

Take Home Tips

Early Learning

Provider-Parent Relationships: 7 Keys to Good Communication

Be interested. To establish constructive relationships with parents, the very first step is to show genuine interest in each parent and family and to convey that interest in each interaction, starting from the first. Remind yourself often that every person has a story.

Be humble. When we approach parents with an attitude of curiosity and humility, parents in turn will be more likely to approach us and seek out our opinions and suggestions.

Then we can figure things out together, which always has a better outcome for children.

Be respectful. Be intentional about expressing your belief that parents want what's best for their child and that their role as the parent is incredibly important. When you acknowledge and affirm parents in this way, it helps establish trust and opens the way for dialogue in which your viewpoint is more likely to be considered.

Be inviting. We can't assume that families know that we want to hear their perspective. Although much of our conversation with parents will be about the child, also expressing an interest in the parent is likely to invite a deeper level of trust and openness.

Be a good listener. Do your best to give a parent your full attention. Convey the message "I'm listening" with your whole body as well as your words. Don't be too quick to jump in when conversing; wait for a response.

Be positive. Don't communicate only when there is a problem or concern, or when you want something from a parent. A proactive, multilayered communication plan, on the other hand, can help keep the majority of the messages to families positive, constructive, and encouraging.

Be creative. Never before have we had so many different ways to communicate with one another! Better to send the same message multiple ways and risk minor annoyance than to rely on one way of communicating that isn't effective for all parents. Ask individual family members often whether they are getting information that you send out to all of the families and to them in particular.



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