

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

## SYSTEMS THINKING



### Systems Thinking and Individualization

**Partnering with Families to Individualize Support**

## LEARN FROM FAMILIES

**Families know their children better than anyone else and have valuable information to share with you.**

- Find out which methods work best for communicating with families in your program.
- Ask which times of day are best for communicating with families.
- Learn about the families' perspectives on their children's progress.
- Ask families about their priorities for their children's development and learning.

## SHARE WITH FAMILIES

**Sharing information with families helps them become actively involved in their children's development and learning.**

- Share observations and information about how the child is developing from your perspective.
- Facilitate information sharing with any other service providers working with the child (for example, speech therapist or occupational therapist).
- Communicate the child's progress and, if need be, concerns you may have about it.

## COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES

**Remember, families are your partners in supporting children's development and learning.**

- Meet with each family to discuss their child's developmental strengths and needs. Then, together, identify appropriate, meaningful learning goals for the child.
- Ask the family about their observations of their child at home to learn about the child's skills and behaviors in other contexts.
- Work with each family to identify leverage points and key strategies to support their child at home and at school.

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#### Taking It Home — Partnering with Teachers/Providers in Supporting your Child's Learning

As a family member, you play an important role in the system that supports your child's individual learning and developmental needs. Collaborating with professionals who care for and provide services to your child helps everyone involved gain a deeper understanding, develop shared goals, and provide better support for your child.

Below are some ideas to help you collaborate with the people who work with your child.

## SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD WITH HIS OR HER TEACHER/PROVIDER.

Children often show different skills at home than at school. Sharing information about your child helps teachers/providers create a complete picture of your child's learning and development.

- Share information about the interests and activities your child engages in at home.
- Share your observations of your child at home.
- Talk about any concerns that you may have about your child's development.
- Provide additional background information to clarify situations. For example, share when there has been a change in daily routines, because this information can help teachers/providers understand why a child may be more sensitive or upset.

## LEARN FROM PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH YOUR CHILD.

New information about your child's development may arise as you hear the perspectives of other professionals who work with your child such as your child's teacher/provider, specialists, and other service providers.

- Listen to information shared about your child's development.
- Ask questions to clarify information that doesn't fit with your experiences at home.
- Share information about what you see your child doing at home.
- Take time to think and, as needed, request additional meetings.

## COLLABORATE WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER/PROVIDER IN SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD.

Think about the activities and learning goals that are important for your child.

- What skills would you like to see your child develop now and in the future?
- Share information with your child's teacher/provider about areas of child development important to you. For example: How important is it for your child to have opportunities to be creative through art? How much emphasis do you place on your child developing social skills?
- Discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your child's program.

**Want More?** Use the following resource to learn more about collaborating with your child's teacher/provider and other professionals:

<http://www.nasponline.org/communications/spawareness/Parents%20and%20Teachers.pdf>