Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................... 4

1.1 Intent of the *Family Relations Standards* ................................................................. 4

1.2 Benefits of a Strong CYP-Family Relationship ......................................................... 5

1.2.1 Benefits to Children ................................................................................................. 5

1.2.2 Benefits to Families ................................................................................................. 6

1.2.3 Benefits to CYP Professionals ................................................................................ 6

1.3 Roles and Responsibilities ........................................................................................... 7

1.3.1 Installation CYP Director ....................................................................................... 7

1.3.2 CYP Management Team ......................................................................................... 7

1.3.3 CDH Monitors ......................................................................................................... 10

1.3.4 Training Team ......................................................................................................... 11

1.3.5 Direct Care Staff ..................................................................................................... 12

1.3.6 Support Staff .......................................................................................................... 13

1.4 Program-Specific Family Involvement ....................................................................... 14

Chapter 2: Understanding Family Involvement ................................................................. 15

2.1 Assessing Current Family Involvement ....................................................................... 16

2.2 Team Approach to Effective Family Relations .......................................................... 18

Chapter 3: Parenting Support ............................................................................................ 20

3.1 Understanding and Respecting Diverse Families ....................................................... 20

3.1.1 Family Culture ....................................................................................................... 20

3.1.2 Parenting Styles ..................................................................................................... 23

3.1.3 Family Dynamics .................................................................................................... 24

3.2 Turning Family Information into Action ..................................................................... 27

3.2.1 Recognizing Bias ................................................................................................... 27
Table of Contents

3.2.2 Learning From CYP Families ............................................ 29
3.2.3 Supporting Military Families ............................................. 30

3.3 Parenting Resources ................................................................ 31
3.3.1 Resource Library ............................................................... 32
3.3.2 Parenting and Community Resources ................................. 33

Chapter 4: Effective Communications ........................................... 34

4.1 Communicating Through Environment .................................... 34
  4.1.1 Creating Welcoming Spaces ............................................. 35
  4.1.2 Connecting Families to the Program Environment ............ 35

4.2 In-Person Communication ...................................................... 36

4.3 Communication Opportunities ............................................... 36
  4.3.1 Written Communications ............................................... 37
  4.3.2 Parent Information Boards .............................................. 44
  4.3.3 Family Conferences ..................................................... 45
  4.3.4 Informal Communication ............................................... 47

4.4 Effective Conflict Resolution ................................................. 48
  4.4.1 How Conflicts Arise .................................................... 48
  4.4.2 Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution ......................... 49

Chapter 5: Shared Decision-Making ............................................. 50

5.1 Decision-Making at the Family Level ..................................... 50
  5.1.1 Involving Families in IAT ............................................. 50

5.2 Shared Decision-Making at the Program Level ....................... 51
  5.2.1 Parent Involvement Board (PIB) ..................................... 51
  5.2.2 Seeking Feedback from Families .................................... 56
  5.2.3 Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI) Participation .... 58

Chapter 6: Parent Participation Promotion .................................... 60

6.1 Actively Encouraging Participation ........................................ 60

6.2 Parent Participation Plan ...................................................... 61

6.3 Family Engagement Program ............................................... 62
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Family Engagement Program Outreach</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 <strong>CYP Rewards Program</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1 Flat Rate and Hourly Engagement Opportunities</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2 Tracking CYP Reward Points</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.3 Redeeming Points</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Participation Recognition</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Conversation Starters With Families</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Sample Parent Participation Plan</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Sample Calendar of Events</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Sample PIB Minutes</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Parent Participation Opportunities</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: Content Bibliography for Resource Libraries</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G: Family Relations Requirement Summary</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: 
Introduction

Collaborative relationships with families are the cornerstone of every successful child care program. Navy Child and Youth Program (CYP) Professionals foster strong and supportive relationships with families by creating and maintaining welcoming and inclusive environments which convey to families that they are respected and appreciated. CYP Professionals make every effort to ensure families feel welcomed, appreciated, and excited to participate—beginning with a family’s very first visit to the CYP and through every encounter thereafter. When CYP Professionals invest in meaningful relationships with families they serve, the entire community benefits—children, families, CYP Professionals, and the broader military community.

Note: The term “child” is used throughout these standards to include all children (6 weeks-5 years), youth (6-12 years), and teens (13-18 years) participating in the CYP. If a program is designed specifically for young children (e.g., Child Development Centers [CDCs]), the term “child” may also be used to reference these children (6 weeks-5 years). Similarly, the term “youth” may be used when discussing activities and programs specifically geared toward school-age youth (5-12 years), and the term “teen” may be used when discussing activities and programs specifically geared toward teenage youth (13-18 years).

1.1 Intent of the Family Relations Standards

The purpose of these standards is to provide CYP Professionals with guidance on and strategies for facilitating implementation of all Navy policy requirements for building and sustaining collaborative relationships with families. These standards embrace family-centered practices and provide rich opportunities for family communication, engagement, and participation. All information in these standards is official Navy guidance and must be followed by all CYP Professionals unless otherwise indicated. A summary of the Navy CYP requirements detailed in these standards is also provided as a quick reference guide in Appendix G.
1.2 Benefits of a Strong CYP-Family Relationship

Strong relationships between the CYP and families can positively influence children’s daily experiences as well as the experiences of the entire community. Parents know their children best, and CYP Professionals rely on parents for their insights and understanding of their children to facilitate the planning of developmentally appropriate experiences. However, building strong relationships with families goes beyond the day-to-day interactions between CYP Professionals and families. Fostering these relationships creates a commitment to community that supports all its members and promotes a team approach to learning and problem-solving. When all CYP Professionals—from the Installation CYP Director to each program staff member and Child Development Home (CDH) Provider—approach families as valued team members of the CYP community, everyone reaps the benefits.

The national accreditation bodies that guide and support Navy child and youth program quality all recognize the importance and value of establishing strong family relations and involvement:

- According to the Military Lifestyle Support and Education Standards by the Council on Accreditation (COA), “Formal and informal supports [for military families] decrease stress for the at-home parent, leading to healthier adjustments and improved outcomes for children living in the home.”

- The National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC’s) Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria confirms that high-quality early childhood programs foster trusting, respectful, and supportive relationships with families and encourage their active participation.

- The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) highlights the building of trusting, respectful relationships with parents and encouraging their participation as one of its fundamental quality standards for accreditation.

Many military families are stationed away from their extended families, and Navy CYPs often fulfill some of the roles of a surrogate family with critical resources and supports. CYPs can also help families remain current with what is going on at the local installation and what resources are available to them. The following sections describe some of the benefits of having families involved in their child’s CYP.

1.2.1 Benefits to Children

- Children sense when their families and CYP Professionals have relationships based on mutual respect and the child’s best interest. This is comforting to children and allows them to experience less anxiety while in care and to transition more easily between home and the program.

- Children learn how to treat others and work together by observing positive interactions between their families and CYP Professionals. Children watch their interactions on a daily basis and learn...
from the adults’ effective communication and problem-solving skills. Children observe how body language, tone, and facial expressions are used to build positive relationships.

- Children take pride in showing their families how they are learning and growing in the CYP. They enjoy showing their parents skills they master, projects they create, and friends they make.
- When busy parents take time to be involved in the CYP (e.g., visiting the classroom, attending a baseball game, leading an art activity, or having lunch with their child at the CDH Provider’s home), children know that they are important to their parents.

### 1.2.2 Benefits to Families

- Families who are actively involved in their children’s education are more likely to trust the expertise of CYP Professionals and provide their children with opportunities at home to practice what they learn in care. Parents are subsequently more comfortable sharing information with their CYP Professionals about their child’s development that can inform programming.
- Actively involved families have greater parenting confidence and parenting skills (as confirmed by The Harvard Family Research Project).
- When CYP Professionals validate the challenges of parenting, parents may be more likely to appreciate the CYP Professionals’ early childhood and child development expertise.
- Families who know and develop relationships with their program Management Team members generally trust and value the overall quality of the program more and the level of oversight and guidance provided to those caring for their children.
- Families who have positive relationships with direct care staff/CDH Providers are more comfortable leaving their child in care and have greater trust in their caregivers. Subsequently, families can focus more easily on their military and mission responsibilities.
- Families who are engaged in their child’s CYP learn more about child and youth development, which enhances their parenting journey.
- Families benefit from the support CYP Professionals are able to provide, such as listening to their concerns and offering referrals for additional support and services.

### 1.2.3 Benefits to CYP Professionals

- Direct care staff/Providers benefit from the knowledge families share about their children that helps them get to know the child better and tailor activities and experiences more effectively.
- When CYP Professionals feel appreciated and respected by families, they experience higher morale, feel validated in their career choice, and see the impact they are having in the lives of children.
- Engaged families are more likely to volunteer and lend support to program activities. This involvement makes the jobs of direct care staff and Providers easier and provides invaluable
resources for support and input to the CYP Management Team. Parent involvement means extra hands to help out, additional role models, and more opportunities for learning.

### 1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Every CYP Professional promotes strong relationships with families and fosters a positive family involvement culture. The following information details the roles and responsibilities of CYP Professionals that are specific to building and sustaining family involvement.

#### 1.3.1 Installation CYP Director

Installation CYP Directors set the tone for the CYP’s commitment to and establish the foundation for building strong relationships with families. These relationships in turn encourage and support positive family involvement (described in Exhibit 2.0A). The Installation CYP Director’s responsibilities regarding relationship building with families are the following:

- Establish the expectation that all families are treated with respect and in a caring manner, and serve as a positive role model of these behaviors.
- Develop and ensure implementation of policies and procedures to build supportive and positive relationships with all families by treating them in a respectful, caring manner.
- Ensure that the Local Installation Information Sheet accurately reflects their program’s information.
- Oversee procedures to ensure that families receive and review the CYP Parent Handbook.
- Facilitate the creation of the Parent Participation Plan (PPP).
- Oversee the management of the Parent Involvement Board (PIB), including recruitment of family member representatives from CDCs, 24/7 Centers, Child Development Homes (CDHs), and Youth Programs (YPs), as applicable.
- Ensure each CYP implements a nonmonetary volunteer recognition program in addition to the CYP Rewards Program.
- Ensure CYP installation-wide communication on policies and procedural changes (e.g., annual Parent Fees Letter) is issued to families.
- Ensure coordination of all CYP-wide events and activities to promote family participation.

#### 1.3.2 CYP Management Team

The CYP Management Team consists of the CYP Director and Assistant Director(s), if assigned; Monitors (for the CDH Program); Youth Sports and Fitness Coordinator; and Teen Coordinator in consultation with the Training Team as needed for specific support. Each team member plays a vital role in ensuring that program operations meet quality expectations for Navy CYPs. Consequently, every member of the CYP Management Team must ensure that all CYP Professionals understand
the importance of family engagement and have the tools they need to effectively partner with the families they serve.

**Director**

CYP Directors are responsible for the oversight and management of the CYP and ensuring that quality control measures are in place. They create an organizational culture that fosters relationships with families and focuses on engaging families. Directors ensure that all CYP Professionals understand their roles in building collaborative partnerships with families. In CYPs where Assistant Directors are authorized, Assistant Directors support Directors in all management functions and share these family involvement responsibilities. The CYP Director’s specific responsibilities regarding building relationships with families are the following:

- Establish clear, written policies and procedures that articulate the expectations for all CYP Professionals in developing and maintaining supportive and positive relationships with families.
- Establish and maintain an “open door policy” so families see the CYP Director as approachable and available.
- In collaboration with the Training Team, ensure all CYP Professionals understand the importance of supporting comprehensive family engagement throughout the program.
- Build rapport with families by listening to their concerns, acknowledging their perspectives, and emphasizing the importance of building and sustaining positive relationships with CYP Professionals.
- Collect and share appropriate information concerning changes or upcoming family activities occurring on the installation with CYP Professionals.
- Ensure all newly enrolled families receive a copy of the *Parent Handbook* and sign that they received it.
- Address and resolve all family concerns in a timely and professional manner.
- Provide leadership to CYP Professionals by engaging staff in creating and instituting varied opportunities that allow families to participate in program activities and experiences.
- Schedule, plan, and conduct new family orientation and facility tours and, in the CDH program, establish a system for coordinating CYP and family orientations.
- Identify family engagement-related training needs of CYP Professionals based on reviews and observations.
- Support the Training Team in the development, coordination, and facilitation of family educational activities and events.
- For the CDH program, observe both Monitors and Providers to ensure compliance with required standards, and identify and implement needed training to ensure interactions with children and their families meet those requirements.
Ensure that families are supported and offered services before, during, and after transitions to new duty station (e.g., Youth Sponsorship).

**Youth Sports and Fitness (YSF) Coordinator**

- Establish clear, written policies and procedures that articulate the expectations for all staff and volunteers (e.g., coaches and officials) in developing and maintaining supportive and positive relationships with families.
- Establish and maintain an “open door policy” by attending practices and games so families see YSF Coordinators as approachable and available.
- Observe staff and volunteers (e.g., coaches and officials) to ensure compliance with required standards, and work alongside the Training Specialist to identify training needs to ensure interactions with children and their families meet those requirements.
- Build strong, respectful relationships with CYP Professionals and volunteers (coaches and officials) to promote and model open communication.
- Address and resolve all family concerns in a timely and professional manner.
- Schedule, plan, and conduct pre-season parent orientations.

**Teen Coordinator**

- Ensure that families are supported and offered services before, during, and after transitions to a new duty station (e.g., Youth Sponsorship).
- Build strong, respectful relationships with CYP Professionals to promote and model open communication.
- Address and resolve all family concerns in a timely and professional manner.
- Schedule and conduct new family orientations and facility tours.
- Facilitate family conferences if and when requested by families, and request conferences with families if needed to best support the needs of a child or youth.
- Ensure that families are supported and offered services before, during, and after transitions to a new duty station (e.g., Youth Sponsorship).

**School Liaison Officer (SLO)**

The SLO is the connection between YPs and all local schools (i.e., public, private, Department of Defense Education Activity Schools [DoDEA], and home schooling). SLOs manage and facilitate education support to maximize academic opportunities for military youth and teens. SLOs are critical in the success of family involvement efforts, particularly in the strategies to support parenting practices at home. The SLO’s specific responsibilities regarding family relations are the following:
Serve as the subject matter expert, advisor, and representative for issues involving schools (kindergarten through 12th grade) and their relationships to military youth and teens, military families, the installation, and the community.

Lead the integration of military youth and teens into local school systems, working with families to facilitate success during their transitions from one school to another or from one installation to another.

Address family concerns regarding local schooling, and process with school personnel in a timely and professional manner.

Identify needs for and refer families to appropriate community supports.

Plan, develop, and coordinate joint installation/community/school activities that promote family involvement.

### 1.3.3 CDH Monitors

CDH Monitors oversee Providers in the context of their CDH operations, including their interactions with families. Monitors ensure that Providers understand their roles in building collaborative partnerships with families and provide ongoing oversight and support to facilitate their development of effective practices. Monitors’ specific responsibilities regarding building relationships with families are the following:

- Establish and maintain visibility so families see Monitors as approachable and available. Monitors build rapport with families by listening to their concerns, acknowledging their perspectives, and emphasizing the importance of building and sustaining positive relationships with their Provider.
- Build positive, respectful relationships with Providers to promote and model open communication.
- Encourage families to share concerns with their Provider; if further assistance is needed, ensure parents have Monitors’ contact information. Address and resolve all family concerns in a timely and professional manner, or elevate issues to the CDH Director as needed.
- Schedule and conduct new family orientations.
- Ensure all newly enrolled families receive a copy of the *Parent Handbook* and sign that they received it.
- Identify the training needs of Providers to further their positive relationships with families.
- Conduct observations of Providers to ensure compliance with all Department of Defense (DoD), Navy CYP, and CDH standards, including those pertaining to relationships with families.
- Remain current in research-based best practices for facilitating family relations, and use that information to inform program training practices.
1.3.4 Training Team

Training Specialist

Training Specialists are uniquely well-positioned to translate family relationship building research into strategy implementation in the CYP. As the CYP Management Team’s “eyes and ears,” Training Specialists help all CYP Professionals support, build, and encourage strong and lasting relationships with families. They accomplish this by coaching on best practices (through modeling and direct training) to assist CYP Professionals in deepening their understanding of and commitment to family engagement practices. Training Team responsibilities specifically related to family engagement include the following:

- Collaborate with the Management Team to ensure all CYP Professionals understand the importance of supporting comprehensive family engagement throughout the program.
- Develop and provide ongoing and as-needed training (i.e., specialized training designed to address an identified concern or issue) to support CYP Professionals in building and sustaining positive relationships with families.
- Train CYP Professionals program-wide on the significance of scheduling time for welcoming and working with parents.
- Observe direct care staff/Providers to ensure compliance with all required standards, and identify training needs to ensure interactions with children and their families meet those requirements.
- Coach direct care staff/Providers to ensure that high-quality interactions and family-focused activities are incorporated into their daily practice.
- Ensure families and direct care staff/Providers are partners in child transitions (e.g., to the child’s next classroom, to other CYPs, to school, to other installations).
- Serve as a resource to CYP Professionals as they work through any family concerns and strategize ways to support and improve relationships with families.
- Develop and facilitate family education opportunities.
- Serve as a role model for direct care staff/Providers in implementing best practices for communicating with families.
- Observe, assist, and support with planning and facilitating family orientations and conferences, and with providing meaningful feedback to enhance family orientations and conferences.
- Develop, collect, and maintain current resources for CYP professionals and families on topics relevant to early childhood, youth development, education, and parenting interests.
- Remain current in research-based best practices for facilitating family relations, and use that information to inform program practices.
1.3.5 Direct Care Staff

Program Lead

Program Leads work closely with direct care staff (e.g., Teachers/Counselors) to establish practices that promote positive, collaborative relationships with families. Their roles are to support, build, and encourage strong, lasting relationships with families by coaching direct care staff on best practices. Program Leads’ responsibilities regarding building relationships with families are the following:

- Conduct observations of staff and family interactions to ensure ongoing compliance with required standards and best practices.
- Guide direct care staff in the implementation of written policies and procedures to establish and maintain supportive and positive relationships with families.
- Serve as a role model for direct care staff by demonstrating effective strategies for communicating with and building relationships with families, and highlight when direct care staff engage in these practices.
- Engage the Training Team to provide the support needed through observations and feedback to ensure that communications with families are effective, meaningful, and appropriate.
- Conduct new family tours and assist the CYP Director with orientations to the program environment.
- Participate in scheduled family conferences with Teachers/Counselors ensuring the child’s developmental information is clearly communicated and questions are answered.

Teachers/Counselors

The Teacher/Counselor is often the facility-based CYP Professional with the most opportunities to interact with families, usually on a daily basis. The ability of Teachers/Counselors to provide a welcoming, inclusive environment is dependent on the relationships they build with their families. Teacher/Counselor responsibilities regarding building relationships with families include the following:

- Actively engage in positive, supportive interactions with each family every time they visit their child’s center, classroom, or activity area (either when dropping off/picking up, or when they are volunteering or visiting the program for any other reason).
- Communicate daily with families, both verbally and written as required, about their children’s daily activities.
- Facilitate scheduled conferences with families to share detailed information about each child as required (CDC, 24/7 Centers) or as requested (SAC).
- Create and maintain a warm and inviting program environment.
Plan, implement, and participate in activities and special events conducive to family participation.

Share information with families about programming activities consistently and frequently.

Extend personal invitations to parents to share their cultures, hobbies, and skills (e.g., playing a musical instrument, reading, sharing traditional clothing).

**CDH Providers**

CDH Providers are the sole caregivers for the children in care. They have the unique opportunity to engage with the families at both dropoff and pickup, and play a vital role in ensuring families feel welcomed and valued. Providers’ responsibilities regarding building relationships with families are the following:

- Actively engage in positive, supportive interactions with each family.
- Initiate and engage in daily communications with families, both verbally and written, about their children’s activities and experiences.
- Offer and facilitate an annual conference with families to share detailed information about each child.
- Plan, implement, and participate in activities and special events conducive to family participation.
- Extend personal invitations to parents to share their cultures, hobbies, and skills (e.g., playing a musical instrument, reading, sharing traditional clothing).
- Create and maintain a warm and inviting environment, including displaying photos of children’s families, children’s work, and attractive family information boards with required forms, policies, and information to encourage involvement.

**1.3.6 Support Staff**

**Operations Clerk**

Operations Clerks are on the frontline of the CYP. In CYP facilities, they are usually the first staff with whom families interact each day. Across all CYPs, Operations Clerks give families their first impression of the program when they are considering enrollment. Their professional demeanor, friendliness, patience, and warmth set the tone for families’ perceptions of the entire CYP. Responsibilities of the Operations Clerk regarding building relationships with families are the following:

- Serve as the family’s primary contact during the registration and enrollment processes, ensuring completion of all registration forms and documents before and/or during the family orientation.
Graciously greet families when they arrive at or call the center, monitor visitors, log children in and out of the center, and answer questions.

Maintain awareness of and coordinate logistics for family involvement special events, including PIB meetings, book fairs, etc. Send reminders to families as necessary.

Actively engage in positive, supportive interactions with all families.

Maintain documentation of current family and child information to ensure parents are easily notified in case of emergencies.

### 1.4 Program-Specific Family Involvement

Each type of CYP has its own approach to engaging its parents based partly on the age of the children served, the program environment, and the services provided. Most programs engage with their parents on a daily basis—in some programs both management and direct care staff are available in the same location—while parents whose children receive services in a CDH Provider’s home or participate in YSF sports leagues do not see their Management Team members as frequently. Programs serving children and youth must tailor parent education, resources, and socialization opportunities differently than do YPs supporting youth and teens. These standards provide guidance and best practices to all CYPs and note program-specific differences where applicable. As discussed previously, all CYP Professionals, including staff and Providers at all levels, must actively support family engagement efforts and do their best to support one another in creating a culture that embraces families as collaborative partners.
Chapter 2: Understanding Family Involvement

The surest way to build a positive CYP-family relationship is through meaningful parent engagement and active involvement. CYPs with successful parent involvement components foster strong relationships between the family and the CYP.

Families engage with their CYPs on many levels, from chatting with CYP Professionals when dropping off and picking up their child to volunteering in the facility or home once a week, several times a week, or even every day (based on program needs). Conducting a baseline assessment of current family involvement can help programs identify strategies to build on effective practices, increase family involvement, and reduce resistance and other barriers to participation.

Dr. Joyce Epstein, a leader in school/family/community research, developed a research-based framework that conceptualizes the types of family involvement that most effectively engage parents and facilitate a sense of shared community between programs and families. Informed by this body of work, these standards are organized around four specific types of family involvement: parenting support, effective communication, promoting parent participation, and shared decision-making. Exhibit 2.0A describes these types of family involvement, including anticipated benefits to families in supporting engagement. Each of these family involvement types is discussed in depth in the subsequent chapters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involvement</th>
<th>Description of CYP Actions</th>
<th>Benefits to Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Support</td>
<td>▶ Provide family support and information on parenting skills</td>
<td>▶ Gain understanding of and confidence about parenting and child and youth development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Understand child and youth development and model positive child guidance strategies to extend practice from CYP to home</td>
<td>▶ Increase awareness of own and others’ parenting styles and challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Respect, learn about, and support families’ backgrounds, cultures, and goals for their children</td>
<td>▶ Lower family stress and foster work/life balancing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communications</td>
<td>▶ Actively and regularly communicate with families about children’s growth and learning</td>
<td>▶ Gain understanding of CYPs and their policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Create two-way communication channels between CYP and home</td>
<td>▶ Increase awareness of child’s development and challenges to respond more effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Involvement | Description of CYP Actions | Benefits to Families |
--- | --- | --- |
Promote Parent Participation | Schedule time for CYP Professionals to welcome and work with parents | Increase quantity and quality of interactions with CYP Professionals and build confidence in and support of CYP |
Promote Parent Participation | Recruit and train parent participants, create meaningful volunteer activities and offer incentives for engagement. Offer varied participation schedules to maximize parent participation. | Feel welcome and valued in CYP. Build parenting confidence and abilities. Foster good relationships between CYP Professionals and families. |
Shared Decision-Making | Include families as participants and advocates in CYP through actively seeking feedback, responding to parent input, and creating meaningful opportunities for parents to formally participate. | Foster connections with other families. Build awareness of Navy CYP policies. Provide input into practices that affect their children’s care. Promote feeling of shared responsibility for culture of cooperation in CYP. Feel heard and valued in meaningful discussions with CYP Professionals. |

### 2.1 Assessing Current Family Involvement

Supporting a robust family involvement culture takes ongoing commitment, planning, effort, and follow-through. The most successful programs, with the highest levels of family satisfaction, are those CYPs that actively prioritize family engagement. These programs recognize that time is short and that parents’ (and CYP Professionals’) responsibilities are demanding, and they identify strategies to work through these challenges. The first step toward growing family involvement is for the CYP Management Team to honestly evaluate the current program climate. This assessment can help Management Teams identify where they are in their family involvement practices and explore strategies to increase family engagement.

CYP Management Teams review a range of information to inform their analysis of their family involvement strategies. Sources of information may include demographic information about the installation and surrounding communities, previous family and staff/Provider surveys, PIB feedback, and review of the current Family Engagement Plan’s effectiveness measures (refer to Section 6.3). Programs engage in open and constructive dialogue about improvements needed in their approaches to family involvement. Practices that work in one program do not necessarily translate with the same success in another location or program type. When CYP Professionals show a willingness to reflect honestly about effectiveness, programs can better determine which practices are effectively promoting and engaging families and which strategies need modification.

Reflecting on current practices across each type of family involvement stimulates creative thinking and more effective activity planning. Exhibit 2.1A suggests questions for CYP Management Teams to consider as they reflect on their family involvement practices, followed by a sample scenario of a CYP Management Team’s reflection process.
Example: The CYP Management Team meets with the Training Team and Program Leads to discuss their current family involvement activities.

- They determine that they have been doing a great job with sharing decision-making:
  - The CYP actively advertises and recruits parent to participate on the PIB.
  - Enthusiastic representatives have been attending meetings and offering useful feedback to the CYP.
  - PIB minutes are posted both online and in the facility.

- The group also realizes that they have not focused sufficiently on parenting support. They brainstorm a number of strategies to address areas of need:
  - They once conducted a reading workshop for families that was well-received but have not held one in a long time. They discuss ways to tailor this kind of workshop to families of children at different ages.
  - CYP Professionals could focus more time during their family conferences on sharing information about their children’s growth and development and strategies for fostering them at home.
The CYP Management Team decides to develop an implementation plan specifically designed to increase family involvement. The plan includes specific targets (e.g., increase attendance at family nights by 15%, get 5 more parents to volunteer each week at the CDC), areas of responsibility (e.g., the Director will add relevant topics to the PIB agenda, Teachers/Counselors and Providers will hand out fliers and personally invite all parents in their classroom/activity room/CDH, the Training Team will provide training on effective family engagement strategies), and timelines for completing the activities. They will assess their progress in 6 months.

By breaking down the huge topic of family involvement into strategic areas and targeting one area at a time, the CYP Management team in the scenario effectively reviewed and updated their strategies to continue their current effective practices and add activities to improve family involvement where it was not as strong. The following chapters address each type of family involvement and provide specific examples and ideas for fully implementing effective strategies.

The resources listed below offer additional information and inspiration for fully engaging families and building communities of collaboration.

**Further Reading in Family Involvement**


### 2.2 Team Approach to Effective Family Relations

Every member of the CYP community shares responsibility for creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration with families. Collaborative teamwork requires a firm understanding of related policies, procedures, and local installation needs; systems for ongoing communication between programs and families; training to enhance CYP Professionals’ family engagement skills; and plans for implementation. These elements involve everyone—CYP Management and Training Teams, all CYP Professionals, and parents—across the CYP community to ensure that teamwork occurs effectively and efficiently. When key members disengage or processes are ineffective, then collaborations are
inconsistent at best and often fail to become a part of the program culture and sustain during times of transition.

Teamwork not only facilitates routine family involvement and relationship building with staff/Providers directly caring for children, but it also creates interest and opportunities for broader program- and installation-wide family engagement. Management Team leadership guides operational and programmatic practices. CYP Professionals create the bridge between the family and the program. Parents advocate for their children and represent their cultures, customs, and family norms. When everyone does their part, children and youth enjoy higher quality care and CYP experiences.
Chapter 3:
Parenting Support

The family is the foundation of every child’s healthy development, and the CYP plays a critical role in supporting families as the child’s first and most important caregivers. By valuing and supporting individual families’ parenting styles, culture, and philosophies, CYP Professionals can foster an environment in which good relationships between families and direct care staff can flourish.

This chapter discusses the diversity of CYP families and the philosophies, life circumstances, and cultural influences that affect parenting choices. It also examines the stressors that CYP families often face and offers strategies for how CYP Professionals can support parents through their parenting journeys.

3.1 Understanding and Respecting Diverse Families

Providing support to parents requires that the CYP Professionals first understand and respect family diversity, and appreciate the family’s traditions and cultures. Family diversity is one of the CYPs’ greatest strengths. When CYP Professionals understand and actively demonstrate genuine respect for family diversity, they can engage more positively with families. Three important family characteristics—family culture, family parenting styles, and family dynamics—are discussed in the following subsections.

3.1.1 Family Culture

Culture in early care and education refers to the beliefs, values, customs, child-rearing practices, and expectations shared by families, communities, or groups, including religious groups, nations, and even the military community. National organizations dedicated to ensuring quality child care, family child care, and youth programming standards have long recognized the importance of cultural influences on child development. These organizations have devoted significant resources to the study and development of resources supporting cultural competence among child care and youth program workers. For example, the Administration for
Children and Families (ACF) has established the National Center for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness to provide early care and education providers with tools and programming resources to integrate family culture into learning environments. These and other research-based resources can inform the development of programming and communications strategies for supporting families from all cultural backgrounds.

The Training Team plays an important role in helping direct care staff and Providers learn about the families enrolled in the CYP and implement strategies that respect and embrace the families’ cultural backgrounds. Having the Training Team facilitate reflective questioning and other self-assessment activities helps CYP Professionals explore preconceptions and adjust expectations and behaviors accordingly. CYP Professionals must carefully consider the factors listed below in order to understand and demonstrate cultural respect in CYP environments.

- Respecting family diversity means recognizing and acknowledging one’s own cultural beliefs, preferences, and expectations, and understanding how a person’s own background influences relationships with families. Awareness of personal biases and motivations can help CYP Professionals better anticipate any “blind spots” and ensure that interactions with families are culturally sensitive and always respectful.

- **What opportunities do CYP Professionals have to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs, including assumptions and perceptions that are stereotypical and that influence their work with children and families?** Initial orientation, annual in-service, and targeted training opportunities can provide valuable forums in which CYP Professionals can reflect on their own histories and cultural belief systems. Training Specialists should purposely seek opportunities in ongoing training events to integrate self-reflection objectives into the training activities.

- **How do personal beliefs and biases manifest themselves in the program environment and in interactions with families?** For example, do CYP Professionals assume that dual-military parents are less available to participate in the CYP than a civilian parent? In addition to self-reflection, program environment observations allow Training Specialists and the Management Team to recommend effective strategies for respecting and incorporating cultural differences into programming as well as identify areas of need for additional strategizing and improvement.

- Learning about families’ cultural affiliations, understanding the differences in cultural backgrounds, and learning more about them is key to building relationships with families.
Conversely, labeling or judging any cultural affiliation is counterproductive and inconsistent with the values of Navy CYP.

- **How does the CYP demonstrate the value of cultural information, including background information about child-rearing practices, meal traditions, family origin, education, and socioeconomic characteristics?** Program guidance and standard operating procedures (SOPs) should directly address the need for cultural sensitivity throughout all areas of programming and family engagement. Training Specialists and the Management Team should make a point to highlight how cultural sensitivity is incorporated into the SOPs whenever they are providing training or technical assistance on the SOPs.

- **What cultural groups live in the community and are being served by the CYP? What do CYP Professionals know about the lifestyle, health beliefs, communication, and interpersonal interaction styles of each cultural group?** Family orientation, community activities, and local installation demographics information can provide some background information about families served. Training Specialists and the Management Team must ensure that information and data is available on the specific demographics and cultural characteristics of their community and installation. They must also ensure that CYP Professionals have many opportunities to directly engage with families—and support them as they engage—because direct engagement with parents is often the best way to learn about the practices and customs most important in their cultural communities.

- Building relationships with all families to gain a better understanding of their cultural practices has a positive impact on children’s early learning and care experiences. A family’s cultural beliefs often influence family care and health practices and/or how family members communicate (such as varying levels of personal space, eye contact, touch, and sharing of information). Exhibiting awareness of and sensitivity to a family’s cultural beliefs helps direct care staff interact without inadvertently offending families and facilitates relationship building. Training Specialists must include targeted training on relationship building, including strategies for building strong relationships with families from different cultures. They must also provide feedback after observations whenever there is a “teachable moment” to enhance relationships with diverse families.

- **What health practices are important to the families of children in care?** Decisions about sleeping arrangements (such as co-sleeping), hygiene, when and where to seek medical care, food choices and preparation methods, and the use of home or folk remedies are significant and very important to different families. Through targeted training and ongoing consultation, Training Specialists are available to help CYP Professionals understand why families might choose different health practices, and how to demonstrate respect and appreciation for those choices.

- Learning about the cultural norms of children and families demonstrates appreciation for different communities and provides priceless learning opportunities. Cross-cultural experiences build sensitivity in the children in care, visibly and tangibly link children’s family beliefs to new learning, and reinforce the program’s commitment to cultural understanding.
How are families invited and encouraged to share aspects of their cultures with other parents and children in the program environment, during other program activities, through the PIB, or in other settings? Cultural holidays, language, dress, and cuisine (as allowed) can be effectively incorporated into learning and reflect appreciation and respect for each child’s upbringing and background. Training Specialists and the Management Team should assess the extent to which programs, classrooms, and Providers are actively inviting and encouraging families to share their cultures, and make recommendations for increasing parental opportunities to share and celebrate their cultures with the CYP.

Engaging families to get answers to many of these questions requires sensitivity and delicacy. These types of conversations, though very necessary, can make both parents and CYP Professionals uncomfortable if they are not handled appropriately, or if the CYP Professional is unprepared to facilitate the discussion. In addition, many CYP Professionals may not recognize their own biases even after individual self-reflection. As a result, they may not effectively plan how to respond when there are disagreements and misalignments of beliefs between the family and CYP Professional. CYP Training and Management Teams must address these types of issues when developing trainings and providing resources and individualized support related to family culture and diversity. Section 3.2 provides more details on how CYP leadership can organize and structure support to employees and Providers, including some of the key topics to be addressed through training and in-person coaching and mentorship.

3.1.2 Parenting Styles

Parenting styles are expressed through the attitudes and beliefs that inform family child-rearing practices. CYP Professionals naturally have their own philosophies on parenting, and sometimes these philosophies differ from those held by families. There is no one “correct” parenting style. CYP Professionals must be respectful of families’ choices and refrain from imposing their own beliefs onto families unless family practices put a child at risk. The program-specific Child Abuse Prevention, Education, and Reporting (CAPER) Standards detail how CYP Professionals must respond in those circumstances. Families’ parenting styles develop based on many factors, including culture, education, faith, and background. CYP Professionals must always respect the choices families make about raising their children and must always consider families’ perspectives, especially when the family philosophy does not align with their own or the CYP’s.

Parenting styles fall along a spectrum ranging from permissive to authoritative to authoritarian, as illustrated in Exhibit 3.1.2A. Where a family falls on the parenting style spectrum depends on the family’s views on how children learn behavior, family rules and expectations, and ideas about rewards, punishments, and consequences.

A parent’s child-rearing philosophies affect a child’s independence, curiosity, friendliness, and self-control. CYP Professionals should use what they know about each family’s parenting philosophy to tailor their practices with the child and communications with the family. For example, if a CDH Provider knows that the family successfully helps their child count to five to calm himself when he
gets frustrated, the Provider might also consider using the same strategy while the child is in the CYP.

The Training Team should help staff understand these styles and provide CYP Professionals with classroom and family engagement strategies to help them build collaborative relationships with all families and to enhance child growth in the CYP. During classroom and Provider home observations, the Training Team (and/or CDH Monitor, for Provider homes) should reinforce strategies that are working and provide feedback and support to the CYP Professional around identifying and implementing new strategies when needed (see Section 3.2 for more information).

### Exhibit 3.1.2A: Spectrum of Parenting Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permissive</th>
<th>Authoritative</th>
<th>Authoritarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Holds few or no expectations for behaviors</td>
<td>• Teaches expected behaviors</td>
<td>• Demands specific behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retains little or no power</td>
<td>• Observes child’s need for guidance</td>
<td>• Retains total power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishes few or no boundaries</td>
<td>• Lessens control as child develops behavioral skills</td>
<td>• Establishes rigid rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses rewards and punishments inconsistently</td>
<td>• Sets clear boundaries</td>
<td>• Uses rewards and punishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeks quick fixes to problems</td>
<td>• Uses natural and logical consequences</td>
<td>• Seeks compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeks development of life skills and self-regulation</td>
<td>• Requires unconditional obedience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.1.3 Family Dynamics

CYP Professionals consider family dynamics, stressors, and military lifestyle factors as they tailor their interactions and the environment to support each family. When CYP Professionals understand a family’s circumstances, any changes or stressors in the family dynamic, and other influencing factors, they are better equipped to support families, strengthen family relationships, and individualize services that meet the needs of each family.

Family circumstances and life experiences influence a family’s ability and willingness to participate in the CYP. For example, during deployments, families may not have the time or energy to participate as much as when both parents are home. Parents’ availability does not equate to their support of the program or their dedication to and support of their children. CYP Professionals must always appreciate when and how a family is able to participate, acknowledge that a family’s availability can change, remain flexible, and always refrain from passing judgment. The following sections describe some of the family factors that can influence interactions between CYP Professionals and the family and that inform how the program can enhance its supports for all families.

Training Specialists are available to support CYP Professionals in identifying and responding to particular family dynamics through observations, trainings (planned and on-the-spot), role modeling, and by providing appropriate resources (e.g., brochures and pamphlets, contact information for
relevant community resources, books and articles) related to family dynamics, including those described in the following sections.

**Family Circumstances**

The following list provides examples of family circumstances that affect family dynamics, parenting styles, and family involvement levels. These circumstances also affect the child’s learning, independence, confidence, stability, and behavior.

- **Family composition** can include two parents, single parents, same sex parents, blended families, and families whose parents are not married. Families can be in the process of divorce or remarriage. The children of divorcing and/or remarrying parents may split their time between two parents who may or may not live in the same area. The number and ages of siblings, or if the siblings have different mothers or fathers, all contribute to the family’s experiences. CYP Professionals may care for children in foster care, who have been adopted, or whose grandparents or other relatives are serving *in loco parentis* (as temporary parents). Such non-traditional family structures can be due to deployment of military parents, incarceration, drug use, mental or other health issues, or other situations that are unique to the family. Adults who are serving *in loco parentis* may not be familiar with military culture and/or the resources available to military families. They may need special support as they attend to new parenting responsibilities and navigate lifestyle changes. CYP Professionals extend welcoming support to such caregiving adults as they would to all members of a child’s family.

- **Employment** can affect who is in the home with the children, who is the primary caregiver, the amount of time families have with the children, and parent availability for family involvement in the CYP. Employment circumstances include variable schedules, deployments, and/or shift work that affects family routines and relationships. One or both parents may be military service members, or one parent may be a nonservice member but employed, enrolled in school, or unemployed. Employment-related separations affect the family structure, finances, children’s sense of stability, and the stress level experienced by every member of the family.

- **Living situations** may include frequent household moves or temporary living arrangements (e.g., a family may be staying in a hotel until their local housing is available). Where a family lives (e.g., on or off the installation or the distance from the installation), their relationships with extended family and how long they have been stationed in the area may influence how they approach relationships with CYP Professionals.

- **Family health-related issues**, such as chronic illnesses or special needs, can increase stress. Health-related conditions can affect the family unit as well as individual members. When a family member is experiencing a health-related issue, there may be changes in the family’s involvement and in who is providing primary care for the children.
Common Challenges for Military Families

While all families, military or civilian, experience occasional struggles, military families face unique challenges that can require additional support. When CYP Professionals support military families, they not only help young children in care and their parents, but they are ultimately contributing to the mission readiness of the Navy.

- **Permanent Change of Station (PCS):** Most military families relocate many times over a military career, and each relocation can create great stress. Military families often do not have a choice in when or where they relocate. When families change duty stations, children leave behind the comforts of what is familiar, such as homes, friends, teachers, and schools. Similarly, their parents leave their own jobs, colleagues, friends, neighbors, and other supports. Families have to start over again at the new duty station, including meeting new people, enrolling their children in new schools, making new friends, and becoming a part of a new community.

- **Deployments and other separations:** Military life often means frequent family separations. Military members may go away for training or schooling for extended periods of time. Deployments can be long, meaning family members not only must adjust to life without the military member, but then they also must readjust when the military member returns and reintegrates into the family. When there are separations or other changes in family dynamics, the CYP Professionals and the CYP can serve as an important constant in the child’s life.
  - When families are separated, the roles of family members adjust to compensate for the person who is away. These role shifts cause changes in routines and possible changes in caregivers. New family dynamics can cause stress for deployed military members who may not feel needed or necessary to the family. When the service member returns, families again must adjust to having the family back together, another reassigning of family roles, and adaptation to a “new normal.”
  - Dual military families face an additional layer of stress if both military members deploy at the same time. Dual military families must plan for the care of children should both military members deploy at the same time, possibly on short notice.
  - Single parents can face significant stress related to maintaining financial security and child care stability and, if the parent is a service member, he or she must also make contingency arrangements for deployments, field training, and other mission requirements. Single parents often need more support on a daily and ongoing basis to manage the responsibilities many dual-parent families share.
  - Adults who are serving *in loco parentis* benefit from the support of CYP Professionals. These individuals may not be familiar with the military culture or services and resources available to military members. The CYP must proactively offer support and information to these...
Caregivers to ensure they are equipped with the resources and support they need to effectively care for the child in the parent’s absence.

While the family profile forms (i.e., *Birth to Five Child and Family Profile—CNICCYP 1700/07A* and *Youth and Family Profile—CNICCYP 1700/07B* forms) are a good starting place for learning about a new child and his or her family, information about families must be learned over time from frequent, respectful, and personal interactions with the family and child. CYP Professionals routinely observe all children in care for indicators that the family may be experiencing changes or stressors. Stress can manifest itself in children as changes in behavioral patterns or emotional expressions, such as acting sleepier or clingier, crying more easily, or behaving uncharacteristically. Older children may act out or become unusually withdrawn.

When families disclose stressors at home, CYP Professionals must remember to show compassion and sensitivity (as well as confidentiality as applicable) in responding and consider additional resources that can support the families and best meet the needs of the children in care.

### 3.2 Turning Family Information into Action

Forming collaborative relationships with families takes time, nurturing, and acceptance of individuality. CYP Professionals may find some families easier to communicate and collaborate with than others. CYP Training and Management Teams must develop training and other support mechanisms that build knowledge of individual and family characteristics that impact relationship building and skills necessary to effectively work with all CYP family members.

#### 3.2.1 Recognizing Bias

Training, selecting appropriate resources, and individual support development starts with understanding the attitudes, beliefs, and biases CYP Professionals bring to their interactions with families, and how these elements affect their ability to make positive connections. Exhibit 3.2.1A illustrates how one’s attitudes about different family characteristics can manifest positively and promote family involvement and child growth, or negatively which can hinder connection and mutual respect.

**Exhibit 3.2.1A: Positive and Negative Attitudes for Family Relations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes That PROMOTE Family Involvement</th>
<th>Attitudes That HINDER Family Involvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“That parent may be stressed. I’ll ask her at pickup if there is something we can do to help her mornings go more smoothly. I’ll offer her this pamphlet on work/life balance and ask her if she’d like to talk with another parent about handling stress.”</td>
<td>“That parent is always in such a hurry. She practically throws her child in the door and dashes off. She just doesn’t care.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That dad has a lot of ideas and knowledge to share. He may not always feel that his observations and ideas are valued. I’m going to invite him to share his skills in photography with the program, and I’m going to see if he…”</td>
<td>“That dad thinks he knows everything about everything. He’s always in our business and telling us what to do. So demanding!”</td>
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## Attitudes That PROMOTE Family Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That PIB, where I’ll really take a moment to listen to what he is seeing and feeling about the CYP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That mom frequently watches for a while. She may be looking for reassurance that we properly caring for her child, and I want to help her feel really comfortable. I know she has chosen outstanding care for her child, and I want her to know it, too. At pickup today, I’m going to invite her in, talk her through what I’m doing and why, and ask if she has suggestions or ideas. She may have an idea to help, and she just may end up being a great resource for us. Perhaps she’d like to participate in the classroom—I’ll ask her.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That is so great that we have two new parent participants. There is a language barrier that I will need help navigating—I’ll ask [colleague who speaks the language] to translate when I need help. I want to make sure they feel welcome and that it’s really good for all the children to hear other languages and experience other cultures. Maybe they could teach us a song or read us a story in [home language]. I’m going to ask.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I get the sense that this grandmother has very strong beliefs about child-rearing and nutrition. I wonder if this is based on her cultural background or how she herself was raised. Her granddaughter frequently brings special meals from home. I’ll see if her grandmother might be willing to come and share some stories about her background with the children or other aspects about her culture. That might also give us some ideas about how we can frame our lessons for her to reinforce at home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Robby says that his family is atheist and seemed eager to talk about it. I know that our holiday celebrations are inclusive, but I wonder if there are other practices that we might want to look at to make sure we’re sensitive to their beliefs. I’ll follow up with his dad after the PIB meeting and see if he has any ideas.”</td>
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## Attitudes That HINDER Family Involvement

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<th>Attitude</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“That mom is always watching me. She hovers at the front desk watching CCTV, and she hangs by the door just watching before she comes in. I feel like she’s judging everything we’re doing. It kind of gives me the creeps.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Those two moms want to participate in our program environment, but they don’t really speak English, and I don’t really know what they can do. They’ll just be in the way.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Wow, is that grandmother strict! She won’t let her granddaughter eat anything from the Center and hates it when I try to share strategies for promoting play at home. That’s no way to raise a child. I’ll just have to do what I can to help her while she’s here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Robby says that his family doesn’t believe in God—you don’t see that much around here. What a shame.”</td>
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</table>

Opportunities for role-playing and open and honest discussion about one’s own potential biases are critically valuable for identifying when CYP Professionals may be putting up barriers between themselves and the families enrolled in their program (even unknowingly). These types of training activities are also useful in helping CYP Professionals identify strategies for mitigating those biases and for finding common ground on which to build stronger relationships with families.

Some specific bias-related topics that the Training Team can incorporate into training discussions include:

- Religious practices
- Same sex couples
- Traditional male and female roles
- Perceived health risks
- Gender identity
- Implicit and explicit racial biases
3.2.2 Learning From CYP Families

The best way to learn about the CYP families enrolled in the CYP is to engage them directly. Training Specialists and Directors should emphasize that there are appropriate times and ways to engage families in discussions about their backgrounds and family characteristics. Such conversations should occur in a relaxed, nonconfrontational environment where both the family and the CYP Professional can focus and listen to one another. Dropoffs or pickups are not the time to delve into a family’s history or cultural background, nor should private or sensitive questions be asked or discussed in an open or public area.

CYP Professionals must never react judgmentally or with condemnation when families disclose sensitive information. Rather, they should remain neutral and compassionate and focus on identifying ways to support the family, protect and care for their children, and provide needed resources. Training Teams should recommend prompts CYP Professionals can use to solicit potentially sensitive information from families as well as neutral language to use when families share information that may be shocking or unsettling. Chapter 4 provides additional strategies for communicating effectively and respectfully with parents both on a regular basis and when circumstances require greater diplomacy and care.

Family Profile Forms

When families enroll in a CYP, they are required to fill out either a Birth to Five Child and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07A or a Youth and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07B (based on the age of the child) to help the CYP learn more about the child and his/her family. The forms include specific questions about the child’s likes/dislikes, skills, challenges, family practices and norms, and input from parents on strategies that inform CYP programming and interactions with their child. The profile forms also include information about the family as a whole—what languages are spoken at home, how many siblings and/or other relatives are living in the home, activities the family enjoys doing together, special events they celebrate as a family, and other types of family-centric information. CYP Professionals use that information to start building collaborative relationships with the family. An example of how the CYP Professional might use information a family has shared about their child is presented below.
Example: A parent writes on the form that her 12-year-old daughter has been especially withdrawn since her father deployed; she hasn’t been talking as much, and she has been spending more time in her room at home. During orientation, the child’s new Lead Counselor asks her mother about circumstances that have helped her daughter enjoy time with other children. The parent responds that her daughter seems more comfortable when she meets other children on the playground in their neighborhood where they can play basketball together, instead of at school or during indoor activities. The parent and Lead Counselor decide together that the family will arrive on the first day during outdoor time to make introductions more enjoyable. The Lead Counselor’s consideration of the information provided on the Youth and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07B contributed to successful early collaboration with the family and demonstrated recognition of the parent as the child’s first and primary caregiver. This engagement laid the foundation for a collaborative relationship with the family and a positive experience for the child in the program environment.

Program Leads and CDH Providers must review family profile forms with families during orientation and maintain forms in the children’s files (additional guidance is available in other standards related to record-keeping). These discussions present an opening for collaboration and relationship building with new families and enable CYP Professionals to learn invaluable information about the child and family that can enhance programming. Reviewing the forms with the family validates the family’s primacy in their child’s life and their role as a key collaborator in their child’s CYP experience. In addition, any information shared on the forms that suggests a potential identified need or other concerns must be shared with the CYP Director, who can then meet with the family and initiate the Inclusion Action Team (IAT) process as appropriate. CYP Professionals should also consider this information when planning, or during, observations and assessments. In CDCs, when children age up to into the next classroom (e.g., when a toddler transitions into a preschool room), Program Leads must help the parents complete a new Birth to Five Child and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07A with their child's updated information and review the new form with the family. While there is no such internal age up requirement for CDH and YP, parents must also complete new forms when their children transfer between programs, such as from CDC to SAC or from CDH to CDC or SAC.

As always, the Training Team must ensure that all direct care staff and Providers understand and can effectively identify key information shared by families and how to frame conversations with parents to build a collaborative learning environment. This includes helping CYP Professionals use the family profile forms effectively and in a manner that best supports the child and family.

3.2.3 Supporting Military Families

CYP Professionals must be ready to support children and families with adjustments inherent to the military lifestyle. The CYP Management Team must maintain awareness of command activities on the installation and share information with CYP staff and Providers about any upcoming deployments, command activity, and/or maneuvers, so they can prepare for situations as they arise. CYP Professionals can then plan activities to ease children’s anxiety during family separations or transitions, as well as offer resources to help families coping with unsettling situations. Families new
to the installation may need help building social connections or require referrals to community resources. CYP Professionals should be knowledgeable about supports available to families both on and off the installation and offer this information to families as needed (refer to Section 3.3 for more details about linking families to available resources). Specific strategies for helping a child cope with deployments, relocations, and other separations include the following:

- Help children create or color a special picture to send to a deployed parent or a special friend left behind at a previous duty station, and help the child put it in the mail.
- Have the child dictate to a letter to a deployed parent.
- Record a short video of the child, or help a youth create a video diary that can be attached in an email to the deployed parent.
- Use resources available from national organizations, such as ZERO TO THREE, Military OneSource, and the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). These and other organizations offer a wealth of resources for military families with young children, including deployment resources and military transition supports.
- Schedule family picnics, parent socials, and resource fairs, including events aligned with key unit movement dates (deployments, redeployments) to provide support and opportunities to connect with other families and services.
- Demonstrate genuine interest and concern for families during challenging periods. Ask questions and listen to their stories, offer support when parents appear particularly stressed, and show understanding when they forget key dates or don’t respond to requests.

### 3.3 Parenting Resources

CYPs are responsible for providing high quality direct care while the children are attending the CYP. They are also responsible for ensuring families have adequate and appropriate resources available to help them in a variety of parenting and child development issues. Parenting resources are critical in that they set the family up to be successful in their most important role—that of their child’s first and most important caregiver.

While the family is the child’s first and most important caregiver, the family home is the child’s first and most important learning environment. CYPs must support families in understanding how their home is in fact a learning environment, and how to extend their children's learning between the CYP and home.

Extending learning works in both directions—from the CYP to the child’s home and from the child’s home to the CYP—and strongly influences a child’s development. When children’s learning spans all of their worlds (the CYP, home, and school environments), their experiences are more meaningful and result in longer-lasting developmental outcomes. CYP Professionals extend learning by sharing information and resources with families that they can use at home. This information can include milestones in a child’s learning and newly acquired skills and related parenting resources that support each family’s child-rearing journey. Similarly, CYP Professionals should intentionally
encourage families to share developmental milestones that the child is working on at home, such as toilet learning practices, so that direct care staff can support those same milestones while the child is in care. In addition, information from home provides an opportunity for CYP Professionals to identify potential needs for support or additional resources to offer.

The following sections provide brief descriptions of the minimum parent resources that are available at all CYPs—resource libraries and parental access to community resources.

### 3.3.1 Resource Library

Parents often look to their own families for support and advice in parenting. Most Navy families are geographically separated from their extended families and may instead rely on CYP Professionals for support. In addition to offering ongoing support and resources for parents, CYPs can help to fill the information gap by maintaining a resource library. Resource libraries are required by the *OPNAV INST 1700.9 (series)* but are also a best practice in extending learning from the CYP to home and demonstrating commitment to parents in their role as parents.

Resource libraries include resources that cover a variety of child development and child-rearing topics that may be of interest and value to families. CYP resource libraries also serve as distribution points for information from local community agencies and national organizations available to support military families. Exhibit 3.3.1A and Appendix F offer content suggestions to stock in the resource library. This list is not exhaustive; CYP Professionals should provide a range of useful, local resources that are consistent with Navy CYP guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice and that will be of use to their installation’s families.

#### Exhibit 3.3.1A: Possible Resource Library Topics and Types of Resource

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Topics</th>
<th>Types of Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and meeting special needs</td>
<td>Books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention of child abuse &amp; neglect</td>
<td>Magazine articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental milestones</td>
<td>Brochures</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYP curriculum information</td>
<td>CDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>DVDs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting skills</td>
<td>List of websites on certain topics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding support</td>
<td>Contact information for organizations (local and national)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addressing biting behaviors</td>
<td>Posters and fliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting military children</td>
<td>Hotline information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fostering child resiliency</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
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<td>Dealing with separation anxiety</td>
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3.3.2 Parenting and Community Resources

CYP Professionals are the installation’s early childhood education and youth programming specialists and play a key role in providing support and resources to participating families. CYP Professionals must not only make print information available at the CYP, but they proactively identify and provide resources to families whose circumstances may benefit from additional support. Based on the relationships they have with their families, CYP Professionals can determine when it is appropriate and would be welcome to share additional resources from in and around the community.

Community resources include local and installation organizational and contact information, including Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), Fleet and Family Support Programs (FFSP), the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), and the Family Advocacy Program (FAP). Additional information about these military community resources and a wide range of family support and parenting resources can be found in the program-specific Introduction Standards.

CYP Management Teams must ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are available for distribution to their families and community and that CYP Professionals are aware of and know when to share those resources. The Training Team must offer training and support so that employees understand when additional resources are most appropriate (e.g., handing out brochures on coping with family stress when there are pending deployments, having materials available for welcoming a new baby into the home and to help older siblings adjust).
Chapter 4: Effective Communications

Effective communication skills are fundamental to building positive relationships with families. CYP Professionals are most successful when they are intentional in how they communicate with families and continuously strive to improve their engagement practices.

Communication occurs in a variety of ways and through a range of methods—verbally, nonverbally, and in writing; formally or informally; and one-time, daily, or occasionally. CYP Professionals’ communications with families should be, above all, open, honest, and respectful. Effective communication requires recognizing that receiving information from others is as or more valuable than sharing information. CYP Professionals who focus more on communicating their own ideas and expertise with their families miss out on valuable opportunities to not only learn important insights from the parents but to strengthen their collaborative relationships with them.

When CYP Professionals are on hand to connect with families, it is often the little things that mean the most. For example, a CYP Professional remembers that a 12-year-old had a math test that morning and asks him how it went when the parent drops him off at the program. This small act communicates to both the parent and the youth that the CYP Professional is paying attention to and is interested in the daily events, successes, and challenges of that and every other child and youth in the program.

This chapter discusses specific aspects of good communication, requirements and best practices for communicating with families, and how CYP Professionals can build their communication skills to further promote positive relationships with families. All of the communication mechanisms described in these standards not only enhance relationship building with the families of children in care but also enable programs to teach and care for those children more effectively.

4.1 Communicating Through Environment

One of the most powerful ways CYP Professionals communicate with families is through the environments they create in the CYP. A family’s first impression should be that of a truly welcoming environment that embraces the family as soon as they walk in the door. This is expressed through the look, sound, smell, and feel of the facility spaces. Clean, well-lit, warm, and inviting spaces; pictures on the walls; thoughtful placement of furniture and materials—these tangible elements,
along with friendly and approachable staff, are a CYP’s best opportunity to make a positive first impression.

### 4.1.1 Creating Welcoming Spaces

Program environments must be attractive, inviting, and appropriate to the ages of children served. Spaces should communicate to children, youth, and their families: “You are welcome here” and “This is your space” when they walk in. Programs create welcoming spaces by arranging environments that are open and free of clutter and maintaining an appropriate noise level and temperature. Program environments must be well-stocked with developmentally appropriate materials based on and reflective of the experiences of the children and youth in care. For example, Youth Program (YP) spaces communicate to youth that they are a valued part of the community by including materials and supplies that appeal to their age groups and interests. Materials must also show positive role models in different genders, abilities, ages, and diverse nationalities. These environmental considerations facilitate learning, build a sense of community, and visually reaffirm the importance of family culture, structure, and background to families when they are visiting the CYP.

In addition to creating a welcoming space, parents must be informed that they have unrestricted access to their children in the CYP and be made to feel welcome any time they come to visit their children. They may visit the facility or CDH Provider’s home at any time and without notice. Not only is this a mandate of Navy CYP, but it is best practice in communicating with families and building family involvement. Just informing parents they have a right to come to the CYP, however, is not as powerful as actually creating a CYP environment that welcomes families. The information in the section on creating a welcoming environment is not just “nice to do” but a key means to deliver on Navy CYP policy and best practices to families.

### 4.1.2 Connecting Families to the Program Environment

In CDCs, CDH Providers’ homes, and 24/7 Centers, pictures of the children with their families must be displayed in the program environment. These CYP Professionals should encourage families to create a family picture, poster, photo books, or display to post on the wall so children can see their families reflected in their environment during the day, talk about their families, and share their families with their classmates. This practice makes the family a constant part of the program environment. Furthermore, children benefit from seeing diversity in the other families enrolled in the CYP.
Direct care staff and Providers can designate a space (e.g., bulletin board, door, or specific wall space) in the program environment for family posters. If space permits, CYPs may leave family posters on display for a long time; if space is limited, an appropriate strategy is to highlight a different child and his/her family each week or each month. The key to a successful family poster experience for families is to give them plenty of advance notice, so they can work with their children at the children’s pace, talking about the photos as they go, and enjoying the experience together.

### 4.2 In-Person Communication

In-person communications generally involve both verbal and nonverbal exchanges of information. CYP Professionals can learn to tailor their language, tone, and talking speed to ensure that parents understand and appreciate what is being communicated. Showing off one’s vocabulary or speaking quickly can intimidate and offend some parents and can convey disrespect. CYP Professionals must make a point to avoid jargon and acronyms, take the time to expand on concepts when someone looks confused, and speak in a calm and pleasant tone.

The best communicators are active listeners. Active listeners strike a balance between talking and listening and often listen more than they talk. They ignore or remove distractions in order to better focus on the speaker (e.g., move to a quieter area in the room, shut the door, turn the music off) and pay attention to the speaker’s words and nonverbal cues. Mostly importantly, active listeners provide feedback to let the speaker know that what he/she is saying is important. CYP Professionals demonstrate active listening through consistent eye contact with families, body language to confirm engagement (e.g., nodding), and paraphrasing or restating what the parent said in their own words to confirm understanding. Actively listening to parents encourages them to share more candidly and allows CYP Professionals to use what the parents have shared to help strengthen the child’s care and learning experience.

Some CYP Professionals may find it difficult to initiate conversations with families. Some feel they are “much better with kids than with adults” and would rather skip interpersonal interactions altogether. Furthermore, language barriers, perceived personality clashes, and a lack of confidence in one’s expertise (especially for new professionals) can further hamper open and relaxed conversations with families. Program Leads, Monitors, or the Training Team should engage CYP Professionals who appear to be uncomfortable initiating or participating in family conversations. Training Specialists can help struggling CYP Professionals gain confidence and ease when engaging families through ongoing observations, modeling, coaching, and practice. Appendix A provides a list of conversation starters that CYP Professionals have found helpful when speaking informally with families. More information on building verbal and nonverbal communication skills is available in the program-specific Interactions and Relationships Standards.

### 4.3 Communication Opportunities

CYP Professionals communicate with families every day. Some communication opportunities are planned and formal activities (e.g., family conferences). Other communications are not necessarily
planned but just as important (e.g., sending home a *We Care Form*). Still other opportunities occur informally and spontaneously (e.g., a CYP Professional saying “Happy Birthday” to a parent coming in to pick up a child). This section describes the most common communication opportunities CYP Professionals use to build relationships with families.

### 4.3.1 Written Communications

Written communication opportunities allow CYP Professionals to share information with families intentionally, officially, mindfully, and with the benefit of advance planning and review. Some families want to know everything that happens with their child during the program day, while other parents are comfortable receiving notification only when something occurs that requires their direct attention. CYP Professionals need to talk with their parents to determine each family’s preferred level of communication. Unlike daily informal verbal interactions and communications with families, written communications meet additional requirements for documenting specific types of information shared with families. Programs must establish clear protocols for when, how, and what information is communicated officially to ensure that families receive the right information at the right time.

The most frequently used written communications (described in the following sections) include family communication forms, emails, texts, and social media.

#### Family Communication Forms

CYPs use required written forms to communicate specific information with families at designated times or under specific circumstances. These required communications include the *Daily Gram*—CNICCYP 1700/41, *We Care Form*—CNICCYP 1700/53A, *We Need Your Help Form*—CNICCYP 1700/53B, and permission slips. Exhibit 4.3.1A describes these forms, including the frequency and examples of their use. Additional guidance on these requirements is detailed in the following sections.

**Exhibit 4.3.1A: Required CYP Family Communication Forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Form</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Example of Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Gram</td>
<td>Communication of daily activities and highlights shared between CYP Professionals and families</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>An infant is in care in a CDC classroom. The parent notes when the child woke up and ate before arriving. The Teacher then records when the infant sleeps, what and how much he eats, each diaper change, and other items of note.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Care Form</td>
<td>Communication of illness or injury while a child is in care</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>A 9-year-old falls on the basketball court in the outdoor activity area of an SAC program and scrapes her knee and elbow. A CYP Professional attends to the injury and completes a <em>We Care Form</em> to inform the parents of the incident and how it was treated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Name of Form** | **Description** | **Frequency** | **Example of Use**
--- | --- | --- | ---
**We Need Your Help Form** | Communication of a behavioral incident that poses a significant risk of injury to the child or others or a pattern of challenging behavior that is persistent, serious, and for which the child has not responded to positive redirection and re-teaching of behavior skill | As needed | An 8-year-old is working on his homework at the kitchen table in a CDH. He becomes frustrated and rips up the paper and breaks his pencil. The Provider gently talks with him about other ways to manage his frustration, but the boy yells at her and refuses to talk until his parent arrives to pick him up. Since this kind of situation has occurred before and her efforts to help him haven’t worked, the Provider completes a *We Need Your Help Form* to engage the parents about their son’s struggles with frustration and request a meeting with them to talk together about strategies to help him build better coping skills.

**Permission Slip** | Communication of a special event or activity (field trip) that requires the attention of the family | As needed | The Teen Program is sponsoring a trip to a play and sends permission slips home to provide families with logistical information including the transportation plans for the event and to obtain signed parent permission.

### Daily Grams

CYPs must use the [Daily Gram—CNICCYP 1700/41](#) to aid in effective communication with families. The *Daily Gram* is required for children under age 3 in CDC, 24/7 Centers, and CDH but may be used for older children as well. The Daily Gram documents child-specific care and programming information and summarizes key information about the child’s day to keep families informed about eating, sleeping, activities, and diapering/toileting. This form can also be useful with a child or youth with identified needs, unique situations, or a family with specialized communication needs or desires.

### We Care Form

As children navigate and explore their CYP environments, they stretch their physical skills and test their limits. Consequently, children and youth sometimes fall or get injured, either on their own or during interactions with others. These types of incidents usually do not result in injury and are simply natural consequences of their interactions and activities. No formal documentation is needed in these situations. However, there are two types of instances when the *We Care Form—CNICCYP 1700/53A* must be used. When incidents occur that result in a physical injury (such as a bump on the head or cut on the arm), the *We Care Form* must be used to inform the child’s family about the injury the child sustained. The CYP Professional who observed the accident/incident completes the form describing what occurred (based on direct observation and/or reports from others who directly observed the incident), responses and actions taken by the CYP, and, if applicable, what measures have been or will be taken to prevent a similar incident in the future.
The *We Care Form* must also be completed any time a child or youth becomes ill or shows symptoms of illness significant enough to require support beyond what programs can provide. The form includes areas for noting symptoms of illness (as well as injury location) and a space to detail actions taken to provide first aid and comfort to the child.

**We Need Your Help Form**

The *We Need Your Help Form*—CNIC CYP 1700/53B must be used when a program determines that current practices may not be sufficient to address a behavioral concern. CYPs engage families with this form in two circumstances: (1) a single, severe behavioral incident that poses a significant risk of injury to the child and/or to others, or (2) an emerging pattern of challenging behavior that is not resolving based on initial CYP modification efforts.

When a pattern of challenging behaviors emerges, the *We Need Your Help Form* is used to notify the family about the CYP’s concerns and alert them to the kinds of behaviors that are occurring. If the behaviors persist, the form must be used to elevate the concern by requesting a formal follow up meeting with the parent and Management Team.

The form is used to invite parents to engage with the CYP in collaboratively working toward resolving the concerning behavior. The invitation to collaborate is requested when the CYP has implemented strategies to support the child but resolution is not complete.

**Identifying behaviors that require the We Need Your Help Form:** Programs must use discretion in determining when a *We Need Your Help Form* is warranted. Some aggressive behaviors are typical and developmentally appropriate for young children. For example, it is developmentally appropriate for very young children (e.g., pretoddlers and toddlers) to push or bite. In response to incidents of developmentally appropriate behaviors, CYPs may decide there is no need to officially engage the parents of the child who engaged in the behavior (i.e., sending a *We Need Your Help Form*). They may have strategies in mind that they can implement to help the child learn from the event and to prevent it from recurring.

Direct care staff and Providers should still alert the families verbally about behavioral incidents with their children even when a *We Need Your Help Form* is not needed. This kind of proactive communication also ensures that the family is not completely surprised or caught off guard if a *We Need Your Help Form* is eventually sent home.

Although every occurrence of developmentally normal behaviors (e.g., biting, throwing tantrums, or pushing in very young children) does not warrant a *We Need Your Help Form*, repeated or ongoing instances of challenging behaviors by children and youth should raise concern among CYP Professionals. For example, a one-year-old bites others a few times in a CDH, and the Provider implements an alternative strategy that results in resolution. A *We Need Your Help Form* is not
needed; however, the Provider should still mention the occurrences to the family. If, on the other hand, a pattern is emerging and the Provider has tried implementing strategies to determine what is most effective, the parent should receive a We Need Your Help Form. Furthermore, while a couple of incidents of pushing by a 4-year-old would not justify use of the form (but should prompt a CYP Professional to mention the incidents to the family at pickup time), a 4-year-old’s repeated tantrums with scratching and biting would indicate a need for formally engaging the family with a We Need Your Help Form. In addition, a single behavioral incident that poses a significant risk of harm to the child and/or others may necessitate formal parent notification through the We Need Your Help Form.

Internal CYP Considerations in Using the We Need Your Help Form: CYP Professional(s) must collaborate with other relevant CYP team members (Program Leads, CDH Monitor, Training and/or Management Team) to assess any contributing factors, trends in the circumstances around which instances tend to occur (such as what is happening right before an incident or the consequences afterwards), or patterns in previous outcomes. Often, through these discussions, the team may identify one or more potential triggers for the behavior that can be addressed through a change in the environment and result in eliminating the behavior.

In addition, ongoing discussion with families can benefit CYP considerations throughout the process. Parents may be able to identify potential triggers, such as academic problems or upheaval in the family unit, which can inform the program’s response. Similarly, parents may have seen similar behaviors at home or in another group setting and perhaps have adopted successful strategies that could be useful to the CYP.

Completing the We Need Your Help Form: The CYP Professional completing the We Need Your Help Form should document the situation as objectively as possible. He/she should use neutral language to relay the events and responses without assigning blame or providing an interpretation of the child’s emotional motivations or intent. Documentation should reflect the following guidelines:

- Document observable, concretely worded behaviors of any of the children/youth and CYP Professional(s) involved. Avoid lengthy or subjective assessments about behaviors and ensure that terms used are uniformly understood by all parties. For example, “Tommy started beating on Mike on the playground” may lead to different interpretations of Tommy’s actions by different people (e.g., was he hitting with his fist, kicking, slapping?). Instead, “Tommy hit Mike in the head with closed fists several times while they were playing near the swing set,” gives a more accurate description of what occurred.
- Describe the full sequence of events, including what was occurring immediately before the incident and what happened afterwards. Often, this kind of information is invaluable in identifying patterns and trends in behaviors, determining potential trigger behaviors, and in
evaluating ineffective responses (e.g., perhaps a child is subject to experiencing problems most frequently right before lunch).

- Avoid interpreting a child’s or youth’s motives and emotional states. Some behaviors, especially aggressive acts, lead people to believe that an instigator is angry or has some kind of hostile intent. The *We Need Your Help Form* is not the appropriate tool for exploring these issues. Including such assumptions (which may be inaccurate) may put parents on the defensive rather than encourage collaboration.

The form must be signed and submitted to a CYP Management Team member (for facility-based programs) for his/her review and signature.

Once signed by the program, the form must be provided to the family for their review and signature. It should be emphasized that the intent of the form is to open a dialogue for collaborating on the best ways to support the child and is not intended to blame or label their child. Programs may choose to print the form with a carbon copy for the family. If carbon copies are not used, the CYP should offer to copy the signed form for the parents. Programs should refer to upcoming standards related to enrollment and record keeping standards for more information on the retention and maintenance requirements for both the *We Care Form*—CNICCCYP 1700/53A and the *We Need Your Help Form*—CNICCCYP 1700/53B.

### We Need Your Help Form Scenario

**Situation:** Three-year-old Joey becomes aggressive when clean up time is announced. He throws the toys/materials he has been using, pushes over chairs, and hits the CYP Professionals in the room. Miss Jane notices that he engages in these behaviors primarily during transitions and recognizes that it’s a relatively normal response for a 3-year-old.

**CYP Analysis and Modifications:** Miss Jane verbally alerts the family at pickup time and Joey’s mom indicates that he does the same thing at home when he has to get ready for bed. Miss Jane, her Program Lead, and the Training Specialist discuss the issue and strategize that providing Joey with multiple advance warnings that clean up time is approaching may reduce the behavioral outbursts when the announcement is made. The team decides to try this modification before completing a *We Need Your Help Form*.

**Escalating the Concern:** The strategies implemented to support Joey are not effective and his outbursts become more frequent and at times severe, including pinching and biting direct care staff and other children. The program decides to elevate the issue and work with the family to develop new approaches. The *We Need Your Help Form* is then used to fully document the behaviors and formally notify the family that follow up is required because preliminary attempts to address the emergent behavioral problems have not been successful or because of the severity of the behaviors.
Completion of the *We Need Your Help Form* is an indication that a behavioral issue is serious enough to require formal family engagement. In facility-based CYPs, the Management Team leads all followup discussions and planning with the family. The CYP Director or CDH Provider must contact the family within 48 hours to initiate the formal collaboration process.

**Permission Slips**

Permission slips are created by individual programs and serve both to inform parents of upcoming events, such as field trips, and to obtain formal approval from parents to allow their child or youth to participate. In addition, permission slips may be used to communicate when a special event or activity requires parents to contribute monetary or time resources. These forms are effective tools for both information sharing and shared decision-making.

**Emails/Text Messages**

Email and text messages are effective and efficient communication tools for sharing information with individual families and groups of families. Emails are the digital descendants of written letters; as such, the language, tone, and formatting should be consistent with an official, printed letter. Abbreviations commonly used in texts, emoticons, excessive punctuation, or slang do not belong in any professional communications.

Texts are typically more succinct, brief pieces of information sent directly to parents’ cell phones. Because texting may involve fee charges from families’ cell phone carriers, programs should use text messaging only with a parent’s express consent and only to communicate brief, official information (e.g., upcoming events, delays in transportation or inclement weather closures).

**Family Distribution List Emails/Texts**

CYPs compile and maintain email distribution lists of enrolled families, including one master list of all enrolled families, as well as additional optional distribution lists for individual program environments. Similarly, programs may set up family contact groups (with family-approved phone numbers) for use in sending out mass communications by text. Text messages must originate from official Navy email servers or Government-owned cellphones. However, for youth participating in sports leagues, families may receive texts from the YSF coach’s private cellphone. Some uses for group emails/texts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Polling all families, such as with a short questionnaire asking families which type of activity they would like to see offered, or which day to schedule a special event
- Sending out links to required annual customer feedback surveys and other surveys created by the program
- Sending reminders of planned closures
- Sending short-notice notifications of unexpected delays or closures due to inclement weather or other emergency situations
Reminding families of upcoming special events, field trips, or other activities

Providing links to newsletters, weekly schedules, and monthly menus

When CYPs send group emails—to more than one family, a classroom, a specific group of families, or the whole CYP—they must enter all email addresses as “blind copy” or “bcc” recipients. This practice prevents families from seeing other email addresses or receiving replies from other email recipients and is an important measure for the protection of personally identifiable information (PII). Similar precautions must be taken when sending out group texts.

**Emails/Texts to Individual Families**

Communicating with individual families by email or text should be done sparingly. Most information specific to a certain family is best conveyed in person or on the phone. The following list of Do’s and Don’ts provides guidance to CYP Management Teams on the appropriate uses of emails to families.

Use email to accomplish the following types of communications:

- Confirm the date and time of a predetermined meeting, such as a family conference, Inclusion Action Team (IAT) meeting, or participation in a PIB.
- Confirm that the CYP received a hand-written note from the family that morning.
- Offer a volunteer opportunity to a certain parent (e.g., “I heard you are a really skilled carpenter. We need a simple shelf over the sink in the infant room. Would you be able to assist us?”). Note that while this use of email is acceptable, asking in person is better.
- Thank a family or acknowledge their contribution in some way; however, such an email should always be followed up by an in-person thanks and public thanks as part of the CYP’s participation recognition program (Section 6.5 discusses participation recognition).

Do **not** use email for the following purposes:

- Break any kind of news to a family. For example, if the CYP Management Team is concerned about a child’s behaviors and would like to hold a family conference to discuss it with the parents, they should never email the family that news. Instead, they should privately share that information with the family either in person or on the phone. Once the information is conveyed and a meeting time is established, it would then be appropriate to use email to simply confirm the date and time of the conference.
- Discuss, explain, defend an action, or inform on any matter regarding a child. All discussions about children should be held in person, and the phone is used only if it is impossible to meet in person.
- Mention any other family or child in the CYP either by name or by oblique reference. It is never appropriate to discuss a family or child with another family, whether in email, on a phone call, or in person.
Social Media

Twitter®, Facebook®, and other organization-sponsored social media sites can be excellent communication tools through which programs can share general information to a wide community audience. Families self-select (or “like”) to join a Facebook® page, follow a Twitter feed, or participate in other social media platforms. Since social media sites reach only those who choose to participate, they are good places to post information that adds a sense of community and pride in the program but does not require positive confirmation of receipt. For example, a CYP could use a group Facebook® page, Twitter® feed, or other social media to post photos from a recent field trip, share a “quote of the week,” or highlight an article on parenting and child development. However, social media is not the right forum for discussing sensitive topics, sharing unauthorized information, or sending out task reminders (e.g., when annual family surveys are due).

Social media sites are public web spaces and may be accessed by users outside of the Navy community. Subsequently, employees managing CYP-sponsored Facebook® pages, Twitter® feeds, or other social media platforms must have parental consent (signed media release) when publishing photos/video of youth for congratulatory (e.g. Youth of the Month, Youth of the Year) or general purposes. Also, CYPs must exercise caution and minimize potential exposure to unknown individuals when sharing PII about individual youth via social media. CYP Management Teams are encouraged to take advantage of these powerful communication tools to boost the visibility of the excellent work happening in their facilities; however, they must also assume responsibility for the ongoing and frequent monitoring of program-sanctioned social media for appropriateness and accuracy of information.

All social media usage by CYPs must comply with CNIC communications requirements and local installation protocols.

4.3.2 Parent Information Boards

In CYP facilities, parent information boards (bulletin boards) are required in each program environment, and they provide great opportunities for communicating with families and reinforcing a sense of community. CDH Providers are not required to use “bulletin boards”; they can display information for parents in a visually appealing format of their choice as long as it is posted for parents to see. YPs must maintain only one parent information board in a common area of the facility. In addition to the information required for posting listed below, parent information boards can showcase the personalities and creativity of the CYP Professionals, families, and children within the program environment. CYP Professionals can decorate their boards or ask family member volunteers to decorate it seasonally (while ensuring easy visibility of required content). In addition, programs can advertise upcoming events or specific requests for volunteers. Children’s artwork or projects may also be incorporated into the parent information board (as well as in other program environment locations). If the appearance of the board changes on a frequent basis, it is more likely to draw families’ attention and convey information.
The parent information board must display the following information as listed on the CYP Parent Bulletin Board Checklist:

- **CYP and Navy policies and procedures**, including the Navy CYP Guidance and Touch Policy, provide specific guidelines for healthy and appropriate touch when working with children. These guidelines apply to all CYP Professionals as well as all other adults interacting with children while in the CYP.

- **Daily schedules** educate families about the class structure and when specific activities happen such as outside time, lunch, snacks, and rest. This daily schedule, meant to inform adult family members, is likely to be a different document from the child-friendly, developmentally appropriate (e.g., larger and with pictures) daily schedule that direct care staff use and discuss with the children in their program environments. More information about effective daily schedules for children is available in the program-specific Interactions and Relationships Standards.

- **Weekly activity plans** show families the experiences children engage in so they can extend learning to the home environment.

- **The CYP facility calendar of events** (see sample calendar in Appendix C) informs parents and family members about upcoming opportunities for socializing with their children, parent education events, holidays, and other CYP-sponsored activities.

- **Weekly meal and snack menus** allow families to plan accordingly if they have dietary restrictions for religious or personal preference (e.g., vegan or vegetarian) and need to discuss food substitutions. More about working with families regarding CYP menus will be available in upcoming standards related to food and nutrition.

- **Mandated local child abuse reporting procedures** (i.e., exactly how, when, and to whom staff must and parents may report suspected abuse) and the DoD Child Abuse Hotline number are critical documents for both CYP Professionals and families. They include all of the information needed to make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect. More information on child abuse reporting requirements is available in the program-specific Child Abuse Prevention, Education, and Reporting (CAPER) Standards.

- In CDH Providers’ homes, **backup Providers and emergency contact information** ensure that families and Providers have ready access to critical information during emergencies and as needed.

### 4.3.3 Family Conferences

Family conferences are a perfect time to explore ways families and CYP Professionals can work together to foster children’s individual learning experiences. Family conferences are typically very positive experiences for both the families and the CYP Professionals. CYP Professionals can also use the family conference to poll families about topics the families would find interesting for upcoming family education workshops and check in with families regarding parent involvement participation opportunities in the program environment, the CYP, or across the CYP. Finally, if a
child is getting ready to transition to a new age group (or a new program environment), a family conference is useful for discussing and planning for a smooth transition with the family.

CDC and 24/7 Center Professionals must conduct family conferences with the families of enrolled children—ages 6 weeks to five years—three times a year (in the fall, winter, and spring). CDH Providers work with their families to schedule conferences at least annually. Family conferences provide opportunities for these CYP Professionals and families to meet privately to focus on the children’s development, share observations, celebrate achievements, voice concerns, ask and answer questions, and review children’s progress through work samples, photos, and anecdotes. Detailed information about the family conference process is available in the program-related Curriculum Standards (when published).

The following guidelines can help CDC and 24/7 Center Professionals and CDH Providers focus on the positive in family conferences and strengthen relationships with the family:

- Be flexible and work with team members to coordinate conference schedules and program environment coverage to meet family scheduling needs as much as possible.
- Prepare for and plan the family conference: review the child’s work products in advance; identify both child accomplishments to celebrate and developmental goals that will be worked on next; brainstorm questions the family may ask; and prepare potential, appropriate responses to issues raised.
- Start the meeting by welcoming the family and sharing examples of the child’s work.
- Ensure families feel comfortable and have enough time to share their perspective and ideas about their child’s development.
- Use active listening skills (refer to Section 4.2 for more information). CYP Professionals should not do all the talking; if they find they are filling the 30 minutes with their own observations, they should try asking questions to draw the family into discussion. Program Leads, Monitors, and Training Specialists can provide strategies for encouraging families to participate and for avoiding dominating the conversation.
- Take notes on what families share during the family conference. This helps in remembering important points and shows the family that the CYP Professional is listening.
- Focus on the positive and potential in the child’s development (i.e., talk about what the child can do, not what the child cannot do).
- Use the Family Conference Form (found on the Teaching Strategies website) to guide the conversation (required for CDC and 24/7 Center programs only). After the conference, have the parents sign the Family Conference Form, and give them a copy, and place another copy in the child’s administration file.
- In the rare instance that a family declines the annual conference, CDC and 24/7 Professionals should complete the Family Conference Form indicating that the conference was offered but the family chose not to participate. Families must sign the Family Conference Form even if they choose
not to participate. If the family refuses to sign the form, the CYP Professional should write, “The family declined to participate in the family conference and refused to sign the form.”

4.3.4 Informal Communication

Informal communication is casual and spontaneous, yet extremely effective in building bonds between CYP Professionals and families. It can, in turn, lead to smoother collaborations and greater family involvement. Informal communication happens most regularly at dropoff and pickup.

Holding effective dropoff and pickup conversations is a skill that CYP Professionals hone with experience and practice. CYP Professionals must strike a balance between being overly brief (e.g., “She was fine! Bye!”) and engaging in a long conversation that pulls them away from speaking with other parents or from supervision and teaching responsibilities.

Dropoff and pickup times are not the time to have a serious discussion about concerns or behavior issues. If a parent initiates such a discussion, the CYP Professional should redirect the conversation with the acknowledgment that their concerns will be heard (e.g., “Thank you for bringing that up, and I look forward to talking with you about that. Let’s schedule a time to meet, so I can give you my undivided attention.”). This lets the parent know that their issues are important and will be addressed, that staff respect their privacy enough to avoid engaging in an open environment, and that the CYP will dedicate time for the discussion and collaborate on solutions. Section 4.4 discusses strategies for discussing sensitive subjects with families.

CYP Professionals should touch base with families on a daily basis, as time and attention allow, to share information, such as the following:

- **Share details about the child’s disposition,** including any information about health concerns and the child’s mood. For example, knowing that a child is cutting teeth allows CYP Professionals to look out for physical or emotional cues that the child may be in pain and plan accordingly.

- **Sharing information about significant events** that occur in the child’s life allows CYP Professionals and families to anticipate and plan for the child’s reaction. Events could be small or large in magnitude but still have an effect on a child’s behaviors. The child may bring up the event in conversations or through play, and CYP Professionals should be prepared to respond. Examples include a youth getting braces, news that the family is expecting another child, grandparents coming for a visit, the death of a family pet, etc.

**YPs and Family Engagement**

“The advantage of afterschool programs addressing parent engagement is two-fold. Not only do afterschool programs have the ability to break down barriers schools face when working to increase parent engagement…but afterschool programs also provide additional opportunities to encourage parent involvement and positively impact children’s academic success, behavior, and overall well-being.

—“Afterschool: A Key to Successful Parent Engagement,” Issue Brief #57, Afterschool Alliance

Chapter 4: Effective Communications
Relating anecdotes about the child’s day (e.g., “she watched when we got out the finger paint, and she said the word purple!”) reassures families that their children are being engaged and cared for during the day and allows families to ask their children questions about their experiences to further learning at home.

CDC, CDH, and 24/7 Center families also receive a Daily Gram (refer to Section 4.3.1); however, these written daily communications do not negate the need for and value of personal connections between the family and CYP Professionals at dropoff and pickup. These exchanges provide CYP Professionals with insight to the child’s home life, customs, and family practices while also building trust with the family. Likewise, the family benefits from hearing about the child’s experiences throughout the day.

4.4 Effective Conflict Resolution

Despite all proactive efforts, challenging situations and conflicts may arise with families. Conflicts are a normal part of life and occur in all relationships from time to time. Conflicts can be difficult and emotionally challenging. All CYP Professionals should develop strategies for identifying, dealing with, and resolving conflicts, and know when to seek help with a conflict situation.

Occasionally, CYP Professionals may need to have discussions with families that involve sensitive information or that may create conflict. When CYP Professionals identify a sensitive topic they need to broach with a family (e.g., a child is demonstrating a pattern of inappropriate behaviors or a developmental need), they should talk with their Program Leads, CDH Monitors, Training Specialists, and/or CYP Management Team. The Management and Training Teams can strategize with direct care staff and Providers on how best to engage the family. When a good relationship is already in place, these conversations tend to proceed more smoothly. Such discussions may be uncomfortable for the family; however, they are much more likely to listen to the CYP Professional’s observations and agree to explore issues further if they trust their child’s CYP Professionals.

Many CYP Professionals may feel confident in working directly with their families to resolve any conflicts and/or addressing sensitive issues. However, they should feel equally comfortable requesting support at any time from their Management Teams.

4.4.1 How Conflicts Arise

Conflicts arise because of misunderstandings (e.g., a different philosophy in child guidance practices), disagreements in how policies are interpreted and implemented, management’s response to or inability to address a concern, or stressful situations in the lives of those involved. Conflicts should be addressed as quickly as possible and in a positive manner to ensure that relationships with families are not compromised. When conflicts arise, the parties directly involved should attempt initial resolution. For example, minor misunderstandings often require little more than sharing appropriate and accurate information to resolve. If conflicts are more significant or there are reasons
to elevate the situation, the CYP Professional should inform the Management Team immediately. CYP Professionals should feel comfortable seeking assistance in conflict resolution and support needed to work through the process. When families have concerns or are upset, they may negatively express themselves toward direct care staff or others. The Management Team, the Training Team, and Program Lead must assist all CYP Professionals in addressing family concerns as quickly and calmly as possible.

### 4.4.2 Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution

While conflict resolution is the ultimate goal, it is not necessarily easy to achieve. Training Teams must provide training and ongoing support around strategies for facilitating effective conflict resolution so that direct care staff are comfortable in these types of situations. Scenario-based role playing of common conflict situations with all levels of professionals is a particularly effective training tool for building such interpersonal skills and can provide concrete strategies for dealing with various types of conflict. Training topics should focus on developing the following skills:

- Active listening skills (asking questions and providing feedback on what’s been said) and keeping nonverbal cues neutral and receptive
- Acknowledging family members’ feelings and perspectives
- Asking open-ended questions
- Brainstorming multiple, potential, realistic outcomes (so families do not feel pressured or limited to one reconciliation option)
- Allowing families to share their concerns without interruption

Additional information and strategies for facilitating conflict resolution are described in the program-specific Interactions and Relationships Standards.

When discussions become overly emotional or even combative—yelling, cursing, interrupting the meeting, and/or displaying other inappropriate behaviors—CYP Professionals should stay calm and professional and practice stress reduction techniques, such as taking deep breaths. If a CYP Professional is uncomfortable with the direction a meeting is taking or is unable to de-escalate heightened emotions, he/she should do the following:

- Call for a member of the Training and/or Management team to help mediate and resolve the situation.
- Maintain a professional tone and stay as calm as possible.
- Take a break in the meeting to give the parents an opportunity to calm down and collect their thoughts.
- Suggest ending the meeting and reconvening at another time and under calmer circumstances.
Chapter 5: Shared Decision-Making

Shared decision-making involves not just informing parents after a decision has been made but also valuing and respecting the input of families up front and demonstrating that by soliciting the advice, opinions, and feedback from families as an integral part of the decision-making process.

Early education, child care, and youth programming organizations that are new to family involvement or who are renewing a commitment to involving families often find sharing decision-making to be the most challenging type of family involvement to fully implement. Navy CNIC (N926), however, has established requirements for installation CYPs to facilitate full involvement of families in CYP operations. The most important of these shared decision-making structures is the Parent Involvement Board (PIB). This board is chaired by a parent and attended by parent representatives from each installation CYP, CYP Professionals, and other key leaders from the larger installation community. The PIB must meet at least quarterly, and its primary purpose is to involve the voices of parents in CYP. Annual surveys and suggestion boxes are also vehicles for shared decision-making; these two topics along with the PIB are discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Decision-Making at the Family Level

CYPs promote shared decision-making with families individually to better address and support the needs and interests of those families. Children with identified needs are supported by the Inclusion Action Team (IAT) to ensure that the child and his or her family receive the most appropriate care and services by the CYP. The following section describes this opportunity for shared decision-making.

5.1.1 Involving Families in IAT

Families are their child’s first teachers and know their children best. Consequently, parents’ input is the most valuable as they understand their child’s needs in ways that programs may not. Parents can often inform programming and support practices based on their intimate knowledge of their child and of strategies they or their previous caregivers have tried that have or have not worked well. This kind of collaboration is especially critical in developing effective supports for children with identified needs. CYPs can better tailor necessary support plans and minimize the need to make further revisions later when parents are included in the IAT process from the beginning. As such, programs are required to invite parents to all IAT meetings that involve their children. In addition, early
collaboration lays a groundwork of trust and mutual respect between CYP Professionals—which is critical to the ongoing support of children with special needs.

The IAT is comprised of a team of experts in the fields of medicine, therapy, family services, special education, and general education. They are charged with helping CYPs locate resources for families and identify reasonable accommodations that can be implemented to support a child’s success in that CYP. The team must work closely with families to formulate strategies and decisions for children’s inclusion in the CYP. If a child has identified needs, or if CYP Professionals recommend to families that screening or assessments may be needed to determine if special services may be appropriate for a child, they always do so in communication with and in partnership with the family. More information about including children with special needs in the CYP, and the specific ways in which IATs prioritize family involvement, is available in the CYP Inclusion Operating Manual.

5.2 Shared Decision-Making at the Program Level

CYPs also demonstrate their appreciation of the value of parents by sharing decision-making at the program and installation levels. All parents are members of the PIB and have a voice in advising and supporting CYP programming. Parents also have a number of opportunities to provide feedback to the installation about their satisfaction and recommendations for enhancements through various surveys and other mechanisms. In addition, programs are required to invite parents to serve on the Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI) to represent the full community of families and to review programs from their perspective. The following sections detail these activities and describe how they are instrumental to effective family relations.

5.2.1 Parent Involvement Board (PIB)

The PIB strengthens family involvement in a format that brings CYP Professionals, other installation leaders, and parents together for active listening and expression of ideas and opinions in a positive, forward-looking context. It is a critical component in quality child and youth programming. The Military Child Care Act of 1989 established the PIB as a mandate for all military installations. The PIB serves in an advisory capacity; it does not have authority to create policy, nor does it engage in the management of CYPs. The family of each enrolled child is automatically a member of the PIB, and family members are encouraged to actively participate in PIB meetings and other activities.

CYPs have flexibility in how the installation forms the PIB to best meet the needs of the programs and families enrolled. An installation-wide PIB may be created with representation from all CYPs, or separate PIBs may be created for each specific program (i.e., CDCs, CDH Providers’ homes, 24/7 Centers, and YPs). The Installation CYP Director is responsible for ensuring that, regardless of structure, the PIB is established and operational at each installation.
PIB functions include the following:

- Ensuring frequent communication by hosting opportunities for families to discuss concerns with CYP Management Teams and applicable installation commanders
- Providing families’ perspectives to CYP Management Teams on issues and activities
- Collecting suggestions, recommendations, and new ideas from families to enhance the learning experience offered in CYPs and promote the well-being of children and youth
- Discussing, approving, and implementing the Parent Participation Plan (PPP)
- Creating opportunities for families to express their appreciation of the daily efforts of CYP Professionals to foster the development and well-being of their children (ongoing activities or periodic events, as determined by the PIB)
- Enabling the participation of a family member representative on the Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI)

**Requirements for the PIB**

*OPNAVINST 1700.9 (series)* lists several requirements for the PIB, including membership, frequency of meetings, and how families are notified of meetings and their content. These requirements are as follows:

- Meetings must be open to all families.
- Family members should make up the majority of the PIB membership. Other members may include installation representatives from the Family Advocacy Program (FAP); Medical, Fire and Safety; and Preventive Medicine.
- A family member is chosen as the chairperson.
- Meetings must be held at least quarterly. If the PIB operates as a CYP-wide unit (i.e., one PIB covers CDCs, CDH Providers’ homes, YPs, and 24/7 Centers), all CYPs on the installation must be represented.
- Meetings are conducted according to professional meeting protocol, such as Robert’s Rules of Order, to respect participants’ time and ensure PIB business is completed.
- Command leadership should be kept informed of the dates and times of every meeting.
- In addition to CYP Management Teams, other CYP Professionals should be invited to attend meetings as appropriate. The meetings are designed to focus on families, but there are situations in which families can benefit from the attendance of CYP Professionals. It is important for CYP Professionals to hear families’ perspectives. Encourage professionals to generate creative ways to
improve family participation and have them present their ideas to the PIB. Possibilities include holding the PIB meeting in conjunction with a CYP Open House to allow CYP Professionals to hear directly from families.

- Meetings must be advertised and promoted well in advance to maximize attendance.
- Minutes from each meeting are signed by the Commanding Officer (CO) (or designated command representative) and made available for review by families. Programs must post minutes for families’ viewing in lobby areas and program websites, send them via group email, and/or post them on social media sites. When the CYP Management Team uses a variety of methods to distribute the minutes, more families are reached, which is the ultimate goal of PIB activities. A sample of PIB meeting minutes is available in Appendix D (this sample is based on the CYP-wide PIB model). Guidelines for PIB minutes include the following:
  - Names of participants are included in the PIB meeting minutes unless a participant specifically requests his/her name be withheld. Individuals requesting this should speak directly with the PIB secretary at the meeting itself, before minutes are published.
  - The CYP maintains copies of PIB meeting minutes. These minutes should be referred to periodically. They allow the CYP Management Team to follow up on concerns raised and decisions made and use the information for future reference.

**Strategies to Maximize Effectiveness of PIB**

The CYP Management Team should work with PIB members to identify ways they can positively influence program quality. One way the PIB can support the program is by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of the staff and CDH Providers. Expressions of appreciation can be very meaningful when coming from families. The PIB can create opportunities for families to show appreciation for their children’s CYP Professionals. A few ideas are listed below; PIBs are encouraged to use this list as a starting point to create ideas of their own that are meaningful in the context of their own CYP and their own families and CYP Professionals.

- Place fresh flowers in the staff lounge.
- Bake homemade goods and place them in the staff lounge for all CYP Professionals to enjoy. (Donated baked goods are for staff only; foods baked at home cannot be shared with children enrolled in the program and therefore should not be brought into program environments.)
- Coordinate and provide food and drink for CYP breakfasts, lunches, or coffee breaks.
- Decorate the staff lounge for seasons or holidays.
- Send flowers or baked goods to Providers’ homes during an appreciation week celebration.
- Incorporate food and socialization time into CDH in-service trainings to allow Providers time to bond with each other and network.
- Create an “appreciation board” for notes of appreciation and thanks for their children’s direct care staff. For example, appreciation could be expressed on a poster that is cut out in the shape
of a cup that says at the top, “Thank You for your Cup of Kindness!” Post-It notes and pens could be positioned next to it so that family members can quickly handwritten notes of thanks (e.g., “Thank you so much for bringing in that special book to read to the class after Janie’s goldfish died! You are so thoughtful!”) and stick them to the “Cup of Kindness.”

- Give signed cards to CYP Professionals on their birthdays. (A word of caution: once initiated, a birthday program must be very carefully managed to ensure no birthday is inadvertently overlooked.)

In addition to the appreciation activities described above, the PIB can serve in other roles to assist CYP Professionals in meeting their goals for family engagement and enhancing program activities and offerings. Some examples are provided below.

- PIB members can serve as honorary hosts to welcome families and assist with logistics as needed. This is a great way for the members to meet other families in the program and spread the word about what the PIB does and encourage participation in upcoming events.

- The PIB can organize family workdays in which families come together to tackle specific projects identified by CYP Professionals. These projects may include tasks such as making curtains for a window, painting a prop for a dramatic play area, painting a mural, or sprucing up the playground area by planting trees, shrubs, and flowers.

**Strategies to Encourage Family Participation in PIB**

The goal of the PIB is to encourage active family participation in CYPs. Some strategies that are proven to promote family participation include the following:

- **Hold contests to increase involvement.** Contests could include providing door prizes at PIB meetings and events or prizes for the family or program environment that recruits the most new families to attend a meeting.

- **Host a CYP event in conjunction with a PIB meeting.** Families typically enjoy attending events where their children are participating. Children could begin the PIB event by demonstrating finger plays or singing a favorite song from circle time. For the remainder of the meeting the children can participate in separate activities so the family members can focus on the PIB meeting.

- **Provide buttons for active members.** Having active members wear PIB buttons will publicize participation and can be a conversation starter. Family members who are not yet active in the PIB can immediately see those families who are active and ask questions.

- **Recruit program environment PIB Representatives.** The PIB representative attends meetings on behalf of all families in a program environment and reports back. This person will actively share information with the families and share their fellow family members’ responses and opinions with the PIB. Serving as the Program environment PIB Representative is one way for family members to participate in the Family Engagement Program.
Inform families at enrollment. Distribute an informational flier about the PIB and assign members to make welcome phone calls to each new family, inform them of PIB activities, and encourage their participation.

Promote PIB in newsletters. In every edition of the facility newsletter, write an article about the PIB, including a brief description of the last meeting or highlights of an upcoming meeting or activity to generate interest.

Send email reminders. Email is a great tool to promote family participation opportunities. Include references to the CYP Rewards Program and the opportunity to earn credits toward child care fees.

Tie meetings to social opportunities. Families enjoy and benefit from social experiences with other families such as potlucks, open houses, or pizza dinners. Planning family potluck dinners to coincide with family education activities is a great way for families to mingle and meet. It is also an excellent opportunity to introduce families who are new to the area. Military families are often far away from family and close friends and benefit from opportunities to get to know others and broaden their support systems. All families should be invited to social opportunities, including those who participate in the hourly care program.

Communications Regarding PIB

PIBs should employ various communication strategies to reach the greatest number of families. Possible communication methods for reaching families are listed below.

Post fliers about upcoming events and meetings on bulletin boards in the program environments, at the front desk, and in hallways. These signs should be attractive and attention-getting.

Place notices and fliers in children’s cubbies. This is an effective way to ensure the information gets to all families.

Send group emails with all the details about the event, with a digital version of the flier as an attachment.

Send text messages. This requires not only asking families for the cell phone number at which they would prefer to receive a text from the CYP, but also requesting their permission to text them with CYP updates, since some cell phone companies charge when a phone receives texts.

Create social media accounts/pages and encourage families to join the group or follow the account. Social media accounts must be established in accordance with Navy and local installation social media policies and must be monitored by a designated CYP Professional. They are beneficial because families are able to receive updates about upcoming events and provide feedback or input, the families can view the page at their convenience, and it facilitates the input
of a larger group of people. For additional information on Navy requirements for operating a social media site, refer to CNIC social media guidance and local installation protocols. The following two guidelines must be kept in mind regarding promoting the PIB on social media:

- **Quarterly agendas require quarterly messages.** After the PIB Chairperson finalizes and posts the meeting agenda to the social media account/page, a message is sent to all followers announcing the upcoming PIB and location of agenda topics.

- **After the official PIB meeting, the minutes are signed and published.** All PIB minutes are reviewed and signed by the CO (or representative). Once signed, minutes must be printed and posted prominently on the facility bulletin board. They can also be posted to the various social media accounts/pages, replacing the correlating agenda post.

**Virtual PIB Meetings**

If a PIB needs to boost its participation rates, one strategy is hybrid meetings that allow for both in-person and virtual attendance. Video or phone conferencing could allow family members to phone in or use Skype or another video platform to be part of the meeting from remote locations. There are free or low-cost tools available online. Some services allow video conferencing as well as regular dial-in conference call options at the same time. Attending in-person is a richer, better experience and should be encouraged; however, a hybrid virtual/in-person meeting would allow families to be active members even if they are unable to attend face-to-face meetings while allowing those who are able to attend to benefit from the interaction and engagement of the in-person meeting. Before using a virtual meeting format for PIB meetings, the CYP Director must check if there are installation policies that govern virtual meetings.

Families who attend virtual PIB meetings earn CYP Reward points for their participation. They should be included in the list of attendees in the meeting minutes.

### 5.2.2 Seeking Feedback from Families

While the PIB is the cornerstone of shared decision-making, there are two other methods to actively solicit and listen to requests and input from families. These two methods are customer satisfaction surveys and the suggestion box, covered in the following subsections.

**Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted to solicit feedback on all aspects of CYP. While family surveys must be conducted annually as part of the annual CNIC Inspection, surveys can be conducted at other times to elicit opinions and advice from families on a variety of subjects pertaining to CYP.

Surveys are anonymous. Anonymity allows families to share their honest opinions without doubts or worries about the effect of their feedback on their relationships with CYP Professionals. The annual surveys that are part of the annual CNIC HQ inspection have two parts: asking families to quantify
their satisfaction with service components of the CYP and requesting narrative feedback from families. Programs should request families’ participation in a variety of ways to underscore the importance of the survey itself and highlight the value CYP places on feedback from families. Requests for participation could include posted signs, group emails, notes on Daily Grams (to reach family members of younger children), mentions in newsletters, and word-of-mouth conversations. All these communication methods should remind family members that completing a survey is both anonymous and is worth one point in the CYP Rewards Program.

During the CNIC HQ Inspection process, summary family survey information is provided to programs for their action on any identified concerns. These surveys allow programs to continuously improve the care and education of children and provide the services needed by the families. Links to electronic surveys should be distributed via email distribution lists using a tool such as Survey Monkey. Responses from the surveys are tallied to compile the overall feedback for the program. More information on inspection surveys is available in the CYP Quality Assurance Standards.

Feedback from surveys must be reviewed, analyzed, and used to inform concrete improvements to program operations. Families frequently become discouraged and may be reluctant to participate in future survey activities when they feel that their feedback has been discounted or ignored. Programs should communicate with their families about what information was learned from inspection (and other) surveys, and describe how the program is using the information to improve program quality moving forward.

Additional Surveys

In addition to the required annual survey, programs may need to solicit specific information from families. For example, when programs are applying for and/or maintaining accreditation from NAEYC, families are asked to provide feedback through family surveys that will be compiled and reported to NAEYC for use in supporting the accreditation decision. Similar feedback is solicited when a CDH Provider is applying for NAFCC accreditation or a YP is working on its COA accreditation. Other topics worthy of a survey include asking families about a potential change in the Give Parents a Break (GPAB) Program, requesting ideas and interest levels in proposed topics for parenting education activities, etc. Programs can use the program-specific Family Surveys (available on the CYP E-Library) as a template and customize the questions to meet the surveying needs of the program.

Suggestion Box

CYP facilities (and the CDH office) must maintain a suggestion box for collecting valuable input and feedback on ways to improve services. CDH Providers may also choose to place suggestion boxes in the home. As with customer satisfaction surveys, the suggestion box is an anonymous way for family members to provide honest feedback. Suggestion boxes are helpful to both families and CYP Professionals. Sometimes suggestion boxes are used as an anonymous way to appreciate the good work and professionalism of a CYP Professional. Sometimes they are used by a family member who has something negative to share but is nervous or uncomfortable about sharing it in person.
with the CYP Director or another CYP Professional. The suggestion box offers the family member a way to communicate even if circumstances make communication difficult. Since all feedback is helpful to the CYP, creating alternative ways for families to give feedback is vitally important to keep information and communication flowing.

Suggestion boxes should be placed in high-traffic, visible locations and stocked with necessary supplies, such as paper and pens. Programs can also post a virtual suggestion box on their webpage, such as a “Suggestion Box” link for families to send anonymous feedback. An email box is another option, but it cannot be the only option since the key characteristic of anonymity is lost in an email suggestion box. This may work for a family member who does not feel the need for anonymity but finds email a convenient method to communicate.

**Closing the Loop with Families**

The program should have a process for acknowledging feedback or suggestions offered by families. The Director or Assistant Director should take charge of overseeing this family communication component. The CYP Management Team may hang a bulletin board near the suggestion box to display suggestions that have been received and led to followup actions. This process allows family members to know that their opinions count and can make a difference. Not all suggestions received will be actionable; CYP Directors and Assistant Directors use their good judgment in implementing suggestions. The CYP Director should also display the contact information for the PIB representative if families wish to suggest topics for discussion at a PIB meeting.

While families should be encouraged to offer constructive feedback for program enhancement and improvement, they should also be encouraged to provide positive feedback. Family members who are happy with the care their children are receiving are the best advertisement for any program; they are also valuable allies of the program. CYP Professionals should encourage families to use the suggestion box to praise their children’s CYP Professionals, give compliments, or make complimentary observations about a CYP Professional’s expertise and professionalism. Positive feedback is a valuable CYP marketing tool; families should be encouraged to share positive comments as well as suggestions for improvement.

### 5.2.3 Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI) Participation

A final way to involve families in shared decision-making is to directly involve a family member in the team that conducts the annual Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI). There are many benefits to having a family member on the team. First, the family member offers a valuable insight into how the CYP looks and feels from the family member’s point of view. Second, inclusion in this extremely important event in the annual cycle of the CYP speaks to the respect CYP Professionals have for families as partners in the delivery of high-quality child care. Third, the representative on the MDTI frequently becomes an excellent spokesperson for the CYP and booster for CYP in general. Once family members see firsthand the rigor, precision, and detail with which the CYP prepares to meet inspection elements, they appreciate to a greater degree the skill, experience, training, and commitment it takes to deliver quality child care that consistently meets the quality
standards of Navy CYP. Participation in the MDTI mutually builds trust and appreciation between families and CYP Professionals as partners in creating an outstanding CYP for their children. Specific details on the family members’ responsibilities on the MDTI are discussed in detail in the CYP Quality Assurance Standards.
Chapter 6: Parent Participation Promotion

Navy CYPs encourage family involvement by identifying participation opportunities that are meaningful and mutually beneficial for families, children, and the CYP. Programs invite family members to share their interests, talents, abilities, knowledge, and energy. No two family members offer the same set of skills; subsequently, programs must provide flexibly scheduled offerings, well-defined activities for which family members can quickly and easily sign up, as well as open-ended, creative opportunities that call on the talents of family members to identify, organize, and accomplish. CYPs must ensure that all family members can find meaningful ways to participate that fit into their schedule and interests. The following sections describe outreach tools, strategies, and plans that facilitate active engagement.

6.1 Actively Encouraging Participation

The CYP Management Team sets the tone for prioritizing family participation, ensuring that CYP Professionals are educated on the importance of family involvement and how to convey this to families in a friendly, inviting manner. CYP staff meeting agendas include standing items dedicated to updating CYP Professionals about upcoming participation opportunities, discussing strategies for engaging with parents, and brainstorming new family involvement activities.

While families and their children’s direct care staff/Providers tend to develop the closest relationships, CYP Management Team members also build collaborative relationships with enrolled families. Families are more likely to get involved when they connect with multiple CYP Professionals in their CYP. When families like and trust the individuals responsible for their child’s care, they are more likely to share their availability, interests, time, and talents with the CYP.

Families who participate in CYP activities bond with the CYP staff/Providers, which encourages families to return to support future opportunities. Often the most challenging steps to family involvement is getting a parent in the door the first time. Marketing is essential; programs should consider ways to tailor outreach efforts to the facility or should devise strategies for making volunteering memorable and desirable. For example, Exhibit 6.1A shows a sample marketing graphic that highlights the different ways families can get involved with the CYP—through parent education, spending time in the program environment, volunteering with activities, and informing improvements at the program level.
Easy to read graphics, pamphlets, and other written marketing materials promote family involvement in a variety of different ways and remind parents of the CYP even when they are not physically in the program facility.

6.2 Parent Participation Plan

The Navy CYP Parent Participation Plan (PPP) helps programs detail how they will encourage families to actively participate in their CYP. **Programs are required to develop a PPP and must review and update their PPP on an annual basis to ensure an accurate and up-to-date “road map” for their participation efforts for the coming year.**

The most useful PPP includes scheduled activities and events that reflect families’ interests and needs. The CYP Director (or designee) drafts the PPP by soliciting ideas for topics, activities, and events from parents, selecting ideas that may appeal to the widest range of families, coordinating CYP schedules and agendas, and building flexibility into the schedule that allows families to choose when and how they participate (refer to Appendix B for a sample PPP). Exhibit 6.2A describes the components that must be included in the CYP’s annual PPP.

| Exhibit 6.2A: Parent Participation Plan Components |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **PPP Components** | **Description** |
| Policy Statement | The opening paragraph must include a policy statement that emphasizes the importance of family participation. |
| Goals and Objectives | An overarching goal (i.e., larger vision of the positive outcomes of this plan) and specific plan objectives (i.e., specific benchmark that demonstrates achievement of the overarching goal) allow programs to effectively measure their success in accomplishing the plan. |
6.3 Family Engagement Program

All family involvement activities and efforts are founded on each CYP's Family Engagement Program. This required, Navy-wide program ensures that families have ample, flexible, and meaningful opportunities to participate in their children’s experience in CYP. The Family Engagement Program acknowledges and accommodates differences in skills, interests, and availability. Each CYP Family Engagement Program includes the following elements (which are detailed annually in the Parent Participation Plan):

- **Parent Involvement Board (PIB):** Serving as an advisory body, the PIB provides parents with opportunities to inform and provide feedback on CYP operations and programming. Section 5.2.1 details the processes for establishing and operating the PIB. Specific measures must be detailed for encouraging families to participate on the PIB as required in OPNAVINST 1700.9 (series).

- **CYP-wide activities and events:** Events scheduled across programs allow families to discover new services available and to meet and interact with their peers. Examples include CYP-wide family appreciation dinners, cross-CYP family cooking classes, talent shows put on by the children in the SAC program to which CYP families are invited, or fun runs for CYP families organized by the Teen Program.

- **Parenting support events:** Opportunities for parenting education on issues pertinent to families with young children provide information they can use every day. Possible topics include how to handle biting, children who are picky eaters, ages and stages of development, creative activities to do with children, child abuse prevention, kindergarten transition, saving for college, and handling sibling rivalry.

- **Child engagement activities:** Opportunities for families to participate in their children’s daily activities expose parents to learning they can expand to home and allow them to get to know their children’s friends. To boost family participation, CYP Professionals should talk with parents first to determine what activities and timing work for their interests and schedules.

- **Hands-on assistance:** CYP Professionals appreciate support in building a welcoming program environment. These kinds of tasks often do not require parents to be in the program environment with children and can be accomplished at the parent’s convenience. Hands-on support participation may include creating bulletin boards, making labels for centers, or cutting out templates for children’s activities.
Culture sharing: CYPs must proactively and purposefully create opportunities for families to share their cultures. Families can share holiday traditions, traditional music and dress, collections, or artifacts important to family or community. Helping children authentically experience different cultures and holidays is an important learning and family involvement strategy.

Special skills and expertise sharing: Family members can share their unique talents, skills, and abilities through organized program environment activities or in support of the CYP to enhance the learning environment. For example, a parent with skills in carpentry could help build a special reading nook, a parent with sewing skills could sew new curtains for the program environment, or a parent with journalism experience could write articles for the newsletter.

Program environment offerings: In addition to opportunities that are available CYP-wide, each CYP environment must offer a family engagement activity or event each month. Many ideas for monthly events are described in the above bullets. However, the most meaningful and fruitful engagement ideas often come directly from the family members of the children in that program environment.

Room Parent: At CDCs, parents can be designated as a Room Parent for specified periods of time (time limits allow parents to participate without making a long-term or open-ended commitment). Room Parents collaborate with direct care staff to identify support needs and activities they can facilitate during their tenure as well as provide an extra set of hands during special events.

Appendix E includes suggestions for engaging parents in a range of participation opportunities. The Family Engagement Program is directly linked to the CYP Rewards Program (see Section 6.4), in which parents earn points that lead to discounts in their child care fees for participating in certain CYP support activities. While all parent participation is encouraged, valued, and supported, not all participation activities receive CYP Reward points. For example, family members may visit the program environment to observe, stop by to eat lunch or a snack with their children, schedule times to breastfeed their infants, come by to just check in, play a game, or have a conversation. They may also donate items to the program (e.g., books, games, and toys). These activities are hugely beneficial to the child, the family, and the program. However, these activities do not earn points for child care discounts. To avoid any misunderstandings, the PPP must explain exactly which activities result in CYP Reward points at the beginning of the year and how this information is shared with families.

6.3.1 Family Engagement Program Outreach

Families learn about the Family Engagement Program through the PIB, family engagement brochures at the CYP, information posted on program environment and facility bulletin boards, program or classroom or CDH newsletters, CYP group emails, CYP social media pages, and most importantly through personal invitations from CYP Professionals. The most creative flier in the world is not as powerful as a respected CYP Professional saying, “I’m planning to go to that presentation tomorrow night. I hear the speaker is really good. Would you like to join me?”
Family members currently participating in the CYP are often the best advocates and advertisements for family engagement. These families can share their experiences and articulate how their participation benefits them and their children. The CYP can use these parents to market participation through a special parent participation bulletin board display, newsletter articles, and social media posts. The CYP can also encourage family members to share their experiences with other families through word-of-mouth, during family events, and at PIB meetings.

### 6.4 CYP Rewards Program

Navy CYPs encourage family engagement by identifying participation opportunities that are meaningful and mutually beneficial for families, children, and the CYP; and by providing incentives for parent involvement. Programs should invite family members to share their interests, talents, abilities, and knowledge. Families who participate in CYP activities bond with the CYP Professionals caring for their children and are motivated to continue supporting future opportunities. CYPs must offer all family members meaningful participation opportunities that fit into families’ interests and schedules.

The CYP Rewards Program offers financial incentives to families who choose to participate. Families volunteer with their CYPs, earn points for the hours or events they support, and then redeem those points for discounts on their child care fees. Volunteer and participation activities and events must be detailed in each CYP’s annual Parent Participation Plan (PPP). The CYP Rewards Program is a required Navy CYP offering and must be implemented by each CYP program.

Families receive and sign the **Navy CYP Permission Statements Form—CNICCYP 1700/43** at initial registration and each year as part of the annual registration process. The parent’s signature on this form acknowledges that the family has been informed of and understands the CYP Rewards Program as explained in the **Family Engagement Brochure** and in the **CYP Parent Handbook**. The Family Engagement Brochure describes the program and details family participation opportunities across all CYPs. Programs should market the CYP Rewards Program to all new and current families and provide the Family Engagement Brochure in orientation packets. Whether or not families choose to participate in the CYP Rewards Program is entirely up to them.

Families earn CYP Reward points for each activity in which they participate. All applicable activities have predetermined, standardized point values. When families accumulate a total of 10 points, they receive a credit applicable to their next military payday child care billing. CYP Reward points may not be applied to hourly care services or part-day enrichment programs and may not be transferred to another installation.

Navy CYP defines a family household to include any adults (married or not) who contribute to the expenses of raising and caring for the child or children. In the case of geographically separated parents or parents who are divorced or legally separated, this definition only applies if the child is living with the sponsor. Each family household is allowed one discount per month, regardless of the number of children in the household. There is no limit on the number of months families can receive the discount (i.e., it is possible for a family to earn the discount every month their child is
enrolled in the CYP). Unused points roll over into the next month and also into the next registration year.

CYP employees and CDH Providers who have children in care in the CYP are not eligible to participate in the program (i.e., they may not earn CYP Reward points for their households). The spouse, however, has no restrictions on family engagement opportunities; the spouse’s participation can earn CYP Reward points. For example, Ms. Julie works in the CDC and her child participates in the SAC program. Ms. Julie cannot get points for volunteering in the SAC program, but her husband may earn points for the family. Subsequently, Ms. Julie’s husband volunteers to serve on the MDTI team and earns five points for his participation.

### 6.4.1 Flat Rate and Hourly Engagement Opportunities

Families accumulate CYP Reward points in two ways: flat rate or hourly. The points earned for an activity can be either a flat rate for the whole event (e.g., three points to attend a Parent Involvement Board [PIB] meeting), or according to the number of hours a family member spends participating (e.g., one point per hour of staffing a booth at the annual CYP Fun Fair).

**Flat Rate Activities**

CNIC has standardized some CYP Rewards opportunities that are available to all families across all CYPs (including families receiving CDH program services). Flat rate opportunities and corresponding point values may not be modified. Exhibit 6.4.1A lists the standardized flat rate opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Standardized Point Value (Flat Rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair of Parent Involvement Board (PIB)</td>
<td>10 points per meeting chaired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Parent Involvement Board (PIB)</td>
<td>3 points per meeting attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI)</td>
<td>5 points for participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at a family education event (e.g., Child Abuse Awareness and</td>
<td>1 point for each event attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention, Ages and Stages, ABCs of Behavior)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving as a field trip chaperone with responsibility for a group of</td>
<td>3 points for each field trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Sports Coaches (and Assistant Coaches)</td>
<td>10 points per completed 6-week sport season, OR no-cost sports registration for all of the coach’s child(ren)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hourly Rate Activities**

Families enrolled in CDC, YP, or 24/7 Center programs can also earn CYP Reward points for volunteering in activities on an hourly basis. The points for these activities are based on the amount of time the family member is involved in the activity. Families are awarded one point per hour of
participation, or half a point (i.e., \( \frac{1}{2} \) point) for one-half hour of participation. There is no set limit to the number of hours a family can participate in one particular activity.

CYPs should offer a number of flexible engagement opportunities every day to provide parents a wealth of choices for every hour they are able to participate. CYPs are encouraged to use the list in Exhibit 6.4.1B as a starting point and add other family engagement ideas generated in their programs.

**Exhibit 6.4.1B: Hourly Rate CYP Rewards Engagement Opportunities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hourly Rate Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend parent/teacher conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with health and nutrition activities such as gardening and recipe sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist the Training Specialist with a training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create or arrange seasonal decorations/bulletin boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph or videotape program activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read or play a musical instrument with small groups or individual children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor SAC children, youth, or teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write articles for the CYP newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaperone a field trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.4.2 Tracking CYP Reward Points

The CYP Reward points tracking process is designed to: (1) reduce duplication of efforts (tracking points both manually and in CYMS), (2) minimize the burden on CYP employees, and (3) empower family members to take ownership of their participation. Parents are responsible for tracking their own points. When parents participate in hourly rate opportunities, the CYP should provide them with a **CYP Rewards: Tracking Form—CNICCYP 1700/77** to document their hourly participation activities. Families who participate in flat rate activities are given a **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form—CNICCYP 1700/76** instead. Both forms are described below.

**Tracking Flat Rate Activity Points**

CYP must provide families with the **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form—CNICCYP 1700/76** to document their participation in one-time events (e.g. PIB Meeting, Parent Education Class). Event coordinators must ensure that an ample number of forms are available for and distributed to parent participants. At the end of an event, parents must have an attending CYP Management or Training Team member sign the form to verify parent participation. Parents can do one of the following: (1) keep these forms at home and bring them in at one time for redemption, or (2) bring the completed forms to the CYP either to attach to their **CYP Rewards: Tracking Form** (if they are also participating in hourly rate activities) or to give to the Operations Clerk (or designated CYP employee) to keep on file until parents earn 10 points and are ready to redeem them for a discount. The Operations Clerk should maintain a file or binder for completed forms for those parents who only participate in flat rate activities and choose to have the Operations Clerk keep their forms.
Parents who volunteer as coaches (including assistant coaches) in Youth Sports and Fitness (YSF) sport leagues receive 10 CYP Reward points for their services for completion of each 6-week season. Consequently, once the parent volunteer receives a signed **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form —CNICCYP 1700/76** from the YSF Coordinator, they may immediately redeem their points. Youth Sports Coaches’ point redemption methods are described in Section 6.4.3.

### Tracking Hourly Rate Activity Points

Parents use the **CYP Rewards: Tracking Form—CNICCYP 1700/77** to document their participation in hourly rate activities. To help parents stay organized in tracking their points, CDCs should keep Rewards Binders in each classroom, and 24/7 Centers and YPs should maintain a single Rewards Binder at the front desk where parents can store their tracking forms (rather than requiring parents to remember to bring it each time they volunteer). The form includes instructions for completion and an example that parents can follow. Staff should help parents fill out the form until the parents become familiar with it. The form includes space for recording the number of points earned for each activity as well as the family’s starting balance and new total earned points. A CYP employee must initial the form each time a parent volunteers to validate the parent’s participation, and either enter the completed number of hours for the parent, or check/validate what the parent entered (if the parent entered the number of hours him/herself).

### 6.4.3 Redeeming Points

For families volunteering in CDCs, 24/7 Centers, and YPs, once a parent earns 10 points, he or she should submit all points tracking documentation to the Operations Clerk (or designated CYP employee) for point redemption and credit processing. Parents are responsible for ensuring that the Operations Clerk has all tracking forms (for both hourly and flat rate activities) at the time of point redemption. The Operations Clerk documents any points earned through participation in flat rate opportunities (based on the **CYP Rewards: Event Points Forms**) on the **CYP Rewards: Tracking Form** and enters the required information into CYMS for processing the household credit using either CYMS Pay Code 55 for “CYP Rewards Points” or CYMS Pay Code 56 for “Youth Coaches” (see the **CYP Rewards: Redeeming Points in CYMS** on the CYP E-Library for more details). When the points have been redeemed in CYMS and the credit has been applied to the household’s next billing, the Operations Clerk initials the **CYP Rewards: Point Tracking Form**, and a member of the Management Team or Training Team validates completion by signing the form. Completed forms must be kept on file until scanning is available, at which time they are scanned and linked to CYMS, then shredded.

If there are leftover points (i.e., the parent earned more than the 10 points needed for redemption), the Operations Clerk provides the parent with a new tracking form and enters (and initials) the leftover point total as the starting balance on the form. The parent can then keep the form at home.
or return it to the classroom/activity area/program binder to track new volunteer activities. If the parent only participates in flat rate activities, any remaining unused **CYP Rewards: Event Points Forms—CNICCYP 1700/76** should be returned to the front desk binder for future redemption.

Parent Youth Sports Coaches may redeem their points in three ways: (1) for no-cost registration for their child(ren) for the same YSF season during which the parent is volunteering, (2) for a $30 credit towards the household’s next child care billing, or (3) for no-cost registration for their child(ren) for a subsequent YSF sport season.

- For parent Youth Sports Coaches who wish to use their points for no-cost registration for the current YSF season (in which they intend to volunteer):
  - The YSF Coordinator must provide each coach with a signed **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form** before the parent Youth Sports Coach registers his or her child(ren) for that YSF season.

- For parent Youth Sports Coaches who want to use their points for no-cost registration for a subsequent sport season or for a credit on their child care fees:
  - The YSF Coordinator must provide the coach with a signed **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form** to document completion of the coach’s participation requirement at the end of the season.
  - The parent Youth Sports Coach then takes the form to their CYP to have a credit applied to their child care fees or to the YP office to apply their points toward no-cost registration on their child(ren)’s next sports signup.

**Redeeming Points In CDH**

As described above, parents with children enrolled in CDH can earn points through participation in flat rate opportunities only. When parent volunteers have accumulated the required 10 points, they may redeem these points through their CDH Provider.

CYP Rewards discounts are deducted from and absorbed by the CYP. CDH Providers are not responsible for covering the costs associated with the discount. Consequently, Providers receive reimbursement for the discount amount in advance of applying the discount to the parent’s weekly fee payment. The parent provides their **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form(s)** to his/her CDH Provider, who then attaches the form(s) to his/her **CDH Subsidy Claim Form** at the end of the billing cycle. Once the Provider receives the discount amount, the discount must be applied to the next parent fee payment. For example, if a parent submits his/her **CYP Rewards: Event Points Form** in the second week of February, he/she will not receive the discount until the first week of March.

**6.5 Participation Recognition**

Parent participants enrich and broaden the learning environment and make the CYP a better place to work, learn, and play. To thank them for all they do, each CYP designs its own process for recognizing parent and volunteer participation. CYPs design recognition that will be meaningful for families and truly demonstrates their gratitude for their valued families. Participation recognition can
involve awards or certificates but should include a public acknowledgment of participants and a heartfelt thank you for their service to the CYP. Participant recognition celebrations should be held annually at a minimum. Depending on the number of parent participants and volunteers, however, some installations may more easily schedule recognition events quarterly (e.g., coinciding with PIB meetings) or even monthly. In addition, YSF programs are required to nominate a Coach of the Year and Parent of the Year for recognition by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS).

In addition to recognizing parent participants at parent involvement meetings and family social events, CYPs can publicize recognitions on their parent information boards, social media pages or feeds, and newsletters. For military family members who participate, CYP staff can express their appreciation to their chain of command. Installation newspapers are also excellent forums for getting the word out about the many parents who donate their time and the ways in which they used their many talents to enrich the learning of children at the CYP.
Appendix A: Conversation Starters With Families

General conversation starters to get to know families:

- How was your weekend/vacation?
- Do you have plans for the weekend/holiday?
- How was your day?

Conversation starters to gain information about their child:

- What is (your child’s) favorite...?
- How did (your child) react when...?
- Have you observed any new behaviors?
- How long has this been occurring?
- Tell me more about that.
- [Child’s name] seems to have an interest in cars.blocks/water/dinosaurs. Have you noticed that...?
- [Child’s name] has some difficulty settling at naptime. What is your routine in preparing for sleeping?

Conversation starters to learn more about the family’s parenting style:

- Can you share some strategies that worked for you to get...?
- How do you feel about...?
- What did you think about...?
- In thinking about (your child’s) progress, what do you think is the most significant and why?
- What are your expectations?
- What are your suggestions for...?

Conversation starters if parent has raised a concern, or if the CYP Professional senses there is a concern:

- Tell me about your concerns.
Why do you believe this happened?
What are some activities I should/can ask (your child) about?
Tell me about what you have tried in the past.
What are other ways to...?
How can we...?
What can you tell me about...? Tell me about what happened when you tried that at home.
Today we ________, and (your child) was...
How did you discover that connection?
Can you describe the reaction you get at home to ...?
Can you tell me about (your child’s)...?
Have you ever tried...? Would you be willing to try...?
Appendix B: Sample Parent Participation Plan

Policy Statement: The Parent Participation Plan for Child & Youth Programs creates opportunities for families to spend time and become actively involved in their child’s social and academic development.

Goals & Objectives of the Parent Participation Plan:

[Single out one overarching goal followed by a list of objectives that align with the four types of family involvement.]

- To engage families in building partnerships and positive relationships with CYP professionals and administration
- To promote education and training workshops for families, including stages of development, parenting skills, and child abuse awareness
- To provide assistance in the areas of fundraising projects, special events, onsite field trip experiences, and community involvement
- To inform families about the Navy-adopted curriculum programs and how they assist in their child’s learning
- To provide families the opportunity to observe children, youth, and teens and participate in activities in the program
- To engage families in the future preparation for accreditation/re-accreditation

Communication between the CYP and families is paramount to building and sustaining positive, healthy relationships. The CYP strives to provide frequent opportunities for ongoing communication with families utilizing multiple mechanisms, including the following:

- Monthly *Family Newsletter*
- *Parent Handbooks* provided at orientation and as updated
- Informational fliers
- Email blasts
- Social media
Informal daily interactions

The Parent Involvement Board (PIB) offers families an opportunity to participate on the advisory board created to facilitate ongoing family engagement by strengthening and supporting program activities and ensuring families’ needs are being met by the CYP. Members are elected and are a resource to CYP staff and other families. The board meets quarterly with CYP management and the responsible commander’s representative for the purpose of discussing problems and concerns and ensuring frequent communication. All PIB meetings are open events, and all CYP families are encouraged to attend.

The Family Engagement Program provides ongoing opportunities for family members to be active participants in the CYP. This is a Navy-wide program that acknowledges and accommodates differences in skills, interests, and time families are able to commit. Incentives have been established to reward families for their active ongoing participation. The family engagement program offers a variety of opportunities for families to participate in the CYP, including the following:

- Opportunities to engage families across the CYP. Events are scheduled to encourage and facilitate family involvement across all CYPs. Families have the opportunity to discover the services available to them and to meet and interact with their peers. The CYP may host a variety of events such as family appreciation spaghetti dinner for all families, a family cooking class, or a talent show put on by the children, youth, and teens.

- Opportunities for family education on issues pertinent to their lives with young children, youth, and teens. These events provide information families may find helpful in their day-to-day lives. Topics may include childhood obesity, stages of development, and sibling rivalry, for instance.

- Opportunities for families to participate in the daily activities of their child’s program. CYP Professionals will work with families to identify their interest and availability. Participation may include facilitating special projects or chaperoning field trips.

- Opportunities for families to assist in creating a welcoming environment. Some family members may not feel comfortable or have availability to participate in scheduled program activities but still have a desire to participate. There are a variety of ways these family members can assist, including creating bulletin boards, sewing curtains for the program, or making cushions for seating.

- Opportunities for families to share their culture. Children should authentically experience a variety of cultures. Families are encouraged to share their experiences as the “expert” with children, youth, and teens, including CDs of favorite music, and collections or artifacts important to family or community.
Appendix C:
Sample Calendar of Events

January
16—PIB Meeting
28—Annual Family Spaghetti Dinner

February
2—Understanding Creative Curriculum (Family Education Opportunity)
4—Super Bowl Fun
14—Afternoon Snack and Social

March
3—Afternoon Read Across the YP
17—St. Patrick’s Day
18—Afternoon Healthy Snack Time
26—Spring Open House

April (“Month of the Military Child”)
1—Morning Fruit Smoothie Snack Social
5—Child Abuse Prevention Training (Family Education)
8—Preschool Marathon
12—Afternoon Ice Cream Sundae Social
13—Operation Megaphone
20—tie Dye T-shirts
29—CYP Carnival and Cookout

May
3—PIB Meeting
11—Muffins With Moms
20—Armed Forces Day Celebration

June
16—Danishes for Dads
21—Field Day

July
1—Independence Day Picnic
22—Positive Discipline (Family Education)

August
2—Family Ice Cream Sandwich Social
13—Fall Open House
27—PIB Meeting

September
6—Boys and Girls Club Day for Kids Celebration
16—Developmental Stages for Children Birth to Five (Family Education)
TBD—Scholastic Book Fair

October
TBD—CYP Fall Fest
30—4-H National Youth Science Day
31—Halloween

November
12—PIB Meeting
22—Thanksgiving Feast/Family Lunch
TBD—Family Appreciation Celebration

December
6—20 Celebrating Traditions and Diversity
Appendix D: Sample PIB Minutes

Norfolk PIB Meeting Notes
Date of Meeting: 15 June
Location: Youth Center Conference Room

Members Present:
- Amy Baker, CYP
- Gabby Hughes, CDH
- Mark Nelson, CYP
- Sarah Taylor, CYP
- Zeke Anderson, Youth, Secretary
- Flynn Graham, Youth
- Carol Dean, CDH
- Inez Johnson, CYP
- Olivia Parker, CYP
- Ursula Vincent, Youth
- Betsy Cooper, CYP, Chairperson
- Helene Ignatius, CYP, Treasurer
- Evan Foster, Youth
- Kyra Long, CYP
- Quinn Rogers, CDH
- Xander Yarbro, Youth

Guests present:
- Jenny Lopez, CDH Director
- Opal Paxton, Youth Director
- Martha Newsome, CYP Director
- Quincy Richards, Northside Family Health Services

Meeting called to order by Jasmine Reef at 1836. All attendees were reminded to sign in.

Executive Committee Reports:

Secretary’s report: Minutes from last meeting were approved, signed, and filed at each program and distributed via Facebook, email, and posted in each facility on the PIB bulletin board. Copies were made available for anyone who wanted a hard copy.

Treasurer’s report: Current balance in the PIB account is $1,258.23
- Anticipated deposits and withdrawals: None outstanding.
- The total cost of the Staff Appreciation events totaled $467.05.
- The treasurer’s report was accepted.

Old Business:
During the May meeting, a parent at the CYP raised a concern about the storage and handling of breast milk. Based on the conversation last month, Quincy Richards from Northside Family Health Services joined the meeting for Q&A and to discuss policies and procedures of safely handling breast milk.

Mr. Richards began by stating: “All Navy programs follow health and safety guidelines established in Caring for Our Children. These guidelines were developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (NRC) to promote quality early care and education for young children.”
The floor was then opened for questions.

A participant asked, “A teacher has disposed of breast milk that was left over in bottles from my child’s feedings. Why can’t she put it back in the fridge and offer it again later?”

Mr. Richards responded, “Caring for Our Children recommends that unused breast milk may be returned to the family at the end of the day IF the child has not drunk out of the bottle. If the child has been fed from the bottle, the bottle should not be refrigerated again. The staff person can leave it for up to 1 hour at room temperature before discarding, to ensure the child will not want anymore. Once the child has drunk from the bottle, bacteria from the child’s mouth may get into the milk and bottle and cause the milk to spoil.”

A participant asked, “Are there any requirements for what I must include on the label? I know I need to label each bottle but am unclear of what needs to be on there.”

Mr. Richards responded, “All bottles must be labeled with the child’s name and date. They must be labeled by contents, such as breast milk, formula, water, or juice. Breast milk should also be labeled by the date it was expressed.”

A handout was provided for the audience, and copies will be provided to administrators from each program to distribute to staff and families and for posting on infant program bulletin boards.

**Meeting Date and Time**

During the May meeting, establishing a set date and time for a meeting every month was proposed. All families were sent a “Survey Monkey” asking for input on the best day, week, and time for the meetings. The response was good. Based on the information provided, starting in August (there will be no meeting in July because of the holiday and vacations), PIB meetings will be held on the second Thursday of every month at 1730.

**Staff Appreciation**

During the month of May, Staff Appreciation day was celebrated. During the weeklong celebration:

- The PIB hosted/served lunch each day in the staff lounge at the CYP, and each staff member was given a certificate of appreciation.
- Youth and Teen program staff were provided/served snacks daily in their staff areas at each program and also received a certificate of appreciation.
- The PIB distributed 23 appreciation baskets to CDH Providers, which included a variety of snacks and a card thanking them for dedication and care for the children in their care.
- We would like to thank each of you who helped facilitate this great celebration by assisting with the delivery, preparation and serving of the food, and delivering the baskets.

**New Business:**

**Upcoming events:**

Members discussed plans for the upcoming **Fall Fest** to be held in the park. This event would be open to all families.

- Possible dates presented were 2 October and 9 October. The group voted and prefers 9 October, pending approval from MWR and Safety.
• Advertisement of the event was discussed and will begin as soon as a date is confirmed. Ursula Vincent offered to make a poster for distribution and to be included in newsletters. Once a date is determined, Ms. Vincent will move forward with the poster.
• Possible activities mentioned include purchasing pumpkins for children to paint, having a bouncy house, and asking the fire and police to participate with displays of fire trucks, ambulances, cars, and K9 dogs. It was also decided to ask families to volunteer to staff several game stations.
• Gabby Hughes volunteered to be the chair for this event. His phone number is (201) 555-3158. Please bring any additional ideas that you come up with to the August meeting, as the Fall Fest will be a large item for discussion and decision-making.

**Picture day** is held annually, and a recent request came to the President via an email from a family at the CYP. Members discussed having two annual picture days, one in the fall and one in the spring.

• Discussion occurred within the group, with points being made that pictures are profitable to the PIB, and it does not cost us anything to have the pictures made. If parents like the picture, then they are able to purchase them.
• The group voted and approved having two annual picture days (spring and fall).
• A participant asked if having class pictures could be added on one of the photo days. Discussion followed and it was agreed that families would have to sign consent forms for the child to be in the group photo, and no one would be obligated to purchase the photo.
• Daniel Everett will inquire with the photographer and move forward with scheduling a fall picture day and report back in August on the date determined.
• When a date is provided, the PIB will need to coordinate a volunteer schedule to assist with picture days.

**PIB Growth**

Betsy Cooper, President of the PIB, brought up the discussion on how to grow the PIB. With the ideas of hosting large events and busy schedules, the hope is to continue to grow the PIB. The group generated the following list of ways to spread the word about and invite families to become active in the PIB. Possibilities mentioned were the following:

• Members attending spouse groups
• Including an ad in the installation newspaper
• Members attending the newcomer orientations
• Having Directors send out a blast email in August to promote as part of the “back to school” push
• Creating and distributing a quarterly PIB Newsletter

A committee was formed to flesh out ideas and report back during the August meeting. Inez Johnson will chair the committee. Her phone number is (807) 555-8738 if you would like to join the committee.

Next meeting: 10 August at 1730
Meeting Adjourned at 1958
Minutes prepared by: Zeke Anderson

**Commanding Officer/Designee Signature**
## Appendix E:
### Parent Participation Opportunities

### Sample Parent Participation Opportunities

#### Hands-On Assistance

One of the benefits of this participation method is that parents do not necessarily need to accomplish at the CYP. CYP Professionals can prepare a bin of projects ready-to-do, and parents interested in hands-on assistance can just pick up the bin and go.

- Cut out templates for children’s crafts
- Organize materials for children’s projects into a plastic baggie for each child
- Create materials for and decorate bulletin boards
- Cut out letters/pictures/other items from recycled magazines that support what the children are learning/exploring
- Repair books
- Organize books, craft supplies, recycled materials for art project files

#### Working With Children

Parent participants are always within line of sight of a fully cleared CYP Professional (i.e., wearing a blue smock) when working with children at all times they are in the CYP. The following are some sample tasks for parent participants:

- Sing with children or play an instrument that supports children’s singalong
- Read books already selected or bring in own favorite children’s books
- Chaperone on field trips
- Help with special projects
- Help with holiday celebrations
- Play with children or provide computer support
- Tell children about a profession
- Share special collection, approved pet, or artifact from another culture

#### Using Special Talents

The most powerful way to elicit this kind of participation is just to ask. Many parents have “unknown” talents they may be happy to share with the CYP if offered the opportunity.

- Assist with projects such as art projects or carpentry/building projects
- Make materials for program environments such as curtains, folder games, puppets, etc.
- Plant and/or maintain a garden
- Play musical instruments
- Record reading a book or story
- Research and help order needed titles for parent library
- Write articles for CYP newsletters
Appendix F:
Content Bibliography for Resource Libraries

CYP Facilities are encouraged to use this list as a starting place, adding to it titles that are consistent with Navy CYP policies and are supported by research in developmentally appropriate practice that will be useful for their local families.

**Websites:**

Talking is Teaching Parent Resources: [http://talkingisteaching.org/](http://talkingisteaching.org/)
ZERO TO THREE: [http://www.zerotothree.org/](http://www.zerotothree.org/)

**Books:**

*Positive Discipline* - Jane Nelsen
*Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child* - John Gottman
*Mind in the Making* - Ellen Galinsky
*The Whole Brain Child* - Dan Seigel & Tina Payne Bryson
*Parenting from the Inside Out* - Dan Seigel & Mary Hartzell
*Raising Your Spirited Child* - Mary Sheedy Kucinka
*Just Tell Me What to Say* - Betsy Braun Brown
*How to Talk so Your Kids Will Listen and Listen so Your Kids Will Talk* - Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
*Siblings Without Rivalry* - Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
*The Sleep Book for Tired Parents* - Rebecca Huntley

*Parenting with Love and Logic* - Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D.
*How Much Is Enough* - Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson, & David Bredehoft
*Unconditional Parenting* - Alfie Cohen
*Becoming the Parent You Want to Be* - Laura Davis & Janis Keyser
*Brain Rules for Baby* - John Medina
*Blessing of a Skinned Knee* - Wendy Mogel
*The Mindful Child* - Susan Kaiser Greenland
*The Sibling Effect* - Jeffery Kluger
*Nurturing Good Children Now* - Ron Taffel
*Kids, Parents, & Power Struggles* - Mary Sheedy Kucinka
*Is This a Phase?* - Helen F. Neville
Appendix G:
Family Relations Requirement Summary

The following summary is intended as a quick reference guide to help CYP Professionals easily identify some highlighted Navy CYP policy-related requirements. Familiarity with the requirements listed below does not replace the need to read and fully understand the Family Relations Standards in its entirety.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.4 Program-Specific Family Involvement

- Programs serving children and youth must tailor parent education, resources, and socialization opportunities differently than do YPs supporting youth and teens.
- All CYP Professionals, including staff and Providers at all levels, must actively support family engagement efforts and do their best to support one another in creating a culture that embraces families as collaborative partners.

Chapter 3: Parenting Support

3.1 Understanding and Respecting Diverse Families

3.1.1 Family Culture

- Initial orientation, annual in-service, and targeted training opportunities can provide valuable forums in which CYP Professionals can reflect on their own histories and cultural belief systems. Training Specialists should purposely seek opportunities in ongoing training events to integrate self-reflection objectives into the training activities.

- Program guidance and standard operating procedures (SOPs) should directly address the need for cultural sensitivity throughout all areas of programming and family engagement. Training Specialists and the Management Team should make a point to highlight how cultural sensitivity is incorporated into the SOPs whenever they are providing training or technical assistance on the SOPs.

- Training Specialists and the Management Team must ensure that information and data is available on the specific demographics and cultural characteristics of their community and installation. They must also ensure that CYP Professionals have many opportunities to directly engage with families—and support them as they engage—because direct engagement with parents is often the best way to learn about the practices and customs most important in their cultural communities.

- Exhibiting awareness of and sensitivity to a family’s cultural beliefs helps direct care staff interact without inadvertently offending families and facilitates relationship building. Training Specialists must include targeted training on relationship building, including strategies for building strong relationships with families from different cultures. They must also provide
feedback after observations whenever there is a “teachable moment” to enhance relationships with diverse families.

- Cultural holidays, language, dress, and cuisine (as allowed) can be effectively incorporated into learning and reflect appreciation and respect for each child’s upbringing and background. Training Specialists and the Management Team should assess the extent to which programs, classrooms, and Providers are actively inviting and encouraging families to share their cultures, and make recommendations for increasing parental opportunities to share and celebrate their cultures with the CYP.

- CYP Training and Managements Teams must address these types of issues (disagreements and misalignments of beliefs between the family and CYP Professional) when developing trainings and providing resources and individualized support to employees and Providers.

3.1.2 Parenting Styles

- CYP Professionals must be respectful of families’ choices and refrain from imposing their own beliefs onto families unless family practices put a child at risk (the program-specific Child Abuse Prevention, Education, and Reporting (CAPER) Standards detail how CYP Professionals must respond in those circumstances).

- CYP Professionals must always respect the choices families make about raising their children and must always consider families’ perspectives, especially when the family philosophy does not align with their own or the CYP’s.

- CYP Professionals should use what they know about each family’s parenting philosophy to tailor their practices with the child and communications with the family.

- The Training Team should help staff understand these styles (permissive, authoritative, or authoritarian) and provide CYP Professionals with classroom and family engagement strategies to help them build collaborative relationships with all families and to enhance child growth in the CYP.

3.1.3 Family Dynamics

- CYP Professionals must always appreciate when and how a family is able to participate in the CYP, acknowledge that a family’s availability can change, remain flexible, and always refrain from passing judgment.

- Information about families must be learned over time from frequent, respectful, and personal interactions with the family and child.

- Adults who are serving in loco parentis benefit from the support of CYP Professionals. The CYP must proactively offer support and information to these caregivers to ensure they are equipped with the resources and support they need to effectively care for the child in the parent’s absence.

- When families disclose stressors at home, CYP Professionals must remember to show compassion and sensitivity (as well as confidentiality as applicable) in responding and consider additional resources that can support the families and best meet the needs of the children in care.
3.2 Turning Family Information into Action

- CYP Training and Management Teams must develop training and other support mechanisms that build knowledge of individual and family characteristics that impact relationship building and skills necessary to effectively work with all CYP family members.

3.2.1 Recognizing Bias

- Both the Training and Management Teams should proactively help all CYP Professionals become adept at staying respectful of and neutral in their interactions with families whose differences evoke their biases.

3.2.2 Learning From CYP Families

- Training Specialists and Directors should emphasize that there are appropriate times and ways to engage families in discussions about their backgrounds and family characteristics. Such conversations should occur in a relaxed, nonconfrontational environment where both family and CYP Professional can focus and listen to one another. Dropoffs or pickups are not the time to delve into a family’s history or cultural background, nor should private or sensitive questions be asked or discussed in an open or public area.

- CYP Professionals must never react judgmentally or with condemnation when families disclose sensitive information. Rather, they should remain neutral and compassionate and focus on identifying ways to support the family, protect and care for their children, and provide needed resources.

- When families enroll in a CYP, they are required to fill out either a Birth to Five Child and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07A or a Youth and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07B (based on the age of their child) to help the CYP learn more about the child and his/her family.

- Program Leads and CDH Providers must review family profile forms with families during orientation and maintain forms in the children’s files (additional guidance is available in other standards related to record-keeping).

- Any information shared on the forms that suggests a potential identified need or other concerns must be shared with the CYP Director, who can then meet with the family and initiate the Inclusion Action Team (IAT) process as appropriate.

- In CDCs, when children age up to into the next classroom (e.g., when a toddler transitions into a preschool room), Program Leads must help the parents complete a new Birth to Five Child and Family Profile Form—CNICCYP 1700/07A with their child’s updated information and review the new form with the family. While there is no such internal age up requirement for CDH and YP, parents must also complete new forms when their children transfer between programs, such as from CDC to SAC or from CDH to CDC or SAC.

- The Training Team must ensure that all direct care staff and Providers understand and can effectively identify key information shared by families and how to frame conversations with parents to build a collaborative learning environment. This includes helping CYP Professionals use the family profile forms effectively and in a manner that best supports the child and family.
3.2.3 Supporting Military Families

- CYP Professionals must be ready to support children and families with adjustments inherent to the military lifestyle. The CYP Management Team must maintain awareness of command activities on the installation and share information with CYP staff and Providers about any upcoming deployments, command activity, and/or maneuvers, so they can prepare for situations as they arise.

- CYP Professionals should be knowledgeable about supports available to families both on and off the installation and offer this information to families as needed.

3.3 Parenting Resources

- CYPs are responsible for providing high quality direct care while the children are attending the CYP. They are also responsible for ensuring families have adequate and appropriate resources available to help them in a variety of parenting and child development issues.

- CYPs must support families in understanding how their home is in fact a “learning environment,” and how to extend their child’s learning between the CYP and home. CYP Professionals should intentionally encourage families to share developmental milestones that the child is working on at home, such as toilet learning practices, so that direct care staff can support those same milestones while the child is in care.

3.3.1 Resource Library

- Resource libraries are required by the OPNAVINST 1700.9 (series) but are also a best practice in extending learning from the CYP to home and demonstrating commitment to parents in their role as parents.

- CYP Professionals should provide a range of useful, local resources that are consistent with Navy CYP guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice and that will be of use to their installation’s families.

3.3.2 Parenting and Community Resources

- CYP Professionals are the installation’s early childhood education and youth programming specialists and play a key role in providing support and resources to participating families. As such, CYP Professionals must not only make print information available at the CYP, but they proactively identify and provide resources to families whose circumstances may benefit from additional support.

- CYP Management Teams must ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are available for distribution to their families and community and that CYP Professionals are aware of and know when to share those resources.

- The Training Team must offer training and support so that employees understand when additional resources are most appropriate (e.g., handing out brochures on coping with family stress when there are pending deployments, having materials available for welcoming a new baby into the home and to help new “big brothers/big sisters” adjust).

Chapter 4: Effective Communications

- CYP Professionals’ communications with families should be, above all, open, honest, and respectful. Effective communication requires recognizing that receiving information from others is as or more valuable than sharing information.
4.1 Communicating Through Environment

4.1.1 Creating Welcoming Spaces

- Program environments must be attractive, inviting, and appropriate to the ages of children served. Spaces should communicate to children, youth, and their families: “I am welcome here” and “This is my space” when they walk in.

- Program environments must be well-stocked with developmentally appropriate materials based on and reflective of the experiences of the children and youth in care. Materials must also show positive role models in different genders, abilities, ages, and diverse nationalities.

- Parents must be informed that they have unrestricted access to their child in the CYP, and made to feel welcome anytime they come to visit their child. They may visit the facility or CDH Provider home at any time and without notice.

4.1.2 Connecting Families to the Program Environment

- In CDCs, CDH Provider homes, and 24/7 Centers, pictures of the children with their families must be displayed in the program environment.

4.2 In-Person Communication

- When communicating with parents, CYP Professionals must make a point to avoid jargon and acronyms, take the time to expand on concepts when someone looks confused, and speak in a calm and pleasant tone.

4.3 Communication Opportunities

4.3.1 Written Communications

- CYPs use a number of required written forms to communicate specific information with families at designated times or under specific circumstances. These required communications include the Daily Grams, We Care Forms, We Need Your Help Forms, and Permission Slips.

- CDC and 24/7 Center direct care staff and CDH Providers must provide written information about each child’s day with families every day their children are in care. The Daily Gram Form is required for children under age 3 but may be used for older children as well. CYP Professionals must use this communication tool as much as necessary to aid in effective communication with families.

- When a child’s or youth’s behaviors lead to the injury of another child or CYP Professional, and suggest a troubling pattern beyond what is considered developmentally appropriate, CYP Professionals engage the child’s parents using the We Need Your Help Form—CNICCYP 1700/53B. CYP Professionals must use their discretion to determine when a We Need Your Help form is warranted. In such situations, the CYP Professional involved, in collaboration with the direct care team, CDH Monitor, Training and/or Management Team, must analyze the situation to identify any contributing factors, trends in the circumstances around which
instances tend to occur, or patterns in previous consequences or outcomes. CYP teams should consider what these factors can tell them about their current practices and programming and what steps may be needed.

- The We Care and We Need Your Help forms now replace any incident forms that programs currently use.

- Direct care staff and Providers should still alert the families verbally about behavioral incidents with their children even when a We Need Your Help Form is not needed.

- Because texting may involve fee charges from families’ cell phone carriers, programs should use text messaging only with a parent’s express consent and only to communicate brief, official information (e.g., upcoming events, delays in transportation or inclement weather closures). Text messages must originate from official Navy email servers or Government-owned cellphones.

- When CYPs send group emails—to more than one family, a classroom, a specific group of families, or the whole CYP—they must enter all email addresses as “blind copy” or “bcc” recipients. This practice prevents families from seeing other email addresses or receiving replies from other email recipients and is an important measure for the protection of personally identifiable information (PII). Similar precautions must be taken when sending out group texts.

- Employees managing CYP-sponsored Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, or other social media platforms must have parental consent (signed media release) when publishing photos/video of youth for congratulatory (e.g. Youth of the Month, Youth of the Year) or general purposes. Also, CYPs must exercise caution and minimize potential exposure to unknown individuals when sharing PII about individual youth via social media. CYP Management Teams are encouraged to take advantage of these powerful communication tools to boost the visibility of the excellent work happening in their facilities; however, they must also assume responsibility for the ongoing and frequent monitoring of program-sanctioned social media for appropriateness and accuracy of information.

- All social media usage by CYPs must comply with CNIC communications requirements and local installation protocols.

### 4.3.2 Parent Information Boards

- In CYP facilities, parent information boards (bulletin boards) are required in each program environment, and they provide great opportunities for communicating with families and reinforcing a sense of community. CDH Providers are not required to use “bulletin boards”; they can display information for parents in a visually appealing format of their choice as long as it is posted for parents to see. YPs must maintain only one parent information board in a common area of the facility.

- The parent information board must display CYP and Navy philosophies and procedures, including the [Navy CYP Guidance and Touch Policy](#); daily schedules; weekly activity plans; CYP facility calendar of events; weekly meal and snack menus; mandated local child abuse reporting procedures (i.e., exactly how, when, and to whom staff must/and parents may report suspected abuse) and the DoD Child Abuse Hotline number; and in CDH Provider homes, backup Providers and emergency contact information.
4.3.3 Family Conferences

- CDC and 24/7 Center Professionals must conduct family conferences with the families of all enrolled children three times a year (in the fall, winter, and spring). CDH Providers work with their families to schedule conferences at least annually.

- Use the Family Conference Form (found on the Teaching Strategies website) to guide the conversation (required for CDC and 24/7 Center programs only). After the conference, have the parents sign the Family Conference Form, and give them a copy, and place another copy in the child’s administration file.

- In the rare instance that a family declines the annual conference, CDC and 24/7 Professionals should complete the Family Conference Form indicating that the conference was offered but the family chose not to participate. Families must sign the Family Conference Form even if they choose not to participate. (If the family refuses to sign the form, the CYP Professional should write, “The family declined to participate in the family conference and refused to sign the form.”)

4.3.4 Informal Communication

- Holding effective dropoff and pickup conversations is a skill that CYP Professionals hone with experience and practice. CYP Professionals must strike a balance between being overly brief (e.g., “She was fine! Bye!”) and engaging in a long conversation that pulls them away from speaking with other parents or from supervision and teaching responsibilities.

- Dropoff and pickup times are not the time to have a serious discussion about concerns or behavior issues. If a parent initiates such a discussion, the CYP Professional should redirect the conversation with the acknowledgment that their concerns will be heard (e.g., “Thank you for bringing that up, and I look forward to talking with you about that. Let’s schedule a time to meet, so I can give you my undivided attention.”).

- CYP Professionals should touch base with families on a daily basis, as time and attention allow, to share details about the child’s disposition; information about significant events; and anecdotes about the child’s day.

4.4 Effective Conflict Resolution

4.4.1 How Conflicts Arise

- Conflicts should be addressed as quickly as possible and in a positive manner to ensure that relationships with families are not compromised. When conflicts arise, the parties directly involved should attempt initial resolution.

- If conflicts are more significant or there are reasons to elevate the situation, the CYP Professional should inform the Management Team immediately. The Management Team, the Training Team, and Program Lead must assist all CYP Professionals in addressing family concerns as quickly and calmly as possible.

4.4.2 Steps to Effective Conflict Resolution

- Training Teams must provide training and ongoing support around strategies for facilitating effective conflict resolution so that direct care staff are comfortable in these types of situations.
Training topics should focus on developing active listening skills (asking questions and providing feedback on what’s been said) and keeping nonverbal cues neutral and receptive; acknowledging family members’ feelings and perspectives; asking open-ended questions; brainstorming multiple, potential, realistic outcomes (so families do not feel pressured or limited to one reconciliation option); and allowing families to share their concerns without interruption.

When discussions become overly emotional or even combative—yelling, cursing, interrupting the meeting, and/or displaying other inappropriate behaviors—CYP Professionals should stay calm and professional and practice stress reduction techniques, such as taking deep breaths.

If a CYP Professional is uncomfortable with the direction a meeting is taking or is unable to de-escalate heightened emotions, he/she should call for a member of the Training and/or Management team to help mediate and resolve the situation; maintain a professional tone and stay as calm as possible; take a break in the meeting to give the parents an opportunity to calm down and collect their thoughts; and suggest ending the meeting and reconvening at another time and under calmer circumstances.

Chapter 5: Shared Decision-Making

The PIB must meet at least quarterly, and its primary purpose is to involve the voices of parents in CYP.

5.1 Decision-Making at the Family Level

5.1.1 Involving Families in IAT

Programs are required to invite parents to all IAT meetings that involve their child.

The team (i.e., experts in the fields of medicine, therapy, family services, special education, and general education) must work closely with families to formulate strategies and decisions for children’s inclusion in the CYP.

If a child has identified needs, or if CYP Professionals recommend to families that screening or assessments may be needed to determine if special services may be appropriate for a child, they always do so in communication with and in partnership with the family.

5.2 Shared Decision-Making at the Program Level

All parents are members of the PIB and have a voice in advising and supporting CYP programming.

Programs are required to invite parents to serve on the Multi-Disciplinary Team Inspection (MDTI) to represent the full community of families and to review programs from their perspective.

5.2.1 Parent Involvement Board (PIB)

The Installation CYP Director is responsible for ensuring that, regardless of structure, the PIB is established and operational at each installation.

OPNAVINST 1700.9E requirements for the PIB state that meetings must be open to all families; family members should make up the majority of the PIB membership; a family member is chosen as the chairperson; meetings must be held at least quarterly; all CYPs on the installation must be represented; meetings are conducted according to professional meeting protocol; command leadership should be kept informed of the dates and times of
every meeting; other CYP Professionals should be invited to attend meetings as appropriate; meetings must be advertised and promoted well in advance to maximize attendance; and minutes from each meeting are signed by the Commanding Officer (CO) (or designated command representative) and made available for review by families.

- Programs must post minutes for families’ viewing in lobby areas and program websites, send them via group email, and/or post them on social media sites.
- The CYP Management Team should work with PIB members to identify ways they can positively influence program quality.
- PIBs should employ various communication strategies to reach the greatest number of families.
- Social media accounts/pages are beneficial because families are able to receive updates about upcoming events and provide feedback or input, the families can view the page at their convenience, and it facilitates the input of a larger group of people. Social media accounts must be established in accordance with Navy and local installation social media policies and must be monitored by a designated CYP Professional.
- Quarterly agendas require quarterly messages. After the PIB Chairperson finalizes and posts the meeting agenda to the social media account/page, a message is sent to all followers announcing the upcoming PIB and location of agenda topics.
- After the official PIB meeting, the minutes are signed and published. All PIB minutes are reviewed and signed by the CO (or representative). Once signed, minutes must be printed and posted prominently on the facility bulletin board. They can also be posted to the various social media accounts/pages, replacing the correlating agenda post.
- If a PIB needs to boost its participation rates, one strategy is hybrid meetings that allow for both in-person and virtual attendance. Families who attend virtual PIB meetings earn CYP Rewards for their participation. They should be included in the list of attendees in the meeting minutes. The PIB must check if there are installation policies that govern virtual meetings.

### 5.2.2 Seeking Feedback from Families

- Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted to solicit feedback on all aspects of CYP.
- Family surveys must be conducted annually as part of the annual CNIC Inspection.
- Surveys are anonymous.
- Feedback from surveys must be reviewed, analyzed, and used to inform concrete improvements to program operations. Programs should communicate with their families about what information was learned from inspection (and other) surveys, and describe how the program is using the information to improve program quality moving forward.
- CYP facilities (and the CDH office) must maintain a suggestion box for collecting valuable input and feedback on ways to improve services. Suggestion boxes should be placed in high-traffic, visible locations and stocked with necessary supplies, such as paper and pens.
- The program should have a process for acknowledging feedback or suggestions offered by families and the Director or Assistant Director should take charge of overseeing this family communication component.
Chapter 6: Parent Participation Promotion

- No two family members offer the same set of skills; subsequently, programs must provide flexibly scheduled offerings, well-defined activities for which family members can quickly and easily sign up, as well as open-ended, creative opportunities that call on the talents of family members to identify, organize, and accomplish. CYPs must ensure that all family members can find meaningful ways to participate that fit into their schedule and interests.

6.1 Actively Encouraging Participation

- The CYP Management Team sets the tone for prioritizing family participation, ensuring that CYP Professionals are educated on the importance of family involvement and how to convey this to families in a friendly, inviting manner. CYP staff meeting agendas include standing items dedicated to updating CYP Professionals about upcoming participation opportunities, discussing strategies for engaging with parents, and brainstorming new family involvement activities.

6.2 Parent Participation Plan

- The Navy CYP Parent Participation Plan (PPP) helps programs detail how they will encourage families to actively participate in their CYP. Programs are required to develop a PPP and must review and update their PPP on an annual basis to ensure an accurate and up-to-date “road map” for their participation efforts for the coming year.

- The CYP’s annual PPP must include a policy statement; goals and objectives; family engagement program activities; and communication methods.

6.3 Family Engagement Program

- All family involvement activities and efforts are founded on each CYP’s Family Engagement Program.

- Each CYP Family Engagement Program includes the following elements (which are detailed annually in the Parent Participation Plan): Parent Involvement Board; CYP-wide activities and events; parenting support events; child engagement activities; hands-on assistance; culture sharing; special skills and expertise sharing; program environment offerings; and room parent.

- The Family Engagement Program is directly linked to the CYP Rewards Program, in which parents earn points that lead to discounts in their child care fees for participating in certain CYP support activities. To avoid any misunderstandings, the PPP [Parent Participation Plan] must explain exactly which activities result in CYP Reward points at the beginning of the year and how this information is shared with families.

6.4 CYP Rewards Program

- CYPs must offer all family members meaningful participation opportunities that fit into families’ interests and schedules.

- Volunteer and participation activities and events must be detailed in each CYP’s annual Parent Participation Plan (PPP).

- The CYP Rewards Program is a required Navy CYP offering and must be implemented by each CYP program.
Families receive and sign the *Navy CYP Permission Statements Form—CNICCYP 1700/43* at initial registration and each year as part of the annual registration process.

Programs should market the CYP Rewards Program to all new and current families and provide the *Family Engagement Brochure* in orientation packets.

Families earn CYP Reward points for each activity in which they participate. All applicable activities have predetermined, standardized point values. When families accumulate a total of 10 points, they receive a credit applicable to their next military payday child care billing.

Each family household is allowed one discount per month, regardless of the number of children in the household. There is no limit on the number of months families can receive the discount (i.e., it is possible for a family to earn the discount every month their child is enrolled in the CYP).

Unused points roll over into the next month and also into the next registration year.

CYP employees and CDH Providers who have children in care in the CYP are not eligible to participate in the program (i.e., they may not earn CYP Reward points for their households). The spouse, however, has no restrictions on family engagement opportunities; the spouse’s participation can earn CYP Reward points.

### 6.4.1 Flat Rate and Hourly Engagement Opportunities

Families accumulate CYP Reward points in two ways: flat rate or hourly. The points earned for an activity can be either a flat rate for the whole event (e.g., 3 points to attend a Parent Involvement Board [PIB] meeting), or according to the number of hours a family member spends participating (e.g., 1 point per hour of staffing a booth at the annual CYP Fun Fair).

CNIC has standardized some CYP Rewards opportunities that are available to all families across all CYPs (including families receiving CDH program services). Flat rate opportunities and corresponding point values may not be modified.

Families enrolled in CDC, YP, or 24/7 Center programs can also earn CYP Reward points for volunteering in activities on an hourly basis. Families are awarded 1 point per hour of participation, or half a point (i.e., ½ point) for a half hour of participation. There is no set limit to the number of hours a family can participate in one particular activity.

CYPs should offer a number of flexible engagement opportunities every day to provide parents a wealth of choices for every hour they are able to participate.

### 6.4.2 Tracking CYP Reward Points

Parents are responsible for tracking their own points.

When parents participate in hourly rate opportunities, the CYP should provide them with a *CYP Rewards: Tracking Form—CNICCYP 1700/77* to document their hourly participation activities.

CYP must provide families with the *CYP Rewards: Event Points Form—CNICCYP 1700/76* to document their participation in one-time events. At one-time events, Event coordinators must ensure that an ample number of forms are available for and distributed to parent participants. At the end of an event, parents must have an attending CYP Management or Training Team member sign the form to verify parent participation.
Parents can do one of the following: (1) keep these forms at home and bring them in at one time for redemption, or (2) bring the completed forms to the CYP either to attach to their CYP Rewards Tracking Form (if they are also participating in hourly rate activities) or to give to the Operations Clerk (or designated CYP employee) to keep on file until parents earn 10 points and are ready to redeem them for a discount.

The Operations Clerk should maintain a file or binder for completed forms for those parents who only participate in flat rate activities and choose to have the Operations Clerk keep their forms.

Parents who volunteer as coaches (including assistant coaches) in Youth Sports and Fitness (YSF) sport leagues receive 10 CYP Reward points for their services for completion of each 6-week season. Consequently, once the parent volunteer receives a signed CYP Rewards: Event Points Form from the YSF Coordinator, they may immediately redeem their points.

To help parents stay organized in tracking their points, CDCs should keep Rewards Binders in each classroom, and 24/7 Centers and YPs should maintain a single Rewards Binder at the front desk where parents can store their tracking forms (rather than requiring parents to remember to bring it each time they volunteer).

For hourly rate activity points, a CYP employee must initial the form each time a parent volunteers to validate the parent’s participation, and either enter the completed number of hours for the parent, or check/validate what the parent entered (if the parent entered the number of hours him/herself).

### 6.4.3 Redeeming Points

For families volunteering in CDCs, 24/7 Centers, and YPs, once a parent earns 10 points, he or she should submit all points tracking documentation to the Operations Clerk (or designated CYP employee) for point redemption and credit processing.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that the Operations Clerk has all tracking forms (for both hourly and flat rate activities) at the time of point redemption.

The Operations Clerk documents any points earned through participation in flat rate opportunities (based on the CYP Rewards: Event Points Forms) on the CYP Rewards Tracking Form and enters the required information into CYMS for processing the household credit using either CYMS Pay Code 55 for “CYP Rewards Points” or CYMS Pay Code 56 for “Youth Coaches” (see the CYP Rewards: Redeeming Points in CYMS document on the CYP E-Library for more details).

When the points have been redeemed in CYMS and the credit has been applied to the household’s next billing, the Operations Clerk initials the CYP Rewards Tracking Form and a member of the Management Team or Training Team validates completion by signing the form. Completed forms must be kept on file until scanning is available, at which time they are scanned and linked to CYMS, then shredded.

If there are leftover points (i.e., the parent earned more than the 10 points needed for redemption), the Operations Clerk provides the parent with a new tracking form and enters (and initials) the leftover point total as the starting balance on the form.

The YSF Coordinator must provide each coach with a signed CYP Rewards: Event Points Form before the parent Youth Sports Coach registers his or her child(ren) for that YSF season, for
parent Youth Sports Coaches who wish to use their points for no-cost registration for the current YSF season (in which they intend to volunteer).

- The YSF Coordinator must provide the coach with a signed *CYP Rewards: Event Points Form* to document completion of the coach’s participation requirement at the end of the season, for parent Youth Sports Coaches who want to use their points for no-cost registration for a subsequent sport season or for a credit on their child care fees. The parent Youth Sports Coach then takes the form to their CYP to have a credit applied to their child care fees or to the YP office to apply their points toward no-cost registration on their child(ren)’s next sports signup.

- CDH Providers are not responsible for covering the costs associated with the discount. Providers receive reimbursement for the discount amount in advance of applying the discount to the parent’s weekly fee payment. The parent provides their *CYP Rewards: Event Points Form(s)* to their CDH provider, who then attaches the form(s) to his/her *CDH Subsidy Claim Form* at the end of the billing cycle. Once the Provider receives the discount amount, the discount must be applied to the next parent fee payment.

6.5 Participation Recognition

- YSF programs are required to nominate a Coach of the Year and Parent of the Year for recognition by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS).