

Caring Community

Narrator: Welcome to this short presentation on creating a caring community. Learn about the importance of a caring community for young children and how to use practices that create a sense of belonging for everyone in the program. Quality teaching and learning practices incorporate the experiences, languages, perspectives, and cultural backgrounds of children and their families. By doing this, learning becomes more meaningful and interesting for children. The Framework for Effective Practice describes effective everyday practices that lead to school readiness for all children.

There are six parts to the Framework for Effective Practice: a strong siding, emphasizing equitable experiences for all children, a foundation of engaging interactions and environments, the supporting pillars of research-based curricula and effective teaching practices as well as ongoing assessment, highly individualized teaching practices that ensure every child makes progress toward school readiness, and, at the center, parent and family partnership and engagement.

Creating a caring community is an essential part of the foundation. This presentation on how to create a caring community is one in a series of suites designed to help adults connect and build strong relationships with children and create an atmosphere of caring and belonging that permeates the program.

[Video begins]

Teacher: We're ready. Good morning, boys and girls.

Children: Good morning!

Boy: Sabah al-khair!

Teacher: Now let's try saying it in Arabic.

Children: Sabah al-khair.

Teacher: Sabah al-khair.

[Video ends]

Narrator: What does it mean to create a caring community? Think about words such as "respectful," "affirming," "kind," "thoughtful," and "understanding." A learning environment that exudes a sense of caring is one where the children and the adults value and respect each other, think about each other, and help each other. Caring behaviors in children develop over time and through many thoughtful interactions.

Educators model respect and caring. And they encourage children to care by helping them learn to share and cooperate and show empathy towards each other. Kindness can create a ripple effect in the learning environment. As educators demonstrate respect and kindness with children and families and other adults, the children feel more value and secure.

Why is it so important to create a caring learning community? Research tells us that children who are taught caring behaviors when they are young continue to show caring behaviors as they grow older. Positive social behaviors also predict children's performance in academic and social areas. And children who show higher levels of caring behaviors tend to be more ready for school than those who do not. Let's look at some of the ways that educators help children learn to be kinder and more respectful.

Teacher: We want to respect Amy's space. Let's slide over a little more. She's building something, and we don't want to keep knocking it down.

Teacher: Or you could ask Silvan to move his hand.

Child: Move your hand.

Teacher: Here, Silvan. Let's move our hand. Maz wants to put it down. Thank you for using your words, Maz.

Teacher: Si tu tienes oportuno, puedes anutar tu nombre y podemos contaro través el tiempo. Gracias por ayudante.

Narrator: Educators are purposeful in designing welcoming learning environments that reflect and affirm children's culture, language, and individual identities. They nurture a sense of belonging for all children and families. They display family pictures and children's artwork, use children's languages and integrate familiar books, stories, music, and objects that celebrate and sustain children's diverse social identities.

Teacher: Help.

Narrator: Educators build on the strengths, abilities, and interests of children to make each child feel valued and confident. They are aware of and responsive to the individual needs of children to help children feel supported and secure. Educators help children learn how their own actions affect others. They model and teach children about fairness and respect for differences. And educators acknowledge children's developing attempts at caring, kindness, and being fair. Educators let children know that their kind actions are valued.

Teacher: Where did you learn to write it in rainbow?

Oriel: He did.

Teacher: Thanks for teaching Oriel about the rainbow. I know you like to do that each day.

Narrator: It takes time and planning to create a caring learning community. Caring learning communities make wonderful and joyful places for children to thrive and learn the many things they need to know to be ready for school. We hope you have new ideas to expand on the ways you already support the social and emotional well-being of all children and can continue to build an atmosphere of caring, belonging, and fairness in your program. For more information and more ideas on creating a caring community, see our 15-minute in-service suite videos, tips and tools on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, or ECLKC.

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