

Partnering with Families Highlight Video

Narrator: Welcome to this short presentation, Ongoing Child Assessment: Partnering with Families. We'll explore ways to gather child assessment information, as well as how to share information. We'll hear about the value of engaging with families around assessment to support children's learning.

This is one in a series of presentations on ongoing child assessment. High-quality assessment includes a number of important features. One of those features is partnering with families. The House framework is one way to illustrate the components of effective teaching that support school readiness for all children. The house includes a strong foundation of effective and engaging interactions and environments. The two pillars represent the research-based curriculum and effective teaching practices, as well as ongoing child assessment. The roof represents highly individualized teaching and learning. All of the parts need to work together.

This presentation fits into the ongoing child assessment pillar. Let's hear from teachers. Listen to their thoughts about the benefits of partnering with families.

Allison Ferry: Families have a very dear place in my heart because they're really the backbone of what we do.

Myra O'Leary: Once we set those goals and we see them -- you know, occasionally we might send notes home; we send emails; we talk on the phone. Those parents are so eager to share that those -- that the children are getting this.

Heather Floyd: We have so much to share with families when they're able to come to the classroom. So, I put the sign in and out sheet in the back corner of the classroom. Almost always, kids will stop to show their family a picture they're in or an activity they did or a toy they like, and it really helps to develop that partnership and that relationship with them.

Narrator: Engaging and partnering with families promotes children's learning. Let's focus our attention on partnering with families around ongoing assessment. We assess children by observing them, gathering and then recording that information. We use the information to make decisions about teaching.

So, let's look at some ways to gather and share assessment information that will really make a difference. Teachers gather assessment information in all sorts of ways, but mostly they carefully observe the child as the child plays, talks, and interacts with other children, with adults, and with toys and other materials. Families do the same thing. As they care for and play with their child, families watch, listen, and delight in all the new things their child is learning.

Families and teachers keep track of their observations by making notes, taking pictures or video, keeping drawings and projects, and remembering important events.

Girl: Look, I made my dad a necklace.

Narrator: Families are with their child in all kinds of places and doing all sorts of activities. Their view of their child is even bigger than the teacher's. How can families and teachers share their observations, their assessment information, with each other? They can share through brief informal conversations, maybe at drop-off or pickup time, or when parents volunteer or visit the classroom. Families and teachers also share their observations during longer and more formal times. Home visits and conferences are opportunities to chat a little longer and spend time talking about what the child is learning, what happens at home as well as what happens at school, how much progress the child is making, perhaps to problem solve if the child is struggling and figure out the best ways to support the child's continued learning.

Here are a few things to think about to make your conversations more productive and to truly partner with families around assessment. Really listen, and be sensitive to the individual ways that families view their children and what's important to them. Let families share first -- if they want to. Work together to understand the assessment information. Make your data collection system manageable and informative. Support the family in all the ways they promote their child's learning. And be positive.

In this presentation, we talked about the importance of partnering with families. Ongoing child assessment helps both teachers and families understand children's development and learning. Working together, families and teachers get a fuller and more comprehensive picture. Teachers are better able to individualize their teaching. Families are better able to understand their child's development and learning in relation to individual goals and school readiness goals. To learn more about partnering with families, look at our longer in-service suite and all the suites on ongoing child assessment. Use our tips, tools, and resources to extend your learning. And thank you for listening.