



Centering Black Families: Building Pathways to Access and Connection

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Purpose of Tonight's Session

- **Listen, learn, and co-create** strategies for engaging Black parents/caregivers and families.
- **Share what research tells us** about how Black families connect to resources.
- **Build accountability partnerships** between families and community organizations.



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Structure of Our Time Together

1

Research Review

(15–20 min)

2

Group Discussion

(40–45 min)

3

Next Steps & Partners

accountability & follow-up



What We Know

- 1 Services exist, but Black families aren't always showing up.**
- 2 Parents cite: unwelcoming environments, hard-to-reach staff, long travel distances.**
- 3 Most learn of resources through word of mouth.**

A photograph of two Black women sitting at a wooden table in a meeting room. The woman on the left is smiling and looking towards the right. The woman on the right is looking at a laptop screen. There are papers, a pink folder, and a smartphone on the table. A whiteboard is visible in the background.

National Research Insights

Text-based family engagement improves early literacy—especially when messages are timely, actionable, and culturally tailored.

Co-designed, representative content increases parent trust and retention, particularly among Black families.

Parenting programs with racial socialization (e.g., EMBRace, SAAF) strengthen youth coping, communication, and wellbeing.

Authentic, two-way communication fosters inclusion and sustained engagement.

Personalization matters: universal messages have limited effects without contextual supports.

Text messaging remains equitable—mobile access is nearly universal among Black parents.

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What Black Parents Want

- Real depictions of family and community diversity.
- Authentic, relatable language.
- Support tailored to cultural contexts—not 'one-size-fits-all'.
- Opportunities for mutual peer support. (Turner et al., 2019; Kirtman et al., 2023)





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Frameworks That Work

1

Racial Socialization

Pride and open dialogue about race.

2

Cultural Affirmation Practices

Messages of resilience and belonging.

3

Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2025)

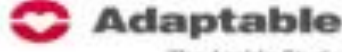
Leveraging faith, family, and community assets.

4

Culturally Tailored Interventions

Adapting imagery, language, and delivery.

Example: What is Cultural Tailoring?

	Original	Tailored
Ad	 Do you have Heart Disease? Do you take aspirin daily to help reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke? Cardiologists at Duke are participating in a national study to determine whether 81mg or 325mg aspirin is more effective. Find out if you're eligible • Talk to your doctor today • Call the study team at 919-684-7979 If you're eligible, you'll be given an access code to enroll online. To learn more about this study, visit www.adaptablepatient.com   The Aspirin Study	 Do you take aspirin for your heart? If so, we need you! Learn about your heart and help doctors find ways to keep others like you from having a heart attack or stroke. Heart doctors at Duke are part of a national study looking at which dose of aspirin (81mg or 325mg) is better. Click here to Learn how you can be a part of the study or call 919-684-7979 To find out more, visit www.adaptablepatient.com   The Aspirin Study
Image(s)	Multicultural group sitting at a table smiling for the camera	Multigenerational Black families actively engaged
Messaging	Focus on study and researchers	Appeal to altruism ("we need you!") Value of participating
Language	Uses the word "disease", which may have negative connotation Focuses on being "eligible" Uses the term "cardiologists," which may be unfamiliar	Focuses on learning about the study Avoids using the word "disease" Includes a call to action Uses the term "heart doctor" instead of "cardiologist"
Readability	Flesch Reading Ease: 63.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 7 Passive Sentences: 25%	Flesch Reading Ease: 80.3 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 5.4 Passive Sentences: 0%

Development and pilot implementation of guidelines for culturally tailored research recruitment materials for African Americans and Latinos

(Cunningham-Erves et al., 2022)

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Local Engagement Models

- **Faith-based partnerships** enhance trust and access.
- **Parent ambassadors / community connectors** strengthen outreach.
- **Food, childcare, and incentives** reduce barriers.
- **Informal gatherings** (e.g., dinner discussions) enable honest dialogue (Cooper, 2021; Kania et al., 2018)





What This Means For Us

- Build personal referral pathways, not bureaucratic systems.
- Use trusted messengers – churches, barbershops, schools, advocates.
- Offer multiple entry points: text, flyers, personal invites, word-of-mouth.
- Center parents as partners, not clients. (Thomas & Comer, 2020)



Activity: Group Discussions



Discussion Prompt 1: Access

- What helps or hinders access to resources/events/information for you?
- What outreach channels are most trusted?
- How can parents & partners share responsibility in closing gaps?



Discussion Prompt 2: Partnership

- How can organizations and partners build trust?
- What's worked—or not worked—in your experience?
- What shared commitments can we make tonight?



Discussion Prompt 3: Accountability

- How can you hold partners accountable?
- What does transparency look like?
- What tools or templates can we co-create?



During Dinner

Enjoy conversation and connection!

Table prompts:

- 1. What makes you feel welcome in a space?*
- 2. How can we build bridges between partners and parents/caregivers?*

Partnership Template for Outreach (Example)

Partner	Shared Goal	Community Connector	Accountability Step	Sucess Indicator
Local Faith Org	Support Black parents' engagement	Pastor [Name]	Monthly check-ins	20 new families enrolled



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Community Connectors & Follow Up

1

**Identify 3–5 parents
as community
connectors**

3

**Host quarterly
check-ins**

2

**Summarize
findings in a
community-facing
report**

4

**Align with schools,
health networks, and
youth orgs**



Closing Reflection

- ***“You are the experts of your own experience.”***
- This work is not about fixing community members, but about fixing systems to meet them where they are.
- *Goal:* belonging, trust, and shared accountability. (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998; Kirtman et al., 2025)



THANK YOU!

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