



Connecting with Parents of Infants and Toddlers

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Learning Objectives

Define family engagement and its contribution to child success

Understand the importance of building relationships with families

Determine barriers to building positive relationships

Describe provider behaviors which promote family engagement

Develop strategies to foster family engagement

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What is one support that will most likely be with a child from the time they enter their first classroom until the time they graduate from high school?

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Their Parents!



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What is Family Engagement?

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Family Engagement

Is the process we use to build positive, goal-oriented relationships with families

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The Importance of Family Engagement

For children

- supports healthy development
- supports school readiness

For families

- promotes well-being of both child and family
- empowers and involves

For providers

- fosters easier communication
- resources
- participates in a child's education

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Program Requirements and Strategies

Family night/center meetings
Goal setting
Open house
Parent-Teacher conferences
Volunteer hours
At home activities
Notes home/correspondence
Phone calls
Face-to-face conversations

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Barriers to Relationships

- 🚧 Personality differences
- 🚧 Personal experiences/histories
- 🚧 Personal biases
- 🚧 Work demands
- 🚧 Conflicting agendas
- 🚧 Cultural differences



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“Even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

--Will Rogers

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Benefits of Focusing on Families

Increases motivation

Promotes collaboration

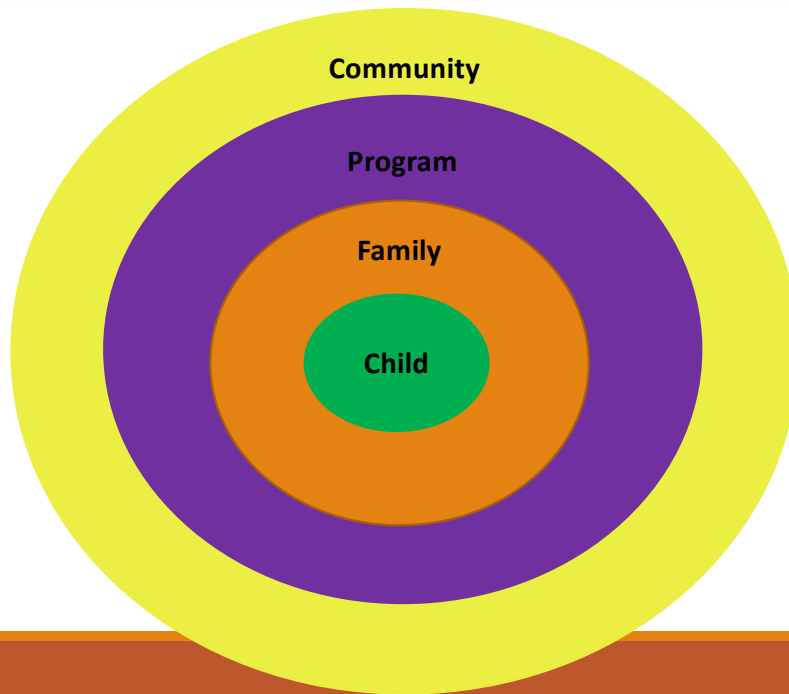
Lessens resistance

Provides support



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Model of Support



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Model for Success

Empathy

“It sounds like you have a lot on your plate right now. How can I help?”

Encouragement

“I’m so glad to see you at family night! We missed you last time!”

Support

“Would you like me to watch your little one while you talk to your child’s teacher?”

Positive communication

“You know, my child used to do that when he was that age! It was tough!”

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Model Conversations

Casual and personal

Changes the relationship from superficial to genuine

Removes barrier between school and family



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Model Effective Approaches

Communicate clearly, consistently, and frequently

Collaborate with families

Respond to each family's individual needs

Focus on the whole family

Help the family identify and connect to additional resources

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Model Positive Relationships

Build the relationship on behalf of the child

Reflect on cultural perspectives

Value a family's emotions



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What's wrong with you?



What happened to you?

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Sources

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/strategies-family-engagement-attitudes-practices.pdf>

The Great Disconnect by Michael Gramling

National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

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