

Supporting Family Systems: *Building Relationships with Families*

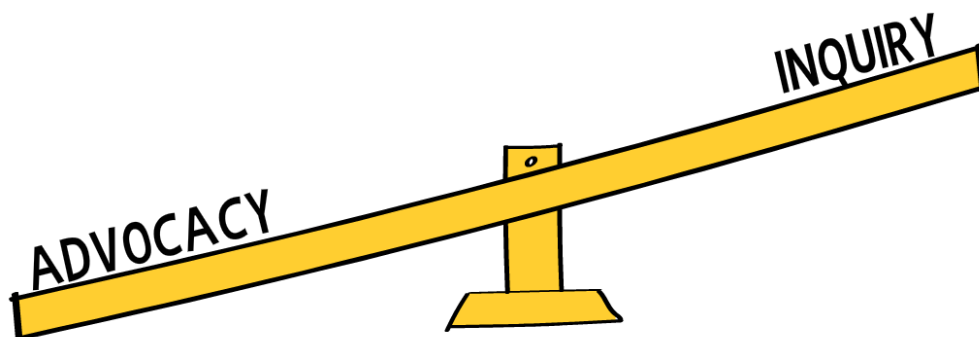
WHAT'S IN THIS PD2GO PACK?

Discover how to use systems thinking for personal reflection and inquiry to better understand a family's perspective. Inquiring about a family's perspective can reduce misunderstandings and build stronger relationships.

Your Participants Will...

increase their capacity to use a systems-thinking perspective and inquiry skills to improve communication and build positive relationships with children and families.

Using Inquiry to Learn About Families



SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Facilitator's Guide Everything you need to facilitate this PD2GO presentation on *Building Relationships with Families*, including an interactive presentation page along with step-by-step presenter's notes.

Coaching Corner One-page resource with self-reflection and practice opportunities that can be explored individually, with peers, and in professional development sessions.


Additional resource materials related to this pack provide opportunities to explore and expand your skills and knowledge through **Digging Deeper**, **Resource Links**, and **Family Connections**.

HOW TO USE THIS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This Facilitator's Guide will provide you with step-by-step information on how to present this session using the interactive presentation page and downloadable materials specific to this PD2GO pack. We recommend [opening the pack presentation](#) as you go through this Facilitator's Guide.

Presentation Information

Text written in italics is meant to be spoken out loud during the course of the presentation.

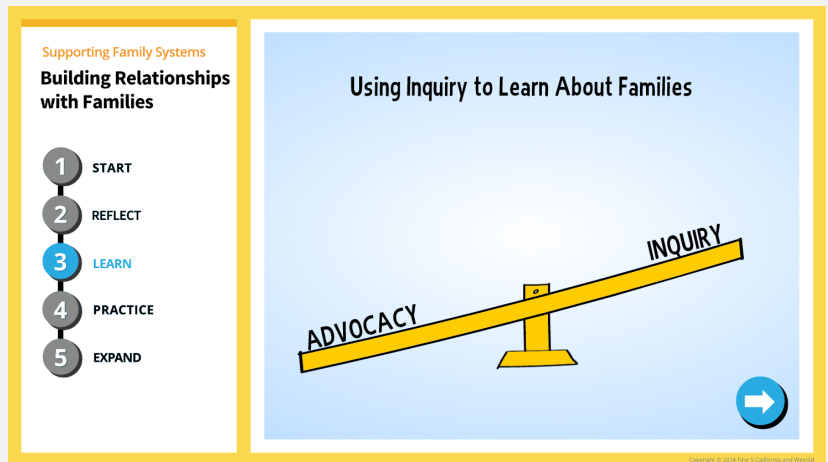
Other text, marked with this icon , offers important information such as instructions or suggested answers to facilitate the presentation of this PD2GO pack.

THE INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION PAGE

The presentation page includes the following elements:

■ Steps

Click on each number icon to begin the section of the presentation—use the presenter's notes in this guide to facilitate each step of the presentation.



DOWNLOADABLE MATERIALS

■ In This Pack

Click on the downloadable materials hyperlink to access all materials related to this presentation.

■ In This Bundle

Click on the downloadable materials hyperlink to access all additional resources and materials that can be used with this presentation and other related packs.





EXPANDING ON THIS PD2GO PACK

This presentation on *Building Relationships with Families* can be used individually or in conjunction with related packs in the bundle, including *Families Are Systems* and *Collaborating with Families*. Additional resources and materials in this bundle (*Digging Deeper*, *Resource Links*, and *Family Connections*) are designed to extend skills and knowledge around these related packs, provide links to resources, and promote partnerships with families.

MATERIALS

In this pack, you will find:

[Download all \(3.7 MB\)](#)

-  [Facilitator's Guide \(3.7 MB\)](#)
Everything you need to facilitate this PD2GO presentation on Building Relationships with Families, including an interactive presentation page along with step-by-step presenter's notes.
-  [Coaching Corner \(150 KB\)](#)
One-page resource with self-reflection and practice opportunities that can be explored individually, with peers, and in professional development sessions.
-  [Handout - Building Relationships with Alana, Erik, and Mark \(250 KB\)](#)
-  [Handout - Using Inquiry to Learn About Families \(150 KB\)](#)

In this bundle, you will find:

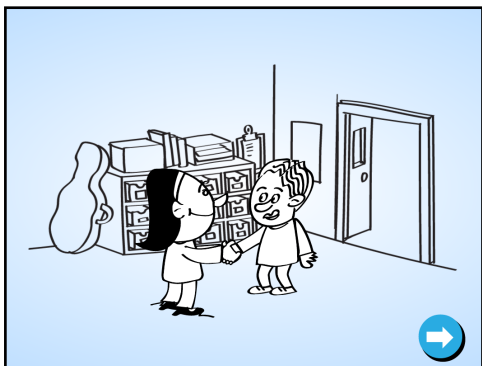
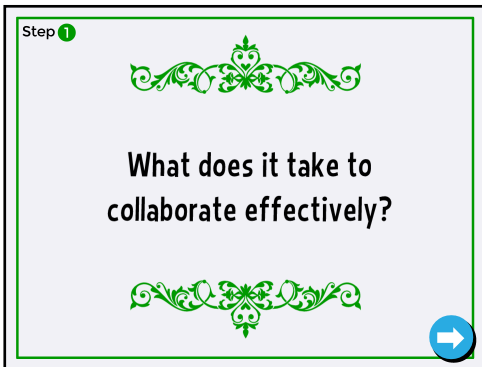
[Download all \(310 KB\)](#)

Additional resource materials related to this pack provide opportunities to explore and expand your skills and knowledge. The resources include:

-  [Digging Deeper \(240 KB\)](#)
-  [Family Connections \(240 KB\)](#)
-  [Resource Links \(230 KB\)](#)

STEP 1:
START

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE



FACILITATOR'S NOTES

[2 min]



Step 1 - Start

Facilitator: *What does it take to collaborate effectively?*



Facilitator: *Imagine you are a new teacher in an early childhood program and you're excited to get started. You'll be working with another teacher whom you've never met. How do you feel about working closely with a new colleague?*



Invite participants to respond. Possible responses include:

- ▣ I'm nervous about working with someone I don't know.
- ▣ It's stressful thinking about it.
- ▣ I'm excited to work with another teacher.
- ▣ I'm confident we can work together.




Facilitator: *There may be a variety of reactions to this situation. What do you think it will take to collaborate with this person effectively?*






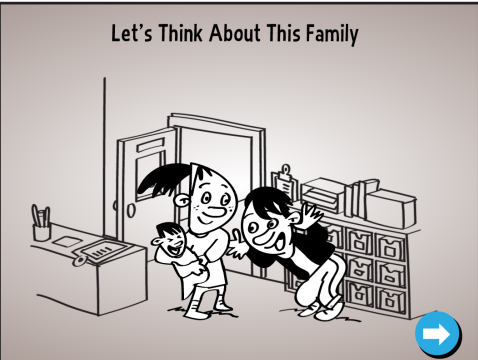






Invite participants to respond. Possible responses include:

- ▣ We need to get to know each other.
- ▣ We need to develop some trust in each other.
- ▣ We need to learn about each other's talents and skills.
- ▣ We need to be open to each other's ideas.

STEP 1: *Continued* START

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE	FACILITATOR'S NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p>How do we promote healthy, collaborative relationships with families?</p>  <p style="background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block; border-radius: 5px;">Go to step 2: REFLECT</p> </div>	<p>Facilitator: <i>We face a similar situation in our work with families. Each year we meet new children and families. One of our goals is to build relationships with them in order to provide healthy, positive experiences for young children.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLICK </p> <p>Facilitator: <i>The family system and the early childhood system are critically important influences on the development of young children. How do we promote healthy, collaborative relationships with families?</i></p>

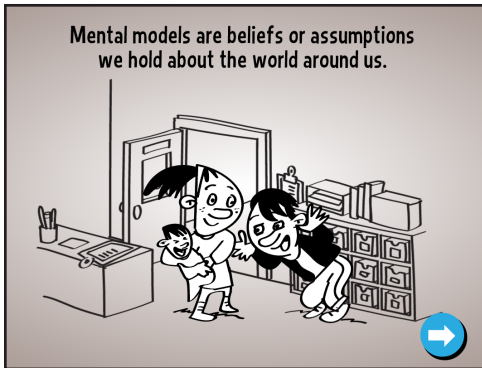
STEP 2: REFLECT

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE	FACILITATOR'S NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Step 2</p>  <p>To build relationships with family members, we need to actively learn about them.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 10px;"> <p>Let's Think About This Family</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"></p> </div>	<p>[2 min] CLICK  Step 2 - Reflect</p> <p> Reference handout.  "Building Relationships with Alana, Erik, and Mark"</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>To build relationships with family members, we need to actively learn about them within their family systems. Let's read the following story and explore ways to do that. Who would like to read the story on the handout about Alana, Erik, and Mark.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLICK </p> <p> Alana and Erik are teen parents who enrolled their infant, Mark, in the Happy House Children's Center. The teachers observe that both parents talk to their baby regularly and spend time playing</p>

STEP 2: *Continued*
REFLECT

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE

FACILITATOR'S NOTES




Reflecting on our mental models helps us identify misconceptions and become more open to understanding each family.


Go to step 3: LEARN



with him before they leave for school. Erik plays “Peek-a-Boo” with Mark and makes him laugh. They keep Mark wrapped up in many layers of clothing, even on warm days. They say that they want him to stay dressed this way when he is at the Children’s Center.

Facilitator: *What stood out for you as you listened to this story?*



Invite participants to respond.



Facilitator: *We have ideas, or mental models, about who children and families are. Mental models are beliefs or assumptions we hold about the world around us. They help us make sense of our world. Yet, because mental models are based on our own personal experience and culture, they may not be complete or accurate. Our mental models may lead to an incorrect judgment about any given family or situation.*



Facilitator: *When we reflect on our thoughts and feelings, we can become aware of our unique perspective. Reflecting on our mental models helps us identify misconceptions and become more open to understanding each family.*

STEP 3: LEARN

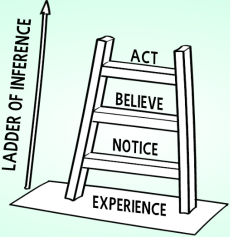

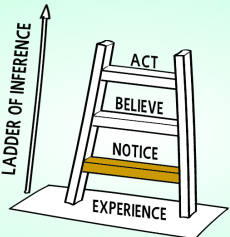

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE

Step 3

To build effective relationships with families, we

- become aware of our own mental models
- actively learn about families



FACILITATOR'S NOTES

[3 min]



Step 3 - Learn



Reference handout.

📄 **"Building Relationships with Alana, Erik, and Mark"**

Facilitator:

There are two important things we can do to build effective relationships with families:

- ▢ *become aware of our own mental models*
- ▢ *take an active role in learning about families*



Facilitator:

In PD2GO Systems Thinking pack 3, we introduced the Ladder of Inference, which helps us think about our mental models and how they influence the way we act.

Let's practice using the Ladder of Inference to help us reflect on our mental models of Alana, Erik, and Mark.



Facilitator:

In this story, what information about Alana, Erik, and Mark did you pay more attention to?



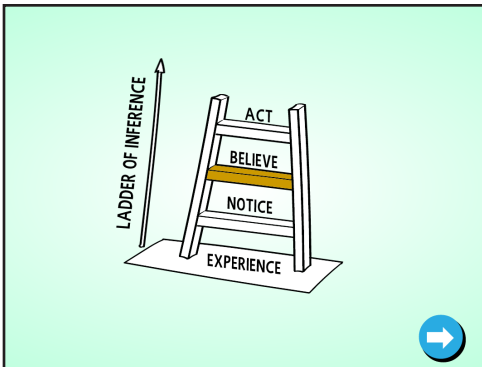
Possible responses include:

- ▢ Alana and Erik bring Mark to the center and play with him before they go to class.
- ▢ Alana and Erik are teen parents.
- ▢ Both parents communicate regularly with their baby.
- ▢ They dress Mark in several layers of clothing.



STEP 3:
LEARN *Continued*

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE



FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Facilitator: *What beliefs or mental models came up as you thought about this family?*



Possible responses include:

- ▣ I wondered if Alana and Erik were capable parents because of their age.
- ▣ Alana and Erik both know how to interact and communicate in positive ways with their child.
- ▣ I thought about my mental models about swaddling babies and dressing them in many layers. (Participants may see this practice as healthy or unhealthy.)

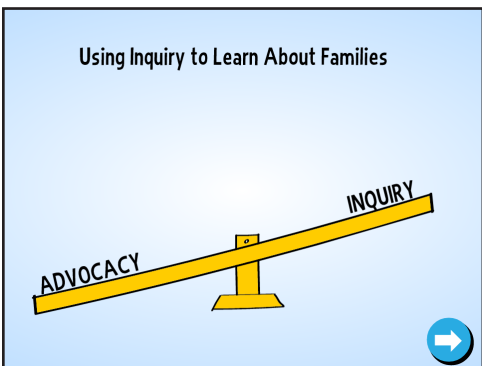
Facilitator: *Our mental models may be accurate or may contain misconceptions. To strengthen our relationships with the family, it's important to surface our mental models and become aware of our biases. In doing so, we consider the family's perspective before taking action.*

To take a more active role in learning about the family's perspective, we use a communication skill called "inquiry."






Facilitator: *Inquiry is asking for more information while suspending your own judgment or opinion. It is a communication style that involves trying to understand a family's perspective. This opens the door for communication and strengthens the relationship between the family and teacher/provider.*











Advocacy is a communication style where you make your thinking and reasoning more visible to others. You describe your opinion and what influenced your thinking and your actions.



STEP 3: *Continued*
LEARN

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE	FACILITATOR'S NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px;">  <p style="text-align: center;">Inquiry helps us think critically about our mental models and understand the family's perspective.</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Go to step 4: PRACTICE</p> </div>	<p>Facilitator: <i>System's thinkers aim to balance advocacy and inquiry. They use inquiry to learn about the family's perspective before stating their opinions. An example of an inquiry statement is that the teacher asks Alana and Erik to tell her more about the clothing Mark wears. This will help the teacher suspend judgment and seek the family's perspective.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Inquiry is a tool we can use to think critically about our assumptions and mental models. It helps us understand the family's perspective and build a more collaborative relationship with family members.</i></p>

STEP 4:
PRACTICE

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE	FACILITATOR'S NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 10px;"> <p style="font-size: small;">Step 4</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Using Inquiry Skills to Explore Mental Models</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Let's Think About This Family</p>  <p style="text-align: right;"></p> </div>	<p>[4 min]  Step 4 - Practice</p> <p> Reference handout.  "Using Inquiry to Learn About Families"</p> <p>Facilitator: <i>We're going to use another example to explore our mental models and practice inquiry. Can someone read the vignette from the "Using Inquiry to Learn About Families" handout?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p> Joseph is the father of Ivan, a new child in the preschool room. Joseph brings his son to school each day, and they are late at least two times a week. Both Joseph and Ivan look disheveled and in a hurry. They tend to arrive just as the group is cleaning up the morning snack and transitioning to circle time.</p>

STEP 4: *Continued*
PRACTICE

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE | **FACILITATOR'S NOTES**

Facilitator: *What mental models come up for you about this situation?*



- Invite participants to respond. Possible responses include:
- ▣ Joseph coordinates morning schedules to get all his children to school; Ivan is probably his last drop-off.
 - ▣ Education isn't a priority for Joseph.
 - ▣ Joseph is overwhelmed as a parent.
 - ▣ Joseph doesn't respect the rules of the center.

Facilitator: *Having reflected on our mental models about this family, how do we learn more about this situation?*

Let's explore two ways we can engage with Joseph.



Facilitator: *Let's consider what might happen if the teacher uses advocacy to start her conversation with Joseph:*

"Joseph, I'd like you to bring Ivan earlier so he can join us for morning snack."

How might this response influence the conversation with Joseph?

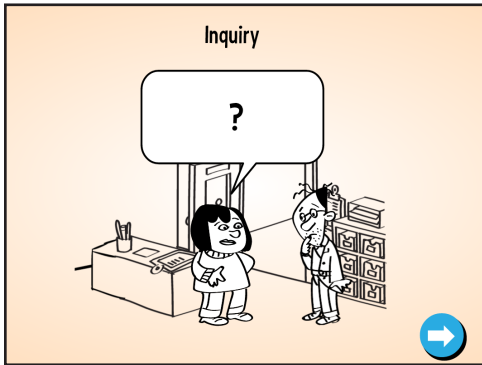


- Possible responses include:
- ▣ Joseph might feel he has to defend himself.
 - ▣ Joseph might shut down and not respond.
 - ▣ Joseph might say, "Ok," but continue to be late.



STEP 4: *Continued*
PRACTICE

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE



FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Facilitator: *With a partner, come up with an inquiry statement that would help you see the situation from Joseph's perspective.*



Invite participants to respond. Possible responses include:

- "Joseph, I'd like to know how mornings are going for you now that Ivan has transitioned to our program."
- "I notice you and Ivan arrive as we are cleaning up snack, how are your morning routines at home?"
- "Joseph, how is morning drop-off going for you? Is there anything we could do to support you and Ivan with this process?"

Facilitator: *How might your inquiry statement influence the conversation with Joseph?*



Invite participants to respond. Possible responses include:

- Joseph might talk about some of the challenges he faces as a parent.
- Joseph might discuss his own concerns about his son's experience at the center.
- Joseph might be curious to know more about the morning routine at the center and how the teachers could support him and his son.

Facilitator: *Based on Joseph's response, the teacher might move to using advocacy statements. For example, if Joseph seems unconcerned and unwilling to make an effort to bring his son to school earlier, the teacher might say, "When Ivan is late, he misses time to interact with his classmates and is slow to engage in activities."*



STEP 4:
PRACTICE *Continued*

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE



Using inquiry improves decision-making and supports family engagement.



Go to step 5: EXPAND

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

Facilitator: *Using inquiry helps us understand a family's perspective, improves our decision-making, and supports family engagement.*

STEP 5:
EXPAND

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE



Step 5



Using Inquiry Skills in Our Work with Families




Using Inquiry to Explore Mental Models

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

[4 min]

CLICK 

Step 5 - Expand



Reference handout.

 **"Using Inquiry to Learn About Families"**

Facilitator: *There are many ways we can use inquiry skills to learn about families and understand their perspectives. Think of a family that you would like to understand better.*






CLICK 

Facilitator: *Take a moment to reflect on your existing mental models you have about this family. How can you use inquiry to better understand this family's perspective? Write down your ideas on the handout.*



Allow 2 minutes.

STEP 5:
EXPAND *Continued*

PRESENTATION SEQUENCE	FACILITATOR'S NOTES
<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p>Systems thinkers seek to understand each family's perspective by using inquiry skills.</p>   </div>	<p>Facilitator: <i>Now turn to a partner and identify one way you will use inquiry to explore your mental models about this family.</i></p> <p> Allow 1 minute.</p> <p></p> <p>Facilitator: <i>Systems thinkers reflect on their beliefs and assumptions about children and families. They seek to understand each family's perspective by using inquiry skills in their communication with families.</i></p>

THIS PD2GO PACK WAS INFORMED BY THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., & Smith, B. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. New York: Doubleday.

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