



This guide offers suggestions for presenting **Ongoing Child Assessment: Partnering with Families**. This in-service suite includes a PowerPoint presentation and supporting materials. Please use and adapt these materials as needed for specific audiences.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- PowerPoint presentation (16 slides)
- Projector and audio equipment
- Learning Activities:
 - » *Opportunities for Collaboration*
 - » *Gathering Assessment Information*
 - » *Sharing Assessment Information*
 - » *The Many Ways to Engage with Families*
- Tips for Teachers
- Tools for Supervisors
 - » *Observation Form*
- Helpful Resources
- Flip chart or similar large paper, and markers for writing participant ideas

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- The purpose of this presentation is to help participants work in partnership with families in order to facilitate ongoing child assessment.
- This is one in a series of in-service suites about ongoing child assessment.
- The focus of this in-service suite is on family engagement in ongoing child assessment in classroom settings.
- Note that this in-service suite represents Family Outcome #3, Families as Lifelong Educators, from the Head Start PFCE Framework.
- Presenters may want to bring different examples of how to involve families in assessment to share with participants.
- Learning activities offer practice opportunities for participants to identify strategies for partnering with families in gathering and sharing ongoing child assessment information.
- Suggestions of potential follow-up activities for participants are provided at the end of this document.

NOTE

The National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) provides many materials on the subject of partnering with families. In particular, the following two documents provide support and additional documentation for the ideas in this presentation:

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/IMs/2011/pfce-framework.pdf>

This document offers a comprehensive guide for programs in promoting parent and family engagement and children's development and learning.

Family Engagement and Ongoing Assessment

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/family-engagement-and-ongoing-child-assessment-081111.pdf>

This document provides support and additional information related to engaging families in ongoing child assessment.



SLIDE 1: ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Introductions:

- Begin the training by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.
- Conduct an icebreaker activity to promote participation.

Examples:

- Ask participants to say a word or short phrase they associate with the concept of “family engagement.”
- Ask participants to share one way they currently communicate with families in their classroom.
- Ask participants to share something new they learned about a child in their classroom from a conversation or other communication with the child’s family.

Introduce the topic.

This presentation is about partnerships between teaching staff and families, and the ongoing child assessment process.





EMPHASIZE *

Engaging families in assessment enhances children's learning and helps prepare children and families for a better transition to kindergarten.

SLIDE 2: NCQTL'S FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introduce NCQTL.

The four components of the House Framework support school readiness for all children:

- The foundation represents effective and engaging interactions and environments.
- The pillars represent research-based curricula and teaching practices, and ongoing child assessment.
- The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning.
- All four components interact with each other and are essential to effective practices.

This in-service suite is part of the Ongoing Child Assessment pillar of the House. The presentation focuses on building partnerships between the teaching staff and family in the context of ongoing child assessment in the classroom.

NOTE


Remind participants that any record of child progress (including video, work samples, and photographs) must be treated consistent with their program's record-keeping policies, especially in regards to ensuring appropriate confidentiality of information.



OBJECTIVES

To learn about ways to work in partnership with families in relation to ongoing child assessment.

- Gathering information
- Sharing information



SLIDE 3: OBJECTIVES

In this in-service suite we will discuss ways to work in partnership with families in relation to ongoing child assessment. Specifically, we will address two main aspects:

- Family–staff collaboration in gathering assessment information on a child’s learning at home and in school.
- Strategies that support two-way exchanges and information sharing.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to think about this question: “What are important things to consider when you work in partnership with children’s families to promote children’s development and learning?”

Record the participants’ thoughts on paper.

Highlight the following:

- Families are a child’s primary educator.
- Be aware and respectful of the values, expectations, cultures, and languages of all families.
- Gather information from families and draw on their insights to adjust your teaching.
- Provide lots of opportunities for families to share information about children’s learning, development, and interests.
- On an ongoing basis, share assessment information such as anecdotes, observations, or samples of the child’s work from home or from the classroom.
- Teaching teams and families will be able to work together to set learning priorities and promote the child’s learning.

We collaborate with families in all sorts of ways. This presentation is about collaborating in relation to assessing children’s development and learning in the classroom.

This in-service suite covers how to work together so that children, families, and the teaching team all benefit.

NOTE

For more information on the broader system-wide context of family engagement, refer to the *Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework* and the *Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment* documents.





Length of video: Approximately 4 minutes and 30 seconds

SLIDE 4: VIDEO: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Introduce the video.

Let's take a few minutes to hear how teachers interact with families as part of ongoing child assessment.

VIDEO 

DISCUSSION 

Ask participants to share their comments about the video clip.

Points to highlight from the video:

- Head Start values families and promotes partnerships.
- Family engagement promotes children's learning.
- Families are children's primary and first educator.
- Hear from families first.
- Knowing what children do at home helps teachers.
- Develop collaborative learning goals for children, that families can also promote at home.
- Help families gain a better understanding of program goals and expectations, and the family's role in extending children's classroom learning.



PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

How do you currently:

- Gather information from families on their child's background, interests, and progress?
- Share information with families about their child's progress?

EMPHASIZE *

It takes all of us to do a great job.

SLIDE 5: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Now that we have heard from some teachers, you can share ideas from your own program.

How do you currently:

- Gather information from families?
- Share information about children's progress with families?

Take a moment to think about or jot down your answer before we begin sharing.

DISCUSSION 

Participants share examples about working in partnership with families in relation to ongoing child assessment.

Points to highlight:

- Families need to be engaged as equal partners.
- A foundation for partnership and sharing can be built at the beginning of the year.
- A system needs to be in place to ensure that information is shared with families on a regular basis.
- Families need access to assessment information about their child that is understandable and meaningful.





SLIDE 6: THE PURPOSE OF PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Families strengthen their children's learning by providing support that continues outside the classroom. The primary purpose of partnering with families is to support children's development and learning.

Review and elaborate on how working in partnership with families in relation to ongoing child assessment helps improve children's learning.

- Information from families about children's backgrounds and observation of children's behaviors at home provide staff with a more comprehensive picture of children's learning.
- The teaching team comes to understand each family's values, parenting practices, and children's interests so that they may better individualize teaching.
- By working in collaboration with the teaching team on assessment, families improve their ability to observe and promote children's development and learning.
- Staff and families engage in two-way communication and participate in decision making as equal partners.

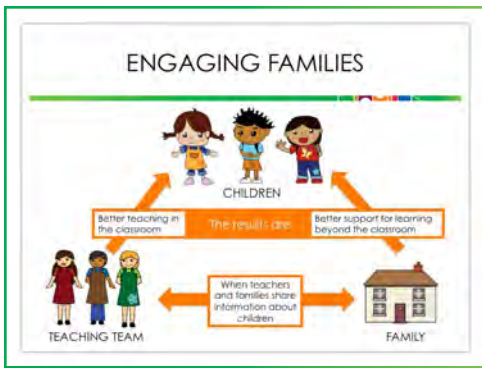
EMPHASIZE *

Information from families helps guide teaching.

DISCUSSION

Provide specific examples of collaboration with families during ongoing child assessment, based on your own experiences or information from the video. Alternatively, ask participants to share examples of their own practices in relation to the points listed above.





SLIDE 7: ENGAGING FAMILIES

This slide illustrates how partnering with families supports children’s development and learning.

Teaching teams and families work together to optimize outcomes for children.

Highlight the main points:

When teachers and families share information about children, the results are:

- **Better teaching in the classroom:**
 - » Information from families provides teachers with a comprehensive picture of the child. This enables teachers to better adjust their teaching to the individual child.
- **Better support for learning beyond the classroom:**
 - » Involving families in developing children’s learning goals increases opportunities for families to support those goals at home and in the community.

EMPHASIZE *

Teaching teams and families are equal partners in sharing information about children.



SLIDE 8: MANY WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

These photos show some of the ways teachers communicate with families: conferences at school, home visits, portfolios, and phone calls.

Opportunities for staff to communicate face-to-face with family members may occur:

- During periodic conferences at school or in the home.
- At drop off and pick up times.
- When family member(s) visit or volunteer in the classroom.

Telephone conversations, email, or written notes help teaching teams and families to keep in touch about children’s progress.

Teaching teams may offer families additional options for ongoing exchange of information:

- Portfolios where both teachers and families contribute work samples and observations
- Activities that include families sending back observations, photos, and/or work samples of what their child does at home

EMPHASIZE *

Members of teaching teams and families find many opportunities to communicate with one another as part of ongoing child assessment. Interactions with families often vary, based upon individual families’ preferences and linguistic or cultural characteristics.





LEARNING ACTIVITY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

The purpose of this activity is to increase awareness of critical aspects of staff and family communication that help promote children's learning:

- Participants share experiences and ideas about staff and family communication situations that help to promote children's learning and development.
- Depending on the number of participants, all can share together, or with a partner, or in small groups.
- Be ready to share examples of two-way, staff and family communication situations, in which staff and families are equal partners.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Opportunities for Collaboration* activity and review directions. Suggest that participants who do not yet have experience in working closely with families think of two or three staff and family communications that would be helpful, and explain why.

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share examples. Offer additional examples, if appropriate. Be sure that the following points are addressed:

- Two-way exchanges are encouraged.
- Equal partnerships are developed.
- Family perspectives are elicited and respected.
- Information is understandable and family friendly.





SLIDE 9: GATHERING INFORMATION FROM FAMILIES: WHAT

Teaching teams gather ongoing child assessment data from multiple sources because information based solely on classroom behavior does not give a full understanding of a child.

Sometimes children demonstrate different abilities at home and at school. Input from family members is a valuable source of information about children's development and learning. It can improve a teacher's ability to fine-tune classroom teaching in the following ways:

- Family background information can help teachers make learning more meaningful for children. Teachers can enhance lessons by incorporating specific details such as pets, outings, and special events that relate to a child's life.
- Family observations and work samples that illustrate what children are doing and saying at home complement classroom observations.

EMPHASIZE



Families contribute valuable background information about children's experiences outside the classroom.

NOTE



For children who are dual language learners (DLLs), the teaching staff needs to gather information from families on each child's background and multilingual experiences. For information on specific strategies refer to: *Young Dual Language Learners: Gathering Background Information*, a resource developed by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness (NCCLR) at: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/dll_background_info.pdf

DISCUSSION



Ask participants to share additional examples of what types of information family members might contribute about their child.

Possible examples:

- Samples of children's work, photos, or video clips from home
- A checklist completed by families or completed with staff
- Family friendly journals sent back-and-forth between home and school

More examples

For more specific examples of ways to engage families in the assessment process, see the "Jason" vignette in *The Many Ways to Engage with Families* learning activity.



GATHERING INFORMATION FROM FAMILIES: HOW	
Acknowledge families' perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual preferences • Cultural and linguistic background • Knowledge of child
Recognize families as partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common language • Participation choices • Support competence
Engage families in assessment and instructional planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use information to make decisions about children's learning. • Incorporate family suggestions into instructional planning. • Co-develop activities for home and community environments.

EMPHASIZE *

Teaching teams and families work in partnership to gather and share information in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.

SLIDE 10: GATHERING INFORMATION FROM FAMILIES: HOW

To acknowledge and value families' perspectives:

- Be sensitive to different family situations, parental emotions, and individual preferences.
- Communicate in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.
- Elicit the family's view on their child's strengths, interests, and challenges.

To recognize and support families as partners:

- Provide families opportunities (e.g., interpreter) to converse with teaching teams in the language they are most comfortable speaking.
- Offer families various options to participate in the assessment process.
- Observe their child and/or review work samples together.
- Use information to help families better understand and contribute to their child's progress.

To engage families in assessment and instructional planning:

- Use information from the family to make decisions about their child's learning.
- Incorporate family suggestions into instructional planning.
- Co-develop activities that families can do at home and in the community.

More examples

For more specific examples of ways to engage families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the assessment process, see the "Tamika" vignette in *The Many Ways to Engage with Families* learning activity.

NOTE

For more information on how to work with families in culturally and linguistically responsive ways, review the following two documents.

Family and Community Partnerships: Supplementary Materials
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/center/Dual%20Language%20Learners/fac/partnerships/PrintMaterials.htm>

Young Dual Language Learners: Gathering Background Information
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/docs/dll_background_info.pdf





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

GATHERING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

The family's perspective on their child's learning provides essential information for evaluating a child's progress and planning for instruction.

In this learning activity, participants identify strategies that could be used during parent-teacher conferences to gather assessment data to inform teaching:

- Depending on the number of participants, all can share together, or with partners, or in a small group.
- Be ready to share examples of verbal and nonverbal strategies.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Gathering Assessment Information* learning activity and review directions.

DISCUSSION

Ask volunteers to share examples. Offer additional examples if appropriate.

Some possible examples:

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Encourage families to bring photos, videos, artwork, work samples, or family journals to the classroom.
- Develop family friendly questionnaires or checklists.





SLIDE 11: SHARING INFORMATION WITH FAMILIES: WHAT

In brief conversations with family members, teachers might:

- Ask families for information about what a child did at home.
- Share an anecdote or sample of a child’s work in school.
- Get the family’s input on a strategy being used in the classroom to address a concern or challenge related to the child’s development or behavior.
- Share ideas that family members might try with the child for incorporating learning goals at home.

During longer conversations at parent-teacher conferences, teachers can:

- Look over a portfolio, checklist, and other types of documentation of children’s behaviors in the classroom and at home with family members.
- Share formal observations of the child’s progress towards goals in the different domains of the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

The teacher and family members may then share a common language and work in partnership to set priority learning goals that take into account:

- The child’s needs
- Family needs and preferences

DISCUSSION

It can be important to let the family share first. Discuss how to provide opportunities for the family to initiate sharing their observations and ideas about the child’s learning.

More examples

For more specific examples of ways to share information with families about children’s progress on learning goals, see the “Crystal” vignette in *The Many Ways to Engage Families* learning activity.

EMPHASIZE

By sharing ongoing child assessment information, the teaching team and family come to support one another in setting learning priorities for children and promoting progress.



SHARING INFORMATION WITH FAMILIES: HOW	
Be sensitive to family individuality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural • Linguistic • Emotional
Work together to understand assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family friendly • Share goals and expectations • Compare observations
Support the family's role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's strengths • Children's challenges • Next learning steps

EMPHASIZE



It's important to acknowledge and support the family's contribution toward promoting their child's learning.

SLIDE 12: SHARING INFORMATION WITH FAMILIES: HOW

It is important that teachers share child assessment information in a way that is understandable and meaningful to families.

Be sensitive to family individuality.

- Recognize and respect each family's views of child development and approach to raising children.
- Share information with family members in the language they prefer and with sensitivity to their culture.
- Take into account the family's previous school experiences and hopes for their child; assessment information can be emotional for families.

Work together to understand assessment.

- Use data collection systems that are understandable and family friendly.
- Share goals and expectations around assessment and how assessment information is to be used (to improve and individualize teaching).
- Compare observations from home and school.

Support the family's role in promoting their child's learning.

- Recognize the family's contribution to a child's strengths and successful learning.
- Approach challenges by inviting families to take part in the problem-solving process and offer all available resources.
- Discuss the implications of assessment findings for next steps and everyday home and classroom learning activities.

More examples

For more specific examples of ways to support the role of the family in the assessment process, see the "May" vignette in *The Many Ways to Engage Families* learning activity.

NOTE

For more information on partnering strategies, see Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/family-engagement-and-ongoing-child-assessment-081111.pdf>





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

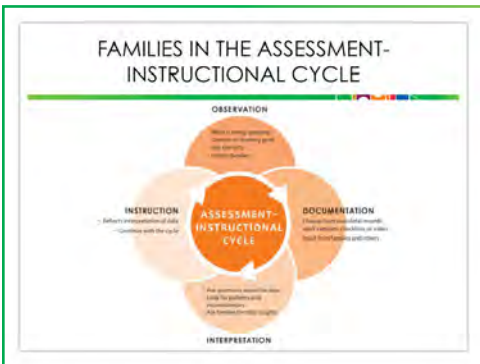
SHARING ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Participants read a short scenario of assessment information that a teacher is preparing to share with a family. Then in small groups of two to three, participants role play a parent-teacher conference. The goal is to communicate assessment information and collaboratively plan next steps for the child's progress.

HANDOUT

Distribute the *Sharing Assessment Information* learning activity and review the directions.

If time permits, bring small groups together for a whole group discussion.



EMPHASIZE

The steps in the assessment-instructional cycle repeat continuously for each child.

SLIDE 13: FAMILIES IN THE ASSESSMENT- INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE

The assessment-instructional cycle refers to the ongoing and interrelated decision-making process that takes place during child assessment. Teachers continually make informed decisions about what to observe and why, and they choose the best ways to gather and document information about children's behaviors. They also decide how to organize, interpret, and use the information to guide and adjust their instruction. Throughout the process, teachers seek input from families and share information with them.

In this in-service suite, you have learned about the importance of gathering and documenting assessment information in collaboration with children's families. You have also learned that by working in partnership, you and the families come to better understand the children's strengths and needs so that you may better help them progress.

Here are four points to keep in mind:

Observations by families

Elicit the family's perspective on their child's strengths, interests, and challenges. Involve families in setting goals and priorities around what behaviors to observe.

Documentation

Work together with families to determine methods for gathering and documenting information. Offer families options for how they can participate in collecting information.

SLIDE 13 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Interpretation-hypothesis setting

Discuss with families what the assessment information might mean. Involve families in drawing conclusions about a child's development and learning.

Instruction with support from families

Engage families as equal partners in making decisions about children's learning. Incorporate family suggestions into instructional planning.

OPTIONAL DISCUSSION

Provide an example from your own experience of the assessment instructional cycle as it relates to partnering with families. Alternatively, ask participants to share examples of when they have changed their teaching based on helpful information provided by families. When have families used their knowledge of ongoing child assessment to strengthen their children's learning outside the classroom?

HANDOUT

The handout *Tips for Teachers* contains information about how to involve families in ongoing child assessment.

NOTE

The PFCE *Family Engagement Ongoing Assessment* also includes helpful suggestions and tip sheets (*Tips for Programs on Family Engagement and Ongoing Child Assessment* and *Ideas for Programs on Sharing Child Information*).



Length of video: Approximately 20 seconds

SLIDE 14: VIDEO: THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Let's consider the importance of partnering with families as part of ongoing child assessment.

Introduce the video.

This is a short clip from the video we watched earlier. As we watch it again, focus on the family's contribution to their child's learning at home and in the classroom and on the importance of a strong connection between home and school.

VIDEO

DISCUSSION

Ask participants to share their comments about the importance of a strong connection between home and school.





LEARNING ACTIVITY:

THE MANY WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH FAMILIES

In this activity, participants review and synthesize the material presented in this in-service suite by analyzing a series of vignettes. Participants review the vignettes for approach, timing, and benefits of engaging families in the ongoing child assessment process.

- Depending on the number of participants, all can work together, or with partners, or in a small group.
- Be ready to modify the activity to fit the needs of your audience.

HANDOUT

Distribute copies of the *The Many Ways to Engage with Families* learning activity and review directions.

SUMMARY:
PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

- Gather information from families
Inform teaching and improve learning.
- Share information with families
Support children's learning beyond the classroom.
- Promote two-way, staff-family partnerships.

SLIDE 15: SUMMARY: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

Ongoing child assessment helps both teachers and families understand children's development and learning. Let's summarize ways in which teachers and families partner to improve children's learning through ongoing child assessment:

- Teaching teams and families gather information to inform teaching and improve learning.
- Teaching teams and families share ongoing assessment information so that teachers can optimize instruction for individual children in the classroom, and families may better support children's learning at home and in the community.
- Two-way staff and family partnerships are promoted through collaboration about ongoing child assessment.

HANDOUT

Distribute handouts if not distributed during presentation.

Based on participant roles:

- Distribute and review *Tips for Teachers*. This handout briefly highlights material covered in this in-service suite.
- Distribute and review *Tools for Supervisors*. This handout is for participants who are supervising programs or grantees. It gives practical ideas for assisting teachers as they collaborate with families on assessment.
- Distribute the *Helpful Resources* handout and review key resources.



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

SHARE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS:

- Work with a colleague to find ways to make families feel welcome in the classroom.
- Watch a child together with a family member in the classroom or at home, or look together at a child's artwork or portfolio. Listen to each others' observations.
- Develop a systematic plan for sharing information with families about what their child is learning in the classroom and at home.



SLIDE 16: CLOSING

Provide participants with NCQTL contact information and encourage them to visit our website for additional resources that support effective assessment and teaching practices in the classroom.