

Improving Communication Skills

Intro page

Heading	Communicating as a partner
Content	<p>Directors and staff are often proud of their programs and knowledge. They work very hard to keep their programs in top shape and safe for children.</p> <p>As a Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC), your communication conveys respect for the staff and program, an understanding of their priorities, and an openness to collaborative problem solving. It is important to practice active listening, ask open-ended questions, and take the time to celebrate successes.</p> <p>In the following activity, you will practice communicating with a program director in a series of simulated conversations.</p> <p>This activity includes audio. Headphones are recommended.</p>
Button text	Next

Sub-menu

Conversation 1

Title	Conversation 1 - Starting the Site Visit
Blurb	In this conversation, you will be in the role of a CCHC tasked with completing an initial visit to an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program.
Background heading	Background
Background content	<p>Prior to this visit, the director sent you information about the program's policies and procedures, as well as copies of the staff and parent handbooks.</p> <p>This is your first onsite visit. During this visit, you begin building your relationship with the director and staff.</p>
Button text	Start

Conversation 2

Title	Conversation 2 - Providing Feedback
Blurb	You are well into your visit to this program, having now completed your observations of the classrooms and the playground. Now, provide feedback in a constructive, collaborative way.
Background heading	Background
Background content	<p>During your observations, you noticed some issues with the playground. The wood chips were worn away in many areas, including around the slide and swings. It looked like rain had washed some of the chips out of the playground so they were no longer deep enough.</p> <p>You also noted that there was no caregiver near the slide to anticipate the needs of children who may need assistance, prevent falls, and manage the flow of traffic around the end of the slide.</p>

Conversation 3

Title	Conversation 3 - Answering Questions and Addressing Concerns
Blurb	You have shared your observations about the playground and started to discuss maintenance strategies with the director. In this final exercise, you will pick up the dialog a little bit later.
Background heading	Background
Background content	At this point, you are exploring strategies to maintain the depth of the woodchips on the playground. You have suggested that the teachers could inspect and rake the wood chips before the kids come out to the playground. The director has some specific concerns in mind. How will you handle them?

Onscreen text during conversations

Text by director image	Director says
Text over answer choices	Your Response
Instructions	Choose the best response
Relationship meter text	Relationship Strength
Director mood meter text	Director's Mood
Transcript button	Transcript
Help button	Help

Help text

Notes	This content is the same for all three convos.
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Content	<p>How this activity works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read or listen to the director's words. • From the options at right, choose the best response. • The director will reply to your selection. • Feedback will appear. Read it, then click Next. <p>FYI As you complete the activity, watch the meter to get a sense of how you are doing.</p> <p>This button displays a transcript of your entire conversation so far:</p>
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Scenario conclusion

Instructions	Select a section of the graph to review your choices and feedback
Meter text	Relationship Strength
Button text	Menu
Feedback popup	Director said: You said: Feedback:
Feedback popup button text	Close

Activity conclusion

Heading	Wrap-Up
Content	<p>As you saw in this activity, a CCHC who is only criticizing the program will have difficulty collaborating with directors and staff. It is important not to judge or criticize out of impatience to fix a problem.</p> <p>Instead, ask questions to understand what a program has done in the past and what constraints they have. This will help you form a strong relationship with the staff and develop effective strategies to support the program.</p>
Button	Finish

Activity title

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Improve Communications Part 1

Program Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Mood (Static)
It's nice to see you. Thank you for stopping by.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	2	It's my pleasure. I'm here to complete the initial visit and inspect your playground and classrooms. I'll be observing the overall environment and your staff and will let you know about any problems I find.	-	-	This is the weakest response. It does not set the best tone or help build a relationship. You missed an opportunity to greet the director and recognize and relate to her busy schedule. Remember, CCHCs are not inspectors, but should work collaboratively with providers to identify and resolve health and safety concerns.	-1
-	3	Thanks for taking the time to meet with me! I know your schedule is packed. Before we begin, is now a good time to go over a few questions so I can learn more about how I can support your program?	-	-	Well done! You demonstrated that you prioritize understanding her program as well as your role in supporting the program's needs.	2
Sure. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have. Did you get the policies and handbooks that I sent?	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Yes, thank you! They were helpful in beginning to learn about your program. I look forward to hearing about the program and your experiences. Can you tell me more about the families you serve?	-	-	Absolutely! You demonstrated an understanding that the director's knowledge is appreciated, which will help build your relationship and encourage teamwork. Asking questions about the families will help you understand the community served by the program.	2

-	2	Yes, thanks for sending them, but there were a lot of gaps in the information that I'll be asking you about. Can you tell me more about the families you serve?	-	-	This is an acceptable option because it is always a good idea to thank the director and ask open-ended questions. However, you used judgmental language that could be interpreted as meaning the materials she provided were not good enough.	1
Well, as you know, we're located in the heart of the city and serve a very diverse community. It's so important to us to foster a welcoming, inclusive environment. We like to make sure that all of our signage, for example, is written in the languages spoken by the children and their families.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	A welcoming environment is definitely important. What would you say your major concerns for the program are at this point? What about your staff's concerns?	Well, I guess you are here to address problems, but I do think there's a lot that we do well here.	-	This is an acceptable response because it is important to check if the director and staff have any concerns. However, it is too soon to do so because it changes the subject and focuses on the problems and misses an opportunity to acknowledge successes.	0
-	2	That's great! I agree with you that a welcoming and inclusive environment is crucial. How were you able to accomplish this?	-	-	This is an excellent choice. Repeating things back to the director demonstrates active listening , which will help build the relationship. The question asked will also provide valuable information and give you an opportunity to recognize the program's achievements—not just the items that need work.	2

-	3	Making sure signs are readable for everyone is important, but it sounds like you may be struggling to meet the needs of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the families. Would you agree?	Absolutely not!	-	This is a poor choice because it makes an assumption that may not be accurate and could anger the director. Be sure to ask plenty of clarifying questions before drawing conclusions. An opportunity to recognize the program's successes was also missed.	-2
I'm very proud of how we've been able to create collaborative relationships with families by enlisting their help to solve problems.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	That's great! So, in the next few minutes, I'm going to talk you through a plan for the rest of the day. Is that okay with you?	Uh, sure...	-	This was the weakest option. It fails to respect the director's role as the leader of the program and the CCHC's role as a guest. In addition, it fails to recognize the expertise the director brings to the relationship.	-2
-	2	Oh wow. I don't see many programs collaborating with families. It's an interesting approach.	Oh yes! They're thrilled to be involved. It's been great to see.	-	This is an acceptable response, but the words "interesting approach" don't acknowledge that involving families is the best approach to strengthening services for children, and the response fails to keep the conversation moving toward getting to know the program.	1
-	3	Fantastic. That kind of collaboration empowers caregivers and families. I look forward to hearing more about that. Can we spend a moment to make a plan for my visit and talk about anything you need from me?	I don't have anything I need right now but thank you for asking.	-	Excellent choice. This option acknowledges successes, demonstrates active listening , and positions yourself as a learner. Asking the director to be involved demonstrates you understand her role as the leader of the program, and your role as a guest.	2

Let's start with a tour of the classrooms. I'll walk you around to all the rooms, so you can meet the staff and get a feel for how the program is laid out. After that, we'll go out to the playground. Will that work for you?	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	You know, maybe we should start with the playground observation. On my way into the building, I saw a few items I would like to investigate further.	Oh? What did you see?	Conclusion	This is a poor choice. It fails to take the program's schedule into consideration and is uncollaborative. It would have been better to ask the director for her input.	-2
-	2	That is a great idea. I understand the staff might be busy and not able to chat. When we're in each place, would it be alright if I walked around to see the layout, sleeping areas, playground equipment, etc.?	Sounds good.	Conclusion	This is a great choice! It collaborates with the director and elicits approval of your approach to the site observation.	2
-	3	That's fine with me. I've noticed that staff can get nervous when being observed in the classroom, so I like to complete a task as I watch. If it's okay with you, I'll start by checking the First-Aid kits in each room.	Could we come back and do that this afternoon? The children will be very curious about the first aid kits, but they're supposed to be eating lunch right now.	Conclusion	This is an acceptable response because you involved the director in making the plan and agreed with her suggestion. However, you explained your approach to the classroom observation instead of the asking for her input.	1
-	-	WRAP UP TEXT	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	BEST	Success! Well done! You demonstrated an ability to work collaboratively with the director, which will establish trust and openness in the relationship. You also asked open-ended questions, actively listened to the director's responses, and took the time to go over some of the program's accomplishments. This demonstrates respect for her expertise and position as the leader of the ECE program.	-	-	-	-

CONCLUSION	AVERAGE	<p>Success!</p> <p>Acceptable. A few mistakes were made along the way, but you managed to get the conversation back on track and recognized the importance of building a collaborative relationship. Remember the importance of asking open-ended questions, practicing active listening, and taking the time to celebrate successes. This will be the basis for all future interactions.</p>	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	FAIL	<p>This conversation was not successful.</p> <p>You did not take a collaborative approach. Remember the importance of asking open-ended questions, practicing active listening, and taking the time to celebrate successes. Respecting the director's expertise as leader of the program will help you build a more collaborative relationship. This will be the basis for all future interactions. Give this conversation another try.</p>	-	-	-	-

Program Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Mood (Static)
Oh, umm, I guess that is okay.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Before we jump into the details about today's visit, I'd like to take a moment to thank you for meeting with me. I know how busy you are. Can I ask you a few questions to learn more about your program?	-	-	Well done! You started the conversation off with a friendly greeting. Additionally, you demonstrated that you prioritize understanding her program as well as your role in supporting the program's needs.	1

-	2	I apologize for getting a little ahead of myself. Would it be okay if I asked you a few questions before we begin?	-	-	This is an acceptable choice. Apologizing is appropriate and helps repair the tone of the previous choice. Asking if it is okay to ask questions shows respect for the director's time and opens the door to collaborate.	1
No, I do not agree with that statement at all!	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Oh! I am so sorry. Many programs struggle with serving diverse families, so I assume you'll face challenges, too.	Actually, we have quite a few items in place to meet our families' needs. I wish you would have asked about them.	Conclusion - Fail	This is a poor choice. The director has already expressed frustration with your assumption that the program cannot meet the needs of the families. Apologizing is not enough. Your relationship with the director is now strained. Remember not to jump to conclusions and to ask clarifying questions if necessary to understand the program's perspective.	-2
-	2	Oh, I'm sorry. Serving diverse communities, especially when it comes to cultural considerations, can be a complex process.	That's true.	-	Apologizing is good, but since you made an incorrect assumption, it is important to gather more information. Since the conversation took a negative turn, it may be helpful to focus on some of the program's successes.	-2

-	3	I'm sorry! I didn't mean to offend you. I should not have made an assumption without further information. Would you be able to tell me about some of the program's accomplishments?	Thank you.	-	Absolutely. It is important to acknowledge your mistake and apologize. Additionally, asking about the program's successes will help bring the conversation back to a more positive note and will provide useful information. Focusing on the positive aspects and strengths of the program will be especially important when addressing future concerns.	1
What do you want to start with?	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	I think we should start with a classroom visit. When we visit each classroom, I'm going to walk around to see the layout, sleeping areas, toys, and so on. I hope that's OK.	It should be fine. We can do the playground after that.	Conclusion	This is not the best choice. You explained your approach to the classroom observation instead of collaborating with the director. Asking for permission is not the same as asking for input.	-2
-	2	Well, I'd like to observe both the classrooms and the playground by the end of the day. Where do you think we should start?	-	-	This is the best choice. By inviting the director to make a plan, you are fostering a collaborative environment and will be able to utilize the director's knowledge when making decisions.	1
-	3	I think we should start with the playground observation. On my way into the building, I saw a few items I would like to investigate further.	Oh? What did you see?	Conclusion	This is a poor choice. It fails to take the program's schedule into consideration and is uncollaborative. It would have been better to ask the director for her input.	-2

Improve Communications – Part 2

Program Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Relationship Strength (cumulative)	Mood (Static)
I hope you were able to see everything you wanted to see on the playground.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Well, I noticed a few issues. I think the one that causes the most concern, however, is the lack of supervision around the slide. There should be a teacher stationed near the slide at all times.	-	-	This is a poor choice. By not asking the director about the program's approach to supervision, you shut down communication. You cannot work together on identifying solutions if the CCHC does not take time to learn about their current process.	-1	-1
-	2	What a great structure! The children love the slide! I also loved that the teachers brought out many toys to promote active play. Children were kicking the ball and playing with the hula hoops. I saw a lot of movement and opportunities for developing gross motor skills.	-	-	Great work. This is an excellent choice because it uses a collaborative approach. Also, it is a great idea to start with a positive observation that acknowledges strategies to promote physical activity. This starts things off on the right foot.	2	2
-	3	Well, I did notice a few issues. There is a lack of supervision around the slide. Also, it appears that your <u>surfacing</u> material is wearing thin in some places. Would you like to talk about supervision or surfacing first?	-	-	While this response may seem to be collaborative in nature because it is phrased as a question, it does not actually give the director much room to participate with her own expertise. Also, this response does not start out by acknowledging what the program is doing right. This will hurt your ability to build a relationship.	-1	0

Oh, thank you so much! Yes, we're very proud of it. It's the highlight of the children's day, I think.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Is it okay if we talk about my observations? I'd love to know more about how the playground has been working. Have you or the teachers had any concerns about the playground?	Sure, we can talk about that.	-	Good choice in asking permission to share your observations first, and then asking the director about the program's perspective on the playground. Depending on what she shares, you might be able to use this as an opportunity to discuss the program's approach to supervision.	2	2
-	2	Before I begin with my observations, have you noticed any issues with the playground?	-	-	This is an acceptable response. Your instinct to ask the director about her own observations is a good one. Using questions as teachable moments is a good strategy. However, it is important to ask permission to talk about observations before starting the conversation. Then you know that the director is ready to hear your feedback.	0	0
-	3	I noticed a few issues, of course. There is a lack of supervision around the slide, which might be why I saw children playing on tricycles near the slide chute. Also, it appears that your <u>surfacing</u> materials are not deep enough in some places. You should address both of these issues as soon as possible to prevent injuries on the playground.	-	-	This is a poor response. Instead of talking through the situation using a collaborative approach, you have presented the director with a list of problems to fix. This does not demonstrate openness to the perspective of the program staff.	-1	-1
The playground has been great, but if I could just get the teachers to stop talking to each other out there, I would feel better.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

-	1	I see. I'm glad you mentioned the supervision issue. I also noticed a lack of supervision around the slide, which might be why I saw children playing on tricycles near the slide chute. Also, it appears that your <u>surfacing</u> material is wearing thin in some places.	-	-	This is the weakest option. Instead of talking through the situation using a collaborative approach to dig deeper, you have presented the director with a list of problems to fix. The two of you share a common concern (supervision), but you did not continue to explore it.	-1	-1
-	2	It sounds like you have concerns about the teachers chatting with one another. Since that can affect supervision, it's an important issue. During my observation of the playground, the teachers were spread around and engaging with the children.	-	-	Yes! It is a great strategy to listen to the director's responses, and then repeat her concerns back. This will make her feel heard, which is key to relationship building. It also provides an example of your role as an observer who can help support her goals.	2	2
-	3	That's not exactly the issue I noticed. The teachers were spread out, but there was a lack of supervision around the slide, and children playing on tricycles near the slide chute.	-	-	This is a poor choice. Instead of talking through the situation using a collaborative approach to dig deeper, you have ignored the director's concerns, and hinted at more for the director to uncover. This does not demonstrate openness to the perspective of the program staff.	0	-1
Well, that's great to hear. Maybe they are figuring it out.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Yes. How have you been working with them on this?	-	-	Excellent! This is the best choice because it is a highly collaborative strategy. By finding out what the approach to problem-solving has been, you acknowledge the perspective of the staff, and you ensure that you will not suggest a solution they have already tried. This will make you a valuable partner to the director.	2	2

-	2	Maybe they are. Fortunately, that wasn't one of the issues I wanted to discuss with you.	-	-	You imply that you have a list of issues the director is meant to address. This is not a collaborative approach and stops communication.	-1	-1
-	3	I have some training materials that might be helpful. Would you like me to send them along?	No, I don't think we need that.	-	This is a poor choice. You never asked about how they do training, or how the teachers feel about the issue. By jumping straight to a solution, you run the risk of suggesting something that has already been tried, which will make your advice less valuable.	0	-1
I made supervision a part of staff meetings after attending a workshop on playground safety and supervision. I also created a map for where the teachers should stand on the playground, so they can watch all the children.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	That sounds like a good start. Can I have a copy of the supervision plan so I can review it?	Okay.	A27	This is an acceptable choice. However, the way you asked to see the supervision map does not establish a spirit of partnership. It would have been better to ask to view it together.	0	0
-	2	Okay. Well, at your next meeting, just make sure that your staff knows someone should be stationed by the slide at all times.	Okay.	Branch A22	This is a poor choice. You are approaching the problem with impatience. You seem to want to fix it immediately, but without considering the staff perspectives, so your solution is unlikely to be adopted.	-1	-1

-	3	A map! That's a great idea. Would it be possible to look at it together?	Of course!	-	This is an excellent response. You praised the director's action on playground supervision and asked to review the map together. This reinforces your role as partner, not auditor.	2	1
Here's our current map. I was already thinking of moving someone closer to the slide; sometimes the children fall near there, and we have had a few injuries.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	That's because your wood chips have worn away in many areas. You'll need to invest in <u>resurfacing</u> to prevent injuries.	-	-	This is a poor choice. You told the director what to do without asking if she would like to hear feedback or considering the financial impact. It also sounds like you are blaming her for any injuries that have occurred. This will hurt your ability to engage in relationship building.	-1	-1
-	2	Slides are a common site for injuries. It's important to have someone near the slide to prevent falls. The wood chips you have are a good <u>surface</u> to prevent injuries from falls, but I noticed they'd been worn away in many areas.	-	-	This is an acceptable choice. However, pointing out issues without asking follow-up questions can feel overly critical to your program. Focus on using questions that are more collaborative in nature. Ask clarifying questions when possible.	0	0
-	3	This is a great way to share a supervision plan with the staff. Having someone stationed near the slide is a good idea; it's a common site for injuries, especially if the <u>surfacing</u> isn't properly maintained there. Can you tell me a little about how you maintain your <u>surfacing</u> ?	-	-	Yes, this is the best option! You are doing a great job of listening and asking clarifying questions.	2	2
We only add chips every September. Other than that, we don't worry about the surfacing.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

-	1	It's great you add new chips each year. I know you are concerned about keeping the children safe when they're outside. According to Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) playground safety guidelines, wood chips need to be maintained at a depth of 9" to provide protection from falls. Can we talk about your maintenance plan?	Sure, that would be great.	Conclusion	Excellent choice! This response provides information and evidence-based approaches without telling the director what to do. This collaborative approach will help you build a trusting relationship with the program.	2	2
-	2	Okay, that's a start. Wood chips get easily moved around and washed away when it rains. CPSC guidelines recommend wood chips be maintained at a depth of 9 inches to provide protection from falls. The best solution would be to add chips more regularly.	I don't know how we'll afford that.	Conclusion	This is a poor response. You have chosen to tell the director what to do without acknowledging any positive aspects of the situation or asking if the director would like to hear the feedback. This will hurt your ability to engage in relationship building.	-1	-2
-	3	I have some ideas about how to maintain the wood chips. Can I tell you what you need to be doing to maintain a <u>surfacing</u> depth of 9 inches?	Sure.	Conclusion	While this response may seem to be collaborative in nature because it is phrased as a question, it does not give the director much room to participate with her own expertise. This will not help you build trust in the long run.	1	-1
-	-	WRAP UP TEXT	-	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	BEST	Success! Excellent. In this conversation, you used a collaborative approach, conveying an openness to understand the program's approach to the problems that you saw. You worked hard to understand any challenges or barriers, and you laid the groundwork to start working on solutions together. This will set you up for successful collaboration in the future. Well done.	-	-	-	-	-

CONCLUSION	AVERAGE	<p>Success!</p> <p>Not bad. You made a few missteps along the way, but overall you used a collaborative approach, conveying an openness to understand the program's approach to the problems that you saw. You worked hard to understand any challenges or barriers, and you laid the groundwork to start working on solutions together. Stick to this approach, and you will set yourself up for a successful collaboration in the future.</p>	-	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	FAIL	<p>This conversation was not successful.</p> <p>Work on adopting a collaborative approach. When talking with program directors or staff about your concerns, it is important to recognize their knowledge and needs. You will not be helpful if you do not ask questions and allow them to share what they know, what they have tried, and what constraints or goals they are working on.</p>	-	-	-	-	-

Program Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Mood (Static)
Oh, um...I guess we could talk about supervision...	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	I have some training materials that might be helpful. Would you like me to send them along?	-	-	This is a poor choice. You never asked about how they do training, or how the teachers feel about the issue. By jumping straight to a solution, you run the risk of suggesting something that has already been tried, which will make your advice less valuable.	-1
-	2	At your next meeting, make sure your staff know someone should be stationed by the slide at all times. That will help.	Understood.	Fail	This is weakest option. You are not considering how the program has approached supervision on the playground. Also, by failing to provide reasoning, you are not helping to build the program's capacity for future problem-solving.	-2
-	3	Before we do that, I'd like to say that it's a great structure! The children seem to really love the slide! I also loved that the teachers brought out many toys to promote active play. The children loved kicking the ball and playing with the hula hoops! It's great to see a lot of movement and opportunities for developing gross motor skills.	-	-	This is an excellent choice because you are acknowledging the positive things you saw outside. You are demonstrating to the director that you are looking at the bigger picture.	1
Yeah. Got it. Anything else?	-	-	-	-	-	-

-	1	Before I continue with my observations, have you noticed any issues with the playground?	-	-	This is an acceptable choice because your instinct to ask the director about her own observations is a good one. Using questions as teachable moments is a good strategy. However, your phrasing implies that you already have a list of things for her to "fix," which is not a very collaborative approach. This could hurt your relationship to the director.	0
-	2	You know, let's back up for a moment. I'd love to know more about how the playground been working from your perspective. What concerns have you or the teachers had about the playground?	-	-	This is an excellent choice because you use questions as teachable moments. It is much easier for a <u>CCHC</u> to address concerns when they are related to the director's concerns, rather than bringing up issues that the director is not interested in discussing. Plus, this approach clearly demonstrates your openness to the perspective of the program staff.	1
-	3	I think the surfacing and the lack of supervision are your main issues. Do you have any questions?	No.	Fail	This is a poor choice. It does not appear that you are attempting to collaborate with the director, and that should be the focus of this conversation. You should start again with that in mind.	-2
Oh.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	With regard to your concern about staff on the playground, I would like to point out that during the 20 minutes I spent observing, the teachers were spread out and engaging with the children. I think that's a great sign!	-	-	Yes! It is a great strategy to listen to the director's responses and address them directly. Of course, finding something positive to say is also a great choice for relationship building.	1

-	2	Let's move on to focusing on the issues I saw with your surfacing.	Fine.	FAIL	This is the weakest option. It does not appear that you are attempting to collaborate with the director, and that should be the focus of this conversation. You should start again with that in mind.	-2
-	3	So, regarding the staff talking to one another on the playground instead of focusing on the children, how have you been working with them on this?	-	-	This is an acceptable response. It is a great strategy to listen to the director's responses and address them directly. Saying something positive about the program would help you go further in building a strong relationship.	0
Oh, well...what issues did you notice?	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	The biggest problems are the lack of supervision around the slide, and the lack of adequate woodchips.	I see.	FAIL	It does not appear that you are attempting to collaborate with the director, and that should be the focus of this conversation. You should start again with that in mind.	-2
-	2	Before we move on, let me ask you a question. How have you been working with them on the supervision issue?	-	-	Excellent! This is a highly collaborative strategy. By finding out what the approach to problem-solving has been, you acknowledge the perspective of the staff, and you ensure that you will not suggest a solution they have already tried. This will make you a valuable partner to the director.	1

-	3	Before we move on, I do have some great training materials that might be helpful for the supervision issue you were talking about. Would you like me to send them along?	No, I don't think we need that.	-	This is a poor choice. You never asked about how they do training, or how the teachers feel about the issue. By jumping straight to a solution, you run the risk of suggesting something that has already been tried, which will make your advice less valuable.	-1
Okay.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Could we look at your playground map together? I'd love to hear what your plans are.	-	-	This is an excellent choice. Asking about the map builds on the director's existing work and motivations.	1
-	2	Do you have a sense of where staff might be able to stand? Maybe we could take a look at that map of yours.	Sure.	-	This is a poor response. The director's work is valuable; make sure that value is reflected in your words.	0
I don't know that we can afford that...	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Sure. I know <u>surfacing</u> can be a cost concern. Tell me more about what you're doing now, and we can talk about ways to address this issue that may not require spending money.	-	-	This is a great choice because it supports the director in problem-solving by using an interactive approach. You are doing a great job of listening and asking clarifying questions.	1
-	2	Maybe we could find a way for you to afford it. Should we take a look at your financials?	No, I don't have time to do that right now.	FAIL	This is the weakest option. It does not appear that you are attempting to collaborate with the director, and that should be the focus of this conversation. You should start again with that in mind.	-2
-	3	Okay, well how do you maintain your <u>surfacing</u> currently?	-	-	This is a poor choice. Pointed questions like this can make the conversation feel more like an interrogation. Focus on using questions that are more collaborative in nature. Ask clarifying questions when possible.	-1

Improve Communications – Part 3

Center Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Relationship Strength (cumulative)	Mood (Static)
–	1	Well, the solution that is most likely to work without incurring additional costs is to have a teacher inspect the playground before the children come out. How can we find a way to make that happen?	–	–	While you are addressing an important issue, you are also ignoring the director’s concern. This will not help you arrive at a solution to address safety concerns that is acceptable to the program, and it certainly will not help you build a relationship.	-1	-1
–	2	You seem really negative about the solution I have proposed. We’re on the same team, remember?	I know we’re on the same team.	–	This is a poor choice. Do not simply tell the director that you are on the same team; show her! Focus on asking clarifying questions, using questions as teachable moments, and building on the strengths that the program already has in place.	-1	-2
–	3	That makes sense. It sounds like it wouldn’t work to ask a teacher who is responsible for the children to go outside and look at the playground, as that would leave the children unattended.	–	–	This is a great choice. You have acknowledged the perspective of the director and the staff, and you are laying the groundwork for a collaborative conversation.	2	1

It is just that the teachers will not like it, and the children need the teachers to help them.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Okay. What other ways could we address this?	-	-	This is an acceptable response because you are supporting the director in problem-solving by promoting an interactive approach. However, you missed an opportunity to build on the director's motivations and strengths.	1	0
-	2	All right. It's important to find a solution that your teachers like and that keeps the children safe. I wonder if there are other ways to address this. What do you think?	-	-	This is an excellent choice because you are building on the director's motivations and strengths. Additionally, you are supporting the director in problem-solving by promoting an interactive approach. Well done.	2	2
-	3	Okay, then maybe you could hire a substitute or a floater teacher. They can do the inspection without leaving the children unattended.	-	-	This is a poor choice because it does not promote interactive collaboration and problem-solving.	-2	-1
We do have a bench in the playground. It might work for the children to sit on the bench with one teacher while the other teacher checks the playground.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Okay, that seems like a good idea. Give that a try, and we can evaluate how it's working the next time I'm here.	Oh, okay.	FAIL	This was the weakest option. It indicates that you have nothing more to say on the topic of surfacing. Avoid closing down further discussion. Let the director indicate when she is satisfied with the solutions you have developed together.	1	0

-	2	That sounds like it might be a good option. Would you like to think about some others?	-	-	This is an excellent strategy. You are supporting problem-solving without telling the director what to do, and you are leaving the door open to discuss other options. This will help build a healthy partnership.	2	2
-	3	Okay. If that doesn't work, you do have other options. Let's go over them now.	-	-	While it is good to go over options with the director, you need to work on your phrasing. This does not demonstrate a collaborative communication style and could come across as impatient.	1	-1
Okay.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Another approach to consider is whether someone could inspect the playground each morning. They could make sure the chips are in place and look for other hazards before the children arrive. If you like this idea, I have a great checklist I can show you.	Oh, I hadn't thought of that. Yes, we always have a person scheduled to arrive one hour before the first drop-off.	Conclusion	This is a great response because it reflects your insight into <u>ECE</u> program capabilities and your knowledge of available resources, while still leaving room for the director's perspective. This is a great way to promote collaborative problem-solving.	2	2
-	2	In addition to what we have discussed, you really should have a <u>certified playground inspector</u> look over the playground. We can go over the findings of the inspector's report the next time I'm here.	Really? Is that a requirement?	FAIL	This is a poor choice. You have phrased the topic of a playground inspector as a directive, rather than raising it as a possibility that you and the director can explore together.	-2	-2

-	3	Here are two things you should try. Either require the first person who arrives in the morning to do a playground check before children arrive or hire substitutes or floater teachers to check the playground before each use.	I guess those could work.	Conclusion	While these are great ideas, the word "should" does not promote interactive collaboration and problem-solving and ignores the director's financial concerns.	-1	-1
-	-	WRAP UP TEXT	-	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	BEST	Success! Great work! In this conversation, you were able to provide information and best practices without simply telling the director what to do. Instead, you focused on supporting the director in her problem-solving while acknowledging the unique challenges she deals with at her program. Because of your choices, you are rapidly becoming a valued member of the program's team, which will help children thrive in the long run.	-	-	-	-	-
CONCLUSION	AVERAGE	Success! Not bad. In this conversation, you were able to provide some information and best practices. However, from time to time you neglected to focus on collaborative communication. Remember, your goal is to support the director in her own problem-solving while acknowledging the unique challenges she deals with at her program.	-	-	-	-	-

CONCLUSION	FAIL	<p>This conversation was not successful.</p> <p>In the future, you should focus on collaborative communication. Share information and best practices without simply telling the director what to do. Support the director in her problem solving. Acknowledge her challenges. Listen and ask clarifying questions. This will help you build a strong partnership. You may want to try this conversation again.</p>	-	-	-	-	-
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Center Staff Says	Learner Option #	Learner Says	Staff Response	Leads to...	AAP / Coach feedback	Relationship Strength (cumulative)	Mood (Static)
I am telling you we cannot do that. What about the kids who need help?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	I understand your frustration. Maybe we should move on to one of the other issues I noted? We can come back to this discussion.	Fine.	FAIL	Part of collaboration is working through problems together. If you stop the conversation every time you hit a block, you will never get anywhere.	-2	-2
-	2	Okay, my apologies. It sounds like it wouldn't work to ask a teacher to go outside and look at the playground before the kids go out.	-	-	This is a great choice. You have acknowledged the perspective of the director and the staff, and you are laying the groundwork for a collaborative conversation.	1	1

-	3	You seem really negative about the solution I have proposed. We are on the same team, remember?	I know we're on the same team.	-	This is a poor choice. Do not simply tell the director that you are on the same team; show her! Focus on asking clarifying questions, using questions as teachable moments, and building on the strengths that the program already has in place.	-1	-2
I am not sure I have the funds for that.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1	Well, in this case, I am afraid that it is required for you to find someone to perform this task.	Really?	FAIL	This is a poor choice. You are not acknowledging the difference between "requirements" and "best practices." Stating that something is "required" when it is not required by your state's licensing will hurt your credibility and damage trust.	-2	-1
-	2	Okay. I understand cost is an issue, and that's fine. Many programs have the same constraints. What other ways could we address this?	-	-	This is an acceptable response because you are supporting the director in problem-solving by promoting an interactive approach. However, you missed an opportunity to build on the director's motivations and strengths.	1	0
-	3	I understand. It's important to you that we find a no-cost solution that your teachers like and that keeps the kids safe. I wonder if there are other ways to address this?	-	-	This is an excellent choice because you are building on the director's motivations and strengths. Additionally, you are supporting the director in problem-solving by promoting an interactive approach. Well done.	1	1