

# VOICES

from the field

----- 2020 - 2021

A Snapshot of Ohio's Regional  
Supports for Family-School Partnerships



Ohio Statewide  
**Family  
Engagement  
Center**

at The Ohio State University

# Who We Are



The Ohio Family and Community Engagement (FCE) Network is a group of dedicated education professionals from across Ohio, comprised of representatives from each of Ohio's regional State Support Teams (SSTs) along with organizations whose work supports families of diverse learners, including students with disabilities. The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center at The Ohio State University facilitates this network each year. The network collaboratively researches, develops, and supports the implementation of tools and strategies for regional teams and school districts to effectively engage and empower families and communities. Through the Network's activities to support strong family-school partnerships, family and community needs and strengths are recognized and prioritized at every level, resulting in improved student and family outcomes and better school climates.

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Family and  
Community  
Engagement

February 8, 2021 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

## LEARNING TOGETHER: A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

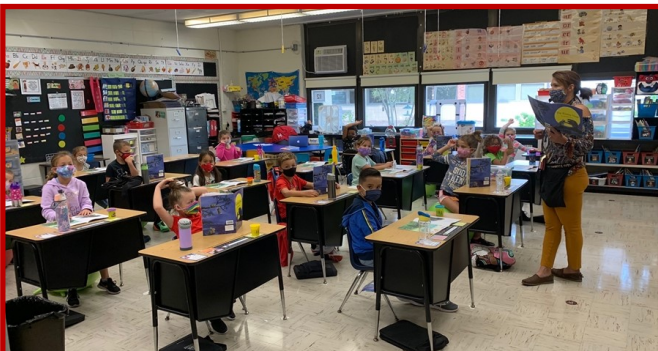


### Action

SST2 has the pleasure of supporting the continuing [Partnerships for Literacy \(P4L\)](#) work with Furry Elementary and Meadowlawn Intermediate in Perkins Local School District. We also had the opportunity to work with Oberlin and Wellington school districts, who are both part of [Ohio's National Network for Partnership Schools \(NNPS\) Network](#). SST 2 coaches these districts on how to apply Dr. Joyce Epstein's Six Keys for Successful Partnership to increase reading performance and create a more positive school climate. We have also developed new ways of listening to our partners through expanding the ways in which we communicate and collaborate. The dedication of our school and community teams has made this work fun and inspiring!

### Impact

With our partnership teams, we have been able to expand our community reach and overall effectiveness. We work to show our families that their input and knowledge is important and vital to the growth and development of our schools. In one community, you will be able to see the local theater advertising the city's "One Book" project. In other areas, you may see strategically placed feedback kiosks throughout the districts at events or when you are just visiting one of the school buildings. Our districts are actively looking for improved ways of connecting with those outside of our school building walls. Our districts continue to gain amazing resources for their schools by fostering and developing these valuable partnerships!



# CHALLENGE ACCEPTED: ADAPTABILITY IS KEY IN CHALLENGING TIMES

## Action

Each year, State Support Team 3 collaborates with districts and community partners on the face-to-face Summer and Beyond Fair. This event brings together families of students with disabilities and districts with community providers who offer extended learning opportunities using arts, therapeutic, recreational, and social interactions to build skills, self-sufficiency, and independence. When it became clear that we could not offer our typical event this year due to public health considerations, the SST 3 staff got to work on developing something that could meet the needs of families and caregivers and still offer a more personalized interaction in the time of COVID. Staff converted the [Summer and Beyond Directory](#) to an online version that allowed agencies and organizations an opportunity to share information online and add a short video clip to describe their agency and offerings.



Welcome to the 2021 Summer and  
Beyond Online Directory

<https://sites.google.com/escneo.org/2021summerbeyond/home>

## Impact

SST 3 has 31 public school districts and 72 community schools in our region. Families and districts are often looking to supplement and extend learning for students with disabilities as summer approaches. Fifty-nine agencies submitted information for the online version of the 2021 Summer and Beyond Directory. Having the Summer and Beyond Directory in an online version allows it to be continually updated which will allow families and districts to have the most current and accurate information available at any moment in time. A printed version of the directory is also available to families who do not have internet access. A customer satisfaction survey will be sent out in summer 2021.



I love the electronic version of the Summer and Beyond Directory. I shared it with school psychologists, posted it on my Parent Mentor FaceBook page, and sent out over 100 emails to families who request this kind of information.

*Anne Dellamorte,*

*Parent Mentor, Solon City Schools*



## BUILDING CAPACITY TO MEET OUR NEEDS IN AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME

### Action

Despite an unprecedented year in which educators adapted to the constraints and ever-evolving challenges presented by the Covid-19 crisis on top of the already challenging task of teaching, SST 4 was able to help families of students with disabilities in a big way! What started as a conversation between SST4's Transition Consultant, Crystal Bryski, and Harvey High School's (Painesville City Schools) Transition Coordinator, Kristin Oriani, resulted in a multi-organizational partnership. Their discussion revealed the need to create a learning series focused on secondary transition for families of students with disabilities. SST 4 was willing to help! Through financial and coaching support, as well as working with the Regional Transition Network Council, this parent series grew to include Wickliffe City Schools, Mentor Exempted Village Schools, Mentor Cares (a local autism resource and education school), and the Lake County Developmental Board of Disabilities.

### Impact

The Parent Transition Series includes five sessions (with the intention of adding more). Areas of focus in this series have included: guardianship, transition to adulthood, accessing board services, summertime networking activities for families, internet safety, and equity. While this series is orchestrated by Ms. Oriani, and sponsored by the aforementioned districts and LEAs, it remains open to all students, families, service providers, and other individuals or organizations in the region who are open to learning more about transition obstacles and opportunities. The feedback provided after each session has helped to target specific areas of need as determined by the families participating in the series! In addition, Ms. Oriani has created a [Google Site](http://bit.ly/PTSeriesLC) (<http://bit.ly/PTSeriesLC>) that includes information about partnering districts, upcoming events, and resources!

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIP THROUGH POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS

### Action

Learning from the experiences of the past year, the SST 5 realized the need to engage and support families differently. To bridge the gap between academic and behavioral success of each student, as well as provide a resource for Ohio schools and districts to utilize, the SST 5 created an interactive learning module, *Building Partnerships through PBIS*, aimed at strengthening the understanding of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) for families and communities. Able to be accessed on any device and screen size, the *Building Partnerships through PBIS* interactive learning module provides stakeholders the opportunity to learn about PBIS, identify some of the key features of an effective program, and offers resources for families to apply PBIS at home.

### Impact

The initial plan was to develop this module in collaboration with a district piloting the PBIS framework. During the year, however, the district decided to focus their efforts elsewhere. Despite this small setback SST 5 continued to develop the module. In the face of adversity, we flourished and our collaboration and partnerships as a team improved. Upon completion of the module and before launching it publicly, a review committee was created. The review committee was composed of one Family and Community Liaison from each of the four Educational Service Centers (ESCs) in our region, the PBIS Family Engagement Workgroup, and two district Family Engagement Coordinators. We continued to gather feedback through the end of May 2021 from our ESC partners as well as the districts. The module will be further refined based on feedback received. We plan to share the module with districts and local stakeholders who can invite families and others to learn about PBIS. View the module at: [https://rise.articulate.com/share/hForlZn9INzOgRvMM8dXrV2LPEjDGdJ\\_#/lessons/druRddnKTHZQq8u-9V8bE01YP-r8AGrR](https://rise.articulate.com/share/hForlZn9INzOgRvMM8dXrV2LPEjDGdJ_#/lessons/druRddnKTHZQq8u-9V8bE01YP-r8AGrR)



State Support Team Region 5

State Support Team

Building Partnerships

through PBIS



START COURSE

DETAILS ▼

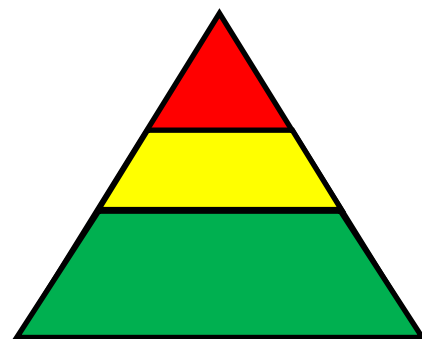
## SUPPORTING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

### Action

SST 6 offered a three-day learning series on college and career readiness for districts in our region. In this learning series educators focused understanding multi-tiered systems of support that include families and community partners. Each day of the series built upon the last as participants explored the components of the multi-tiered systems of support framework, before reviewing and updating their policies and procedures to better support a multi-tiered approach to college and career readiness. Time in the agenda was reserved for participants to invite partner agencies and families to attend during the afternoon of each day. During that time teams could share their action steps and discuss any further opportunities for partnership and feedback during that time. Topics covered included graduation planning, career advising policy, understanding at-risk indicators, student success planning, and post-secondary transition.

### Impact

We had five districts and community schools participate in the series. Each school was required to submit evidence to support an improvement or change at each tier of support that stemmed from participation in the series. Post-secondary transition funds were provided to all schools who submitted all of the required documentation. One community school found great success in the afternoon partnership session as they took the opportunity to have rich conversation with Ohio Means Jobs and make plans for how the partnership will support students next school year.



## SST7 BUILDING FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS PALOOZA DAY AND OUTSTANDING STUDENT AND EDUCATOR AWARDS

### Action

The SST 7 Building Family Partnerships Palooza and Outstanding Student and Educator Recognition Day was a highlight in SST 7's work towards expanding and improving quality family and community engagement practice across the region. The event included targeted sessions from regional, state, and national experts in the area of improving family partnerships. Joyce Epstein, Ph.D. was the kickoff keynote discussing family partnerships and the Six Principles for Effective and Equitable Programs. Participants then had a full day of FREE learning options, open to all participants through Zoom. Most of the sessions were recorded and are now available to be watched on-demand by all stakeholders. This resource has continued lasting benefit. During Lunch at the Palooza, Support Team Region 7 recognized our Outstanding Students with disabilities and Educator/Educator Team Awards for the year 2020-2021. This was a celebration with families, students, and schools. Jonathan Martinis, Senior Director of Law and Policy, was our lunch hour keynote focusing on self-advocacy and determination.

To access resources and videos from the day, follow this link, <https://bit.ly/2RRcK12>.

### Impact

The SST 7 Building Family Partnerships Palooza and Outstanding Student/Educator Recognition Day was a live virtual professional development day and a celebration ceremony that was recorded so working families and all stakeholders could access it on-demand. In addition, we announced our selection for the state awards including our nomination for the Walter Horn Outstanding Student Award and our nomination for an educator/educator team for the Franklin B. Walter Outstanding Educator Award. Each awardee had a slide recognizing them and their accomplishments. This was a great day of learning together and celebrating student and teacher accomplishments in our region. These recordings are being accessed and we are able to share these recordings to continue to build regional capacity.



# FAMILIES ARE FIRST TEACHERS



## Action

State Support Team Region 8 in Collaboration with our Partners at the Summit Educational Service Center came together to prepare short videos with practical strategies that parents and caregivers could use immediately when helping their children learn at home. Parents have taken on new and expanded roles as they have assisted their children to adjust to remote instruction, navigated the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, and all on top of the responsibilities of everyday life. These various videos focused on self-care, emotional support, supports for diverse learners, behavior interventions, developing a growth mindset and academic content support.

## Impact

The videos were not only well-received by families, but school districts too. We received many messages from the field applauding the videos and the resources. The videos were presented in family friendly language and the SST 8 consultants provided supportive messages throughout. Knowing that families have little time to be searching for resources, the videos were short and engaging and presented in categories that are understandable for families. So far, these videos have been viewed over 1,100 times. View the videos here, <https://www.summitesc.org/FamiliesareFirstTeachersVideos.aspx>.

## BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF FAMILIES IN POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING

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### Action

During the 2020-21 school year, Region 9 focused on building the capacity of families and students in post-secondary transition planning. Under the Kent State Professional Development Case Management grant, the region provided support and strategies to seven interagency teams. The teams included: a school district, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, and Local Departments of Development Disabilities. The goal was to increase student and family engagement in the secondary transition planning process. Through a 3-session Virtual Lunch & Learn Series with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, SST 9 also provided professional learning sessions about Discipline, Facilitation and Mediation, and Evaluation Team Reports (ETRs).

Whether offering a train-the-trainer series like *Establishing Families as Partners in the Secondary Transition Planning Process*, or planning a virtual secondary transition resource for schools, families, and students, or offering on-demand professional development, Region 9 has worked diligently to facilitate conversations, embed and coach on family engagement, build capacity, and offer supports for educators and families of students with disabilities.

### Impact

Moving forward, Region 9 will launch a Regional Family Engagement YouTube Channel which will include conversations that help families navigate their questions around children with disabilities and connect families to free county and state supports.

Region 9 has strong relationships with districts that we serve and community partners. Additionally, our impact has enabled us to build even stronger connections with families than in previous years. Within the community, our impact is a unified approach where all organizations provide services and supports to students and families. We will continue to build upon our relationships with districts so that they are implementing new strategies in the coming years to keep families engaged as partners. We will also continue to strengthen our community connections to support our families and students.

# Launching All to Success: A Learning Series on Post-Secondary Transition

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## Action

Without the ability to meet in person, State Support Team 10 reconsidered how to share resources and provide learning opportunities. The result: State Support Team 10 offered a Post-Secondary Transition series for families, educators, agencies, and anyone wanting to learn more about transition at the post-secondary level for students with disabilities. The Series consisted of 12 one-hour evening virtual sessions in February, March, and April 2021. A variety of topics around access to college and careers were covered with support from partner agencies including, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and local colleges and universities. In addition, the team provided an in-depth look at the Ohio Means Job website and helped participants create accounts, research careers, explore career interests and understand the educational and training requirements of each career interest. The series culminated in a final session that tied together previous learning to support building a student's transition plan.

## Impact

A mixture of family members, educators, agencies, and other participants attended the sessions. Participants shared that they increased their knowledge about the transition topics that were presented. Each session included specific survey questions to gauge the knowledge that was learned or if more information was needed. Ideas for continuing a virtual transition series for the next year were generated and the team is working to collaborate with other regions to reach even more families, educators, and community partners.



Thank you for your work to put these presentations together. As a parent of a 10th grader with autism, it is encouraging to learn that [post] secondary education is possible for my son.

*-Parent Attendee*



To view presentations and other handouts from the series, visit:

<https://www.livebinders.com/b/2750806>.

# Centering Race, Equity, and Family Engagement in Education

## Action

SST 11's family engagement efforts during the 2020-2021 school year centered around three areas: professional learning, communication, and planning for 2021-22 and beyond.

This year, SST 11 provided a collection of professional learning opportunities. A selection of these learning opportunities are presented below:

- Hosted a book study on Brene Brown's book, *Dare to Lead*, with SST staff and educators from across the region.
- Hosted Dr. Kenyona Walker from the Center on Education and Training for Employment at The Ohio State University for a three-part series on cultural responsiveness in education.
- Hosted Mark Anthony Garrett for his presentation, *The Power of a Hero*.
- Hosted Jo Salazar for her presentation, *Better Together*.
- Three SST staff attended the University of Southern Florida's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace program and received certifications on the topic.

SST 11 Focused on communications with families, caregivers, agencies, and educators in a variety of ways as well, including utilizing social media, newsletters, zoom learning sessions, YouTube videos, the SST 11 website, a Google site designed specifically for family resources, and numerous podcasts. These podcasts were designed to deliver timely, relevant information to families and educators and included topics and speakers like Dr. Antoinette Miranda on cultural competency, Dr. Kenyona Walker on culturally responsive practices, and LaDerrick Horn on Strategies for Families of Students with Disabilities.

## Impact

Planning for the 2021-22 school year and beyond is critical to sustaining support for families and educator awareness around these important topics. Numerous events are planned including some of the following:

- Engaging Partners in the Secondary Transition Planning Process - A Seven Part Series
- Evening Family Networking Sessions with discussion topics to include: Literacy, IEP/ETR, Secondary Transition, Instructional Tips and Strategies, Social Emotional Learning, and SST services and supports
- Additional interactive series on Culturally Responsive Practices by Dr. Kenyona Walker
- Continued book studies on the work of Brene Brown, Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Katie Novak
- Support for Success- Tips for Parents by LeDerrick Horne

In addition to these events, SST staff will continue professional learning around race, equity, cultural competency, and family engagement to strengthen supports and services to families and educators in the region.

### Connect with Us!



[@statesupportteam11](https://www.facebook.com/statesupportteam11)



[@SSTRegion11](https://twitter.com/SSTRegion11)



[statesupportteam11](https://www.soundcloud.com/statesupportteam11)



[Newsletter Archive](#)

<https://www.sst11.org/>

## Engaging Families in Secondary Transitions



### Action

SST 12 has supported and participated on the Zanesville Transition Team to revise their plan to increase parent engagement in Secondary Transition Planning for students with disabilities. Because Zanesville staff recognize that many of their families have very different life experiences, staff felt that taking a trauma-informed approach to their work would increase the likelihood that staff would be more responsive to the needs of all students and their families. In addition to supporting Zanesville on that team, SST 12 encouraged them to attend the SST 12 Transition Networks and to participate in the Trauma Informed book study hosted by SST 12. Zanesville is hoping to increase the percentage of parents who attend IEP or transition planning meetings.

### Impact

While Zanesville has had difficulty collecting baseline data about family engagement in secondary transition due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have reported a change in the mindset of staff participating in the SST 12 Transition Networks and the book study. The team is replicating the book study with those who were unable to participate this year. SST 12 is ready to support Zanesville as they focus on gathering impact data in this upcoming school year.

## Listening to Families During Difficult Times






### Action

State Support Team 13 and Parent Mentors from the region teamed up to create a safe space for parents to discuss and share their celebrations and concerns around communication, testing, and remote learning. Together they hosted three listening sessions to help understand how to best support families. A listening session is similar to a focus group. It is a facilitated discussion with a group of people, aimed at collecting information about their experience. Participants in a listening session are asked to talk about what they know and think.

During the session, the Parent Mentors and State Support Team consultant listened to the families and provided resources to help them with concerns that were brought up during the discussion. After the session, we compiled the big ideas and suggestions from families and shared them with the local districts.

### Impact

The listening sessions are a platform for families to share their collective ideas and help schools better serve their needs. We had more than 30 families participate in the listening sessions. From the sessions, we were able to share with schools what families would like to see schools do when it comes to communication, testing, and remote learning. The feedback from the schools was that the information was helpful to guide their family engagement plans.



And the Parent Mentors

Are inviting you to attend a

**Listening Sessions for Parents with students  
with disabilities**

**What is it?**  
A listening session is similar to a focus group and is a type of facilitated discussion with a group of people, aimed at collecting information about their experience. Participants in a listening session are asked to talk about what they know and think.

**Why are we hosting a listening session?**  
During these difficult times we want to be available to hear your success and challenges. This is a chance to talk with parent mentors and other families about the experiences you are having or have had throughout the school year.

**How can you get involved?**  
Sign up through the google link for the time and date you are available!

**January 12th 12pm or 7pm**  
Topic: Two way communication with your child's school  
[Sign up here](#) or scan the QR code above

**February 9th 12pm or 7pm**  
Topic: The good and bad of remote learning  
[Sign up here](#) or scan the QR code above

**March 9th 12pm or 7pm**  
Topic: Navigating state testing  
[Sign up here](#) or scan the QR code above

For more information or to register by phone contact Megan Horstmeier at [Megan.horstmeier@hcsesc.org](mailto:Megan.horstmeier@hcsesc.org) or 513.674.4365

## STAYING CONNECTED

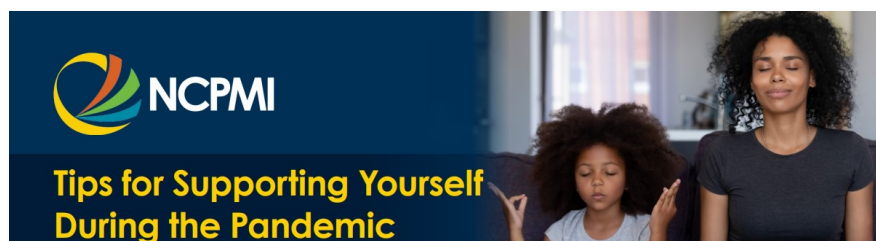
# SHARING VIRTUAL PARENT PACKETS DURING COVID-19

### Action

At the beginning of every typical school year, over 3,000 Informational Parent Packets are printed and delivered to each of the 18 School Districts in Region 14. With the uncertainty of COVID-19 restrictions, the Parent Packets were provided as an online resource for families. The School Districts and the Educational Service Centers placed the documents on their websites for easy access for the parents. Printed copies were also made available upon request. The Parent Packets included: PBIS Fact Sheet, Tips for Parents During Remote Learning, Supporting Yourself During the Pandemic, Wearing Masks Tip Sheet, and the Annual Family Engagement Learning Session Flyer.

### Impact

Many families were able to access the Parent Packets through their School District's website. Providing the informational Parent Packets to families in this online format worked well this year. Families were still able to receive the information in a safe manner.



*Example of one resource shared.*

## Person-Centered Backwards Planning

A Process for Facilitating Transition Planning:  
*Person-Centered Thinking*  
and  
*Backwards Planning*



## Action

Over the last 3 years, SST 15 has partnered with many agencies to coordinate services for students with disabilities, birth through transition to employment and independent living. School districts, state organizations, and other county stakeholders, including mental health providers and philanthropic organizations, met several times to communicate, collaborate, and problem-solve local needs and services that could be utilized throughout an individual's life. This allowed agencies to understand what resources were available throughout the community and facilitated open lines of communication among families partners to ensure successful student outcomes.

## Impact

In late spring of 2021, the SST received a call about an eighteen-year-old student who was homeless, cognitively impaired, and suffering life-threatening physical and mental health conditions with no living family members to provide care. Using the structures developed during the Person-Centered Backwards Planning initiatives, the team coordinated emergency services to ensure the student's needs were met immediately. In addition, the team was able to convene and develop a long-term plan with the student to address their transition and independent living needs. Person-Centered Backwards Planning allowed the group to know what resources were available in the county and problem-solve the situation that day, ensuring that the student received appropriate care and support.

## SUPPORTING PARENT NETWORKS THROUGH REMOTE AND HYBRID LEARNING



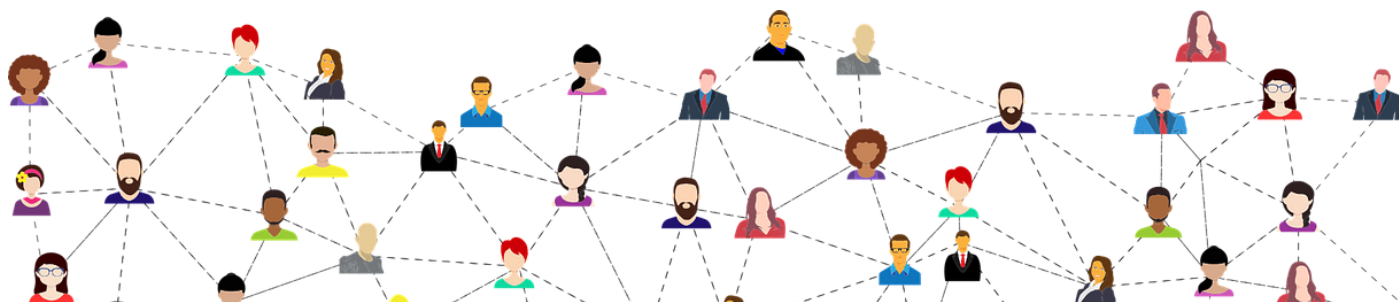
### Action

During the 2020-2021 school year, State Support Team 16 hosted virtual parent networks for parents of students with disabilities. These networks were framed in the parent café model. Each network series consisted of three virtual meetups on topics related to remote/hybrid learning during the pandemic. Parents of students with disabilities discussed matters that were important to them. Discussions centered around barriers with IEP team meetings, remote/hybrid instructional modifications, and how to support learning from home.

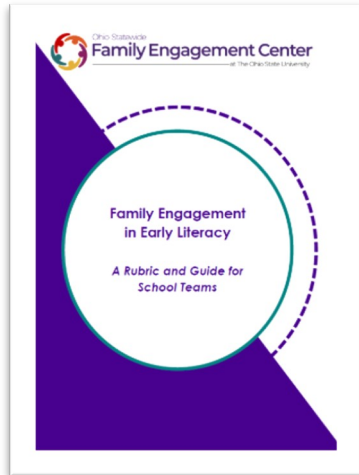
### Impact

Through the use of networks, parents increased their self-advocacy and offered and received peer support. The parent café model advocates for parent resilience, relationships, knowledge, support, and communication. Parents in the sessions appreciated support and suggestions from other parents.

The number of parent participants increased with each network series. We plan to continue offering the parent networks on a monthly basis for parents of students with disabilities, whether virtual or in-person.



# Resources Developed by the Ohio FCE Network 2020-2021



The FCE Network's Early Literacy Work Group developed a short video series to accompany the Family Engagement for Early Literacy Rubric. These videos provide a brief overview of each section of the rubric.

Available at the [Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center website](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/).



The FCE Network's Great Meetings Work Group has developed a new professional development for educators on how to have welcoming and engaging meetings with families. The work group was invited to present at multiple conferences this fall and a instructional video and discussion guide will be available at the [Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center website](https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/).

For more tools and resources to aid and improve your family engagement practice visit the Ohio Family Engagement Website.

<https://ohiofamiliesengage.osu.edu/>

# Regional Contacts

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## ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED IN THE NETWORK



**Ohio Coalition for the Education  
of Children with Disabilities**

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