

# Creating a Caring Community

## Activities with Families

### Building Community with Families

Consider these ideas as part of your program's plan to engage families. Invite them to suggest ideas. Let families lead and share talents for a more diverse and caring learning environment for all.

### Welcome Families in the Learning Environment

Here are some ways you can make families feel welcome in the learning environment:

- Ask families for suggestions of images, photos, print, songs, books, and other materials to create a learning environment that represents children's cultural, linguistic, and individual identities.
- Learn about their home culture and languages.
- Start a phrase book with common sayings from the children's home languages.
- Ask a family (or two) to plan and lead a learning activity. For example, they could read a book, tell a story, teach a song, or share a skill.
- Invite families to make books that tell their family stories. Provide materials and directions. Offer a family social event for bookmaking.
- Begin a family mentor program, where families connect with and learn from each other.

### Support Families in the Home and Community

Here is how you can make families feel supported in the home and community:

- Ask families to share their views on building positive relationships between adults and children and between children.
- Discuss ways to embed caring actions within the program day.
- Encourage families to use everyday items easily found in the home to support children's learning.
- Ask families for suggestions of activities or events you can attend to get to know the family's values and beliefs.



## Reflect on Ways to Build Community

Use the table below to capture your thoughts on how your program can build a caring community with families and other Head Start and Early Head Start staff. This can be used in a group activity with program leaders and education staff, or individuals can use it to reflect on how to engage families.

Reflection Question	Reflections
<p>How can we gather families' ideas about the ways they would like to participate in the Early Head Start/Head Start community this year? How can we invite them to play a role in leading these efforts?</p>	
<p>How can we find out how families want to interact with one another? What has been successful in the past in bringing families together in meaningful ways? Are there ways we can help families connect?</p>	
<p>How can we find out ways that families would like to support one another? Are there areas where families would like help from other families or Head Start and Early Head Start staff?</p>	
<p>How have we connected with families in the past to get to know and learn from each other, share information, and celebrate events? What are the ways we want to do that this year?</p>	



National Center on  
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning



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