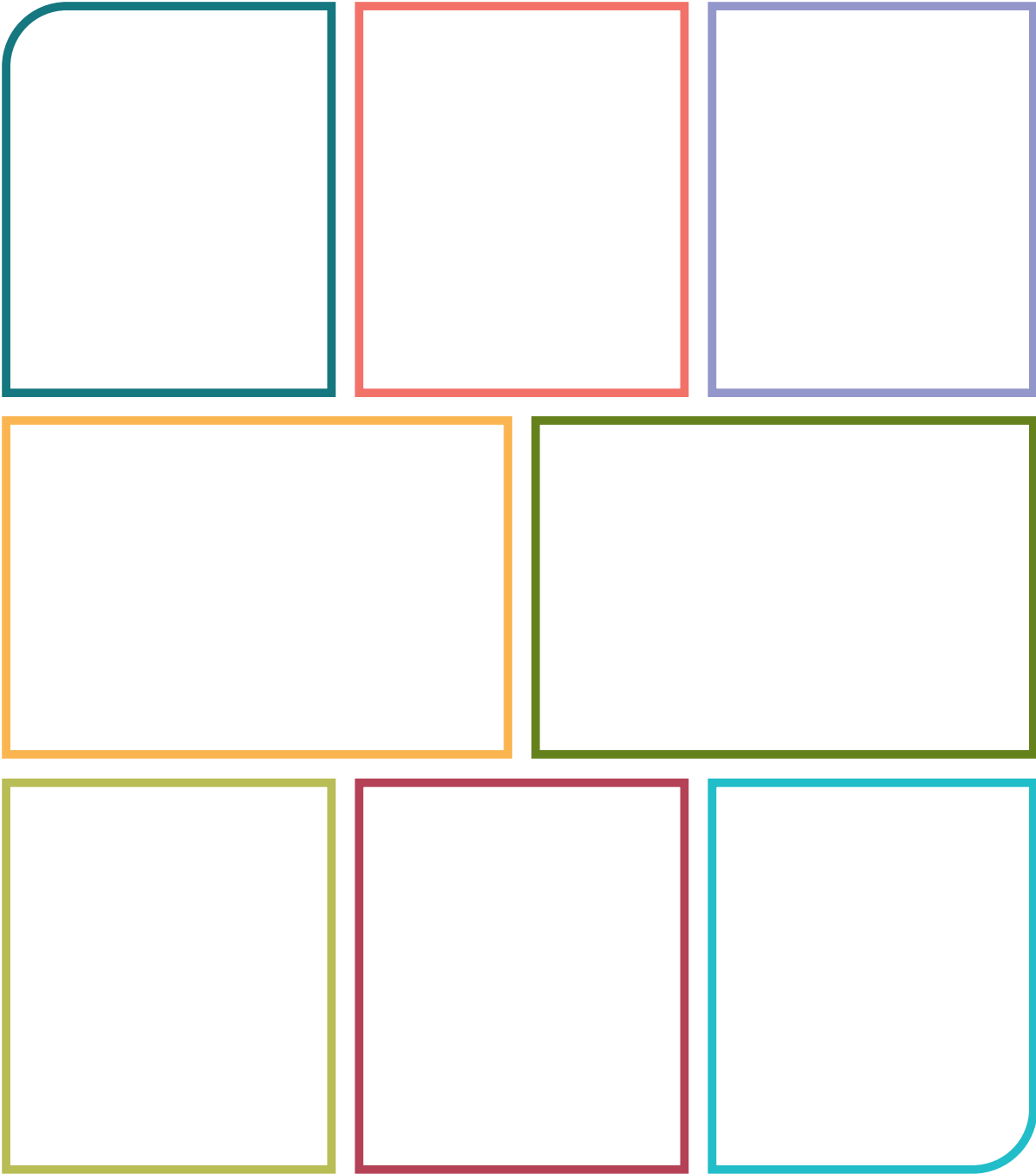
This tool can be used to map assets in the community to support the recruitment of potential families for family literacy and family learning programs. Remember people can be listed as assets.

Family Mental and Physical Health Offices	Family Resources	Government/Tribal Offices
Community Centers	Community Events	
Faith-Based Organizations	Schools in the Community	Adult Education Partners

Create Your Own Community Asset Map Template

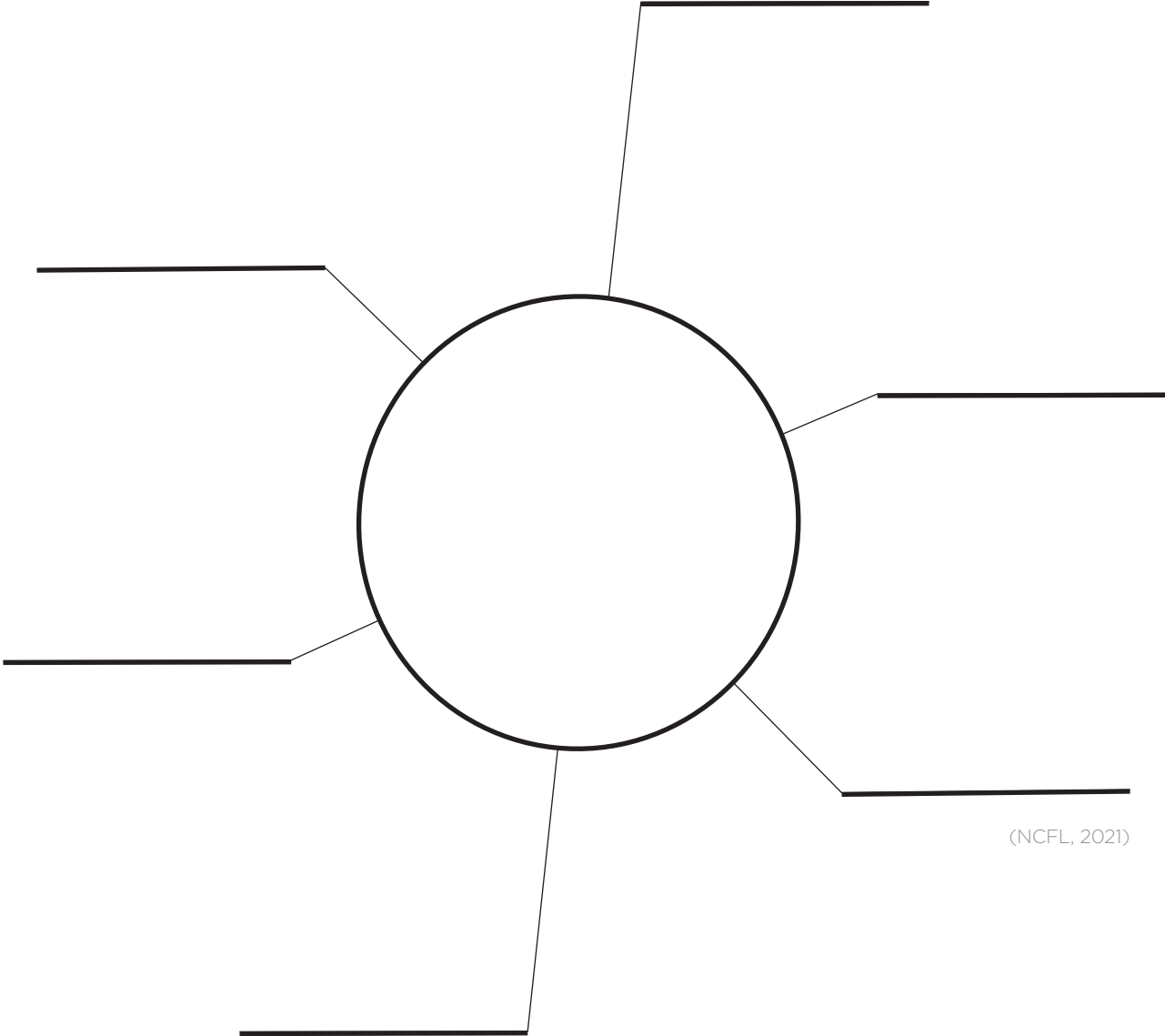


If you'd like to set your own categories, this template can be used in place of the previous template.



Personal Asset Map Template

After writing your name in the center, add your assets on the lines. Add pictures and decoration to make this your own.



Recruitment & Retention Plan



Program Site:

Team Members:

Date:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound (SMART) Goals for Recruitment:				
<i>In the columns, plan several strategies the team will implement to achieve this goal.</i>				
Strategy	Timeline	Team Member(s) Responsible	How will we know when we have been successful?	Status

Full Year Recruitment & Retention Planning Calendar Example



July	August	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a recruitment plan, ensuring all staff have roles. • Develop recruitment materials. • Prepare flyers to post in the community, send home with children. • Approach businesses for incentives and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host an open house. • Hold a family orientation event. • Establish an attendance policy with participants. • Work with families to set personal goals. • Display photos and community information on program bulletin board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a “bring a friend” day and encourage families to bring a guest. • Help parents prepare for conferences as a recruitment tool. • Encourage teachers to refer families.
October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate Family Literacy Day by involving families in sharing their success stories. • Update bulletin boards. • Design new recruitment materials for use in the new year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a plan to keep parents engaged with learning during the holiday break. • Host a family holiday event. • Review and update family goals with participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make phone calls to participants who may be slow to return after the break. • Distribute new flyers. • Incorporate resources appropriate for winter months.
January	February	March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have families help plan for and host a recruitment event. • Ensure program information is included in organization’s newsletter, Facebook page, and other outreach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update bulletin boards. • Help parents prepare for spring conferences. • Encourage participants to share their program experiences with the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a school or organization-wide PACT Time® activity. • Have parents compile a collection of personal essays on their program experience.
April	May	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for program celebration and involve families in the planning. • Collect feedback/ anecdotes from participants about their program experience. • Create a fun summer learning plan: PACT Time® activities, reading logs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain contact over the summer with participants—send postcards, make phone calls. • Contact school administration to determine families to target. • Front load recruitment outreach by hosting a booth at summer community events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review family feedback. • Review and revise previous recruitment plan. • Engage previous participants to share at summer events. • Coordinate with local summer enrichment providers to share information about the program.

Recruitment & Retention Planning Calendar



July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March
April	May	June

Family Interest Form



Tell Me About Your Children and Family

We do not share this information outside of our program without asking you. Your information helps us tell you about this program and how it can support your goals.

Parent/Guardian Name(s)

Children: Full Names, Ages, Grade Levels

Contact Information

What are the best ways to contact you?

Email

Text

Phone call

Other

What is your email address and phone number?

Phone Number(s): _____

Email Address: _____

What are the best times of day to reach you by phone or text?

Morning: before school

During the school day

Afternoon: after school

Evening: after 7pm

Follow-Up Contact Survey



“Hello, my name is _____ and I am from _____.

I am calling to talk with you about our _____ program. Is this a good time to talk for a few minutes?”

- Brief program description:

- What the program offers:

- Program schedule:

- What interests you about the program?

- What questions do you have about the program?

You can contact me at _____. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about our program. I hope to hear from you soon!”

Next step(s):

Barriers and Solutions Team Activity

With your team, list participation barriers that families in your program experience in the column on the left. Discuss and list strategies for supporting families through each situation in the column on the right.

Barriers	Solutions

Next Step: During team meetings, take time to review and discuss the attendance and participation of families. What strategies have been successful? What new strategies might be needed? In addition to the barriers identified, are there other challenges or obstacles facing participants? Are the goals of participants being met?

REFERENCES

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Oxford University Press. (2021). Asset. In *Oxford Languages*.



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