



## Family Engagement in Early Care and Education

Gathering and Sharing Child Assessment Data

### Overview

**This module will focus on ways to:**

- Gather and share information with families to support children's learning and development
- Have meaningful conversations with families about child assessment data
- Join families in using the information collected to guide children's learning and development



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

**OBJECTIVES**

- Explain ongoing childhood assessment
- Identify ways to partner with families in gathering and sharing information about children
- Describe ways that early childhood educators and families can use information to guide children's learning and development

## Ongoing Child Assessment



“Systematic, ongoing child assessment provides information on children’s development and learning.”

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, n.d.)

Image credit: EarlyEdU



**VIDEO**

## **Ongoing Child Assessment: Partnering With Families**

The video focuses on gathering and sharing child assessment information with families.

After watching, share three highlights with a partner.



## **VIDEO: Ongoing Child Assessment: Partnering With Families**



**VIDEO**

## Video Debrief

- Family engagement promotes children’s learning
- Families are children’s first and primary teachers
- It is important to hear from families first
- Knowing what children do at home helps educators
- Families can help develop collaborative learning goals for children

## Ongoing Assessment: A Definition

Ongoing assessment is the continuous process of **gathering information, observing, documenting, interpreting progress, and deciding when to adjust practices** to better support children’s development and learning.

## Ongoing Assessment: A Definition



## Goals in Sharing Data with Families

- **Families have access** to information about their children
- **Information is understandable** and meaningful
- **Parents have opportunities to share** about their children's needs
- **Families and program staff can act** on shared information

## Gathering and Sharing Information



### DISCUSSION

## How Would You?

- Invite families to share information about their children's earliest experiences, interests, growth, and development?
- Share information with families about their children's program experiences, interests, growth, and development?





## Positive Relationships Are Key



Partnerships with families that are based on positive, goal-oriented relationships support family and child progress.

Image credit: EarlyEdu





Sharing information can help families and educators guide children's learning and development.

Image credit: EarlyEdU

## Inviting and Responding

**Some strategies to ensure access to information are:**

- Inviting families to share observations
- Using multiple methods to reach families
- Communicating with families in their preferred languages and with sensitivity to their individuality and cultures
- Regularly sharing observations and children's portfolios

## Impact of Shared Information

**When parents and early childhood educators share information, this can:**

- Guide and inspire learning activities at home and in the early learning setting
- Increase consistency throughout environments to reinforce children's learning
- Create opportunities for educators to show respect for parent views and adjust their comments about children's abilities

## Impact of Shared Information



When parents have positive relationships with educators and are involved in their children's early learning environment, their children's school readiness and success can improve.

Image credit: EarlyEdU

## Perspectives




LEARNING  
ACTIVITY

### Expectations of Parents and Educators

#### Divide into two groups

- One group will take the educator role
- One group will take the parent role
- Each group will make a list of what they expect of the other
- Be ready to compare lists



When gathering and sharing information with families, early childhood educators may need to see through another lens or in a different way.

Image credit: EarlyEdU



**DISCUSSION**

## Taking Another's Perspective

Share a time when you tried to set aside your expectations and beliefs to see another perspective.

## Sharing Perspectives



Image credit: EarlyEdU

**Early childhood educators, other program staff, and families bring:**

- Information
- Feelings
- Beliefs
- Expectations



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## Wondering Together

**With a partner or in a small group:**

- Read the statements and questions in the handout
- Discuss how *wondering* helps us better understand families' perspectives and leads to a stronger partnership
- Then, discuss the types of questions and statements you use in conversations with families to invite them to share

## Start With Family Perspectives



Image credit: EarlyEdU

### Example questions for families:

- What is important to you?
- What would you like to share?
- What would you like to know?
- What does this mean to you?

## Sensitivity to Family Individuality

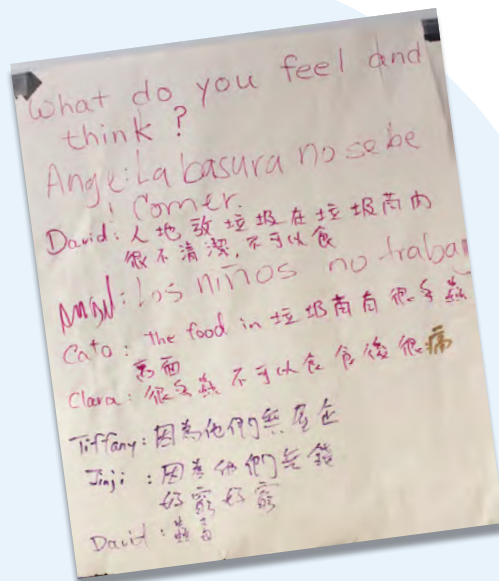


Image credit: EarlyEdU

- Cultural
- Linguistic
- Emotional





Image credit: EarlyEdU

When educators understand family perspectives, they learn to see children as their parents do.

## Approaches to Communication

## Strategies for Conversations

- Start with the parents' perspectives
- Be positive and specific
- Be descriptive and share interpretations
- Focus on the parent-child relationship
- Support parental competence
- Be open to parents' emotions



### DISCUSSION

## What to Share

What can parents and educators share with each other about children?

This may change over time as relationships between educators and families deepen.

## Making Information Meaningful

- Do families understand what ongoing assessment is?
- Do they know what the next stage of learning and development will be?
- Am I using language that is clear and jargon-free?
- Am I using families' preferred languages?

## Tips for Sharing Clear Information



- Provide specific examples of what children know and can do
- Give context to information
- Pair verbal descriptions with visual examples

Image credit: EarlyEdU

## Ways to Communicate

### Times and methods for families and educators to share information:

- Arrival or departure
- Formal parent-educator conferences
- Home visits
- Phone conversations
- Text, video, and other messages
- Email
- Shared parent-educator journals

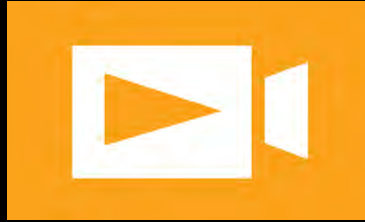


VIDEO

### Toddler Assessment Conversation

#### Think about these questions while watching the video:

- What types of information do the parent and educator share?
- What is the balance of educator talk and parent talk?
- What types of questions do you hear?
- How do you think the parent feels during the interaction?



## VIDEO: Toddler Assessment Conversation



**VIDEO**

### Video Debrief

- They share information about the child's development, goals, and interests
- "What kinds of things is he interested in?"
- "I wonder what you're noticing at home."

## Tools for Sharing Information



Image credit: EarlyEdU

**In addition to observations, families and educators can share:**

- Samples of children’s art, writing, and other work
- Photographs of children’s work, activities, and interests

## Using Video to Talk About Child Learning



Image credit: EarlyEdU

- Video is a powerful tool for observing
- Video helps “**Keep It REAL**”
- Video is useful across early learning contexts





**VIDEO**

## Using Video to Share With Family Members

**Watch Megan Klish Fibbe, physical therapist, share information with families**

- How does Megan use video in her work with families?
- How does video support their work together? The family?



**VIDEO: Using Video to Share With Family Members**



**VIDEO**

## Video Debrief

### Megan's use of video:

- Includes important caregivers and family members
- Allows family members to implement strategies
- Highlights family competence
- Offers the child multiple learning opportunities

## Keep It REAL



Relaxed

Equal

Accessible

Learning-focused

## Acting on Shared Information

### Co-Designing Activities



Families and educators can collaborate to design activities to foster children's learning and development at home and in the early learning environment and community.

Image credit: EarlyEdU

## Action Steps

### Steps that family- educator partnerships can take include:

- Translating information into everyday activities
- Finding community resources to support children's learning
- Describing children's accomplishments, strengths, and challenges as they transition to new learning environments



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ACTIVITY

## Role Play: Keep It REAL

### Read Jonathan's case study

- In groups of two or three, role play a learning-focused conversation
  - One member should take on the role of the educator
  - The remaining members should be Jonathan's family
- Discuss the experience



**VIDEO**

## **Learning in Partnership: Using Data and Reflective Practice in Programs**

Listen for key principles about how families, educators, and other program staff use information they gather.



**VIDEO: Learning in Partnership: Using Data and Reflective Practice in Programs**



## Video Debrief

### Key principles you may have heard include:

- Collaboration
- Learning from families
- Families as experts and decision-makers

## Improving Practices



- Professional development
- Coaching
- Mentoring

Image credit: EarlyEdU





“We know that training alone, according to the research, is not enough. They need the opportunity to put that into practice.”

Dr. Dathan Rush, Associate Director of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP)

Image credit: EarlyEdU

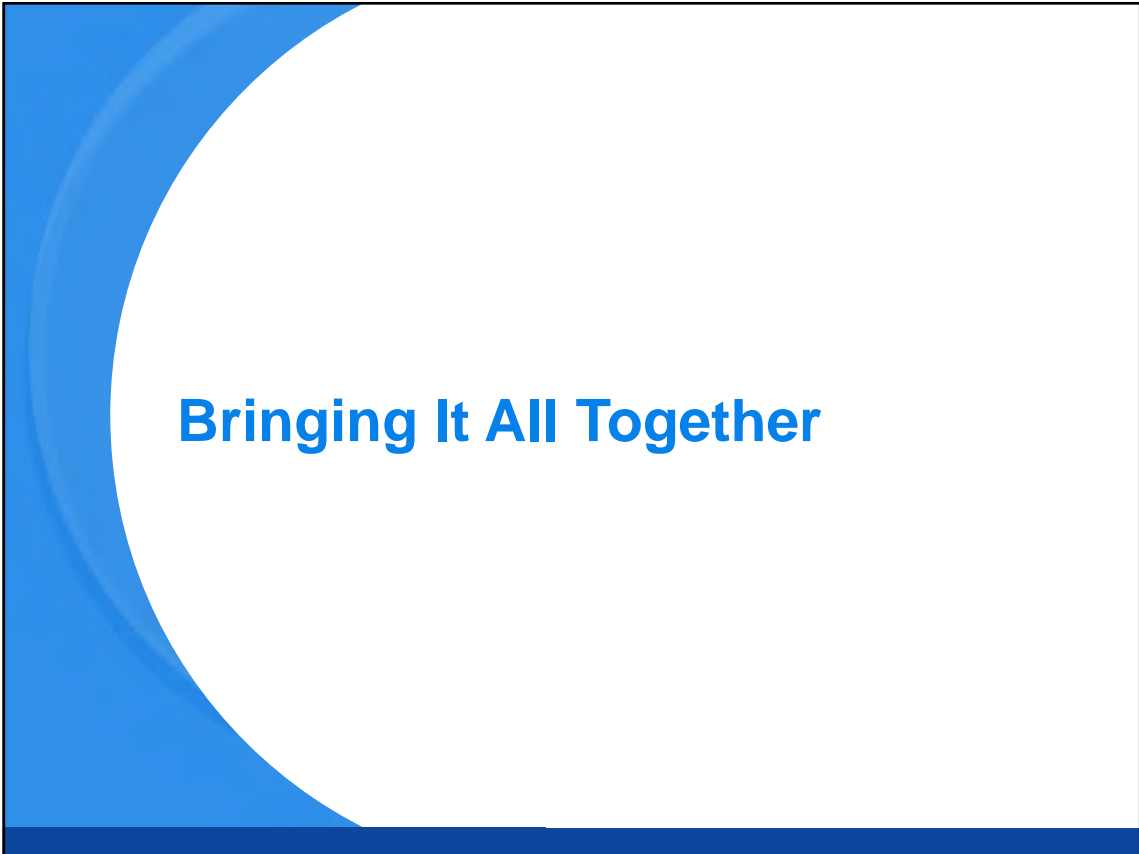
## Reflective Practice



Families can think about their goals and progress

Educators and other program staff can reflect on their practices and think about what would be most effective

Image credit: EarlyEdU



## The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

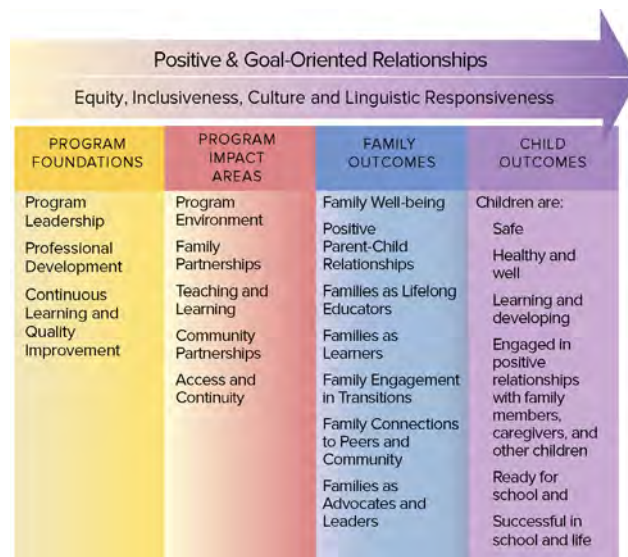


Image credit: Office of Head Start



## DISCUSSION

# Where Does It Fit?

### Which part of the Framework does this topic relate to?

- Form a small group and share ideas
- Be ready to share your thoughts with the whole group



## SESSION SUMMARY

- Gathering and sharing information with families supports children's learning and development
- Starting with parents' perspectives and sharing clear and meaningful information helps build trusting relationships that boost children's progress
- Families and educators can co-design activities for children's learning

# Family Engagement in Early Care and Education Gathering and Sharing Child Assessment Data



For more information about this resource, please contact us:  
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