

PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH GUIDANCE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM...

Youth Guidance's Parent & Family Engagement initiatives equip parents and caring adults with skills to support their children's educational experience and to improve school outcomes. A core value for Youth Guidance since its inception, services are aligned with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and currently engage more than 1,400 parents in 46 Chicagoland schools.



Youth Guidance Parents

The Parent & Family Engagement program develops parents and other caring adults as role models and leaders. Parents learn to model positive adult-student relationships and reinforce safe, youth-centered school climates. Parents are also equipped with skills to nurture the Six Developmental Pathways of healthy and academically successful youth: Physical; Cognitive; Psychological; Language; Social; and Ethical. The acquired skills and knowledge foster confidence and self-efficacy in our parent community.

With positive role models in place, Youth Guidance staff are better able to help transform schools into resources for both the home and the community. Schools are provided with trained cohorts of Parent Leaders to build welcoming environments and bridges to the surrounding community. Parents, caring adults, and their families play multiple roles in our schools – from encouragers to decision-makers – and increase the school's social capital. As leaders and role models, they establish a systemic connection between the home environment and the learning environment for our youth.

Parent & Family Engagement initiatives successfully:



- Coach parents as leadership team members
- Boost attendance through home visits
- Provide relevant professional development
- Link school improvement goals to parent support
- Create a community of trust
- Help families interpret student data
- Build strong parent organizations
- Connect families to needed community resources
- De-escalate conflict and bridge cultural divides

PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH GUIDANCE

Core Service Components

Parents need support too. We know that no matter how engaged they are, parents and caregivers can't be with their children 24/7. Youth Guidance's Parent & Family Engagement teams provide extra support to youth during the school day. We work directly with families to create the support plans that each child needs to succeed in school and in life.

Parent Leadership Conference

Each year, parent representatives from across the region come together for a dynamic two-day parent conference. Speakers and interactive workshops focus on challenges parents face in their communities, and offer new strategies for overcoming obstacles at school and at home. School and agency staff and key partners also attend the conference to demonstrate best practices as part of a shared learning community.

Coaching & Capacity Building

Youth Guidance coaches parents on effective participation in decision-making forums such as advisory teams and local school councils. Current parent leaders and/or officers meet regularly with agency staff to plan their home-school connection calendar, discuss recruitment strategies, and resolve challenges as they arise.

We also provide professional development to school staff and agency partners to foster meaningful, long-term parental involvement. Many schools lack the capacity to manage large groups of parent volunteers. We provide oversight for a robust school-based volunteer program. Coaching also increases the capacity of other Youth Guidance programs and staff to better support the family unit.

Leadership Development

Using our Parent Leadership Initiative Curriculum, cohorts of parent leaders engage in a full-year professional development course and practicum covering topics such as research on school improvement and positive parenting skills. Each cohort participates in a week-long introductory seminar, 1-on-1 coaching, collaborative team meetings, clinical support groups, and a school-based leadership position. Stipends are used where available.

Parent Enrichment & Support

Our one-hour power workshops give parents and caring adults tools to serve as role models for youth at home, at school, in the broader community, and in interpersonal relationships. Parents emerge better equipped to nurture the social-emotional development of their children. In addition, they find the sessions to be enjoyable spaces to share experiences, exchange ideas, support and empower one another, and create plans of action.



Parent Success Story

Mrs. Tatum became a Youth Guidance Parent Liaison two years ago. She recalls feeling "blown away" by the experience. "We did role-playing and learned strategies for working with youth. It was so amazing that I brought my husband in as well." Today, Mrs. Tatum supports 9th-12th graders on Chicago's south side. She notes: "I have new respect for the youth. For many of them, their anger is coming from what they face outside of school. I use the same motherly, nurturing approach I use at home to encourage students everyday. A simple 'good morning' or a hug makes a big difference. We do not scold. We support in a different way that leads to better grades and less disciplinary problems."