



### Group connection formats

Format	Descriptions and intended outcomes
Family activity	<p>Family activities are designed primarily to focus on parent-child interaction as parents engage in active learning with their children. Family activities provide opportunities for parents and other family members to interact with their children to encourage learning and promote development. In a family activity group connection, children can benefit from opportunities to interact with other children and adults. In addition, parents build social connections with other parents as they play with their children.</p> <p>Family activities may focus on messy play, art, gross motor, or language and reading, among other topics. Often, children create a project that they can bring home.</p> <p>As a result of these activities, parents gain knowledge about children's development and ways to promote development. Generalization to home is maximized when information about parent-child interaction and ways to encourage development are shared in multiple modalities, and handouts and how-tos are provided to take home.</p>
Presentation	<p>Presentations can be useful when specific information is needed and a parent educator, supervisor, or member of the community is able to provide knowledge on a particular issue or developmental topic. Multiple presentation approaches can (and should) be used to engage participants, including using multimedia, group discussion, or panel presentations. It is also important to include an interactive element that helps parents learn and apply the information, such as parent-parent activities that foster social connections or a parent-child activity that fosters parent-child interaction.</p> <p>As a particular benefit, presentations can also help parents make personal connections with representatives of community resources, making them more approachable for families.</p> <p>Because of the more passive nature of the presentation format, it is important to actively engage and involve the parents who attend. To maximize attendance, child care should be provided. Parents can walk away from a presentation with a greater understanding of child development and ways to promote their child's development, with additional strategies and ideas for parent child interaction, as well as increased knowledge about a variety of issues related to family well-being.</p>







### Group connection formats (continued)

Format	Descriptions and intended outcomes
Ongoing group	<p>Ongoing groups are small groups of parents facing similar issues. Group members build strong social connections and support networks over time. Opportunities to facilitate the group and determine topics of interest encourage parent empowerment. Resources and information shared also address family well-being issues, such as stress management and economic self-sufficiency. Group members learn new knowledge and practice skills.</p> <p>Because they occur over multiple sessions and may have a particular focus such as child behavior problems, ongoing groups are able to address all three areas of emphasis. Ongoing groups typically require child care for a portion of the group but can also include time for parent-child interaction. Not only can ongoing groups increase parents' knowledge about children's development and ways to promote it, but parents can learn and apply positive discipline techniques and stress reduction strategies, build social connections, get connected to needed resources, learn new information about topics pertaining to family well-being, and become empowered as leaders.</p>
Community event	<p>Community events may take place at various locations either as an event an affiliate hosts or as organized outings which build greater community awareness. Community events are often open to all families and can be a source for recruitment of new families. For example, a Safety Fair could involve local resources performing car seat checks and bike helmet fittings, representatives of the Back to Sleep campaign, and others. Community events primarily focus on family well-being while often incorporating developmental topics.</p>
Parent café	<p>Parent cafés are evenings of sharing, learning, and socializing in a space that appreciates all that parents have to offer and all that they need. Offered within community settings, Parent cafés are often led by parents for their peers (<a href="http://www.beststrongfamilies.net/build-protective-factors/parent-cafes">www.beststrongfamilies.net/build-protective-factors/parent-cafes</a>).</p> <p>The most significant impact of parent cafés may be the development of social connections, thereby positively affecting family well-being. In addition, depending on the focus of the evening, increased knowledge of developmental topics, as well as ways to strengthen parent-child interaction, can result.</p>

