



Family Engagement in Early Care and Education

Partnerships That Foster Development
and Learning



Overview

This module will focus on:

- Importance of relationships for children's learning and development
- Responsive interactions that build children's abilities
- Ways to partner with parents to boost children's learning outcomes
- Identifying community resources with families to encourage children's learning

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

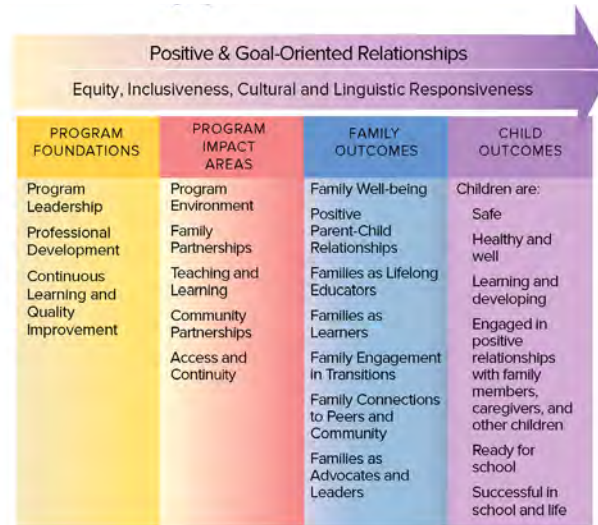


Image credit: Office of Head Start



LEARNING ACTIVITY

Partnering for Children's Learning

- Four pieces of chart paper with prompts are hanging around the room
- Move around the room and write your responses to each prompt
- There are no right or wrong answers



By the end of this module, you should be able to:

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the impact of positive relationships on children's learning and development
- Identify and model responsive interactions to build children's abilities
- Partner with families to boost children's learning and development in the early learning environment and at home
- Identify community resources with families to enhance children's learning

Relationships and Learning



DISCUSSION

Seeking Understanding

- What do you think families want from you?
- What do you expect from families?
- How might these interests, desires, needs, and wants overlap?
- How might they differ?

Influences on Relationships

The interactions, conversations, and experiences that you have with families are shaped by:

- Personal stories and individual experiences in families and school
- Identities
- Values and beliefs
- Culture

Valuing Families' Perspectives

When educators and families have different cultural perspectives, they can learn to:

- See and value each other's viewpoints and perspectives
- Work toward shared goals for children's learning and development

A Strengths-Based Approach



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Families . . .

- Are our partners in supporting children's development
- Are experts on their children
- Always have something important to contribute



**Parents are
their children's
first and most
important
teacher**

Image credit: EarlyEdU



When parents and other family members have strong, trusting relationships with those who support them, they are more likely to actively participate in young children's learning and development

Image credit: EarlyEdU

Impact of Interactions on Children's Learning



Children's learning and development depend on the quality of the interactions with important adults in their lives

Image credit: EarlyEdU

Everyday Interactions

“The day-to-day interactions between infants and young children and their parents help drive their emotional, physical, and intellectual development (Brazelton & Cramer, 1990).”

(Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2013, p. 2)

Responding to Children



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Three strategies
In responding to
children are to:

- Describe
- Repeat
- Add something new

Describe



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Repeat



“¡Mira!”

“¡Mira!”

Image credit: EarlyEdU

Add Something New



“¡Mira!”

“¡Mira!”
You look
happy.”

Image credit: EarlyEdU

Partnering for Children’s Learning



DISCUSSION

How Would You...

- Partner with families to extend children's development and learning?
- Support the relationships and interactions of parents and children?
- Recognize and encourage parents' roles as lifelong educators of their children?

Share Learning Ideas



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Adopt an approach of collaborating with families to share learning goals and ideas to support children's learning both at home and in the early learning program



DISCUSSION

Influences of Culture

In small groups, discuss:

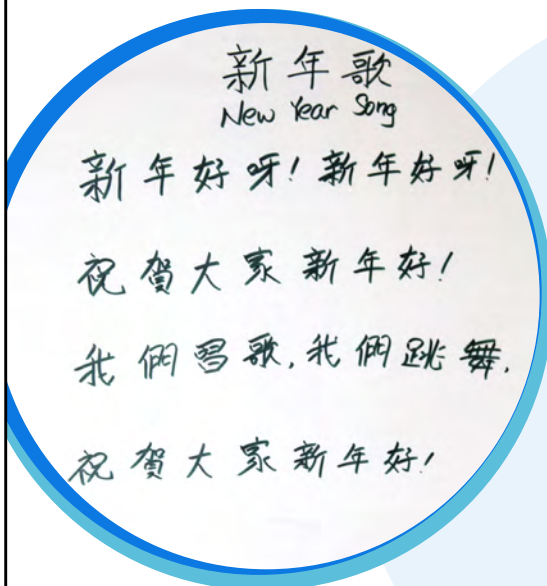
“What are some of the ways that culture can influence families’ approaches to teaching their children?”

If possible, draw from your own experiences.

Welcoming Families' Cultures

- Parents are more likely to partner with educators and advocate for their children when they are able to discuss culture openly
- Children can have enhanced brain development when they continue to learn their home language in addition to English

Inviting Families to Share



Educators can invite families to bring stories, songs, and other activities from their culture and childhood to share in the early learning program

Image credit: EarlyEdU

Families May Want To...

Lead activities for
groups of children

Volunteer or help
with activities

Read and play
with children

Sit with children
and observe



RESOURCES

Tell Me A Story Series



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Enjoying Books Together



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Invite families to share approaches to engaging children with books

Some strategies are:

- Look at and describe the pictures
- Ask the child questions
- Act out parts of the book
- Skim it

Look at the Pictures



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Look at the cover:
What do you think this book is about?

Turn to the first page:

- Describe what you see
- Respond to children's comments

Act It Out



Image credit: EarlyEdU

- Recreate scenes
- Say the words in characters' imagined voices
- Use loud and soft voices and pauses for drama
- Create a new ending or add a plot twist to keep it fun

Skim It



Image credit: EarlyEdU

- Choose select words to emphasize
- Look for, and focus on, important ideas
- Follow the child's lead and if the child starts to lose interest, take a break



**LEARNING
ACTIVITY**

Let's Practice (Optional)

- Find a partner and one children's book for your pair
- Practice the strategies from the previous slides



Image credit: EarlyEdU



**LEARNING
ACTIVITY**

What Am I Learning?

Read each experience that a child could have with family members. With a partner, discuss:

- What children may be learning
- How families can help children learn
- How educators and families can work together to help children grow and progress

Supporting Families

Support from a healthy web of relationships can offer families:

- Strength
- Hope
- Respect for their role as lifelong educators of their children
- A sense of competence and confidence
- Security

When Families Face Challenges

- Some families may face challenges that can impact interactions between parents and children
- It is important that you continue to build positive and supportive relationships with families and work to understand their perspectives



Image credit: EarlyEdU

Families may face separation due to:

- Employment
- Immigration issues
- Hospitalization, long-term care
- Deployment
- Custody issues

Keeping Connected



- Pictures
- Letters
- Photographs
- Phone calls
- Video chats
- Recorded stories

Image credit: EarlyEdU



DISCUSSION

What Are Your Ideas?

Kiera is 2 years old. Her father just started a new job as a truck driver and is gone several nights in a row each week.

How could you support Kiera's father in continuing to engage with her and promote her learning?

Learning Within the Community

Through a Family's Eyes



Image credit: EarlyEdU

- Encourage families to share their world with you
- Explore the importance of learning opportunities that bring families together
- See the community through a child and family's eyes

Use Family and Child Photos



Image credit: EarlyEdU



DISCUSSION

Families and Community Resources

How are community resources valuable to young children and families?

- Turn to, and exchange ideas with a partner
- Be ready to share your thoughts with the larger group

Potential Community Partners

- Public libraries
- Museums
- Public health departments
- Hospitals
- Local schools and school districts
- Faith-based organizations
- Parks
- Recreation and community centers



DISCUSSION

Program-Community Partnerships

- How could you and families plan to use community resources to support learning in early childhood programs?
- How might you work with community resources to help promote families as lifelong educators?

Ideas for Programs

- Ask a librarian to help lead a family event or children’s story time for children and families
- Request a bookmobile visit
- Ask a local library, hospital, or business to sponsor a gallery of children’s art
- Ask a museum representative to visit your program



ASSIGNMENT

Community Resource Map (Optional)

- Identify at least three resources, such as libraries, museums, or recreation centers, that provide family or child activities in a community
- Investigate and gather information about the opportunities they offer
- Create a map of the community and label the kinds of resources available to families

Bringing It All Together

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

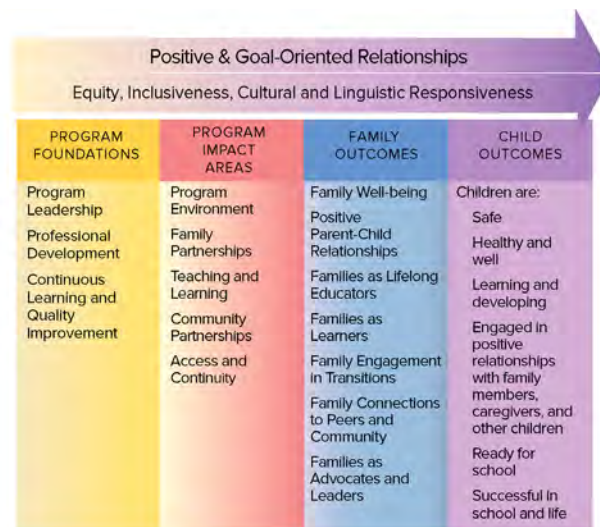


Image credit: Office of Head Start



DISCUSSION

Where Does It Fit?

Which part of the Framework does this module connect with?

- Turn to, and exchange ideas with a partner
- Be ready to share your thoughts with the whole group



SESSION SUMMARY

- Family-educator relationships and parent-child relationships influence children's learning and development
- Responsive interactions are key to children's growth
- Educators can partner with families to boost children's learning at home and in the early learning program
- Families and educators can access community resources to support children's learning

Family Engagement in Early Care and Education Partnerships That Foster Development and Learning



For more information about this resource, please contact us:
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