

Mission & Vision

The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) works in partnership with communities to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families. Since 1989, we have helped to advance multigenerational literacy and learning opportunities nationwide. Our vision is to establish coordinated and aligned family learning systems in 60 communities, built with and for families, to increase education and economic outcomes and create thriving communities..

Principles for Entering Communities

Entering a community without investing in the proper community leadership and infrastructure can perpetuate systemic disparities. NCFL's approach ensures that family voice is at the forefront of decision-making, provides high-quality multigenerational programming, and builds capacity. As part of this approach, NCFL identifies individuals and families within communities as key system designers. Individuals and families most impacted by community challenges should and must be critical partners to proposing and enacting solutions to those challenges..

NCFL is committed to:



Fostering community leadership and shared decision-making

We want those most impacted by education issues and policies to be treated as experts in creating solutions. When we enter a community, we engage with and learn from families, professionals, and other community partners and ensure they share equal space as decision-makers.



Working towards systems change

NCFL is committed to following families' lead as they identify issues relevant to their community through design thinking, root-cause analysis, and community investigation tools. The redesign process should recognize the process as the product and interrogate how disparities may be grounded in local histories of place, policies, and practices. Communities that are supported and trusted are able to create sustainable change by increasing available programming; strengthening wraparound supports; and influencing laws, policies, regulations, and practices that remove barriers to family success.



Prioritizing relationships

Fair and engaging spaces are needed to effectively address educational and economic challenges. We foster community by building connection, discovering shared experiences, investing time in partnership development, and providing mixed methods of engagement. As families and communities grow together, they learn from one another and demonstrate the ways in which all partners' contributions are valued and respected.



Removing barriers to access

To ensure that all participants are able to engage fully, NCFL works with community partners to remove barriers to access. This process serves to ensure that the voices of those furthest from opportunity are heard while also strengthening relationships across lines of difference. Common barriers include access to transportation or childcare, language practices, and compensation for time, knowledge, and expertise.

Process

Developing partnerships

- Meet 1:1 with community stakeholders
- Host focus groups and community conversations
- Build a partner list that includes families and those with lived experience

Setting the stage

- Develop evaluation tools
- Expand strategic connections
- Recruit individuals and organizations to be part of a collaborative body
- Host convenings to foster community

Identifying community conditions

- Convene coalition to explore educational challenges
- Conduct a community-driven needs assessment

Sources

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