

## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

### INTENTIONAL INTERACTIONS IN TEACHING:



## Being Responsive to Children and Families

Partnering With Families to Provide Responsive Care

### LEARN FROM FAMILIES

Families know their child better than anyone else and have valuable information to share with you.

- Ask family members about their child's behaviors, skills, personality, and interests at home. Use this information to plan responsive learning experiences.
- Learn about families' home language, greetings, and traditions. Use this knowledge to create a welcoming and culturally responsive learning environment.
- Learn how families would like to participate in your early childhood program. Offer a variety of opportunities for them to participate in the program and collaborate on the curriculum.

### SHARE WITH FAMILIES

Sharing information with families helps them become actively involved in their children's development and learning.

- Share examples of the curriculum and children's learning through your ongoing communication with families and documentation boards.
- Use a private website to show children's learning. After receiving permission, upload photos so families can see their child participating in learning experiences. Provide access to the website on a program computer to make sure all families have access.
- Host family events that support children's learning, such as a family math night where children and families do a cooking activity or a family literacy night where children and families read a book or tell stories. Provide materials for a related "Make-It, Take-It" activity where children and families work together on an art project or create their own book to take home.

### COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES

Remember, families are your partners in supporting children's development and learning.

- Invite families to plan and participate in learning experiences. Families could join in an activity such as story time, music time, or a nature walk. They may share with the children objects, stories, or traditions from their own culture.
- Invite families to share their skills and resources to support learning experiences. For example, families could lead a learning activity or help by providing materials from home for an upcoming unit of inquiry.

For more ideas and tips about family engagement and culturally responsive practices, check out the following resource:

- Child Care Exchange: *Meaningful Family Engagement: Just Imagine the Possibilities*  
<https://secure.ccie.com/library/5016318.pdf>



### Being Responsive to Children and Families

#### Taking It Home—Partnering with Teachers around Responsive Care

As families, you play an important role in your children’s early education. You can support their development and learning through active participation in your children’s early childhood program.

Learn about important aspects of an early childhood program: teachers/providers, curriculum, and environment on the First 5 California Parent Education website:

<http://www.cfcf.ca.gov/parents/learning-center.aspx?id=13&sub=57>.

Communicate with program staff when you have a question or concern about any of these aspects.

Here are some ideas for how to participate in your child’s early childhood program:

### WHAT CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S INTERESTS, PREFERENCES, AND ROUTINES?

- Share information with your child’s teacher/provider about your child’s skills, interests, and preferences.
- Discuss with your child’s teacher/provider some things about your child’s home—who lives with you and what routines look like.
- Talk openly about your parenting practices and values.

Communicating this information helps teachers/providers practice routines that are consistent with the home life and plan learning experiences that meet your child’s and family’s needs.

### WHAT CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY’S CULTURE?

- Think of ways you can be involved in learning experiences that share your cultural traditions. Share pictures, foods, books, music, or other items that represent your culture with the group.
- Communicate with the teacher/provider if you feel your cultural practices are not being supported in the early childhood program. Offer suggestions to the teacher/provider that would better support your child and family.

### WHAT CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN YOUR CHILD’S PROGRAM?

- Tell the teacher/provider if you notice a new development or interest of your child or his/her peers. This interest may spark the next unit of inquiry.
- Read the documentation boards in your child’s program. Let the teacher/provider know if you have any ideas for materials, activities, songs, or books related to the children’s learning experiences.
- Discuss with your child’s teacher/provider ways you can be actively involved in your child’s program, for example, by leading an activity or volunteering in the classroom.

**Want More?** Read about specific tips for how to discuss a concern you have with your child’s teacher/provider on the National Association for Education of Young Children’s family website:

<http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/child-development/tips-talking-teacher>.