



Building Lasting Family Relationships Part 1: Fostering Trust, Respect, & Collaborative Partnerships



Objective: Label a strategy to establish a cooperative, reciprocal, and impactful relationship with each child's family

The Goal: To Collaborate = Partnership

To work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor.

"A childcare provider collaborated with the family to find a solution that worked for both."

*Cooperate *Join forces *Unite *Participate *Come together *Team up *Coproduct *Be in "Cahoots"

"A partnership suggests mutual respect, an acceptance of equivalent expertise, and a reciprocal relationship in which each partner shares information and expectations with the other." Pugh 1985



Family's Main Question:

"Can you help my child blossom?"



"How your actions answer [this] question will affect the parent's relationship with their child and their wellbeing... And their relationship and partnership with you."

Source: Zero to Three Podcast by Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D.

***Value my child = I value you = I make an extra effort**

Value me = I value you = I make an extra effort

***The answer to forming collaborations that work = *Build the Relationship!**



What do you currently do to build a strong relationship with the families you work with?

1) Be Curious:

- Take the time to get to know the family and child, showing genuine interest in the family's everyday life
- From the start: Ask valuable connection questions
 - What are your favorite or most valuable holidays? How does your family celebrate those?
 - What kinds of meaningful routines and rituals does the family enjoy?
 - How would you like to communicate?



Ask open-ended questions that invite connection and help you get to know the families world.

- How did you choose your child's name?
- What brings your family joy?
- What brings your family stress?
- When you do have extra time, what do you enjoy doing?
- What is day-to-day life like for your family?
- What kind of music do you like to listen to?
- How has your parenting journey been so far?
- What do you enjoy about parenting?
- What has been challenging about parenting this child?
- What was it like for you as a child?
- What were you really into as a child?
- What are your main goals as a parent? What do you like to do? What do you avoid doing?
- If you had a whole day and you could do whatever you wanted, what would you do?
- How has life changed since caring for young children?
- What brings you stress? What helps you calm?
- What would be your perfect weekend?
- Who, in your life, brings you the most joy?
- What are you best at?
- So far, what is the favorite time of your life?
- What do you like to do best on a winter (summer) day?



Keep a tally, making sure to connect with each and every family member



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2) Increase Positive Communication:

"Effective communication requires more than an exchange of information. When done right, communication fosters understanding, strengthens relationships, improves and builds trust." -Liz Papadopoulos

- ✓ **Be positive:** Developing a "proactive, multilayered communication plan, ... can help keep the majority of the messages to families positive, constructive, and encouraging."



- ✓ **Check your ratio:** Keep your messages a minimum of at least 5+ to 1-
- ✓ **Avoid negative communication:** Judgement, defensiveness, distracted interaction, advice giving, lack of interest, raising intensity, denying feelings, lecturing, "me too"

- ✓ **Increase positive communication:** Active listening, validation, mutual sharing, specific praise, supportive statements, checking in, reframing, focused attention, seek clarification

- ♥ ✓ **Show your love!** When did you enjoy the child's behavior or reaction? When was the child successful?
- ♥ ✓ **Tell the fun stories!**

- ✓ **Consider the family and child when making choices about your day and communicate the positive results of these considerations**
 - o "I know your toddler loves trucks so I..."
 - o "I totally get you both need to take turns picking up and do not always know who will do pickup ahead, it is so great that you can work together to make this work! I have _____ to help with this."
 - o "I remembered your family celebrates ____, so today we..."



Practice: Today we..... and the result?

✓ Reframe family member's worries

Family Member's Statement	→	Caregiver's Reframe
Isn't my child stubborn?	→	We really have noticed and appreciate how she will work on a task until it is finished!
Aren't they naughty?! They get into everything!	→	
They are so attached to me... I wonder if it is because they are an only child...	→	



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3) Value Family's Strengths and Contribution:

- ✓ **Beware (or BE-AWARE) of the human brain's negativity-bias**
- ✓ **Make up positive stories**
- ✓ **Assume positive intent**

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. - Maya Angelou

Be the calm cool water (rather than starting a fire)

Interpretation of Family Member's Behavior

"That parent doesn't even care enough to follow through with this simple task..."



"Parent keeps rescheduling because they don't care about what we are working on."



"My child is having trouble separating because we sleep with them at night."



Why else might this be happening?

"They must not understand why this is important. I wonder what they think or feel about this requirement?"

✓ Attend longer, seeking to understand the family's world

- "You seem to be doing so much, tell me more about what life looks like for you."
- "You have seemed a bit distracted, is everything okay?"
- "How are you holding up lately?"
- "I noticed you have been lingering at goodbye time. How are you feeling about separation?"

✓ Notice family strengths

*Express gratitude *Provide compassion *Focus on strengths

✓ Show gratitude and appreciation for what the family *does do*

I appreciate that you...

- Trust me to care for your child
- Show up on time
- Love, hug, and touch your child
- Working hard to provide for your family
- Put time into finding community resources for your family
- Others?



Objective Check: What can you do to promote an open, cooperative, reciprocal relationship with each child's family?

Survey:

