

This guide provides information about the slide contents and background information for presenters. Estimated time to present this module is just over three hours.

Some activities require self-reflection and discussion of potentially sensitive topics. Reading the slides, notes, discussion topics, and activities ahead of time will help prepare the instructor to present topics more fully and anticipate areas that may require more guidance.

References throughout the presenter notes and in this module's accompanying resource list can also help instructors prepare to present this module.

It is recommended that presenters be familiar with the Framework and complementary materials developed by the Office of Head Start's National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website:
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement>.



SLIDE 1 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION: PARTNERSHIPS THAT FOSTER DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

This module focuses on ways that early childhood educators can work alongside families to support children’s ongoing development and learning through everyday interactions and experiences. This module is for educators working with children from birth to age 5.

The module has two main parts: 1) the importance of relationships and everyday interactions on children’s development and 2) learning and partnering with families in the early learning environment and at home to support children’s progress.

Begin by sharing background information about yourself. Then provide an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves.

Additional Information

The activity on Slide 4 requires preparation of four poster-sized papers for participants to write responses on.

Slide 42 of this module contains an optional learning activity that involves *reading* books. If participants will do the activity, bring enough children’s books for every two people or ask participants to bring books to the session.

Overview

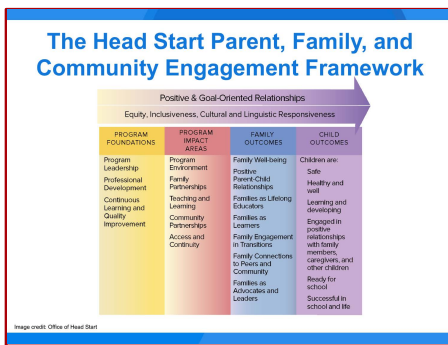
This module will focus on:

- The 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.

SLIDE 2 OVERVIEW

This module will focus on:

- The 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.



SLIDE 3

THE HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

With a solid program foundation in place for parent, family, and community engagement, program leadership and staff can partner with parents, families, and communities to promote family engagement and positive outcomes for families and children.

At the end of this module, participants will have a chance to think about where this module topic (*Partnerships That Foster Development and Learning*) connects with the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.

The terms *parent* and *family* can be defined this way:

- Parents can be biological, adoptive, or step-parents, as well as primary caregivers like grandparents, foster parents, and other adult family members.
- Families may be biological or non-biological. Their connections may include culture, language, tradition, and shared experiences.

REFERENCES

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2011). *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting family engagement and school readiness, from prenatal to age 8*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/policy-im/pfcef-framework.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Parent involvement and family engagement: For early childhood professionals*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/parent-involvement-family-engagement-for-professionals.pdf>



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.

SLIDE 4 LEARNING ACTIVITY: PARTNERING FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Materials: Four pieces of chart paper, a marker for each participant, sticky notes (optional)

Prepare four pieces of chart paper and hang them around the room. Provide a marker (and sticky notes) to each participant. The four posters should say:

Families help their children learn by...

Parents may not see themselves as their children's first teacher because...

Families in my program have resources and support that look like...


When families are in the program, the environment is...

To help early childhood educators look more closely at their work with families, ask participants to move around the room and write responses directly on the chart paper (or on sticky notes they post on the paper).

Emphasize to the group that there are no right or wrong answers. This experience is about sharing ideas and talking about real experiences. Once everyone has had a chance to write on all posters, bring the group back together. Read the responses aloud and note themes that emerge.

Highlight what the group notices about:

- Ways that families help children learn.
- Possible challenges and struggles for some families.
- Family strengths and protective factors, such as steady employment, stable housing, frequent communication, and extended families.
- Positive or negative feelings that may emerge about families in early learning programs.



OBJECTIVES

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

- 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.

SLIDE 5 OBJECTIVES

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


- 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 that can enhance children's learning and development.



Relationships and Learning

SLIDE 6 RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING

A goal of family engagement is to build strong partnerships with families that support family well-being and young children's learning and development.



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?

SLIDE 7 DISCUSSION: SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Materials: Flip chart and marker

Ask participants to find a partner and discuss these four questions:

- 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?

Then, ask each pair to share a few highlights from their conversation with the whole group. Write responses on chart paper. Look for common themes across responses, such as respect, honesty, and open communication.

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

SLIDE 8 INFLUENCES ON RELATIONSHIPS

Prior relationships create feelings, expectations, and behaviors that people bring to each new relationship. The relationships of educators and families are shaped by:

- Previous experiences and interactions, including previous care and school experiences
- Identities, which include the messages that people receive about themselves during childhood
- Values and beliefs
- Culture

One of many definitions of culture is: “The organized and common practices of particular communities.” (Rogoff, 1990, p. 110)

REFERENCES

Rogoff, B. 1990. *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social contexts*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2010). *Revisiting and updating the multicultural principles for Head Start programs serving children ages birth to five*.

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/principles-01-10-revisiting-multicultural-principles-hs-english_0.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In *Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series*.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>

Seeing Families' Perspectives

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

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

SLIDE 9 SEEING FAMILIES' PERSPECTIVES

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

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

The module in this series called *A Relationship-Based Approach to Family Engagement* includes more about working to understand family perspectives.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>

A Strengths-Based Approach



Families . . .

- Are our partners in supporting children's development.
- Are experts on their children.
- Have something valuable to contribute.

SLIDE 10 A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

Adopting strengths-based attitudes allows educators to see families in a positive light. A few strengths-based attitudes are that families:

- Are partners in supporting children's development and learning.
- Are experts on their children.
- Have something valuable to contribute.

When families engage in early learning programs, one result is that early childhood educators have opportunities to notice positive interactions between parents and children. Educators can share their observations with families to recognize their strengths.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *Building partnerships: Guide to developing relationships with families*.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/building-partnerships-developing-relationships-families.pdf>



SLIDE 11

Remind participants of this important tenet of early childhood practice: Parents are their children's first and most important teacher. This view reflects a strengths-based approach.



SLIDE 12

Research suggests that parents and other family members who have positive, trusting relationships with those who support them tend to engage more in their children's development and learning.

These relationships in Head Start and Early Head Start focus on goals that families develop with the help of program staff and community partners. These goal-oriented relationships are part of a two-generational approach to working with families and children in Head Start and Early Head Start.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d). *School readiness: Head Start and Early Head Start parent and family engagement.*

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/pfce-interactive-framework>

Effect on Children's Learning



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

PHOTO: EMMU

SLIDE 13 EFFECT ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Children's healthy development and learning depend on the quality of their interactions with important adults in their lives, including parents and educators.

These relationships lay a foundation for children's development and learning in many areas, including:


- Language and cognitive skills
- Self-confidence
- Motivation to learn
- Ability to control impulses and solve problems
- Ability to form and maintain friendships
- Academic success

REFERENCES

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2004). *Young children develop in an environment of relationships: Working Paper No. 1*. <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2004/04/Young-Children-Develop-in-an-Environment-of-Relationships.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>



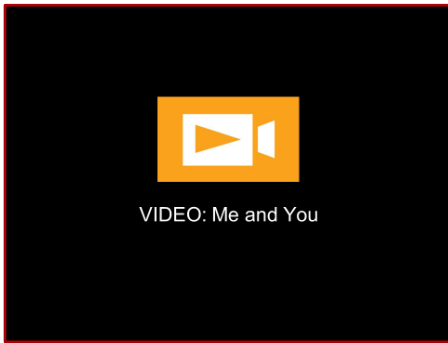
Me and You

As you watch this video, think about:

What types of interactions lead to children's healthy development and learning?

SLIDE 14 ME AND YOU

While watching the video, ask participants to think about what types of interactions lead to children's healthy development and learning.



SLIDE 15

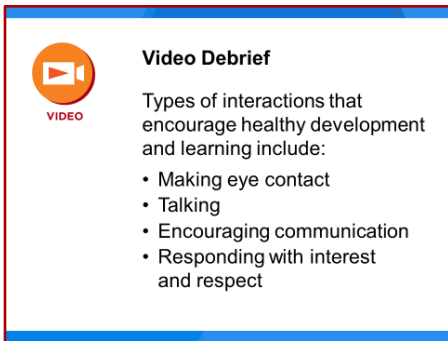
VIDEO: ME AND YOU

Click the icon to access the video *Me and You*.

Note: The PowerPoint presentation must be in Slide Show mode to link to the video.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2014). *Me and you* [Video file]. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/me-you>



SLIDE 16

VIDEO DEBRIEF

Ask participants to share their thoughts about the previous question or what stood out for them in the video.

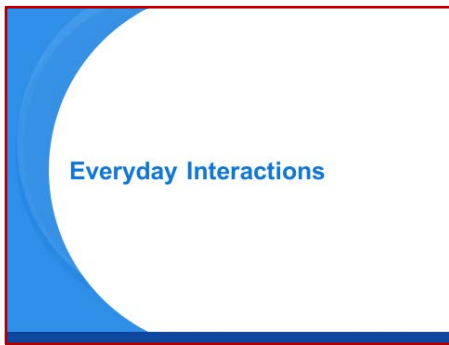
This slide is animated so that participants can share their ideas before discussing those on the slide.

Participants may share that these interactions encourage young children's healthy growth:

- Making eye contact
- Talking
- Encouraging communication
- Responding with interest and respect

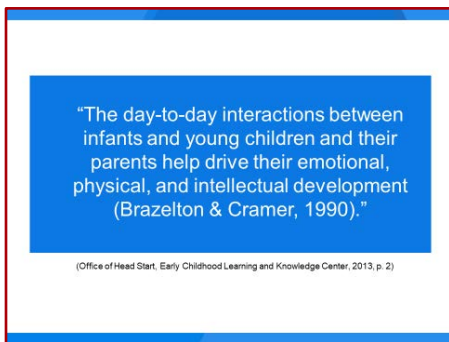
Highlight that these types of adult interactions lead to children who feel loved, valued, and confident in exploring the world.

Consider asking participants how these points compare with ways that adults interact with preschool-age children. What might be the same with preschoolers? What might be different?



SLIDE 17 EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS

This next section will focus on everyday experiences and interactions that support young children's development and learning.



SLIDE 18

Interactions with caring adults are a key component for young children's learning and brain development. Warm, responsive interactions help create a nurturing environment for young children.

An interaction is like a game of tennis. One person serves the ball, and someone on the other side of the net returns the ball. If players on both sides are attentive and responsive, the ball goes back and forth many times. This idea of *serve and return* in interactions starts very early in life, such as when an infant coos and a father smiles back. These consistent, familiar, responsive, and nurturing interactions and relationships with primary caregivers are important in building brain architecture.

REFERENCES

Brazelton, T. B., & Cramer, B. G. (1990). *The earliest relationships: Parents, infants, and the drama of early attachment*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Positive parent-child relationships*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf>




Serve and Return

Watch this video carefully about everyday interactions and brain development.

SLIDE 19 SERVE AND RETURN

Next, participants will view a video from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University that explains how the process of *serve and return* works.



VIDEO: Serve and Return

SLIDE 20 VIDEO: SERVE AND RETURN


Click the icon to access the video *Serve and Return*.

Note: The PowerPoint presentation must be in Slide Show mode to link to the video.

REFERENCE

Harvard Center on the Developing Child. (n.d.). *Serve & return interaction shapes brain circuitry*.

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/serve-return-interaction-shapes-brain-circuitry/>



Video Debrief

- Healthy brain architecture depends on a strong foundation built by consistent, responsive relationships with caring adults.
- Serve-and-return interactions help shape brain architecture.
- Healthy brain architecture is essential for young children's learning and development.

SLIDE 21 VIDEO DEBRIEF

Ask participants to share their takeaways about the video.

The slide is animated so that participants can share their ideas before these possible responses appear on the slide:

- Healthy brain architecture depends on a strong foundation built by consistent, responsive relationships with caring adults.
- Serve-and-return interactions help shape brain architecture.
- Healthy brain architecture is essential for young children's learning and development.

Continued on next page

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Emphasize that consistency in relationships with children does not mean that adults and children need to be in tune with each other all the time. In fact, the relationship is typically only *perfectly* in sync 20 to 30 percent of the time. The rest of the time, the two are getting in sync, out of sync, or back in sync. Through this experience of connecting and reconnecting, parents learn they do not have to interact perfectly. Children will learn how to reconnect with them and others.

REFERENCE

Galinsky, E. (2010, July 9). *PBS's 'This Emotional Life': The magic of relationships*. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ellen-galinsky/pbss-this-emotional-life_b_568178.html



SLIDE 22 RESPONDING TO CHILDREN

The primary way that adults help children learn is by responding to children's experiences and communications. Three strategies for responding are:

- Describe
- Repeat
- Add something new

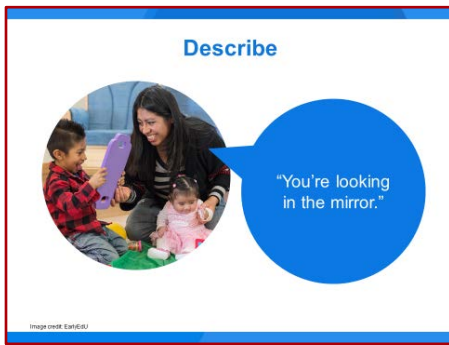
The next few slides will look at each strategy in detail.

Note that the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center has a tip sheet on these interactions designed for educators to share with families. The *Expansions* tip sheet is here:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/iss/language-modeling-and-conversations/expansions-family-tips.pdf>.

REFERENCE

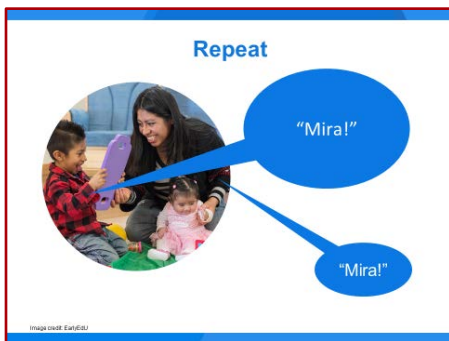
U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *15-minute in-service suites*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/professional-development/article/15-minute-service-suites>



SLIDE 23 DESCRIBE

Parents help children become speakers and readers by describing what they notice about children.

Here, the mother says, "You're looking in the mirror." She is noticing her child's interest and labeling it. This simple strategy models complex language and gives children words for their experience. No child is too young for this strategy. An educator, for example, could help a parent notice and describe what an infant is doing: "Oh, you are yawning so big!"



SLIDE 24 REPEAT

A parent or caring adult can also repeat what a child says.

In this case, the child says, "Mira!" The mother repeats back the same word. This acknowledges that she heard her child, and they are ready to carry on the interaction. Again, no child is too young for this strategy. As an infant begins making coos and babbles, parents can copy those sounds. This helps children see themselves as communicators.

All of these strategies are simple and can be used nearly anywhere. While riding in a car, a toddler may yell the word "Dog!" The father may repeat back, "Yes, a dog."



SLIDE 25 ADD SOMETHING NEW

After repeating what a child says, an adult can add something new, just a little more than what the child said. This expands the child's vocabulary and developing ideas about concepts.

Here, the mother adds "You look happy!" to the child's original statement. She is giving the child more information and continuing the interaction.

This strategy is very effective for helping children learn concepts. If a child asks for milk, a parent might say, "Here is your tall, cold glass of milk." Adding words like *tall* and *cold* are new additions to the child's request for milk. As a child plays with a toy truck, the child may say, "Truck go!" The parent may add: "Truck goes so fast!" or "Blue truck goes up the ramp!"



Real to Reel: Everyday Talk

As you watch this video:

- Identify strategies that families use to support their children's language development.
- Consider ways you can support and encourage families in their everyday interactions with their children.

SLIDE 26


REAL TO REEL: EVERYDAY TALK

This next video shows the power of *parent talk* in the home.

Researchers at Vanderbilt University are helping parents use language strategies with their young children. These are children who need extra support to communicate effectively.

Some of the strategies in the video may also be useful for all children, depending on the needs of the child.

Encourage participants to look for ways the families have learned to use language support strategies in their homes, during everyday interactions.



VIDEO: Real to Reel: Everyday Talk

SLIDE 27

VIDEO: REAL TO REEL: EVERYDAY TALK

Click the icon to access the video *Real to Reel: Everyday Talk*. This video is 13 minutes, 37 seconds long.

Note: The PowerPoint presentation must be in Slide Show mode to link to the video.

REFERENCE

EarlyEdU. (2014). *Real to reel: Everyday talk* [Video file]. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/partnerships-foster-development-learning-real-reel-everyday-talk>



Video Debrief

- Adults can support children's development and learning by joining in their play, connecting to their interests, and sharing ideas.
- It's important to respond to children's vocalizations, words, gestures, and eye contact.
- Building engaging and fun interactions helps make communication with a child easier.

SLIDE 28 VIDEO DEBRIEF

Ask participants to share their thoughts about the prompts on the previous slide:

- Identify strategies that families use to support their children's language development.
- Consider ways you can support and encourage families in their everyday interactions with their children.

Note that this slide is animated so that participants can share their ideas before discussing the ones on the slide.

Possible responses to the first prompt are:

- Key adults in children's lives can support their development and learning by joining in their play, connecting to their interests, sharing ideas, and communicating.
- It is important to respond to children's vocalizations, words, gestures, and eye contact.
- Building engaging and fun interactions helps to make communication with a child easier.


Participants may have a range of ideas in response to the second prompt.



Partnering for Children's Learning

SLIDE 29 PARTNERING FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

In this section, participants will explore a few ways to partner with families to boost children's learning in the early learning program and at home.



DISCUSSION

How Would You . . .

- Partner with families to boost 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?

SLIDE 30 DISCUSSION: HOW WOULD YOU . . .

Materials: Chart paper or whiteboard and markers

Ask participants to reflect on the following questions and discuss them with a partner.

How would you:

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

After 5 to 7 minutes, bring the group back together to debrief. Ask for a summary of possible ways that families participate in their children's learning. Record answers on the chart paper.

Label a second piece of chart paper or another part of the whiteboard with two columns: 1) Supporting Interactions and 2) Encouraging Roles as Lifelong Educators. Write down the main ideas that emerged from the discussions.

Share Learning Ideas



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.

SLIDE 31 SHARE LEARNING IDEAS

Early learning professionals can adopt an approach of collaborating with families to share ideas about learning goals and ideas to support children's growth and development both at home and in the early learning environment.

Family members can provide valuable information about children's interests and learning at home and in other settings. This can help educators adjust their teaching and make learning more meaningful in the early learning program.

Educators can share what children are interested in and learning in their early learning environment so that families can build on those experiences at home. Learning activities at home can include everyday activities like conversations, singing, exploring, and playing.



SLIDE 32

What and how families teach children varies by culture. One definition of culture, introduced earlier in this module, is: “The organized and common practices of particular communities” (Rogoff, 1990, p. 110).

Different cultural beliefs can lead to different expectations for children’s learning and development as well as ideas about the roles of parents. For instance, adults in most cultures speak to infants and think that they understand long before they can talk. However, some societies believe that speaking to infants before they can talk does not make sense.

As educators and families build strong relationships, they can learn to understand each other’s perspectives and work toward shared goals.

REFERENCES


Bornstein, M. H. (2012, June). Cultural approaches to parenting. *Parenting: Science and Practice*. 12(2-3), 212-221.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3433059/>

Rogoff, B. 1990. *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>



Influences of Culture

In small groups, discuss:
What are some of the ways that culture can influence families’ approaches to teaching their children?

Draw from your own experiences, if possible.

SLIDE 33

DISCUSSION: INFLUENCES OF CULTURE

Ask participants to form small groups and discuss this question:
What are some of the ways that culture can influence families’ approaches to teaching their children?

Encourage participants to draw from their own experiences and observations, if possible.

Give groups 5 to 7 minutes to discuss, then ask them to share highlights with the whole group.

Welcoming Families' Cultures

- When parents and educators have different cultural perspectives, 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.

SLIDE 34 WELCOMING FAMILIES' CULTURES

- When parents and educators have different cultural perspectives, 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.

Open communication across cultures requires educators and programs to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>

Inviting Families to Share

新年歌
New Year Song
新年好呀! 新年好呀!
祝咱大家新年好!
咱们唱歌, 咱们跳舞。
祝咱大家新年好!

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

SLIDE 35 INVITING FAMILIES TO SHARE

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

Families may also have ideas about ways they would like to share their culture.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>



SLIDE 36 FAMILIES MAY WANT TO . . .

Families can participate in early learning programs in a variety of ways. It is up to each family to decide what time they have available and what their interests are.

Early childhood educators can work with families to create opportunities to participate so that they feel meaningfully engaged. This may mean working with families to find ways for them to participate outside of class time. For example, some families may enjoy helping to prepare materials or doing other work in the evenings.

In the program, families may choose to:

- **Sit with children and observe:** Family members may prefer to observe and see how their children participate in the early learning environment. This may look like a parent sitting with children at snack or circle time. The family member may also enjoy spending time with their child and having warm interactions in the classroom. The family member may also observe what other adults in the environment do.
- **Read and play with children:** Family members might like to be more active in the classroom. They may also feel most comfortable focusing on their own child. For example, a parent may pretend to eat food with their child in the dramatic play area or read a book with their child.
- **Volunteer or help with activities:** Family members might like to help in the program in other ways. They may work with other adults to facilitate an art activity, for example.
- **Lead activities for groups of children:** Family members may feel comfortable growing into leadership opportunities in the program. For example, in time, a father may volunteer to read a story to the whole class or play a musical instrument for the group. A family member may work with the educator to plan a small group activity and lead it while the educator does other work.



SLIDE 37 RESOURCES: TELL ME A STORY SERIES

Educators can use this resource, called the *Tell Me a Story Series*, to support family engagement and early literacy. A professional development guide, *Teachers and Parents Working Together: Delivering a Tell Me a Story Workshop to Parents*, is on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/workshops-families-teachers-parents.pdf>

One way to support young children's development is through shared book reading or storytelling. When parents read to their children, they can foster children's language development and school success in literacy and other areas.

For a variety of reasons though, families may not feel comfortable reading with their children. Perhaps parents are self-conscious about their literacy skills. Perhaps they are exhausted after a long day of work or school. Perhaps they think their children will not be interested in listening to a story.

By inviting families into the early learning program and helping them build their confidence in book reading and storytelling, early childhood educators can help promote positive parent-child relationships and children's school readiness.

The *Tell Me a Story Series* focuses on books with social-emotional themes. Information about the resource on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center website highlights that:

Reading stories with social-emotional themes is one of the ways parents and early care and education staff can support children's healthy development. *Tell Me a Story* will help build parent and staff capacity to use books and stories to help young children learn. Books can be used to explore important topics such as managing strong emotions, dealing with feelings of grief, or working on social skills. Head Start, Early Head Start, and early care and education staff can use the *Tell Me a Story* book guides, workshop materials, and additional resources to help children learn these skills that are crucial for school readiness.

Tell Me a Story was developed to support early childhood learning programs and their mental health outreach to families and children, with a focus on adversity and parental depression.

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REFERENCES

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>

Enjoying Books Together



Invite families to share approaches to engaging children with books.

Some strategies are:

- Look at the pictures.
- Act out parts or skim the book.
- Ask questions.

Image credit: Karfaku

SLIDE 38 ENJOYING BOOKS

Early childhood educators and families can share ideas about reading or looking at books with children. Families may enjoy coming together and sharing approaches to engaging children with books.

Some strategies for engaging young children in books are:

- Look at the pictures and talk about them.
- Act out parts or skim the book.
- Ask questions.

Language and literacy activities during children's early years of life are important for school readiness. When infants and toddlers in low-income families are read to more often, they tend to have stronger language and cognitive skills at age 3 than those who were not.

Educators can work with families to make sure that books are available in families' home languages. Children learning more than one language are more likely to be prepared for school and know English well if they have a strong foundation in their home language.

In addition, books should be of different types, from stories to non-fiction, and include ones that represent the cultures of the families. Families may want to come together to create their own books.

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The next slides will describe the first two book-reading strategies in more depth.

REFERENCES

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (n.d.). *NCCLR quick guide for teachers: Selecting culturally appropriate children's books in languages other than English.*

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/select-cultural-childrens-books-non-english-eng.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2014). *Family engagement and school readiness.* In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/schoolreadiness-pfce-rtp.pdf>

Look at the Pictures



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.


Image credit: Einarfou

SLIDE 39 LOOK AT THE PICTURES

Adults do not have to read the words of books to young children. They can *read* the pictures. They can talk about what they see, ask children to make predictions, and respond to children's comments. They can create their own stories in their preferred languages.

There are even picture books that have no words. An early learning program that has a lending library may consider adding some picture-only books. This also helps family members with low literacy levels to access and share books with children.

Act It Out



- 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.

Image credit: iStock

SLIDE 40 ACT IT OUT

Another way to make a story come alive is to act it out. Adults and children can:

- **Recreate scenes.** It can be fun for families to act out books or movies that children are particularly interested in. Parents and children can dress up as characters and act out different parts.
- **Say the words in characters' imagined voices.** Children love hearing character voices, and parents can have fun using different voices to play characters in favorite books. This also can keep the experience interesting for parents when children request the same books night after night. Young children learn through repetition, so reading the same books regularly benefits them.
- **Use loud and soft voices and pauses for drama.** Voices that suddenly get quieter or louder catch everyone's interest.
- **Create a new ending or add a plot twist to keep it fun.** For instance, families can ask children to make predictions about what they think will happen, then make that the new ending.

Storytelling and drama are also powerful ways to teach early literacy skills.

Encourage families to tell favorite stories to their children. These can be family stories passed down from their own childhood, or they can simply be stories about everyday events like going to the grocery store.

Skim It




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

Image credit: iStock

SLIDE 41 SKIM IT

Another way to hold a child's interest is to skim the book, rather than read the whole thing. Some children's books are lengthy.

Adults can focus on talking about the pictures or reading just enough to keep the story going. If the child loses interest, it is fine to move on to a new activity.



Let's Practice (Optional)

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

SLIDE 42 LEARNING ACTIVITY: LET'S PRACTICE (OPTIONAL)

Ask participants to find a partner. Distribute children's books that you have brought, or ask participants to use books that they brought with them.

Each pair can practice strategies from the previous slides:

- *Read* the book.
- Keep children's interest by acting out the book or skimming it.
- Ask questions.

Participants can take turns playing the roles of the adult and the child.



SLIDE 43 LEARNING DURING DAILY ROUTINES

Learning happens all day, every day. Families likely support their children's learning during daily routines and activities.

For example, when a father pours water in the bathtub and comments on its temperature, the child is learning. When a grandmother reads signs along the road and points out letters, the child is learning. When a mother helps a child measure one scoop of cereal in the morning, the child is learning. During bedtime stories, tooth brushing, and many other daily moments, a child is learning.

Early childhood educators can ask families about their routines, activities, and other ways they may already be helping their children learn.



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.

SLIDE 44

LEARNING ACTIVITY: WHAT AM I LEARNING?

Materials: *What Am I Learning?* handout (optional chart paper, markers, sticky notes)

The purpose of this activity is to identify the many ways that children learn through small interactions with family members and key adults throughout the day.

Encourage participants to work with a partner and complete the table in the handout. Ask participants to be specific in their examples. This may mean developing some possible conversations or interactions for each scenario.

Note that participants take the view of the child in this activity.

Provide 10 to 15 minutes for discussion and completing the handout.

Bring the group back together and ask participants to share examples for each scenario.

Ask participants to summarize key ideas. Possible ones are:

- Children learn through interactions.
- Many opportunities arise throughout the day to support young children's learning.

Alternatively, you could post chart paper around the room with a scenario written on each. Participants could write responses on sticky notes and put them on the appropriate chart paper.

You might point out to participants that a similar activity might be useful for parents to do, too.

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.

SLIDE 45 WHEN FAMILIES FACE CHALLENGES

Some families may face challenges that can impact interactions between parents and children.

It is important for educators to continue to build positive and supportive relationships with families and to work to understand their perspectives.

Challenges that families may face include:

- A shortage of economic resources
- Lack of social supports
- Chronic health issues
- Workplace demands
- Increased family mobility and isolation

When these risk factors build up, they can negatively affect family caregiving. Children's development can be disrupted when families are under stress or lack social supports. Children's cognitive, language, and social-emotional development can be affected.

The next slide will list ways that educators and programs can support families under stress.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Positive parent-child relationships*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/docs/parent-child-relationships.pdf>

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

SLIDE 46 SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Programs and early childhood educators that recognize, acknowledge, and support the needs of families and help them engage in parenting and positive interactions with their children will, in turn, help support healthy development and learning of young children.

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

Programs can also help families connect with services that will build on their strengths and protect and encourage their role as their children's most important teacher.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2013). *Families as lifelong educators*. In Understanding Family Engagement Outcomes: Research to Practice Series.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rtp-families-lifelong-educators.pdf>

Time Away



Families may face separation due to:


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

SLIDE 47 TIME AWAY

Not all families live together, and not all families have the time they would like with their children. There are a number of reasons this might be the case.

Perhaps the parent's work requires travel or seasonal work away from the family. Perhaps families have been forced to live separately because of immigration issues. Other families may be impacted by custody issues after a divorce.

Keeping Connected




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

Image credit: Eshetu

SLIDE 48 KEEPING CONNECTED

Early childhood educators and families can create ways for young children to feel connected over space and time with their loved ones. Some possible suggestions are:

- **Pictures.** Young children and parents can create pictures for one another. A parent can trace their hand so a child can give it a *high-five* whenever something positive happens.
- **Letters.** Children and parents can write special notes or letters to share with one another.
- **Photographs.** Children and parents can easily carry and take along photos wherever they go.
- **Phone calls.** Hearing their loved one's voice can be meaningful for parents and children.
- **Video chats.** Parents and children may enjoy seeing one another while they are talking.
- **Recorded stories.** A parent can record a favorite bedtime story or message using a digital recorder, video camera, or cell phone.

**DISCUSSION**

What Are Your Ideas?

Read the scenario below:

- 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?

SLIDE 49 DISCUSSION: WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?

Discuss the scenario with participants. Ask them to brainstorm options that families may use to build and keep connections that promote child development.

Possible suggestions for the father in this scenario:

- Text Kiera a picture of the place where he is each night.
- Take a photo of Kiera with him, and then take pictures of Kiera's photo in new places (like the book *Flat Stanley: His Original Adventure!*).

Also, Kiera and her family could count the trucks they see or look for ones that are the same color as the father's.

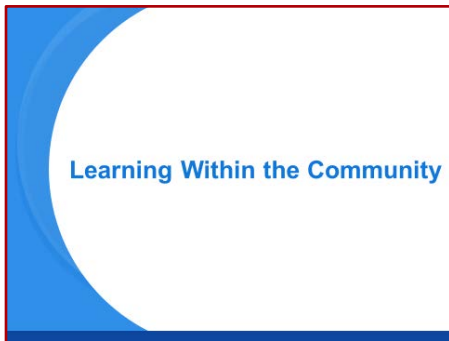
Kiera's father and family may have ideas about how he could continue to connect with her and support her learning while he is away. It would be important for an educator to find out the father and family's thoughts first.

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REFERENCE

Brown, J. (2013). *Flat Stanley: His original adventure!* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.



SLIDE 50 LEARNING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

This section will focus on identifying community resources with families that strengthen family engagement and enhance children's learning and development.



SLIDE 51 THROUGH A FAMILY'S EYES

Children may spend far more time in their homes and communities than they do in early learning programs.

Early childhood educators should do all they can to learn about the families and communities around them. They can build strong partnerships for learning when they are authentically interested in families' lives outside of early learning environments and look for ways to bring family and child knowledge and experiences into the program.




SLIDE 52 USE FAMILY AND CHILD PHOTOS

Materials: *A Family's Story: Community Photos Sample* handout

This is a simple example of how a program brought in family experiences.

Each week a different child took an item from the classroom home. (In this case, the item was a stuffed bear. Educators could also use a laminated paper bear or other image.) Children and families texted the educator photos from the child's weekend with the bear. The educator put the photos in a class book and added new photos each week.



Families and Community Resources

DISCUSSION

How are community resources valuable to young children and families?

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

SLIDE 53 DISCUSSION: FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Ask participants to share how community resources are valuable to young children and families.

Part of supporting young children and families is recognizing, valuing, identifying, and making connections to community resources. Some families may not know what resources are available in their community or how to access them. Others may have ideas to share with their early learning program and other families.

Possible Community Partners

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

SLIDE 54 POSSIBLE COMMUNITY PARTNERS


Community resources can benefit early childhood educators in their work alongside families. Educators can ask about and learn from families' experiences and knowledge about resources in their community.

Families and educators can use community resources as they plan activities and experiences in their early learning setting and at home.

Both can explore what is available, including:

- Public libraries
- Museums (children's museum or art museum)
- Public health departments
- Hospitals
- Local schools and school districts
- Faith-based organizations
- Parks
- Recreation and community centers

Ask participants to share possible additional community resources.



Program-Community Partnerships

DISCUSSION

- 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?

SLIDE 55 DISCUSSION: PROGRAM-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Materials: Flip chart and marker

Brainstorm with participants about some ways that educators and families could involve community resources in their early learning programs. Then discuss ways to work with community resources to help promote families as lifelong educators.

Write responses on flip chart paper.

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.

SLIDE 56 IDEAS FOR PROGRAMS

These examples show ways that community resources could support children's learning:

- 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 or classroom.

Ask participants to share their ideas about community programs to invite into the early learning environment to support children's learning.

Emphasize that:

- Librarians and museum professionals can work with families and early childhood programs to create learning opportunities.
- Libraries and museums across the nation are designing environments and experiences to support young children, families, and early childhood programs. In some areas, these are primary places where families and early childhood educators can borrow books, learning backpacks, and other materials for home and program use.
- Leaders in the field of early childhood are recognizing libraries and museums as supporters of young children's readiness for school.

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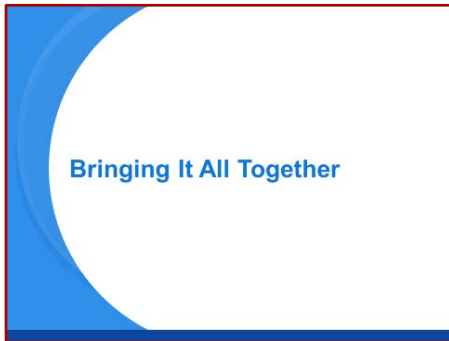
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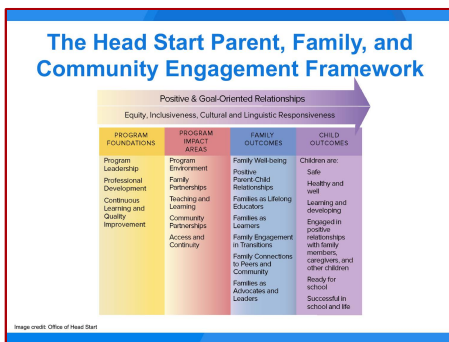
Washington, DC: Author.

<http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/GrowingYoungMinds.pdf>



SLIDE 57 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

This final section summarizes the main points and includes an optional assignment.




SLIDE 58 THE HEAD START PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Remind participants that the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework shows that when family engagement is systemic and integrated across Program Foundations and Program Impact Areas, family and child outcomes can be achieved.

The activity on the next slide will ask participants to think about this module and how practices align with the Framework.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2011). *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting family engagement and school readiness, from prenatal to age 8*.
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/policy-im/pfce-framework.pdf>



Where Does It Fit?

Which part of the Framework does this module connect with?

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

SLIDE 59

DISCUSSION: WHERE DOES IT FIT?

Materials: Flip chart and marker

Ask participants to think about the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework and identify where they think this module topic (*Partnerships That Foster Development and Learning*) fits within the Framework.

You may want to print out a few copies of the Framework, ask participants to look at it online, or review it as a group.

Guide participants to look at the Program Impact Area of the Framework in particular. Write their responses on the flip chart for the group to see.

This exercise can serve as a reflective activity for participants as they think about what they learned during the module.

Ultimately, participants should identify that family engagement strategies in this module align with these impact areas:


- **Family Partnerships.** Program staff and fathers build relationships to support family and child development goals.
- **Teaching and Learning.** Fathers are equal partners in encouraging children's development and learning.
- **Community Partnerships.** Families and program staff collaborate with communities to support family engagement in children's learning.

Participants may also focus on family engagement outcomes, such as Families as Lifelong Educators.

REFERENCE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center. (2011). *The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Promoting family engagement and school readiness, from prenatal to age 8*. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/docs/policy-im/pfce-framework.pdf>

Presenter Notes




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.

SLIDE 60 SESSION SUMMARY

This module focused on these main points:

- 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.



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.

SLIDE 61 ASSIGNMENT: COMMUNITY RESOURCE MAP (OPTIONAL)

Materials: *Community Resource Map* handout

This is an optional assignment that asks participants to develop a community resource map.

Review the assignment and answer any questions.



For more information about this resource, please contact us:
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Developed in collaboration with EarlyEdU Alliance: A Higher Education Collaborative for Head Start and Early Childhood Teaching.

SLIDE 62 CONCLUSION

This concludes the module *Partnerships That Foster Development and Learning*.

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ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



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