

Partnering with Families to Support Quality Interactions and Communication

LEARN FROM FAMILIES

Families know their child better than anyone else, and have valuable information to share with you!

Provide families with opportunities to share about conversations that happen at home (e.g., “Maria really enjoyed sharing her bedtime story with us today... Can you tell me more about your story time routine at home?”).

- Reflect on how the family’s cultural values impact their communication with the child? With the teacher?
- Invite families to ask questions or share concerns about their child’s language development and/or communication skills.

SHARE WITH FAMILIES

Sharing information with families helps them become actively involved in their child’s development and learning.

How do you inform parents about your current efforts to support their child’s development and learning?

- Host a family workshop to share and demonstrate positive interaction and communication strategies.
- Send families informational handouts that provide key skills to practice at home with their children to promote quality interactions and positive communication.

COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES

Remember, families are your partners in supporting children’s development and learning!

How do you engage families as partners in supporting their child’s language, communication, and critical thinking skills?

- Discuss ideas with families on ways to build on and extend children’s thinking and ideas.
- Provide families with resources and concrete examples to use at home. See Family Connections: Taking It Home for more ideas.

For more ideas and tips for engaging families around positive interactions and communication, check out the following resource:

- First 5 California - Parent Education Site: *Language Development: The Parent’s Role*
<http://www.first5california.com/parents/learning-center.aspx?id=10&sub=41>

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Taking It Home - Important Strategies to Support Your Child's Development

As a parent you play a critical role in supporting your child's language and communication skills.

Click on the link below to check out *"The Parent's Role - Ways You Can Encourage Strong Language Skills"* on First 5 California's Parent Education Site. This article provides ways to build strong language skills and positive interactions with children. <http://www.first5california.com/parents/learning-center.aspx?id=10&sub=41>

Here are some ideas for you to try at home:

TAKE TIME TO LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD

Slow down and really listen to your child.

- Build in time for conversations during the day.
- Pay close attention to what your child communicates (words, body language, facial expression, and actions).
- Encourage your child to express his/her thoughts by using words.

This simple strategy can deepen the relationship between you and your child and will set the stage for a lifetime of communication!

ASK YOUR CHILD QUESTIONS THAT LEAD TO MORE THAN A ONE-WORD ANSWER

For example, instead of saying, "Did you have fun at school?" you might say "Tell me about your favorite thing that happened at school today." When you ask these types of "open" questions, you are:

- Supporting your child's language and communication skills
- Supporting "thinking" skills and brain development

USE EVERYDAY ROUTINES TO ENGAGE IN BACK-AND-FORTH CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD

When your child makes a statement or comment, listen closely and then respond by repeating back what was said and extending or building on it. Continue to engage in back-and-forth exchanges.

Example:

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| Child: | "I read the book all by myself!" |
| You: | "You read a book by yourself! What was the book about?" |
| Child: | "The doggy. He lived at a pet shop." |
| You: | "He did! I wonder why he lived at a pet shop?" |
| Child: | "Cause nobody bought him." |
| You: | "Oh, I think I understand. He lived in the pet shop while he waited for someone to buy him and take him home?" |

Want More? Read more about ways to encourage and strengthen your child's language skills at First 5 California's Parent Learning Center. <http://www.cfc.ca.gov/parents/learning-center.aspx?id=10>