

# Engagement Guide | Foster care

## Overview

As part of the CW 20/21 project, ACS is asking advisory committee members to partner with us in identifying engagement opportunities to learn more about the needs and goals for the future of child welfare in NYC. For foster care, the engagement targets and guiding questions are detailed below. Please help us in identifying opportunities in the next 6 weeks that would enable us to engage each stakeholder group in a co-facilitated session around these topics. We hope all conversations can focus on outcomes and how to achieve them!

## Stakeholder Groups + Engagement Questions

### PROVIDER AGENCY STAFF – SENIOR LEADERSHIP

#### Format & Logistics

- Provide discussion question beforehand to senior leadership
- Give 10-15 minute overview of why we are there and the purpose of this engagement
- If possible: provide the “financial constraints and realities” slides from the Finance PPT Deck
- Small group activity- icebreaker- 8/10 people at a table

#### Discussion Questions/Activities

- Do the CW 20/21 goals & values resonate with you? Is there anything that is missing/that you don't agree with?
- Share Areas of focus from the Phase I Research
- Practice: Which areas of practice improvement would you prioritize to improve permanency and reduce length of stay in care?
  - What strategies are yielding strong outcomes for your agency?
  - What should we do more of?
  - What should we do less of?
  - What strategies have we not considered?
  - Evidence based models- what is working and what is not?
- Organizational Health:
  - What to providers need in place to deliver high quality services?
  - How do we support a high quality workforce?
    - What methods/strategies could you implement to increase staff retention?
    - Administrative burden/paperwork – what are your ideas for how we can reduce the amount of paperwork staff are required to fill out and submit?
      - What are ideas that still align with OCFS mandates for documenting and sharing work processes?
    - How do we ensure frontline staff are receiving the right type and dosage of support, specifically within the first 3-6 months?
    - Do you have ideas for career ladders for frontline staff?

- What are strategies that you have implemented that have mitigated attrition rates?
- What gaps in resources exist?

**Possible Group Activities:**

- Share & validate the CW 20/21 goals & values.
- Share and validate areas of focus from the Phase I Research.
- Based on the response to the discussion above, identify your top 3 priorities to be addressed in CW 20/21?

**PROVIDER AGENCY STAFF (case planners, supervisors, specialists)**

**Format & Logistics**

- Provide discussion question beforehand to senior leadership
- Give 10-15 minute overview of why we are there and the purpose of this engagement
- Small group activity- icebreaker- 8/10 people at a table

**Discussion Questions:**

- Goals
  - Can you describe your role?
  - What are your goals in this role?
  - What do you consider success in your role?
  - Describe your best day at work. What makes days like this possible?
    - OR ask *this way*: What are some of the biggest challenges that you face in your role that makes it hard to be successful?
    - Do you have ideas for how to fix problems or challenges that you continually face in your position?
  - What kind of support/resources do you need to better support families?
    - Probe: Think about things like technology, transportation, additional administrative support, supervisory support, wellness programming, professional development opportunities, etc
- Supervision
  - Describe the best supervisor you have had.
    - What made that supervisor great?
    - What did this supervision look like? How did this supervisor make you feel?
  - What methods would help to identify and communicate your challenges? (With Supervisory Staff and families)

**Serving Families**

- What does success look like for a family receiving foster care services?
  - What are the goals of a typical family you serve?
  - How would your role or resources need to change to better enable you to help families achieve those goals?
- How do we include family voice and choice in goal setting?
  - Are there better ways or other opportunities to include family voice or choice when working with families?
- Are there better ways to help the families you serve?

- What types of family needs do you typically find difficult to address because of a lack of resources or services?

**Possible Group Activities:**

- Share areas of focus from Research Phase I. Do these areas of focus resonate with you? What are we missing? Does this describe what you do every day, or what you would like to do every day with families?
- Turn and talk to a partner, spend 2 minutes describing a recent success with a family. Then switch. After you each describe the success, discuss common themes that helped enable that success. Then share out your list of enabling factors.
- What gets in the way? Write barriers on post its and we'll create a venting wall to document all the challenges we face in our work.

**BIRTH PARENTS**

**Format & Logistics**

- Large group discussions are not our preferred way to engage with families – but let's discuss together how you've had success connecting and learning from families. We will tailor these guides based on the specific groups. Ideally, we could break up into smaller groups or use cultural probes to get people talking to each other.
- We need to discuss child care for the working parents, so they can make their feedback possible
- Food maybe pizza?
- Small group activity- icebreaker- 8/10 people at a table

**Guidance**

- Explain the why we are here
- We'll also need to do some work at the beginning to identify ourselves, the purpose, and confidentiality very clearly.
- Be mindful of our migrant populations and sensitive-- other languages? \*\*Spanish, Chinese, Russian, any other language translations?\*
- Be transparent with families and ACS roles
- Give space to the family for their reaction to ACS involvement in this process
- Make sure all the questions are well understood after they are asked, possibly repeat them if needed
- Mindful disclosure for the questions
- Don't waste time
- Have someone familiar with the families do introductions and prep and inform the families before the meeting

**Questions**

**Family**

- About the family
  - Where do you live? Who do you live with?
  - What do you often wish for – for yourself? For your family?
  - What are your personal goals for your family?
    - What work do you need help with and how can we help you with that? Or not help?

- What is something about where you live or who you interact with on a typical day that makes you happy?

**Experiences with ACS**

- Quality of services and support
  - Can you describe your ideal case worker?
    - What do interactions with this person look like? Feel like?
    - What types of conversations do you have?
    - How does this person help you and your family?
      - *Probe (if unable to answer):* what is your current case worker/case planner like? What would you change about your current case worker/case planner?
    - What would you change?

**Possible Group Activities (as a bank to help us brainstorm)**

- Please describe the kinds of support you feel you need and want to meet your goals for your family.
- One word. What one word describes the services you are receiving? Write that down on a post it note.
- Let's dream together. Break into small groups and discuss what your ideal caseworker would be like. How would they help? What would they do for you? How would you reach them?

**FOSTER CARE - OLDER YOUTH**

**Format & Logistics**

- Large group discussions are not our preferred way to engage with youth – but let's discuss together how you've had success connecting and learning from families. We will tailor these guides based on the specific groups. Ideally, we could break up into smaller groups or use cultural probes to get people talking to each other.
- Food maybe pizza?

Small group activity- icebreaker- 8/10 people at a table

**Guidance**

- Explain the why we are here
- We'll also need to do some work at the beginning to identify ourselves, the purpose, and confidentiality very clearly.
- Be mindful of our migrant populations and sensitive-- other languages? \*\*Spanish, Chinese, Russian, any other language translations?\*
- Be transparent with families and ACS roles
- Give space to the family for their reaction to ACS involvement in this process
- Make sure all the questions are well understood after they are asked, possibly repeat them if needed
- Mindful disclosure for the questions
- Don't waste time

Have someone familiar with the families do introductions and prep and inform the families before the meeting.

**Questions**

Youth

- About the youth
  - What are your personal goals?
    - What do you need help with and how can we help you with that? Or not help?
  - What is something about where you live or who you interact with on a typical day that makes you happy?

**Experiences with ACS**

- Quality of services and support
  - Describe the support you get from your agency?
  - Who do you rely on for help the most at your agency?
    - What types of conversations do you have?
    - How does this person help you?
      - *Probe (if unable to answer):* what is your current case worker/case planner like? What would you change about your current case worker/case planner?
      - What would you change?

**Possible Group Activities (as a bank to help us brainstorm)**

- Please describe the kinds of support you feel you need and want to meet your goals.
- One word. What one word describes the services you are receiving? Write that down on a post it note.
- Let's dream together. Break into small groups and discuss what your ideal caseworker would be like. How would they help? What would they do for you? How would you reach them?

**FOSTER PARENTS**

**Format & Logistics**

- Large group discussions are not our preferred way to engage with foster parents – but let's discuss together how you've had success connecting and learning from families. We will tailor these guides based on the specific groups. Ideally, we could break up into smaller groups or use cultural probes to get people talking to each other.
- Food maybe pizza?
- Small group activity- icebreaker- 8/10 people at a table

**Guidance**

- Explain the why we are here
- We'll also need to do some work at the beginning to identify ourselves, the purpose, and confidentiality very clearly.
- Be mindful of our migrant populations and sensitive-- other languages? \*\*Spanish, Chinese, Russian, any other language translations? \*\*
- Be transparent with families and ACS roles
- Give space to the family for their reaction to ACS involvement in this process
- Make sure all the questions are well understood after they are asked, possibly repeat them if needed
- Mindful disclosure for the questions
- Don't waste time

- Have someone familiar with the families do introductions and prep and inform the families before the meeting

### Questions

#### Family

- About the family
  - What are your personal goals as a foster parent?
    - What work do you need help with and how can we help you with that? Or not help?
  - What is something about where you live or who you interact with on a typical day that makes you happy?

#### Experiences with ACS

- Quality of services and support
  - Describe the support you get from your agency?
  - Who do you rely on for help the most at your agency?
    - What types of conversations do you have?
    - How does this person help you and your family?
      - *Probe (if unable to answer):* what is your current case worker/case planner like? What would you change about your current case worker/case planner?
    - What would you change?

### Possible Group Activities (as a bank to help us brainstorm)

- Describe the kinds of support you feel you need and want to be a successful foster parent.
- One word. What one word describes the support you are receiving? Write that down on a post it note.
- Break into small groups and discuss the top 3 things you would like for your foster care agency to do to support you as a foster parent?