

Background:

The Cornerstone Program is an 8-week C2L program that serves 25 youth, ages 16-20 from a variety of neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Included in the youth served are those with disabilities and in the justice system. About ¼ of the youth participants are from families where English is not the first language spoken. The youth in this program participated in a service-learning experience where the goal was to host a community wellness fair. Recognizing the importance of family involvement in enhancing youth outcomes, the Cornerstone Program is looking to implement a family engagement strategy.

Objectives:

- Increase family participation
- Strengthen communication between families and program staff

Strategies Implemented:

- Family Communication - Cornerstone established communication through a newsletter at the beginning of the program that included information about the program for the summer, upcoming events, and ways to support youth learning at home.
- Cultural Celebration - Cornerstone celebrated the cultural diversity of the youth participants by organizing an event where families could share their traditions, foods, and customs. The goal was to foster a sense of community and mutual respect among families of different backgrounds.

Questions:

- How would you incorporate the guiding principles in the strategies?
- What might be some challenges this program experienced?
- Could a different strategy be used?