

Grandparent Coffee Time

Early Childhood Education at Maddox Englewood, CO

The staff at Early Childhood Education (ECE) at Maddox, located in Englewood School District, started noticing a large population of grandparents dropping off and picking up students. Right around the same time, a grandparent on the School Advisory Council wondered how she could become more involved within the school. Following discussions between the school principal and family liaisons, it was decided to start a “Grandparent Coffee Time” group. Grandparents now meet twice monthly to help foster support, share ideas, advocate for their grandchildren, and discuss ways to contribute to ECE.

The ECE at Maddox site typically has great family involvement. A noticeable change in demographic dynamics occurred and more grandparents have custody or are providing before and after school care for their grandkids. ECE staff saw a need to support these grandparents within their school community.



The school principal and two school family liaisons discussed ways to get grandparents involved within the school. The family liaisons decided on a grandparent group that would meet up two times per month for an hour and a half right after dropping off their grandkids in the morning.

The first meeting consisted of 8-10 grandparents. The group brainstormed ideas on what they wanted to get out of the grandparents group. It was determined that they would love to learn more about technology, volunteer within the school, share resources, and network with family members in similar situations. This group provided the opportunity for the

grandparents to contribute to a positive school climate, welcome all family members, and support two way communication between families and the school.

The two ECE family liaisons have done informal evaluations of the Grandparent Coffee Time group this year. Observations and qualitative data in the form of participant feedback have been gathered. They are planning to conduct pre and post surveys of this group next year. They will also continue to do a needs assessment to see where the group feels they would like support and opportunities each year. They did face some challenges as any new group does. The family liaisons realized they needed to reign in topic discussions to make sure all voices were feeling heard. Therefore, the liaisons created and followed agendas after challenges were noted.

Some advice that the two family liaisons would give to someone wanting to replicate this practice would be to make sure meeting times are convenient for families and that the invitation is shared to all.