

The Parent Leadership Learning Party

This Learning Party, developed in collaboration with experts at EPIC (Every Person Influences Children), provides parents and families with important leadership and advocacy skills to promote civic engagement in the familiar and comfortable Learning Party format. The Parent Leadership Learning Party is part of a larger effort to create and sustain local parent leadership efforts through the Early Childhood Advisory Councils, Judy Centers, and public school systems.

The Parent Leadership Learning Party is designed to support parents/family members as they take an active role in their child's education and in schools, early learning programs, and local communities. Parent Leadership Learning Parties support growth and development in four areas:

- Trust and Communication
- Problem Solving and Conflicts
- Meeting Management
- Advocacy

Like traditional Learning Parties, each Parent Leadership Learning Party session includes:

- **Parent Skill Development:** A Lead Trainer provides specific, content-based concepts and demonstrates a variety of activities, techniques, and strategies. Parents practice with their peers, while trainers observe and provide positive feedback and suggestions.
- **Child Learning:** While parents are learning new skills, children are engaged in play that aligns with the specific concept of the Learning Party.
- **Parent-Child Activities:** When the parents and children are reunited, they work together to complete an activity.
- **Parent Networking:** Parents have opportunities to meet, talk with and learn from other parents.

- **Home Connection:** Parents are given a take-home activity and discuss ways to transfer knowledge into action.

The Parent Leadership Learning Party has been designed to meet Goal 7 of the Maryland Family Engagement Framework: Family engagement initiatives should support the development of families as leaders and child advocates. When parents and families are empowered, they can be a strong force for positive change in their child's education and in many other areas of life. Therefore, Maryland initiatives and the family engagement practices of early care and education providers should support families to participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, and community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

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