

# Connecting with Families



To support the mental and behavioral health of children

# Presenters



Barbara Boone, Ph.D.  
The Ohio State University



Angela Schoepflin  
National Alliance on Mental Illness, Ohio



Grace Schoessow, MS  
Early Childhood Mental Health  
Consultant, Greene County



Meredith Wellman, Ph.D.  
The Ohio State University



# Overview the module

---

- Learning opportunity for groups of professionals and/or parents who care for children or teens
- Focus on engaging families to support mental and behavioral health of children and teens
- Pause for reflection, writing or group discussion

# Learning Objectives



## **Participants will...**

1. Compare family engagement and traditional parental involvement.
2. Reflect on the changes in families and caregivers over time.
3. Reflect on the experience of families and the experience of professionals when trying to work together.
4. Recognize family engagement as an area for on-going professional skill development.
5. Understand the science behind engagement: the parent's experience and the professional's experience.
6. Practice using a self-reflection tool for professionals and families to assess the quality of interactions.
7. Commit to improving family engagement skills in one area.



Parent  
Involvement

Family  
Engagement

Supplemental

School/center  
focused

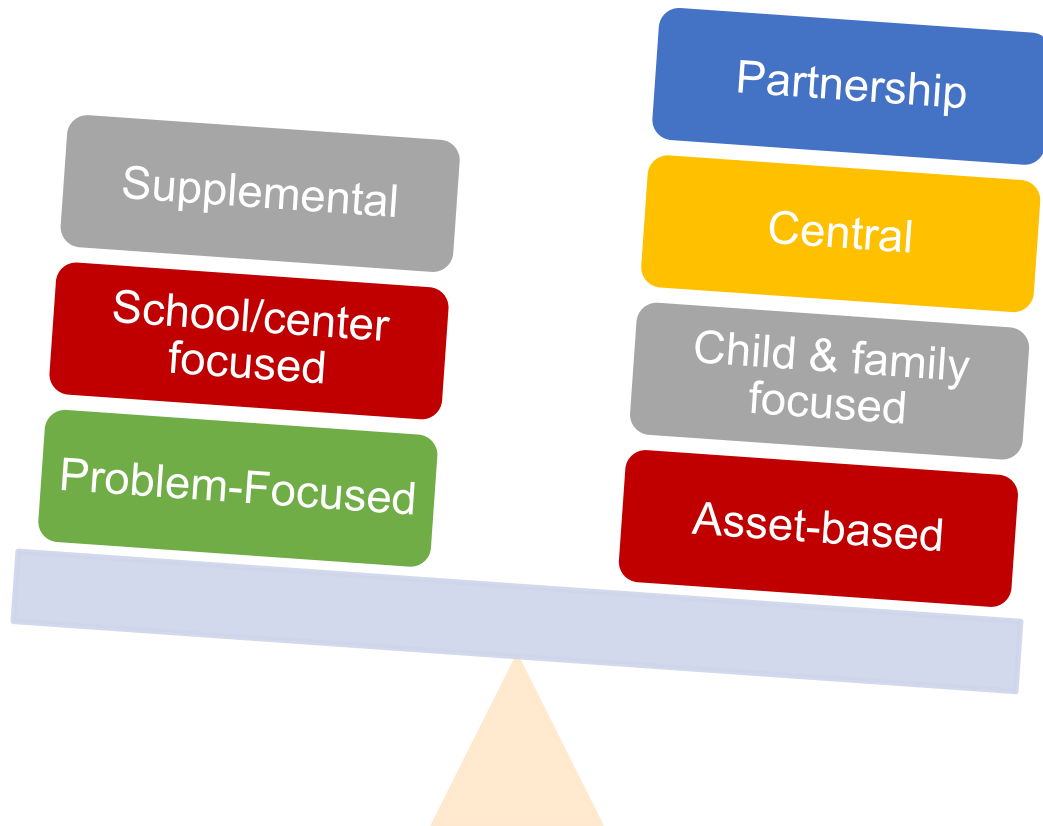
Problem-Focused

Partnership

Central

Child & family  
focused

Asset-based





# PAUSE THE VIDEO

---

Complete this **Activity** before continuing to watch the presentation:

Think about the caregivers of the children in your center.

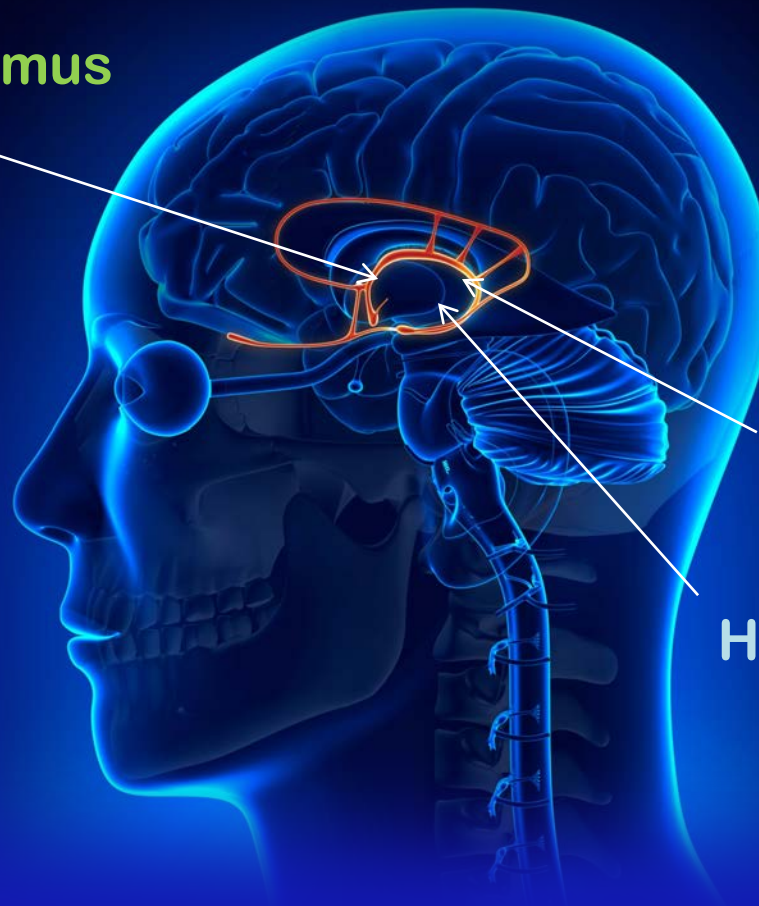
1. How have families changed in your years as a professional?
2. What is a family to you?
3. What is engagement in your mind, how is it different than parent involvement of the past?

Spend a few minutes recording your own thoughts – If you are watching this with a coworker or a team, discuss your results.

# The SCIENCE Behind Engagement



**Hypothalamus**  
**Frontal  
Lobe**



**Limbic  
Brain**

**Amygdala**

**Hippocampus**

**Brain Stem**



Our brain state influences our actions and reactions.





# PAUSE THE VIDEO

---



Complete this **Activity** before continuing to watch the presentation.

Think about a time when you were working with a family and things got tough. Maybe you had to deliver bad news, or maybe a child was acting out. Maybe the child's parent was having a hard time understanding or valuing your services.

How did you feel? What went through your mind?

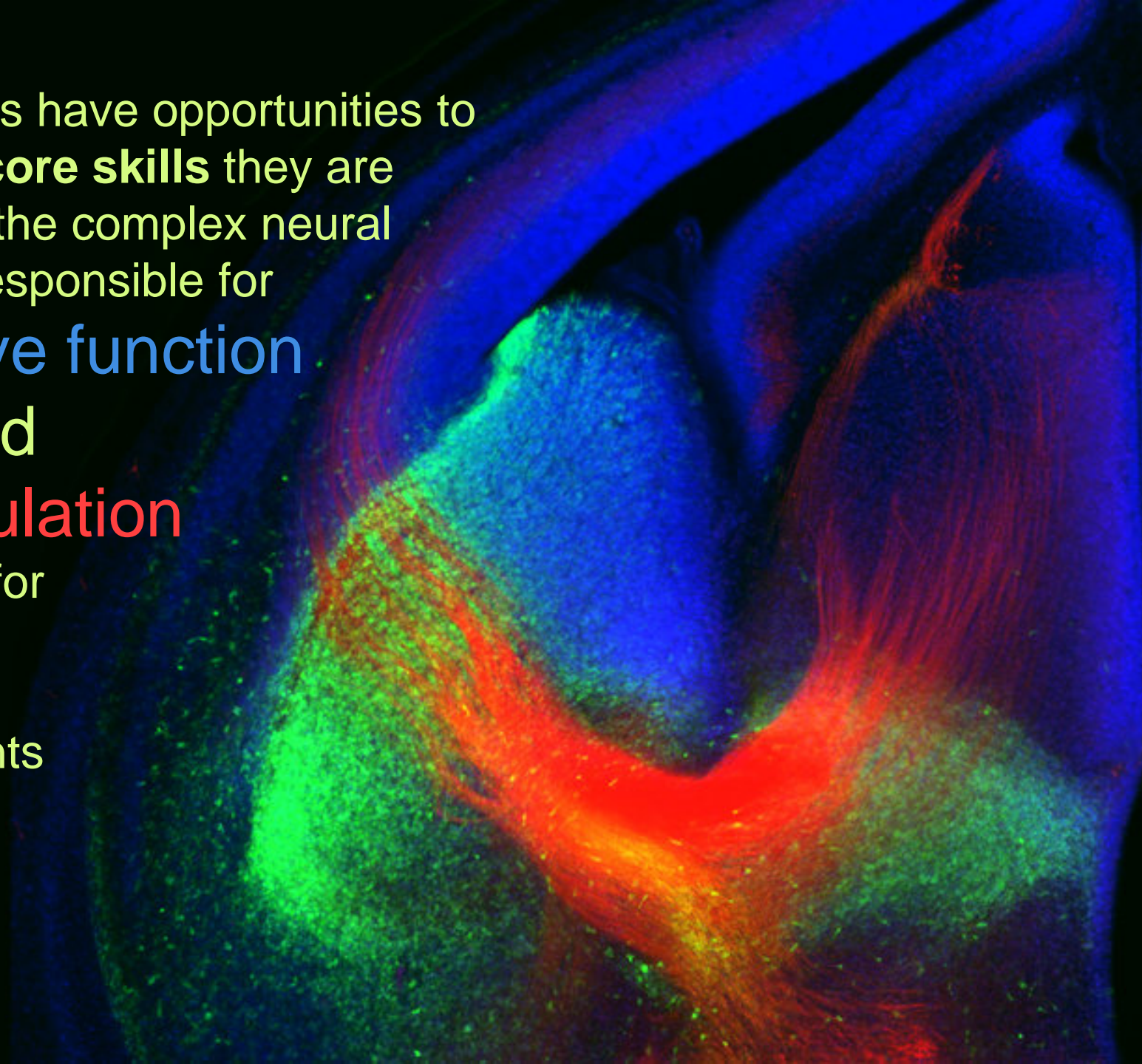


When adults have opportunities to  
build their **core skills** they are  
enhancing the complex neural  
networks responsible for  
**executive function**

and

**self regulation**

necessary for  
the stable  
responsive  
environments  
in which  
children  
thrive.



# Skills for Professionals



Respectful  
practices that  
build **trusting**  
**relationships.**





# Helpful

- Provide specific self regulatory training (deep breathing, calming routines)
- Teach specific executive function skills
- Teach strategies for re-assessing stressful situations and consider alternative responses
- Teach strategies for recognizing and interrupting automatic (often emotional) reactions to allow for time for intentional self regulation in stressful situations.
- Strengthen intentional self regulation by building skills that override automatic responses

# Hopeful

- Help parents identify their own motivators, goals and dreams for their child and family
- Help parents see how small changes make a difference
- Reinforce a cycle of positive emotional responses and successes
- Build confidence along with competence



# Measuring Improvement in Skills



How do we know if we are doing a *good enough* job of engaging and supporting families?

## Family Engagement Reflection Self-Assessment

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Family: \_\_\_\_\_

This scale includes items that encourage reflection on the ways in which professionals might engage with and respond to families. Please indicate which rating **best describes** how you, the professional, interact with and respond to families or parents. It may be helpful to your professional practice reflect on your engagement and interaction with each family over time.

To what extent is each of the following statements true about your work with the parent or family members?	Rarely	Seldom	Sometimes	Generally	Almost Always
Ask about how they and their child(ren) are doing	1	2	3	4	5
Say positive things about them	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage them to share their knowledge about their child(ren)	1	2	3	4	5
Help them learn new skills	1	2	3	4	5

# PAUSE THE VIDEO



Complete this **Activity** before continuing to watch the presentation:

Now, using the Help-giving Practices Scale rate yourself two times:

1. ONCE while thinking about a family with whom you have a good relationship.
2. and ONCE while thinking about a family with whom you have the most challenging relationship.

*\* If you are watching this with a coworker or a team, take time to compare differences between the two and discuss your results.*

# Next Steps



**What is one skill you can develop or strengthen to make you a more effective when working with families?**



# Pause the video

## Complete this **Activity** before continuing to watch the presentation.

Click on the Commitment handout located in the box on the bottom right of your screen. Select “download”. Once the attachment is downloaded you may complete your answers to the following questions:

1. What skills you have identified that you will commit to developing?
2. What is your plan for action to develop this skill(s)?







# Connecting with Families

Engaging Families to support the mental and behavioral health of children

Barbara Boone, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University

[Boone.32@osu.edu](mailto:Boone.32@osu.edu)

[u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/](http://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/)

Angela Schoepflin

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Ohio

Meredith Wellman, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University

[Wellman.87@osu.edu](mailto:Wellman.87@osu.edu)

[u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/](http://u.osu.edu/familyschoolpartnerships/)

Grace Schoessow, MS

Early Childhood Mental Health

Consultant, Greene County



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



**nami** Ohio  
National Alliance on Mental Illness The State's Voice on Mental Illness

