

# Becoming FAMILY VOICE CURIOUS



## WHAT IS FAMILY VOICE CURIOUS?

**Family Voice Curious** culture means intentionally working side-by-side with the families you serve, really hearing them, and adapting to meet their expressed needs.

**Family Voice Curious** culture acknowledges that lived experience gives families and children valuable perspectives, insights, and information that can and should help shape agencies' programs and services.

**Family Voice Curious** culture understands that families are the experts on their experiences and needs.

**Family Voice Curious** culture knows that families belong at decision-making tables. Making a place at the table requires addressing barriers to family involvement, including the time and place of meetings, child care, language, and other needs identified by families. Becoming Family Voice Curious means addressing families' social and cultural needs with cultural humility, awareness of issues related to race and ethnicity, and an openness to learning and changing.

## VALUES OF A FAMILY VOICE CURIOUS ORGANIZATION

Organizations that are Family Voice Curious operate with intention to actively engage the families they serve, from day-to-day activities to the big-picture vision. The core values behind all efforts include:

Authenticity	Transparency
Respect	Adaptability
Empathy	Responsiveness
Cultural humility	Equity
Collaboration	Advocacy

## WHY BE A FAMILY VOICE CURIOUS ORGANIZATION?

### It's best practice!

- Outcomes improve for both families and systems when families are engaged as decision-makers, advocates, and partners.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Programs that involve their target population in the development, implementation, and improvement of programming have the greatest impact.<sup>3,4,5</sup>
- Family-friendly workplaces have higher rates of employee retention and job satisfaction.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Best practice for working with any group of people includes integrating their feedback and input into program planning and quality improvement.<sup>8</sup>

### It's required!

- Many funding and oversight agencies now mandate some level of family engagement.
- Family engagement is a form of branding and messaging that builds support for your agency in the community, making it crucial for impact and sustainability.

### It's transformative!

- Family engagement encourages and trains employees and community members to become powerful leaders and community organizers.<sup>9,10</sup>
- Family engagement helps create a culture of growth and empowerment within an agency and beyond.<sup>11</sup>
- Organizations that engage families become part of a larger movement to positively address the systemic issues that negatively impact families.

**Becoming a Family Voice Curious organization is well worth the effort.  
Have questions? Email the Center at [ccfwd@umontana.edu](mailto:ccfwd@umontana.edu).**

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