

Communicating with Families - Tip Sheet

Why is it important to communicate with families? Two-way communication...

- Strengthens the relationship with families as partners in children's development and learning.
- Provides an opportunity to discuss a child's development and progress over time and to set individual goals for the future.
- Give families an opportunity to talk with you and ask questions
- Supports family involvement

What are some ways I can communicate with families?

- Create a family handbook that includes information about the importance of communication between your program and families.
- Develop a newsletter to keep families informed about your program.
- Set a goal to contact each child's family on a regular basis to exchange information about their child
- Use technology! Send emails or text messages to connect with families

If I decide to offer family conferences, how do I schedule them?

- An average conference can last about 15 minutes.
- Hold conferences before or after regular hours to avoid the need of a substitute.
- Plan conferences during quieter times in your program.
- Offer phone conferences for family members are unable to attend in person.

How can I prepare for conferences?

- Gather information on each child using observation and ongoing assessments.
- Save work samples to share with family members.
- Create a list of topics you would like to cover with each family. Remember to leave time for questions from the families.

Final thoughts:

- Aim to begin and end your communication with families on a positive note and share the accomplishments the children have made.
- Invite families to have a friend or other family member serve as a translator if English is not spoken by the family.
- Communicate major concerns to families as they occur, and develop a shared plan for addressing them