

Take Informed Action



When you engage with families, you form a relationship on behalf of their children. You can use the tools below to help you decide what to say or what to do next when interacting with families.

Use Relationship-based Practices

Use what you learn about a family to help you choose a Relationship-based Practice. Then use the practice to help you determine what to do next in your work with families.



Focus on the family-child relationship.

Let families know you value their relationship with their child. Comment on the positive things that you see when a family interacts with their child.

Observe and describe the child's behavior to open up communication with the family.

You can share what you notice about a child with a family without interpreting the child's behavior. This approach provides you with an opportunity to learn about what families have noticed at home and what their child's behavior means to them. Then you can discuss what you have observed at the setting and partner with the family to decide what to do next.



Support parental competence (the parent's skills) and self-confidence.

Families benefit when you recognize their successes, growth, and efforts. Share in families' progress and encourage them to recognize their strengths.

Value a family's passion (working with both their positive and negative feelings)

Value and recognize your own and the family's feelings, especially when families feel strongly about an issue. Recognize that families' expression of strong emotions indicates how much they care.



Strategies for Building Relationships with Families

