

FAMILY SUPPORT

Developed by the Family Support Committee, State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC), July 2016

Definition of Family Support:

Family Support is defined as an integrated network of community-based resources and services that strengthens practices that promote stability of families and the healthy development of children.

Family Support Characteristics:

- *Responsibility remains with the parent.* Support must be **family driven**, meaning there is a true partnership between state and community programs and parents.
 - “Parents” include biological and foster parents, guardians, and caregivers.
- *Each family is unique.* Support must be **comprehensive, flexible, and individualized** to each family based on their needs, culture, values and preferences.
- *All families have strengths.* Support must **build on strengths** to increase the stability of family members and the family unit.
- *Engagement is essential.* Support must utilize **informal and formal delivery models** with information and feedback loops.
- *Access is universal and coordinated.* Support ensures that **all families have access to economic and parenting supports** through system integrations, referrals, and programming.

Family Support Results:

- Increased parent confidence and competence in their parenting abilities.
- Safe, stable and supportive families who are connected to their communities.
- Enhanced and continuous health, growth and development of children and adults in the family unit.

Reference Sources:

BC Association of Family Resource Programs, www.frpbc.ca.

BUILD Initiative, Family Support, <http://www.buildinitiative.org/TheIssues/FamilySupport.aspx>.

Family Preservation and Support Services Program Act, 1993, Child Welfare Information Gateway, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/supporting/>.

Head Start, Office of the Administration for Children and Families early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKA), <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>.

Langford, Judy. *The Role of Family Support in an Integrated Early Childhood System: Helping families get what they need to support their children's development.* Center for the Study of Social Policy, <http://www.cssp.org/publications/neighborhood-investment/strengthening-families/the-role-of-family-support-in-integrating-early-childhood-systems.pdf>, 2009.