

ParentCorps



Parenting Program Outreach Guide



Dear ParentCorps Champion,

As a busy professional dedicated to supporting families and children, we know your time is precious. This is why we are especially thankful to you for taking on the role of ParentCorps Champion. For over 20 years, PC Champions have helped ParentCorps create safe and judgment-free spaces for caregivers to join together and support one another in the fulfilling yet challenging role of raising and nurturing pre-K children.

Much of ParentCorps' parenting program's success hinges on the connections that PC Champions build with families. As the "glue" for the parenting program, PC Champions provide families with the support and information to join, should they desire.

You know how to make caregivers feel comfortable and feel heard. You know the value of a simple "How are you doing?" You know how important it is for caregivers to not feel alone in their parenting journeys. You know how far a smile, a warm welcome, and a listening ear can go in making caregivers feel safe and heard.

This guide was designed to support your role as PC Champion by outlining the key functions of being a PC Champion and implementing ParentCorps' parenting program. Launching the program is certainly a team effort to which PC Champions are central. Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your love and dedication to children and families.

With Gratitude,

The ParentCorps Team



ParentCorps Champions are selected to literally “champion” the parenting program.

You might be the parent coordinator at your school, or a pre-K teacher, or perhaps you are a mental health professional facilitating the program. While the PC Champion role can be filled by people whose primary functions at school sites are very different, the common denominator for people filling the PC Champion role is that they have great relationships with families. Most families will come to the program specifically because of the trust that they have in you. The trust they have in you will extend to the trust that they have that the parenting program will be a good experience, even if they are hesitant or not quite sure what to expect.

Speaking of what to expect...

Many families have no idea what the parenting program is and might be hesitant to join such a program. There are so many beautiful and even magical moments that can happen in a 12 week parenting program – when a caregiver realizes how much their own childhood influences their parenting style, or when a participant shares something vulnerable and someone else affirms that person and lets them know they’re not alone. Amazing things happen in a protected space where caregivers can release their armor, take a deep breath, and be reminded that they are enough, they’re doing a good job, and they are not alone. But all that can be hard to communicate in a few quick sentences on a flyer.

This guide focuses on the logistical side of programming and what ParentCorps offers to support you in connecting with caregivers. While all of the technical details are important, we cannot overstate the value that relationships have in this process.

Launching a parenting program involves lots of logistics. Perhaps the most important, yet most challenging of those logistics is how to outreach to caregivers/families. PC Champions are KEY to family outreach and family engagement.

The main logistical functions of outreach and family engagement include:

1. **Inviting caregivers to join** during family engagement events and through the distribution of hard copy and digital flyers.
2. **Connecting with Pre-K classroom teachers** so they can help promote ParentCorps.
3. **Supporting the logistics surrounding the program**, like making sure the PC banner is hung, adding program details to the customizable flyer, and making sure the room is set up if the program is in person.
4. **Giving caregivers access to program materials**, so they can practice strategies at home.
5. **Supporting caregivers in continuing to attend** by sending reminders and communicating program changes.

Before you get started, here are some helpful questions to ask yourself when planning for outreach and family engagement.

Outreach Materials	Outreach Strategy/Timeline	Family Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will outreach materials be distributed physically, digitally, or both? • Will you personalize physical flyers to send home? • What languages do the families speak? • Are some families more comfortable with verbal communication? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is my role in family engagement currently? • Will the program be virtual or in person? What considerations do I need to make in either case? • Who can I coordinate with at the school to help spread the word? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Coordinator • Teachers • Site Leader • PTA • What is the best frequency for sending invitations/reminders? • Do we have resources to order food or snacks? If so, who will do the ordering? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methods have I utilized in the past to connect with families? What has worked well? • What opportunities do I have to affirm caregivers and build trust? • How can I weave ParentCorps into the engagement activities we already do? • How much time do I have with the families? How can I help demystify the program?

ParentCorps’ would love for as many pre-K parents and caregivers as possible to experience at least one session of the program so they can decide if it’s for them. There are many ways to invite caregivers to give it a try and we have found that starting early and mentioning it often works best. There isn’t one right or wrong way to outreach and plan for launching a parenting program, but these practices have proven successful for other partners in the past. Consider these suggestions as you think about and plan your own outreach and program launch. A sample outreach plan is included in this document.

Months before the program begins:

Generate hype about the program

- » Place ParentCorps posters & banners where pre-K families can easily see them (i.e. where pre-K families drop off/pick up their children).
- » Host family engagement events and promote the program during the event. Reference the Family Engagement Guide for many ideas for family engagement events. The guide is accessible from the ParentCorps Portal. Instructions for accessing the Portal are at the end of this document.
- » Use multiple methods to inform families about the program (e.g. phone calls, text, emails, flyers etc.).
- » Use our tagline, “Come for the Strategies, Stay for the Community.” We feel that this captures the heart of the program.
- » Encourage your principal/site leader to endorse ParentCorps as part of pre-K.

Distribute ParentCorps flyers/postcards to all pre-K caregivers via kids backpacks, cubbies, and/or at drop-off and pickup. Also share the flyers via whatever virtual platforms you use to communicate with families. Tip: When you share flyers digitally, save it as a jpeg first so that it appears automatically on a phone without the need to download first.

- » The general outreach flyer/postcard can be distributed before you know the start date and time to help build momentum.
- » Once you have program details, add your start date, location, session description, and any other details you want to include into our customizable flyer.

Connect with pre-K teachers to help spread the word.

- » Ensure that your pre-K teachers are aware of when the program starts, what topics are covered and what benefits the program has. The program offers support, a sense of community, helpful strategies and, in some cases, has led to meaningful lifelong relationships between participants.

Consider creating a sign-up sheet to track which caregivers express interest in attending.

- » Having a list will allow you to survey interested families to see what dates and times work for them and to follow up with families to remind them of program dates, etc. A sample sign-up sheet is on the Portal.

Talk to your site leader about food and water for family engagement events and program sessions.

- » Food makes people feel appreciated and connected. If resources allow, try to have small snacks at your family engagement events and/or program sessions or give out snacks when doing outreach at drop-off and pickup. Giving out coffee and muffins with the program flyer at drop-off is a great way to make caregivers feel warm and welcomed.

Work out the details:

- » **Create an outreach plan.** A sample outreach plan is included in this document.
- » **Decide on the start date and time of the program and whether it will be in person or virtual.** Ideally get caregivers to weigh in on the times and format that would work best for them.
- » **Determine with your coach who will facilitate the program.**
- » **Identify storage space for the boxes of materials.**
- » **Decide who will make the certificates.** Certificates are typically given to each participant, the facilitator and the PC champion.

For in-person programs:

- » **Determine where the program will be held.** We suggest a room that gives families privacy.
- » **Make a plan for how the room will get set up** (i.e. will furniture need to be rearranged?) and how everything will be returned to its original location at the end of each session.

For virtual programs:

- » **Determine who will create the zoom link.** Test the meeting room to make sure the settings are as you want them.
- » Determine who will make sure new participants receive program materials.
- » When sending reminders digitally, save the flyer as an image and make sure to **send a follow up message with the meeting link** so caregivers can easily click on the link to join.

A week before the program begins:

Remind caregivers about ParentCorps at drop-off and pickup.

- » We suggest handing out snacks and/or ParentCorps swag.
- » Make sure caregivers know that any adult in the pre-K child's life can attend – including uncles, aunts, grandparents, siblings, etc.
- » Encourage families to attend at least one session so they can have the experience and decide whether to return.

Do individual outreach in person, by phone, or via an online platform.

- » Have a schedule of the ParentCorps sessions handy. A template of the schedule can be downloaded from the ParentCorps Portal. Feel free to recommend specific sessions based on what caregivers have expressed to you.
- » Affirm caregivers during these conversations! Affirmations go a long way in helping caregivers feel seen and building trust.

Share the session topics with pre-K teachers (these are available on the Portal).

- » Encourage teachers to think about which caregivers might benefit from attending. We believe that all caregivers would benefit from this supportive space but some topics may resonate with some caregivers more than others.

The morning of Session 1:

Send lots of reminders!

- » Send a blast message to all pre-K caregivers with the program details on whatever digital platform you use to communicate with families.
- » Remind caregivers about the program at drop-off in the week and days leading to program launch.

If the program is in person:

- » Make sure the room is set up and welcoming. Maybe have music playing while caregivers gather.
- » Consider creating signs directing families to the room and/or welcome them at drop-off and point them to the meeting space.

After the program, consider sending another message thanking them for joining, reminding them about the next session, and inviting others to join the next one!

Between each weekly session:

Make session specific flyers that include the session number and description and share it on whatever communication platform you normally use.

- » After adding your program details to the flyer, we recommend that you save the file as an image so it can be easily shared with and opened by caregivers. If your program is virtual, send a follow up message with the zoom link so caregivers can easily click on the link to join.

Remind families about the sessions using different methods.

- » Have a standard text that you use and switch it up. Sample text: “Your pre-K’s ParentCorps program for families started this week. For those who came yesterday- great! If not-know that parents meet every XX DAY at XX TIME. Join us!”
- » Send reminders on different days and different times to increase attendance.
- » Consider sending links to fun videos you find on instagram or tiktok that are funny and that caregivers can relate to.

Check in with caregivers and ask them how they are experiencing the sessions.

- » If they are having a good experience, encourage them to invite other caregivers from the school.
- » If they are not having a good experience, try to understand why and share feedback with your coach.

If a session is rescheduled, make sure all of the caregivers know.

- » Sometimes sessions must be canceled due to inclement weather or school closings. Keep your colleagues in the loop so everyone has the most up to date information.
- » Sample text: We will miss you this week!! Unfortunately, we have to cancel ParentCorps this week. The next session will be on xx at xx. Hope to see you there!

Make sure caregivers have access to program materials so they can use the strategies at home.

- » Programs that are in-person will likely receive a bin of program materials. Store the bin in a place that the facilitator will have access to.
- » Programs that are virtual will likely receive a box of totes that include all of the tools caregivers will need for each session. Each new attendee should receive a tote, such that all families who attend the program get a tote at some point.
- » Caregivers can also access program materials from the PC Portal for Caregivers by:
 1. Going to weareparentcorps.org
 2. Clicking on the “ParentCorps Portal” button on the upper right side of the page
 3. Selecting “Parents and Caregivers” from the drop down menu
 4. Selecting “Program Materials” in whichever language they prefer
 - 5. Typing “care” when prompted for a password**

We wish you a successful program this year!

Sample Outreach Plan

	When?	What?	Who can help?	Best practices
Before Programming	September/ October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Engagement Event #1 Swag Item 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ParentCorps Champions Teachers PTA Site Leader 	Introduce ParentCorps - what is it? Give a small glimpse into what's to come.
	October/ November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Engagement Event #2 Swag Item 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ParentCorps Champions Teachers PTA Site Leader 	Dive into a few topics that will be covered in ParentCorps.
	November/ December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Engagement Event #3 5x7 Postcard Swag Item 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ParentCorps Champions Teachers PTA Site Leader 	Create a survey for families to choose the best time/date for the program.
	January (right before Session 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Outreach Flyer Swag Item 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ParentCorps Champions Teachers PTA Site Leader 	Call each caregiver who expressed interest and individually invite caregivers in person.
During Programming	Session 2 (and all subsequent weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Outreach Flyer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ParentCorps Champions Teachers 	Send reminders to caregivers using platforms your site communicates with families on. (e.g. class dojo, email, texts, phone calls, classroom announcements.) We recommend sending reminders frequently at the start of programming.