

Use a Strengths-based Approach



Strategies for Building Relationships with Providers



You can use the following three strategies when interacting with providers:

- **Use a Strengths-based Approach**
- **Listen Actively**
- **Take Informed Action**

You can access more information on all three strategies in the Family Engagement Toolkit at qualitycountsca.net/FToolkit.

How to Use a Strengths-based Approach

The **Use a Strengths-based Approach** strategy helps you focus on a provider's* strengths. It also helps you consider the perspective of the provider as well as your own, which can be especially useful for addressing challenges or differing views between you and the provider. You can use the following tools to help you take a strengths-based approach: Reflect and Inquire and Apply the Strengths-based Attitudes.

*The term "providers" used here refers to all early learning and care professionals. This includes, but is not limited to, supervisors, coaches, co-workers, higher education faculty, teachers, home visitors, and family child care providers.

Reflect and Inquire

Reflect

When you take time to reflect, you begin by thinking about your own personal and cultural perspectives. You can then consider the provider's perspectives.

- **Reflect on your personal and cultural perspectives.**
- **Reflect on the provider's individual and cultural perspectives.**

Inquire

After you reflect, you can inquire. Inquiring is asking yourself questions and thinking about how what you learned may influence your relationship with a provider. You can use two questions to inquire:

- **What came up for you, both positive and negative?**
- **How might these feelings or reactions influence your relationship with the provider?**

Apply the Strengths-based Attitudes

Apply

You can use the Strengths-based Attitudes to help you think about a provider's strengths, especially if you are experiencing challenges. Choose a Strengths-based Attitude and determine how you will use it to focus on the provider's strengths:

Strengths-based Attitudes	Guidance
All providers have strengths.	Be aware of uncomfortable feelings or judgments you might have about the other provider. Hold the idea that the other provider has strengths and notice their strengths.
Providers deserve the same support and respect we are asking them to give families.	Recognize and honor what providers share with you about their personal and cultural perspectives and what matters most to them. Reflect on how these perspectives might influence your relationships with other providers.
Providers have expertise about their own fields of practice.	Listen to understand and recognize the provider's knowledge about their work and experiences.
Providers' contributions are valuable and important.	Be open to providers' suggestions and requests. Adopting an open mind will help you learn from providers about what is happening.



To learn more about family engagement, check out the Family Engagement Online Toolkit: www.qualitycountsca.net/FEtoolkit

References for this resource can be found in the [Module 5 Reference List](#).

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2018). *Strategies for Family Engagement: Attitudes and Practices*.