

# Collaborating with Families Part 1: It's All About Relationships!

Strategies to build strong relationships with the families you work with (compiled from past sessions).



- Have brief daily or weekly "check-ins"
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - How are they doing?
  - Any questions/ concerns?
  - How was the cabin this weekend?
  - Did your sister those her tooth?
- Keep communication overt, open, and clear
- Have a place on the bulletin board to share great activities to enjoy with their child that do not cost anything and fits into busy schedules
- Send out a detailed message on an app to every family member about the activities you did that day, why you did them, and how the adult can continue the learning at home with their kiddos.
- Recommended apps and helpful use of technology
  - Brightwheel
  - KidsReport
  - Daily Connect
  - Procare
  - Facebook page to update and post photos
  - Daily emails / texts
  - Send weekly/monthly newsletters with special events, sharing about a family tradition, etc.
  - Send home progress reports
  - Send videos throughout the day (activities)
- Have events throughout the year to connect and welcome all families
  - Open-house
  - Conferences
  - Family picnics / family night out
  - Invite parent/families to come share a morning with the kids about their family, hobbies, culture, jobs, reading stories, etc
  - Have special days to celebrate the family members such as "muffins with moms" and "Donuts with dads" on Fathers/Mother's day.

- Greet each family member and the child with joy at pickup and drop-off, getting down at the child's level and using their names
- Share your mutual love for their child
- Recount positive stories, funny stories and/or humorous moments from your interactions at pickup time
- Dedicate special 1-1 time to the child with problem behaviors to build the relationship
- Have a Meet and Greet / initial conference with each family before start of school year
  - Ask questions about home life and the child
  - Get to know name of parents and siblings
  - Ask about what they enjoy doing as a family, including interests and hobbies
  - Learn about their culture and traditions
  - Ask the parents their hopes, goals and fears for their child
- Point out good behaviors every day and build on strengths rather than focus on problems.



- Assume positive intent, that the adult is doing their best
- Have empathy and understanding about the place they are in
- Listen to the family members thoughts and concerns
- Make time to schedule important conversations.
- Share stories about your own struggles as a parent, be open and vulnerable
- Reassure them that they are the experts on their own children and have valuable insight
- Be consistent in policies between instances and between families
- Family projects so the children and families can share creativity and ideas with other families a the school.

