



Montcalm County Great Start Collaborative Strengthening Families Survey Results

Montcalm County Family Coalition participated in the Strengthening Families survey. From the survey, the group was given results with a list of things the families stated the GSCFC were doing well, and the things to improve on. Based on the list, the families picked the top 5 things the GSCFC could improve on (“grows”), and the things their family thought the GSCFC were doing well (“glows”). The families were then asked what ideas or ways we could improve on the “grows”, and why they identified the “glows”, as strengths. Below are the top 5 “Glows” and the top 5 “Grows”.

Things the Great Start Collaborative Family Coalition can “grow” on and ideas on how that could happen:

1. 1.4.1 Taking time to get to know family members individually, by name.
 - a. Intentional Ice Breaker to get to know families.
 - b. Table tents for meetings.
 - c. Dinner conversation cards to promote conversations and engage families with each other.
2. 1.13 The GSFC helps to support the continued development of parent leaders by supporting attendance at conferences, leadership development trainings or special events.
 - a. Sharing free online trainings with parents.
 - b. Inviting parents to community tables and events with the Family Liaison.
 - c. Providing opportunities to attend conferences and trainings the Family Liaison’s attend
3. 2.2.4 Making efforts to connect families who share similar interests
 - a. “Speed dating” to get to know other families.
 - b. Making efforts to acknowledge the similarities between families.
 - c. Creating a Facebook page for the Family Coalition per year.
4. 3.3 The GSFC members provide support in the creation of resources on parenting and child development, to ensure that they are culturally appropriate and easily understood by parents.
 - a. Redoing information and including parents in the approval process of the information.
 - b. Asking culturally diverse families to join a “Core” for Family Coalition and bring information and flyers to them before the whole Family Coalition group.
 - c. Encouraging families to give more input on the information we share with the community.
5. 2.9 The GSFC encourages families to participate in community improvement or advocacy projects.
 - a. Providing spaces in the community where parents already are going to provide safe spaces for them to talk to other parents. (Coffee at library story hours, opening the MACC classroom for coffee and light snacks one morning a month, parent cafes in community.)
 - b. Inviting families to participate in Great Start Collaborative work groups and committees.
 - c. Inviting parents to volunteer at community events. (Summer events, medication take backs, wellness events, walking in parades.)



Things the Great Start Collaborative Family Coalition are “glowing” in and why:

1. 1.1 The GSFC strives to reinforce that parents are the first teachers and key decision makers in their children’s lives, through every interaction and communication.
 - a. Connecting families with resources.
 - b. Encouraging families to do their best with everything but also allowing a safe place for questions and concerns to be talked about.
 - c. Providing speakers for parents to come and listen to so parents can grow and learn together.

2. 1.3 All family members are made to feel welcome at GSFC events. Families are greeted when they come to GSFC activities and events.
 - a. Family Liaisons always greet kids and parents at the door.
 - b. Family Liaisons ask personal questions to the families and know what is happening in the family’s everyday life. (How are sports going? How was the camping trip?)
 - c. There is always something for everyone, even the older kids and nobody is ever turned away.

3. 3.2.2 The GSFC works to reduce barriers to participation by offering supports such as: childcare, transportation or food when possible.
 - a. Dinner, gas cards, books and childcare are provided in all the Family Coalition meetings.
 - b. At least a snack seems to always be provided for all meetings or groups the GSC put on.
 - c. Gas cards are a wide variety, and the family gets to pick the kind of gas card they want. (Marathon, Wesco, Shell)

4. 4.2.2 Keeping family issues confidential unless given explicit permission to share information (except when potential abuse or neglect is an issue).
 - a. Family Liaisons are always willing to help or find out where the family can go for help without making a scene or allowing other families or even family members know anything is happening.
 - b. Family Liaisons ask permission before sharing a story with the group as an example but also leave out names or any identifiers of the family when telling the group.
 - c. Family Liaisons are open to listening and providing information if asked but are also willing to be a listening ear.

5. 5.4 The GSFC events and activities nurture children and model nurturing for parents by: Demonstrating mutual respect between children and adults.
 - a. Children always get a book and in the book is information for events and resources for the family and then a calendar of stuff to do at home as a family.
 - b. The events are always fun, free, and the kids love going to play all the games or finding new parks, and the adults have a chance to talk every so often. Families would love to get together more than once a month.
 - c. Family Liaisons always engage with the children and make the children feel welcome.