

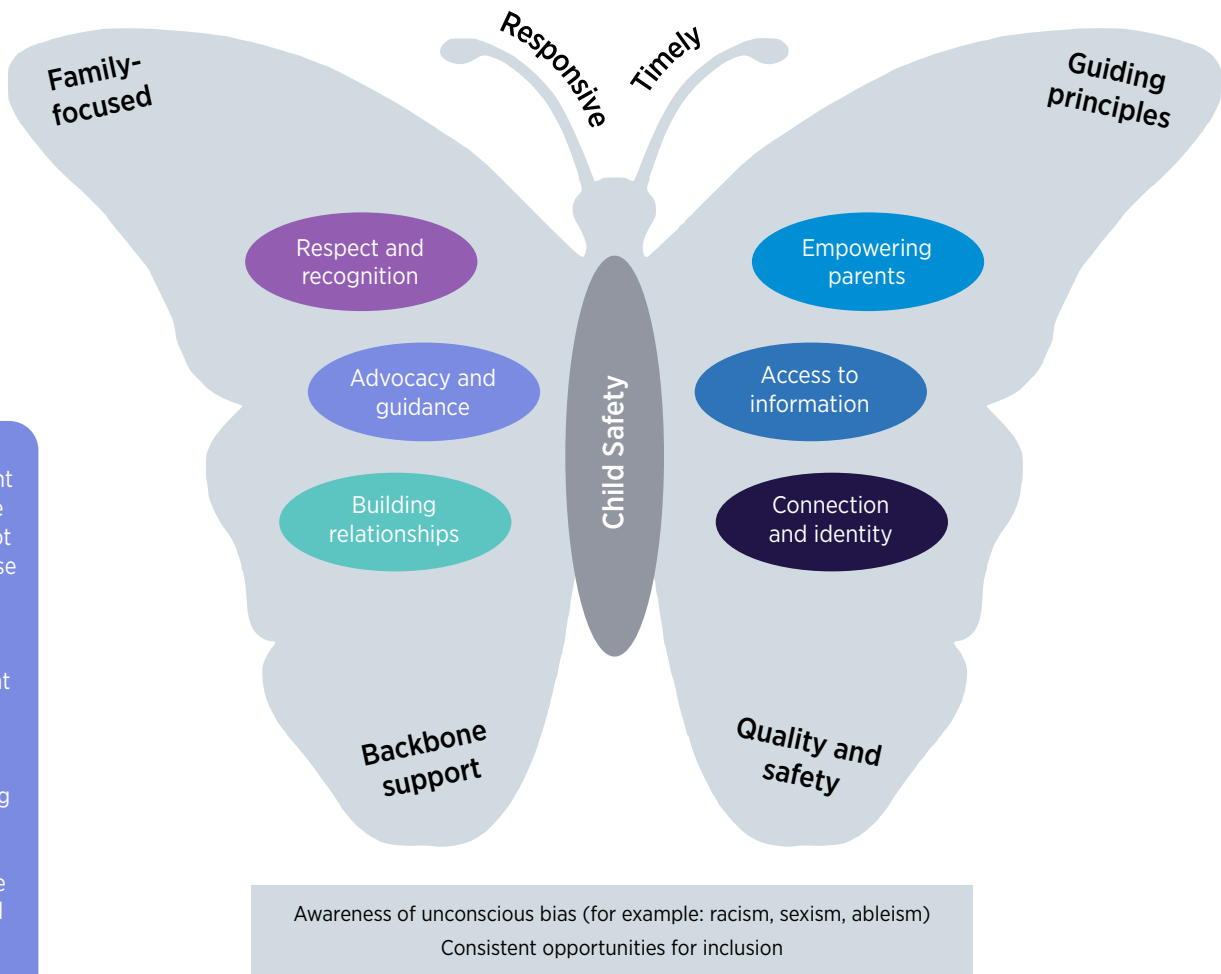
Parent Participation Model and Framework



Parents deserve to be respected and to have their experiences recognised. Interactions that are embedded in respect and recognition will help to strengthen the relationships between services and parents. It will also help develop an environment where parents feel safe, comfortable, and seen. This is essential for parents to be able to engage with services in a meaningful way.

All parents need networks of advocacy and guidance, and this will look different for each family. Some roles may include providing guidance to parents, while not necessarily advocating for them. In these cases, helping parents to access advocacy via services or informal networks can have a positive influence on their engagement or participation. This might come from broader family, friends and peers, or from professional assistance such as counselling, mental health or alcohol and other drug support, housing support, financial support and more. Advocacy and guidance that is long-term, accessible and inclusive should be explored. Parents' self-advocacy should also be encouraged, recognising that they are best placed to understand the unique support needs of their family.

Building relationships is a critical element of improved parent participation. Interactions that work to build trust, increase feelings of safety, and reduce power imbalances between parents and professionals help to strengthen the relationship. Active steps to include parents that are time-sensitive and responsive can contribute to a sense of partnership and improve parent engagement with services.



Empowering parents (and their children) to have a voice in the processes that affect their family is essential practice. Parents may need support to see themselves as experts of their own lived experience, and as experts in their child's life. Create space for them to contribute their expertise in planning and decision-making, and help to address the practical barriers that can limit participation and achievement of goals.

All parents have the right to transparent, timely and accessible information about processes involving their family, and about their own rights in decisions being made. Information needs to be shared regularly and in a form that is accessible to parents, followed by a confirmation of understanding. Space should also be made receive information from parents (and children), including their preferred method for sharing their story.

Parents continue to be parents, even if services are involved or their child is not with them. A child's connection to their family and culture remains important throughout the lifespan, and this should be strengthened at every opportunity (unless this compromises the child's safety). Supporting parents to stay connected to their child can be critical for child development and wellbeing, and their own emerging identities. It can also support the support the healing of parents.