

Follow Along Program Community Engagement Team 2023-2024



The Minnesota Department of Health Follow Along Program invited 27 program partners and members of the public to participate in the Community Engagement Team from November 2023 through May 2024. When describing themselves, cohort members emphasized a variety of identities, often motherhood/parenthood. In surveys, the cohort varied considerably in geographic region, age (respondents ranged in age from 33 to 58), and preferred method of communication/information. Meanwhile, the cohort identified as disproportionately female, white, and middle or high income.

Core themes

The 2023-2024 Community Engagement Team returned to three core themes time and again:



- **Shared vision:** Every Minnesota family has a right to a high-quality early childhood system.
- **Persistent disparities:** While Minnesota has prioritized young children and families in systems work, troubling disparities still exist.
- **Five-year plan:** The Follow Along Program has adopted a Five-Year Plan that will be implemented using an implementation science framework.

Topics covered

Equity and Engagement

Illustrative question: How can the Follow Along Program reach and support all Minnesota families?

Illustrative quote: If all systems can “talk” once screenings and referral has been placed.

Electronic Platform with Mobile App and Data System

Illustrative question: What do you see as barriers for caregivers to using an Electronic Platform and Mobile App? What concerns do you have or predict related to data privacy?

Illustrative quote: I love all the features it has, activities, and easy to follow questionnaire. As a PHN I am curious if I will be able to interact with my family through the app as one of their coaches or how that works.

Connections to Supports and Services

Illustrative question: What resources are important to share with families?

Illustrative quote: The “why” is important to communicate. There is stigma that exists about the program especially within certain populations.

Importance of Developmental Screening and Extending to Kindergarten Entrance

Illustrative question: What are your reactions to expanding to Kindergarten?

Illustrative quote: Children over 3 are often found to have delays or the need of the FAP program. Having the program open to age 5 or older will be beneficial.