



Village Engagement Matrix

Child's Stage	Parent/Caregiver's Stage	Village's Role	Desired Outcome
<p>Acorn (Birth to 2 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns to trust their caregivers by feeling safe, loved, and cared for every day. • Starts to understand their feelings as parents respond with warmth and consistency. • Builds confidence in their world as they experience love, routine, and connection. 	<p>Guardian Phase</p> <p>The Guardian Phase is a period of transition as families adjust to life with a new child. During this time, guardians build trust and security by consistently responding to their child's physical and emotional needs, creating a foundation of love, safety, and connection that sets the stage for deeper understanding in later phases.</p> <p>Example: A caregiver soothes their baby by holding them close, rocking them, and singing lullabies, helping the child feel secure, comforted, and connected to their voice and rhythm.</p>	<p>Hand Holders</p> <p>Hand Holders provide families with reassurance, guidance, and hands-on help to ease the transition into parenthood. They ensure caregivers feel capable and supported in their role.</p> <p>Example: Postpartum doulas, parent educators, seasoned parents, home visitors, and community elders offer knowledge, encouragement, and resources.</p>	<p>The child develops secure attachment, trust, and emotional stability, establishing a foundation for self-expression, exploration, and early communication.</p>
<p>Sprout (2 to 4 years old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts to see themselves as their own person with likes, dislikes, and feelings. • Gains confidence when caregivers encourage their choices and let them explore safely. • Learns how to connect with others by watching, playing, and interacting in new spaces. 	<p>Explorer Phase</p> <p>Explorers shift from meeting their child's basic needs to discovering who their child truly is. Having built a secure attachment in the Guardian Phase, they now see their child as an individual with unique preferences, emotions, and ways of engaging with the world.</p> <p>Example: A caregiver realizes that their child, once soothed by rhythm as a baby, now lights up whenever they hear music, so they introduce more singing and dancing into daily routines.</p>	<p>Guides</p> <p>Guides expand the child's world by introducing structured social experiences while reinforcing the secure foundation built by Hand Holders. They help families bridge early development to interactive learning environments.</p> <p>Example: Parent-child playgroup facilitators, early childhood educators, and librarians provide safe spaces where children explore social interactions, creativity, and new ways to express themselves.</p>	<p>The child builds independence, self-awareness, and early social skills, establishing a foundation for emotional intelligence, relationship-building, and confidence in structured environments.</p>
<p>Seedling (Pre-K through 2nd grade)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels good about who they are when adults affirm their efforts and strengths. • Learns to keep trying when things don't work out the first time. • Begins to understand emotions and relationships by practicing kindness, teamwork, and problem-solving. 	<p>Architect Phase I</p> <p>Architects reinforce perseverance by teaching children that emotions are a natural part of learning and important indicators of their experiences. Building on the independence developed in the Explorer Phase, they encourage problem-solving and self-confidence.</p> <p>Example: A caregiver sees their child working hard to build a block tower and resists the urge to fix it, instead asking, Have you considered trying it another way? or What else might work?</p>	<p>Builders</p> <p>Builders expand the learning from Guides, reinforcing emotional intelligence and confidence as children navigate structured environments. They create opportunities to practice persistence, collaboration, and problem-solving, preparing them for deeper skill development.</p> <p>Example: Preschool teachers, after-school staff, and mentors strengthen social-emotional learning through teamwork, turn-taking, and cooperative activities.</p>	<p>The child develops perseverance, confidence, and collaboration skills, strengthening their ability to work with others, manage emotions, and approach challenges with a problem-solving mindset. This foundation prepares them for deeper skill refinement and responsibility in the next phase.</p>

<p>Sapling (3rd through 7th grade)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes more independent and starts making more choices on their own. • Builds problem-solving skills by thinking through challenges and taking responsibility. • Feels proud of their growth and accomplishments as they try new things and gain skills. 	<p>Architect Phase II</p> <p>As their child’s skills, interests, and needs evolve, parents shift from receiving support to actively curating a village. With confidence in their knowledge of their child, they identify the people and resources needed to help their child grow further and faster with support.</p> <p>Example: A caregiver recognizes their child’s continued interest in music and seeks out a skilled instructor, ensemble, or mentorship program to provide structured opportunities for development.</p>	<p>Engineers</p> <p>Engineers build on the foundation set by Builders, providing structured opportunities for children to refine their skills, take initiative, and gain confidence. They create environments where persistence, problem-solving, and leadership are applied in real-world ways.</p> <p>Example: Music instructors, robotics coaches, team leaders, and mentors guide children through hands-on experiences that challenge them to set goals, think critically, and grow.</p>	<p>The child sharpens their skills, strengthens their independence, and builds problem-solving abilities, preparing for leadership, responsibility, and real-world application.</p>
<p>Young Tree (8th through 12th grade)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts taking charge of their own goals, dreams, and future plans. • Learns how to make decisions, set goals, and figure out what steps to take. • Becomes more confident speaking up for themselves and leading in different situations. 	<p>Navigator Phase</p> <p>Navigators support their child in setting goals, creating a strategic plan, and identifying the village members needed to help them succeed. Parents shift from directing to guiding, trusting their child’s vision while helping them make informed decisions. The child steers the course, while the parent ensures they have a strong roadmap.</p> <p>Example: A caregiver helps their child map out the steps to attend their dream college or explore a future career.</p>	<p>Pathfinders</p> <p>Pathfinders introduce opportunities, mentorship, and guidance as young people take ownership of their journey. They provide real-world exposure to leadership, career paths, and skill development.</p> <p>Example: High school counselors, career mentors, coaches, and program leaders connect students to leadership roles, extracurricular activities, and hands-on learning experiences that align with their interests and future goals.</p>	<p>The young person develops autonomy, critical thinking, and self-advocacy, establishing a foundation for navigating adulthood with confidence and purpose.</p>
<p>Oak Tree (Young Adulthood)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes decisions about their life with confidence and clarity. • Knows when to ask for advice but trusts themselves to make the final call. • Steps into adulthood with a strong sense of who they are and what they want. 	<p>Consultant Phase</p> <p>Consultants shift from active guidance to providing wisdom and support as their young adult takes full ownership of their life. Parents trust the foundation they’ve built and offer insight when requested, allowing their child to navigate adulthood with confidence. Their role is no longer to lead but to be a trusted advisor, always available when needed.</p> <p>Example: A parent listens as their child considers a major career or financial decision and offers perspective, but ultimately lets them make the final choice.</p>	<p>Consultants</p> <p>Village members transition into lifelong supporters, offering mentorship, connections, and guidance when called upon. While their direct influence is reduced, their presence remains valuable in reinforcing the skills and confidence they helped build.</p> <p>Example: Mentors, community leaders, and former teachers serve as professional references, networking connections, or trusted advisors as the young adult navigates new opportunities.</p>	<p>The young adult confidently makes decisions, manages responsibilities, and knows how to seek guidance and support when needed and is prepared to contribute positively to a global society.</p>