

Objective

The purpose of this activity is to think about, plan, and try out approaches to talking with families when you have a concern about a child's development.

Instructions

1. Find a partner, or form small discussion groups, and read the scenarios below.
2. Choose one, and think about how you might approach a conversation with a parent. Alternatively, you may have a child and family in your program with whom you would like to talk about a developmental concern. If so, you could draft language to guide you in that discussion. Make sure that you use fictitious names if you choose this option.
3. Consider these questions:
 - How would you prepare for the conversation?
 - How would you invite parents to talk with you? What would you need to consider?
 - What would you plan to say? What would you bring?

Although you do not know exactly how the conversation would go, come up with some comments and questions you would like to use in an effective conversation with a parent on this topic. You may have to fill in some details about the child and family using your imagination.

4. Keep strengths-based practices and relationship-based strategies in mind when preparing your responses. These are listed at the end of this document.
5. Be prepared to act out the conversation in front of the group. Speak out loud to help you practice.

Scenarios

1. Alia, a 1-year-old child in your program, is not doing some behaviors that children typically do at that age. You have noticed, for instance, that the child does not make eye contact or mimic expressions or gestures. The other day, you tried to play peek-a-boo and Alia did not respond.

The parents have not mentioned any concerns about Alia's development.

2. Victor is almost 5 and heading to kindergarten next year. His language is difficult for adults and other children to understand.

You have observed that Victor's parents know his speech well and are often able to understand what Victor says. They have not brought up any concerns about Victor's speech.

Learning Activity: Thinking About Approaches

Plan

Questions	Your Ideas
<p>How would you prepare for the conversation?</p>	
<p>How would you invite parents to talk with you?</p> <p>What would you need to consider?</p>	
<p>What would you plan to say?</p> <p>What would you bring?</p>	

Strengths-Based Attitudes for Building Positive Goal-Oriented Relationships

- Families are the first and most important teachers of their children.
- Families are our partners with a critical role in their family's development.
- Families have expertise about their child and their family.
- Families' contributions are important and valuable.

Relationship-Based Practices for Family Engagement

- Observe and describe the child's behavior.
- Reflect on the family's perspective.
- Support competence.
- Focus on the family-child relationship.
- Value a family's passion.
- Reflect on your own perspective.

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/sites/default/files/pdf/building-partnerships-developing-relationships-families.pdf>

For more information about this resource, please contact us:

PFCE@ecetta.info | 1-866-763-6481



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Parent, Family and Community Engagement

This document was developed with funds from Grant #90HC0014 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, and Office of Child Care, by the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission. Developed in collaboration with EarlyEdU Alliance: A Higher Education Collaborative for Head Start and Early Childhood Teaching.