



NATIONAL FAMILY FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

Is Family Friendly Schools (FFS) the right fit, right now for our center, school or district?

A Family Readiness Guide

A reflection tool for centers, schools and districts considering the Family Friendly School Certification Process

How to Use This Tool

- District and school leaders use this guide to engage in honest conversations about what the FFS process is, current leadership beliefs about partnership, readiness for change and current capacity to do this work.
- Leaders may choose to review the questions individually and then discuss them as a team, or work through the tool collaboratively in a meeting.
- If most responses are “yes,” your district or school is likely well-positioned to begin.
- If several areas are marked “in process” or “no” the reflection questions can guide where additional preparation or discussion may be helpful before launching the work.

SECTION 1: Check Your Understanding of what the FFS Process *Is* and *Is Not*

What It *IS*:

- ✔ **A research-backed framework for partnership linked to learning**
Provides a clear structure for strengthening family–school collaboration that directly supports student success and is aligned with the Dual Capacity-Building Framework.
- ✔ **A practical roadmap for improving school climate and engagement**
Guides schools through self-assessing current practice, setting goals, and taking actionable steps.
- ✔ **A shared language and set of standards**
Helps build alignment across classrooms, schools, districts, and community partners.
- ✔ **A national peer learning network**
Connects schools with others across the country to share promising practices and learn together.
- ✔ **A pathway for recognition and celebration**
Offers opportunities for local, state, and national acknowledgment of strong family engagement work.



What It IS NOT:

- ⊗ A tool for assessing or expanding wrap-around services**
 It does not focus on addressing non-academic barriers like housing, food access, or medical support.
- ⊗ Intensive professional development or consultation**
 The process offers guidance and a process to follow not high-touch coaching, training series, or long-term consulting. We do have Trusted Partners who can support this deep work listed on the [NFFS webpage](#).
- ⊗ A quick fix or short-term strategy**
 It supports sustainable improvement, not a one-off initiative.
- ⊗ An evidence-based program**
 It is a research-informed framework and improvement process, not a scripted program or curriculum.

➔ **Visit prichardcommittee.org/nffs to:**

- watch the 3-minute FFS video,
- review the What is FFS brief, and
- read the Summary of Findings.

In addition, at least one member of your leadership team should attend an [Intro to NFFS webinar](#). The registration link is also available on the NFFS webpage.

Basic Understanding Checklist	Yes	In Progress	No / Unsure
I have personally watched the 3-minute FFS video, read the What is FFS brief, and reviewed the Summary of Findings on prichardcommittee.org/nffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At least one member of our leadership staff has attended an Introduction to FFS Webinar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Based on this information, I have a general understanding of what the FFS Certification Process is and is not	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Reflection: What is one “like,” one “dislike,” and one “question” you have at this time?



SECTION 2: Check Your Beliefs

Our leadership culture reflects the belief that...	Yes	In Progress	No / Unsure
Stronger family partnerships lead to improved attendance, behavior and student success	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All families have the capacity to support their children's learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families and staff should be equal partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The responsibility for cultivating and sustaining partnerships rests primarily with center, school, and district leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Centers, schools, and districts must build systems, so every child and family is known and supported, including more creative solutions for middle and high	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A clearer, more consistent approach to engaging families is needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An intentional process is needed to build trust with families who may feel disconnected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joining monthly calls with other administrators to discuss family engagement best practices, lessons learned and challenges is a worthwhile use of our time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Reflection 1: Choose a few of your strongest “yes” statements. What evidence shows that leadership genuinely holds these beliefs?



Staff Reflection 2: Identify one or two areas where your team is not yet a strong “yes.” What immediate actions can you take to shift beliefs about the importance of authentic family voice?

SECTION 3: Check Your Willingness for Change

Our leadership is prepared to ...	Yes	In Progress	No / Unsure
Implement a structured process that includes family feedback, action planning, and measurable progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involve families and teachers in shaping school priorities and experiences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use feedback from families, teachers, students and community partners to guide decisions, try new ideas, and rethink long-standing ways of doing things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively champion and publicly celebrate certification milestones and the work of families and school teams throughout the year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish school-based teams of at least 2 family partners, 2 classroom teachers, and the principal who meet regularly to guide this work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Embed family partnerships into existing routines, structures and systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit to long-term culture change rather than a short-term initiative, recognizing that initial certification typically takes 12–24 months and active certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use feedback from families, teachers, students, and the community to guide decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commit to ongoing learning and improvement, recognizing that family partnerships are never “finished” and must evolve with the changing needs of families,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Staff Reflection 1: Which of the commitments in this section do you feel most prepared for? What evidence supports this as an area of strength?

Staff Reflection 2: Which of the commitments in this section will require the most support or growth? Who should be involved in those conversations?

SECTION 4: Check Your Current Capacity

For this section, you will need access to documents distributed during the Intro to NFFS webinar which include:

- Overview of FFS Roles and Responsibilities
- Sample FFS Scope of Work and Pricing

If you did not receive these documents, email brooke.gill@prichardcommittee.org

Our district, school, or early education center has the capacity to...	Yes	In Progress	No / Unsure
Allocate consistent time for a core team of at least two classroom teachers and the building leader to meet regularly with families and co-lead this work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure participation of team members in online courses and utilize available supports to effectively navigate the process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain at least one district-level staff member with the capacity to support this work. (required for all K-12 schools)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure the principal or center director is present for all school team meetings, either as the team lead or an active participant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Our district, school, or early education center has the capacity to...	Yes	In Progress	No / Unsure
Foster a culture where leadership and staff are open to trying new and out of the box ideas suggested by families and educators, and then willing to make adjustments as learning occurs (FFS Step 3: Try New Ideas and see what works)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use school websites, social media, community events, and local media to consistently promote and celebrate the meaning and impact of achieving Family Friendly Certification.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Reflection: What gaps in time, staffing, leadership involvement, or resources would need to be addressed for us to fully support this work?

Final Reflection: Is Family Friendly Schools (FFS) the Right Fit for Us Right Now?

After completing this guide, review your responses across all four sections:

- Understanding
- Beliefs
- Willingness for Change
- Current Capacity

As a leadership team, discuss the following:

- Where do we feel most confident and aligned?
- Where are the biggest gaps or uncertainties?
- Based on our responses, are we ready to begin the FFS Certification Process at this time? Why or why not?
- What would need to change or be strengthened before we begin?

Using Trusted Partners: If your team identifies areas of growth in readiness, willingness, or capacity, Family Friendly Schools **Trusted Partners** can play a key role in supporting



Trusted Partners are experienced organizations and leaders who:

- Provide guidance, consultation, and practical tools aligned to the FFS process
- Support schools, districts, and centers in building effective family engagement systems
- Offer professional learning, coaching, and implementation support
- Help teams translate ideas into actionable plans

Engaging a Trusted Partner can be a valuable step if your team:

- Is still building internal capacity
- Wants additional guidance in launching the process
- Needs support aligning staff, systems, or family engagement practices
- Is preparing for certification but not yet fully ready to begin independently

NEXT STEPS

- ➔ If most responses are “Yes,” your district, school, or center is likely well-positioned to move forward with the FFS Certification Process and ready to sign a letter of commitment and join in the next fall or spring cohort:
 - Kentucky Schools, Email: Grace@prichardcommittee.org
 - Outside Kentucky, Email: Brooke.Gill@prichardcommittee.org
- ➔ If several areas are “In Progress” or “No,” consider engaging a Trusted Partner to help build readiness before launching.
 - A list of Trusted Partners and their areas of expertise can be found on the NFFS webpage: prichardcommittee.org/nffs
- ➔ If you are unsure, connect with a member of the FFS team to clarify fit, strengthen alignment, and identify a clear path forward.
 - Kentucky Schools, Email: Grace@prichardcommittee.org
 - Outside Kentucky, Email: Brooke.Gill@prichardcommittee.org

Thank you for your time and thoughtful reflection. We're excited to partner with you on this journey. No matter where you're starting, every school and district can grow into Family Friendly Schools with clarity, commitment, and a shared focus on what works for students and families. ~ Your Family Friendly School Support Team

Learn more: Prichardcommittee.org/nffs

