

PRISM Training Modules

Focusing on Relationships

Pyramid Resources for Infant-Toddler
Social-Emotional Development
Juniper Gardens Children's Project
University of Kansas

Adapted from:
The Center on the Social and Emotional
Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
Vanderbilt University

*"Be the person you needed
when you were younger."*

-Ayesha Siddiqi

These materials were supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R324A170118 to University of Kansas. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education. You may reproduce these materials for training and information purposes.

PRISM Training Module Series

Introduction & Understanding
Social-Emotional Development

Focusing on Relationships

Responsive Routines,
Schedules, & Environments

Understanding Child Behavior

Developing Emotional Literacy
& Teaching About Feelings

Supporting Active Engagement

Promoting Positive Peer Interactions

Challenging Behavior

PRISM Training Modules*: Focusing on Relationships

In Focusing on Relationships, you will explore the importance and complexities of developing relationships between caregivers, families, and children. Participants should leave understanding that social-emotional development takes place within the context of relationships, so strategies to support development must prioritize building relationships. This training covers topics such as reflecting on participants' past and current relationships, and addressing issues related to culture, diversity, and risk factors. It is recommended the trainer spend time reflecting on the discussion questions prior to the training to be prepared to share their own experiences and facilitate discussions.

Learner Objectives

Understand how attachments and relationships build over time

Learn ways to grow relationships with children and families

Learn how the influence of culture and family factors can affect your role as a caregiver

Agenda

- I. Setting the Stage: Review - 10 minutes
- II. Attachment Relationships - 30 minutes
- III. Building Relationships with Children & Families - 30 minutes
- IV. Understanding Families: Cultural Influences - 25 minutes
- V. Understanding Families: Risk Factors - 20 minutes
- VI. Essential Positive Messages - 20 minutes
- VII. Wrap-up & Reflection - 5 minutes

My Notes:

*For references and more information about the PRISM Training



Training Preparation

- Print PRISM Relate - All Handouts, 1 copy per participant, double-sided, or print each handout listed below individually
- Review videos
- Prepare and print certificates of completion
- Activity: Reflective Inventory - Trainer should complete before training to facilitate discussion with personal examples
- Activity: Essential Positive Messages - Familiarize your training assistants with the examples so they are prepared to circulate around to groups to provide aid

Handouts

- PRISM Relate - 1 PowerPoint
- PRISM Relate - 2 Agenda
- PRISM Relate - 3 Reflective Inventory
- PRISM Relate - 4 Attachment Relationships
- PRISM Relate - 5 Enhancing My Relationships
- PRISM Relate - 6 Practice Implementation Checklist
- PRISM Relate - 7 Family Engagement Strategies
- PRISM Relate - 8 Training Feedback

Videos

- PRISM Relate - Supporting Attachment
- PRISM Relate - Infant Caregiver Relationship
- PRISM Relate - A Parent's Perspective
- PRISM Relate - A Teacher's Perspective
- PRISM Relate - Learning from Families

Materials Needed:

Technology

- PowerPoint File
- Video Files
- Computer
- Projector

Printables

- Handouts
- Certificates of Completion
- Sign-in Sheet

Supplies

- Name tags
- Pens
- Snacks and drinks
- Chart paper/white board and markers
- Table fidgets/manipulatives

Other Items

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Slide 1: Focusing on Relationships

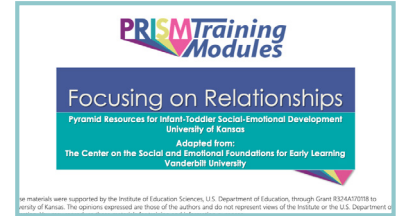
Welcome to the next session in the PRISM Training Series, where we are going to be focusing on relationships. These trainings are meant to be used hand-in-hand with the practice-based coaching model. We'll give you an overview at these trainings, but you'll get into more specifics with your coach.

I am *(name)* and *(give some personal background history relevant to training)*. Here with me are *(introduce rest of team)*.

Let's get some logistics out of the way before we begin

- Breaks:
- Lunch/Snack:
- Parking:
- Restrooms:

You should have a set of materials that includes handouts, slide notes, and other useful information. We'll reference some of these throughout the training, so keep them handy. If you don't have the materials you need, please let us know.



Slide 2: Learner Objectives

We will start off by talking about something at the center of your relationships with the children in your classroom - attachment. We'll also talk about the importance of the relationships between you and the families, and then discuss the influence of culture and risk factors on those relationships.



Slide 3: Training Agenda

You can find our training agenda for today on **Handout 2**. The agenda shows you the specific topics we'll cover in order to meet our learning objectives.



Slide 4: Our Learning Environment

We'll be spending a lot of time together throughout this training and future trainings. It's helpful to decide together what sorts of agreements are important to the group. Think about what makes a positive learning environment for you. What are those things?

Pause for responses.



Slide 5: Possible Shared Agreements

With that in mind, what are some agreements we can make about how our learning environment should look? You can use the agreements on the slide as a jumping point.

Pause for responses, then summarize agreements.



Slide 6: Partner Discussion

Pair up with a partner and share something you really enjoyed learning about at a past training?

If you have never been to an early childhood training before today, share something you think you'd enjoy learning more about.

Give about 5 minutes for partner discussion.

Alright, now that you've had some time to talk, did anything stand out to you or is there anything you'd like to share from this activity?

Pause for responses, then summarize.





Slide 7: What are Relationships?

Many of the strategies discussed have emphasized the critical role of relationships in the lives of infants and toddlers. Let's think about the question "What are relationships?"

What is the difference between Interactions and Relationships?

Pause for responses.

Now, think about a relationship you have and how it developed. It began by interacting and through interactions over a period of time, the relationship was formed. Relationships are more than interactions.

Relationships:

- Have emotional connections
- Endure over time
- Have special meaning between the two people
- Create memories and expectations in the minds of the people involved.

Repeated similar interactions lead to fairly predictable relationships because the infant or young child begins to know how the other person will respond to him or her. This pattern of responses creates the emotional connection that the infant has to the other person.

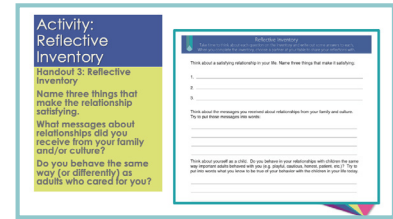
Notice in this definition there is no mention of "positive," "good," "negative," or "bad." Some relationships may be viewed as more positive or more negative; however, in reality most relationships have both positive and negative elements.



Slide 8: Reflective Inventory

When we start to think and talk about relationships with children, it is helpful to reflect on the role that relationships have played in our own lives.

Take out **Handout 3: Reflective Inventory**. This inventory gives you space to reflect on your own relationships. Take a few minutes to fill it out, and then we'll come back and share.



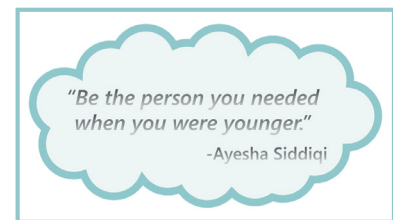
Presenter Notes:

After a few minutes, ask participants one or two questions from the slide. Be prepared to share your own reflections.

Slide 9: Be the person you needed...

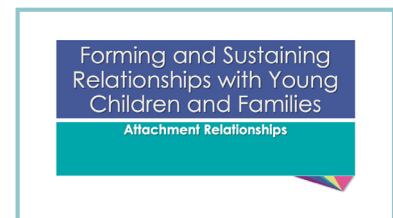
Prior relationships create feelings, expectations, and behaviors that we bring to new relationships. If we have a personal history of satisfying and supportive experiences, we are likely to go into new relationships with the expectation that these relationships will be similar. If we have a personal history of emotionally difficult or traumatic experiences, we may find it harder to manage new experiences as adults, particularly stressful ones.

During our childhood, we received all sorts of messages about ourselves. We are likely to send some of those messages to the children we care for, whether we intend to or not. However, we are more able to recognize this if we reflect on how the messages we received in childhood were interpreted by us.



Slide 10: Attachment Relationships

We are now going to talk about a specific aspect of relationships. Think about why a baby cries when his mother leaves the room. Why does a young child seek out a parent for a hug when they get hurt? These and other questions relate to the key interactions that build a relationship between caring adults and young children—the attachment relationship. When we say a child is attached, we're saying she has developed a strong preference for the most important adult or adults in her life.



Slide 11: Attachment Relationships

Ask a participant to read the text in the yellow box on the slide:

"Attachment is a pattern of interaction that develops over time as the infant or toddler and caregiver engage."

John Bowlby, one of the first writers and researchers to write about attachment, describes the term "attachment" as the emotional bond that develops between a baby and a caregiver.

An infant is biologically inclined to use the caregiver as a provider of comfort. We use the term "secure base" to describe the feeling of safety provided to an infant or toddler by a caregiver. For example, you have probably seen a toddler venture off to try something new, but keep looking back to make sure that you (his secure base) are still there and close by if he needs you.

When infants feel threatened, they turn to caregivers for protection and comfort. The caregiver's consistent, accurate response to the infant's signal of need, such as crying, helps mold the attachment relationship into a predictable, back and forth pattern of interaction that develops over the first year of life.

Children who develop secure attachments to one or more adults are more likely to develop positive social and emotional skills. They know they can rely on adults to meet their needs, to respond to them, and to comfort them. They feel important and begin to develop a sense of competence and confidence.

Infants who do not experience this type of relationship may feel a lack of control over their environment and struggle to develop positive relationships with others.

Our job as care providers is to form a close and attached relationship with a child as well as to promote parent/child attachment.



Slide 12: Supporting Attachment

We are going to watch a video clip showing an interaction that, if repeated over and over in different forms, becomes the pattern of the attachment relationship. Observe what the child is doing and likely feeling and what the mother is doing and likely feeling, and then we'll share observations and comments about the video.

 **Play PRISM Relate - Supporting Attachment (1 min 19 sec)**

What is the child doing?

What is the child likely feeling?

What is the mother doing?

What is the mother likely feeling?



Presenter Notes:

Possible responses include...

Tries to take wrapper off her snack

Confident; proud of herself (says "yeah" at one point); persistent; determined

Starts to take the wrapper off, then asks her child if she can do the rest; encourages her child ("almost" and "keep trying"); offers to help but waits, observes, allows child to figure it out herself; supports child by talking through what she is doing; helps her be successful by holding the wrapper back so she can pull the snack out; celebrates her success

Proud of her daughter; anxious or excited to help, but pulling back to allow her daughter the chance to do it



Slide 13: Activity: Attachment Relationships

Find **Handout 4: Attachment Relationships** in your folder. Pair up with another person and briefly discuss the vignettes on the handout. These vignettes describe interactions between caregivers, parents, and toddlers. Think about the vignettes from your professional role in supporting the infant-caregiver relationship. What could the professional do to promote infant-caregiver relationships?

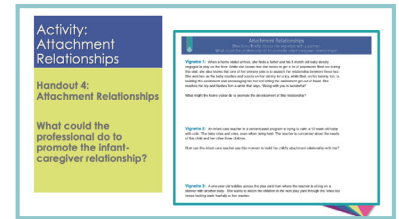
Give 5-10 minutes for partners to discuss.

Let's take a look at the first vignette: a home visitor is meeting with the father and baby. What ideas did you have for ways the home visitor could develop the relationship?

Affirm responses and share ideas not mentioned.

In the second vignette, an infant care teacher is trying to calm a baby. What can the teacher do to build the attachment relationship between her and the child?

Affirm responses and share ideas not mentioned.



Presenter Notes:

Put away her papers, watch, ask the dad how he knows how to play with his daughter so well; allow dad to talk about what he is doing and why, then base her response on his thoughts and follow his lead about what he is doing; talk for the baby about all the positive moments in this interaction and tell dad what a pleasure it is to watch him (a great way to support dad's competence and confidence)

Think about what this baby is learning about relationships as a result of her care towards him; recognize the value of her attempts to comfort him and keep him safe, even if she cannot consistently ease the pain in his tummy; use a sling to keep him against her body while she also provides care for other children; murmur to him that she understands that he hurts and that she wants him to feel better; monitor her own emotional reaction to having trouble comforting him and to the tension that a crying baby evokes. She can talk with his parents and find out what they do to soothe him.

Slide 13 cont.

In the last vignette, the teacher must decide how to support a timid toddler. What ideas did your group come up with to help this teacher use her relationship with the child to support learning and exploration?

Affirm responses and share ideas not mentioned.

Presenter Notes:

Maintain eye contact, smile, show interest in what the toddler is doing; use words and facial expressions to convey that the situation is safe; move closer to the toddler to be available to support her, comment on what the toddler is seeing, or ask questions about what the toddler is interested in

Slide 14: Attachment Relationships: Observation

Babies are biologically programmed to develop attachments to others. We're going to look at three photo slides. You'll be using your observation skills to describe what you see the baby or toddler doing that tells us that the caregiver and/or child is inviting or participating in a relationship. Be as specific as possible about the behavioral cues that the adult, infant, or toddler is demonstrating.



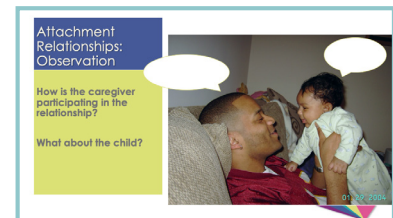
Presenter Notes:

Baby is holding on to caregiver's finger; baby is looking at caregiver's hand
Caregiver is smiling at baby; caregiver has positioned baby to easily see her; caregiver is attempting to make eye contact with baby

Slide 15: Attachment Relationships: Observation

What cues do you see the caregiver and infant displaying in this picture?

Affirm responses and share ideas not mentioned.



Presenter Notes:

Baby: Smiling, looking at caregiver, leaning forward
Caregiver: Smiling, looking at infant, holding at eye level

If the baby had a speech bubble above her head what would it say?

How about the dad - if he had a speech bubble over his head what would it say?



Slide 16: Attachment Relationships: Observation

There are several relationships in this photo, so let's focus on the relationship that the caregivers are facilitating – the relationship between the two children.

What are the caregivers doing to facilitate the relationship between the children?



What cues are the baby in the hat giving to show he is ready for the relationship?



What do you think the speech bubble above the baby in dark blue might say?



What would the speech bubble say above the baby who is facing us?



How about speech bubbles for the moms?



Presenter Notes:

Holding the children at eye level with each other, caregivers are watching the children, smiling to let the children know it is okay to get to know each other

Smiling, watching other child, reaching hand out



Slide 17: Attachment Relationships: Observation

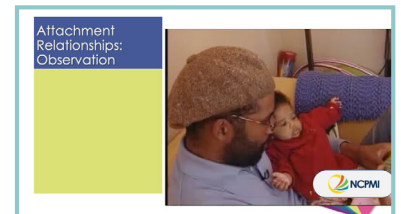
You are going to watch a video clip of an interaction between a caregiver and an infant.

As you watch, identify the specific behaviors of the caregiver and the baby.



Play PRISM Relate - Infant Caregiver Relationship (1 min 27 secs)

What specific behaviors did you notice in that clip? How do you think the baby and caregiver felt during these interactions? Some of the behaviors and potential feelings are the same; the caregiver uses her behaviors and her feelings to help the baby feel secure and safe. What do you think this baby will learn about the world, relationships, and herself if these kinds of interactions continue?



Presenter Notes:

These kinds of interactions help infants and toddlers learn that the world is a safe place and that people protect and care for them. They learn relationships are caring and people in relationships are interested and responsive to their interest and needs. They also learn that they are interesting, effective at communicating, and worth receiving good care and attention.



Slide 18: What do your relationships look like?

We're going to shift to what your own caregiver-child relationships look like. Let's get into small groups and reflect on and discuss the questions on the slide.

What kind of interactions would be captured if someone took photos of you at work? Would the care-giving look nurturing? Would you be smiling and seem to be enjoying working with infants and toddlers? Would you look stressed, worried, or bored?

Would the pictures be capturing moments like those we just saw?

How many moments of these types of interactions make up the day for the infants and toddlers in our care?

What percentage of the day is made up of these types of interactions in your setting?

How do you increase joyful interactions like this in the child's home and in your care?

Give 5-10 minutes for groups to discuss.

Let's come back together as a group and share some of what you discussed.

What were some of the responses or insights you had while going through these questions?

Think about what memories and expectations you are creating for children and families in your care. What will children and families believe about relationships because of their relationships with you?

Activity:
What Do Your Relationships Look Like?
Imagine someone is taking pictures of your interactions with children throughout the day...
What kinds of interactions would be captured?
What strengths would be identified?
How many moments of these types of interactions make up the day for the infants and toddlers in your care?
How might you increase joyful interactions like these in your care setting?



Slide 19: Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship

There are some specific key strategies you can use to help form relationships with infants and toddlers, for example taking advantage of one-on-one routines such as diapering or bottle feeding to talk, to engage in warm responsive interactions, and to engage in joint activities together. What are some other key strategies you've identified so far today, in the video and in discussions, to help form relationships?

Here are some specific ideas for you:



Attempt to understand the child's behaviors, communication and needs through **listening and observing**. This includes taking time to observe a child, as well as how that child is interacting with his or her environment, and the adults and children in the classroom.

Acknowledge and respond to a child as soon as possible. This includes responding to a child's needs quickly, as well as welcoming a child who has just entered the area of the room you are in.

Use natural opportunities to be physically close and affectionate, **staying at the child's level** as much as possible. Being at a child's level creates more opportunities for eye contact, sharing hugs, rocking, etc.





Slide 20: Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship

Use a **warm, responsive tone** in communications and interactions.

Follow the child's lead by matching your attention to what the child is paying attention to. For example, the child is having fun crawling through a tunnel, so the caregiver joins the activity by waiting for the child on the other side.

Listen and respond to the child's attempts to communicate, both verbally and through body language, such as gestures or expressions.

Use alternative strategies to communicate with children who are non-verbal, language-delayed, or are dual language learners. Those strategies are most often visual cues, like easy to understand gesture or pictures.



Slide 21: Strategies to Build a Secure Relationship

Use **routines** such as diapering and feeding as one-on-one time to interact individually.

Acknowledge and mirror child's emotions, both positive emotions such as excitement, and more difficult emotions, such as anger and frustration. There are so many ways to do this in the classroom. You can ask questions about emotions being expressed, provide a label for what the child is feeling, and point out a child's feelings to her peers. This will show the child you understand, while at the same time, teaching that child and the other children in the classroom how to recognize and understand emotions. You can also share your own feeling and emotions with the children in your room, in age- and situation-appropriate ways.

When a child is frustrated or having a conflict, **help the child identify the feeling and problem solve**. This shows the child you care and are there to support her.

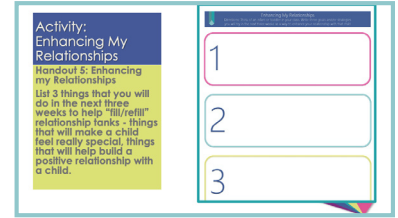
With toddlers, consider conversations reflecting the **child's culture**; for example, family structure, food preferences, religious traditions, native language.



Slide 22: Activity: Enhancing my Relationships

Take out **Handout 5: Enhancing my Relationships**. First, fill out the Practice Implementation Checklist on Communication & Building Relationships by placing stars next to items you feel are your strengths. Then place “x”s in boxes that reflect where you would like to go with specific ties.

Then, flip the handout over and think about a specific child in your classroom. Using ideas from the checklist, come up with three examples of ways you’d like to enhance your relationship with that child.



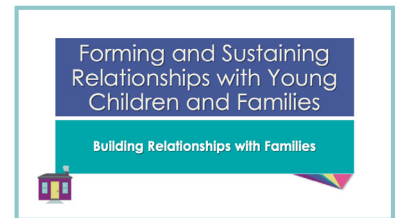
Activity: Enhancing My Relationships
Handout 5: Enhancing my Relationships
List 3 things that you will do in the next three weeks to help “fill/refill” relationship tanks - things that will make a child feel really special. Things that will help build a positive relationship with a child.

- 1
- 2
- 3

Slide 23: Building Relationships with Families

We cannot truly know and understand each young child in our care unless we know and understand each child’s family. While effective family-caregiver relationships take time to develop, strong relationships are key to promoting young children’s healthy social-emotional development.

To support social-emotional development, we engage with families and children by building positive and goal-oriented relationships. The foundation of family-teacher relationships are built upon mutual respect for the roles and strengths each have to offer.





Slide 24: Activity: Building a New Relationship

We are going to do an exercise in building relationships. Find a partner you don't know, or don't know well. Find a way to get to know your partner, or if you already know your partner, find a way to get to know them better. As you are building that relationship, think about how you started that conversation and write down highlights of what you talked about.

Give partner about 5 minutes to get to know each other.

Okay, how did you get to know your partner? How did you start the conversation? What kind of questions did you or your partner ask? What did you learn?

Often when people are getting to know each other, they start by finding out what they have in common. Usually when we try to get to know someone, we introduce ourselves and our role, and we ask questions to learn about the other person and their strengths. There are many ways we can use this experience to think about how we build relationships with families. One thing you have in common with families is the child in your care. Both you and the child's family want what is best for the child. As your relationship grows with a family, learn more about the family (e.g. family members, job, school) including their culture (e.g., language, foods, traditions, values).

Activity: Building a New Relationship

Find a partner you don't know
Find a way to get to know your partner
Write down how you started the conversation and highlight what you talked about

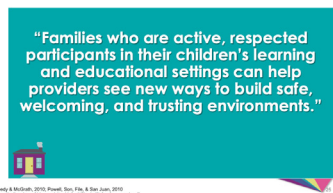


Slide 25: Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships advance Family and Child Outcomes

Positive, goal-oriented relationships develop over time through interactions among families, family members, and infant and toddler teachers. These relationships:

- are fueled by families' passion for their children
- are based on mutual respect and trust
- affirm and celebrate families' cultures and languages
- provide opportunities for two-way communications
- include authentic interactions that are meaningful to those who participate in them
- often require an awareness of one's personal biases and how those biases can affect mutual respect and trust

When relationships focus on shared goals for infants and toddlers, staff and families can experience the support that comes from knowing that they all are on the same team.



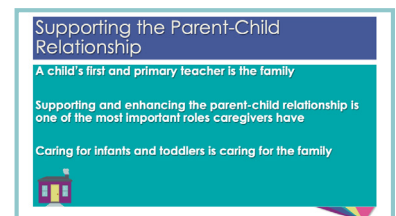
Slide 26: Supporting the Parent-Child Relationship

How does building a healthy relationship with parents help you have a more secure relationship with their children?

Parent-caregiver communication about the child is a means of linking the home and childcare environments. Seeking and sharing information contributes to greater knowledge about the child and therefore influences sensitive caretaking practices. One study found that when mother and caregiver reported more frequent communication about the child and the child's experiences, the caregiver's interactions with the child were observed to be more sensitive, supportive, and stimulating (Owen, Ware & Barfoot, 2000).

Because most of us are trained to focus on children, we may not necessarily think about the importance of healthy parent-caregiver relationships.

Often caregivers feel they have little control over what happens in the home environments of children they work with. However, building a relationship with the child's family can go a long way to enhancing the parent-child relationship.



Slide 26 cont.

Babies can't survive on their own so they depend on the adults around them to care for them. When we provide care for infants and toddlers, we must think about how we engage with families who are the child's primary caregivers and first teachers.

Sometimes building a trusting relationship with a parent or family member can be challenging. For example, many of us use drop off and pick-up times as our primary times to connect with families. However, those times are often hurried and stressful with parents wanting to get to work or home. They are also times when children express strong feelings about beginning or ending a long day.

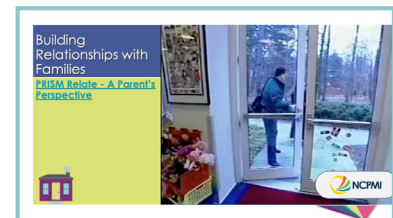
Children observe the adults around them as they engage in interactions and relationships. Observing parents and caregivers engaging in a trusting relationship, working together, and communicating effectively helps children feel more secure in their relationship with that caregiver.

Slide 27: A Parent's Perspective

You're going to see a parent sharing her perspective in this next video. Watch the video and reflect on the benefits to the parent, the child, and the program when a parent feels respected and valued.

 **Play PRISM Relate - A Parent's Perspective (1 min 12 secs)**

Can anyone share their ideas about the benefits that might be the result of parents feeling respected?





Slide 28: A Teacher's Perspective

Following up on that, here is a teacher's perspective on building relationships with families.



Play PRISM Relate - A Teacher's Perspective (5 min 17 secs)

Can someone share an experience where you successfully formed strong and close relationships with families?

What impact did forming a close relationship with the family have on your relationship with the child?

What impact did this have on the parent-child relationship?

Anyone else?

Slide 29: Strategies

I heard many of the strategies we see here from those who just shared their experiences.

Communicate daily with families and offer multiple ways to share information - build a ritual at drop off or pick up. Ask families their preferred mechanism for receiving ongoing information about their child and program events. Offer choices including text-message, email, phone call, communication book, and other options specific to your program.

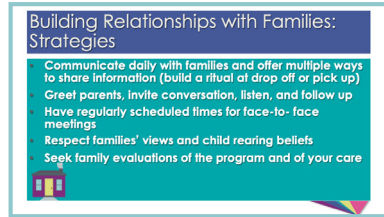
Greet parents when they enter the classroom and help them feel welcome.

Invite conversation, listen and follow up.

Have regularly scheduled times for face-to-face meetings but offer alternatives for those who need them.

Respect families' views and child-rearing beliefs, and reinforce their role as the expert in raising and caring for their child. Ask families to complete a child rearing/child routine survey that includes information about the child's temperament, home language, family routines, religious and holiday traditions, as well as routines related to toileting, feeding, and sleeping. You can use this information to provide families with specific social-emotional resources and to help the child adjust to your environment.

Seek family evaluations of your care and of the program.



Building Relationships with Families: Strategies

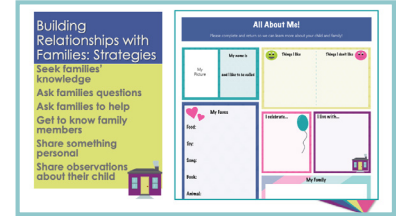
- Communicate daily with families and offer multiple ways to share information (build a ritual at drop off or pick up)
- Greet parents, invite conversation, listen, and follow up
- Have regularly scheduled times for face-to-face meetings
- Respect families' views and child rearing beliefs
- Seek family evaluations of the program and of your care

Slide 30: Strategies

It's so critical to form trusting relationships with families. When families and caregivers form a trusting relationship, infants and toddlers feel more secure in their care, the care can be more attuned to the needs of the child, and the quality of the care in all settings can be higher and more consistent.

- Seek families' knowledge of their child's strengths, needs and interests. Families can bring something unique to their family from home that the children may play with; or as a class create an "All About Me and My Family" showcase highlighting one student each week.
- Ask families to help. Create opportunities to invite families into the classroom. For example, you can host a monthly snack and story time. Families can bring their child's favorite family/cultural food and book to read during story time.
- Get to know family members as individuals outside of their role as parent. Ask about their work or what they are doing over the weekend. Additionally you can share something personal about yourself.

Share observations about their child. Provide families with positive updates using their preferred mode of communication.

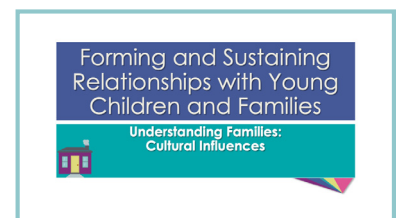


Slide 31: Cultural Influences

To successfully form relationships, it is especially important for caregivers to have an awareness to and understanding of how culture is a significant factor in both how families raise their children and in how caregivers provide care for them.

Cultural differences in families' beliefs and practices effect :

- how young children behave
- how young children adjust to care settings and other early childhood programs
- how families care for their children
- how young children respond to caregivers
- how caregivers and families communicate with each other
- what a problem solving process might look like.



Slide 31 cont.

How do you define culture and what does it mean to you?

Culture can be defined as a system of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape or influence perceptions and behaviors.

How do you see culture in your early care and learning settings?

How might culture influence family beliefs? Staff beliefs?

What about a culture's influence on child behaviors?

Do staff in your programs come from backgrounds that are the same as or different from those of the families you serve. Are there cultural differences between staff members? Between families?

Early childhood care settings provide a unique environment in which adults and children alike can learn about and honor differences in values, beliefs and perceptions. How does this take place in your setting? For example, what happens when caregivers disagree about how holidays should be celebrated with toddlers? How does your program handle differences between a family's and teacher's ideas about discipline?



Slide 32: How Culture Influences Caregiver Behavior

Everyone brings specific values, beliefs and assumptions about child rearing and child development to their work with infants and toddlers.

There are individual and culturally-based beliefs that affect our perceptions and assumptions about behavior (e.g., children should be seen and not heard or children should sit quietly at the meal table).

As educators, we must understand and be responsive to each child's unique culture (1) to understand and promote the development of the child and (2) to establish reciprocal relationships with families.

Studies show that parents and teachers often have differences in their expectations about children's behavior (which are



Slide 32 cont.

largely based on parents' and caregivers' own cultural and family experiences). Behavioral expectations are developed in the context of culture, family and community. For example, a parent may carry an infant most of the time and a caregiver may want to place the infant on the floor.

Recognizing and acknowledging another person's point of view and reaching a shared solution is critical in providing high-quality care to infants and toddlers. In the next slide, you will see some examples of differences in groups of parents' expectations for their children's development.



Slide 33: Age Expectations for Feeding Milestones

This slide highlights the findings from research studies (cited on the slides) in differences in developmental expectations between various cultural groups based on their cultural beliefs.

Take a look at some of the milestones where you see letters besides the numbers. The letters denote those milestones where there was a statistically significant difference and the population there was a difference with. Note that, of course, not all Caucasian, Puerto Rican and Filipino families share these beliefs about age level expectations. We know there is great variation within each group; however, this study demonstrates how in certain areas, across different ethnic groups there can be very different developmental expectations for children based on individual cultures.

Let's take a look at the "Utensils" category. In this study, Caucasian families expected children to start using utensils around 17.7 months. Puerto Rican families expected toddlers to use utensils around 26.5 months and Filipino families expected toddlers to start using utensils around 32.4 months of age. It would not be surprising if some families questioned your program's expectations of emphasis on independence during mealtimes if their expectations were different than the programs.

Skill	Caucasian	Puerto Rican	Filipino
Eat Solid Food	8.2 ^a	10.1 ^{a,b}	6.7 ^a
Training Cup	12.0 ^a	17.1 ^{a,b}	21.9 ^{a,b}
Utensils	17.7 ^a	26.5 ^{a,b}	32.4 ^{a,b}
Finger Food	8.9	9.4	9.5
Wean	16.8 ^a	18.2 ^a	34.2 ^{a,b}

Carlson & Harwood (2000)

Presenter Notes:

If participants are curious about specifics, the superscript tells you the group(s) where the significant difference was found. For example, for eating solid foods, Puerto Rican was significantly different from both Caucasian and Filipino, and but Caucasian and Filipino were not significantly different from each other.



Slide 34: Cultural Influences: Large Group Discussion

How might differing cultural expectations among you and other caregivers and/or families impact your work with infants, toddlers and their social-emotional development?

As a caregiver, can you think of any examples where you had differing values, beliefs and ideas about how to care for an infant?

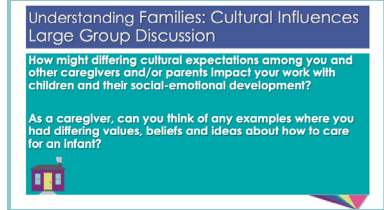
A caregiver or family may view the child as challenging if he/she does not display behaviors that match with their expectations about behavior and/or development.

Different expectations among caregivers and/or families may cause caregivers and/or families to judge each other. This can strain the relationships and ultimately impact the quality of care and support children and families receive.

Very young children and families may be treated differently if their behavior and expectations don't align with caregivers' expectations. For example, we may avoid a parent or act more reserved around someone who dresses differently or looks different, ultimately impacting the relationship. When behavior expectations between your program and the family are different, cultural disconnects can lead to behavior challenges, as well as disagreements between families and care providers.

Children and families may demonstrate behavioral reactions (e.g., showing frustration, being withdrawn or exhibiting acting out behaviors, etc.) to things they are uncomfortable with. For example:

- If infants are fed on a schedule instead of on-demand
- If they are pushed to nap when they are not ready or stay up when they are ready to sleep



Presenter Notes:

Responses may include discussion about inability to do something like this in current centers due to rules about cribs. Presenter may note or redirect conversation about what can they take away from this? Is swaddling an option? Wrapping baby tightly while rocking?



Slide 35: Cultural Influences: Partner Discussion

Let's talk about some scenarios that may sound familiar to you. Discuss in pairs the question you see on the screen.

Give about 5 minutes to discuss.

What ideas did you come up with to support this child and family?

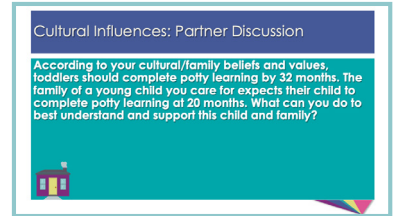
Affirm for responses, then share ideas not mentioned.

Can you share examples from your own work when you might have had cultural differences with families?

Can you share examples from your own work when you might have had cultural differences with other caregivers?

Think about how those differences may have impacted relationship-building. What could you do what have you done to address these differences?

Now that we've shared some of our own experiences, we're going to hear a story about cultural influences in the classroom.



Slide 36: Learning from Families

This video shows an example of how a caregiver can learn from a family about how to more effectively individualize care for a young child.



 **Play PRISM Relate - Learning from Families (1 min 10 sec)**

How do you think culture played a role in helping to develop this partnership between teacher and parents?

Pause for responses, then summarize.

Of course, we always adhere to the health and safety standards within our center. While a baby board may not be feasible in most centers, this is an example of how we can challenge our thoughts and beliefs about culture and how we provide care

It is within their families that infants and toddlers learn about their culture and experience relationships that influence their sense of who they are and who they will become. Talking with families about their cultural practices, traditions and beliefs provides the message they are valued. But, talking with families is not enough – it's important for caregivers to reflect on their own cultural beliefs and practices, as well as be open to and accepting of different ways of caring and supporting infants, toddlers and families.



Slide 37: Cultural Influences: Strategies

Here are a few specific strategies to support cultural influences in your program. Some may work better with your program design than others, so take some time to look at the list and think about what you could incorporate, if you aren't already.

Understanding Families: Cultural Influences Strategies

- Visit families' homes and communities
- Support children's home languages
- Develop cultural competency
- Share picture books where children in the stories come from around the world or diverse cultures
- Ask families to share a special lullaby or song from their culture

Visit Families' Homes and Communities

Caregivers can gain an understanding of the strengths children and families bring with them to the childcare program or setting.

Support children's home languages: the earliest experiences of young children shape their growth and development, including language and communication skills. All young children need support for the development of their home or primary language. Infants and toddlers may also feel more emotionally secure when they hear their home language in a childcare setting.

Training in Cultural Competency

Acquiring information can be a first step in increasing caregiver sensitivity. In order to develop the skills necessary to work with a diverse population, it is important that caregivers of all backgrounds receive meaningful training in cultural competency. Cultural competency requires a set of skills including (but not limited to) knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures, diverse parenting practices, family values and customs, and dual language acquisition processes.

Diversity in Materials

Share picture books where children in the stories come from around the world or diverse cultures. It is important that children "see" themselves represented in the media in the classrooms and programs (i.e., books, posters, videos, etc.).

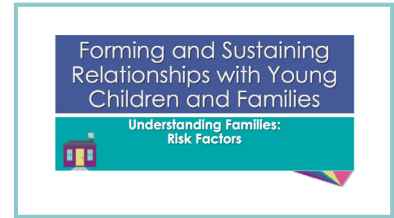
Let Families Help

Ask families to share a special lullaby or song from their culture.

Slide 38: Risk Factors

As we consider how we can work with families, and equip them to support their child's development, we should also consider the strengths and the challenges that families experience. It is important to be aware of and have a deep understanding of the factors that can affect young children and their families, in order to best support families. Family strengths, such as having involved grandparents or extended family, living in a supportive community, being bilingual, or having services that support children with special needs are important strengths to acknowledge and value. Families also experiences challenges. Socioeconomic conditions, foster care or child protective service involvement, substance use, and depression and mental health challenges are all conditions that can pose potential risks to child development.

Knowledge of these and other factors helps create a deeper understanding of young children's lives. This knowledge is critical to your ability to help children learn and develop well.

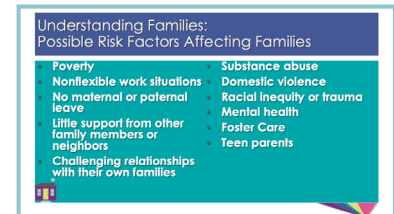


Slide 39: Possible Risk Factors Affecting Families

Children's early social and emotional development depends on a variety of factors, including genetics, environment and the community. These influences affect development in a number of ways.

Risk factors are obstacles to healthy development, but protective factors are those things that offset risk and help young children become resilient so they can bounce back from challenges that arise.

For example, one influence on an infant's or toddler's social-emotional development is the general level of stress a family experiences and the family's capacity to adapt to that stress. When there is additional stress from environmental circumstances, such as poverty or community violence, families' ability to form a relationship and provide their children with consistent, responsive care may be adversely impacted. Having strong, supportive relationships can help families be resilient in challenging times.



Slide 39 cont.


Think about the influences on a young child's development within the first 3 years and the effect these influences could have.

What are some early childhood influences or possible risk factors that come to your mind?

Pause for responses, then summarize.

What are some possible effects of these influences and risk factors?

Pause for responses, then summarize.

 The items on this list are just some of the risk factors. It's important to have background on the familial stressors that may have a negative impact on the social-emotional development of young children. Our understanding, actions, and decisions can increase our ability to use the familial stressor knowledge to better understand and respond to young children's developmental needs (Gilliam et al., 2016).

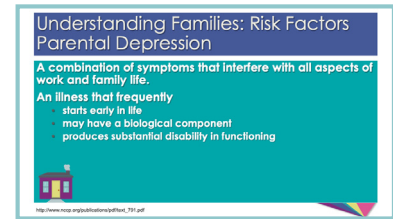
Slide 40: Parental Depression

There is one influence that we should pay very close attention to as we think about factors that strongly impact very young children's social-emotional development - parental depression.

Depression is:

- a combination of symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, eat, enjoy life and parent;
- an illness that frequently starts early in life, that may have a biological component and that can produce substantial disability in functioning
- a common but sometimes invisible condition that responds to prevention and treatment

Depression is a common condition that affects people of all backgrounds, classes, and ethnicities. Approximately 15.6 million children live with a depressed parent (NRC & IOM, 2009).





Slide 41: Research on Parental Depression in Early Head Start Families

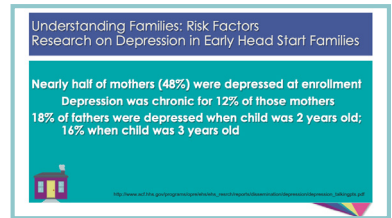
The rate of postpartum depression among families enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start is more than twice as high as in the general population.

- Nearly half (48%) of mothers in one study whose children were Early Head Start-eligible had enough symptoms to be considered depressed.
- In 12% of these women, depression was chronic (i.e., they experienced low mood for long periods, sometimes years).
- Depression also affects fathers. Another study found that 18% of Early Head Start fathers had depressive symptoms when their children were two years old.
- Sixteen percent were still depressed when their children were three years old (Administration for Children and Families [ACF], 2002).

A number of factors can contribute to parental mental illness in general, and to depression in particular, whether biological, familial, personal, or social. Examples include:

- Hormonal shifts and experiences during pregnancy and after pregnancy (postpartum)
- Family history of depression, prior depression, life stress (for example, family violence, trauma, substance abuse)
- Poverty
- Social isolation
- Oppression

These risk factors may harm children directly by exposing them to unfavorable conditions, or indirectly by increasing parental depression, which can lead to poor parenting and negative child outcomes (Onunaku, 2005).





Slide 42: Depression can Impact Child Development

Understanding Families:
Depression Can Impact Child Development

Birth outcomes

- A parent's ability to bond and attach to her child
- A young child's language, cognitive, and behavioral development
- A parent's ability to follow appropriate health and safety guidelines

www.ku.edu/prism/parenting/2014/07/

While not always the case, parents who are depressed are less likely to be responsive and sensitive with their children. Parental depression can impact a child's development in several ways:

The negative effects of maternal depression on children's health and development can start during pregnancy. Research on untreated prenatal depression finds links to poor birth outcomes, including low birth weight, prematurity, and obstetric complications.

Parents who are depressed may lack the energy to carry out consistent routines and to have fun with their children.

For example, three-year-old children whose mothers were depressed in their infancy perform more poorly on cognitive and behavioral tasks.

"The impact of depression in mothers has also been linked with health and safety concerns. Depressed mothers are less likely to breastfeed, follow the back-to-sleep guidelines, and engage in age appropriate safety practices, such as car seats and socket covers. Depressed parents are also less likely to follow health advice for their young children." (Knitzer, Theberge, & Johnson, 2008)

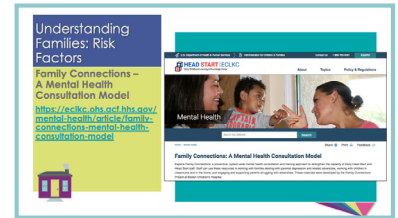
The goal of understanding information about depression is not to help you become clinicians, but to raise your awareness about the signs, symptoms, prevalence, and impact of depression on young children's social-emotional development. It is also important to note that parental depression may likely impact a caregiver's ability to form a close relationship with the parent. Knowing some basic facts about depression and its symptoms is useful in thinking about how to best support families and their young children.



Slide 43: Family Connections

Here is a terrific resource for child care and Head Start programs to help staff and parents better understand depression and effectively talk about it.

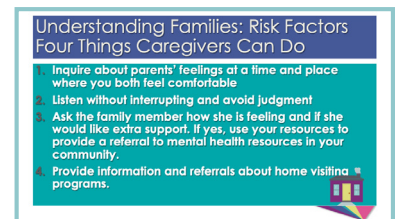
Family Connections is a project funded by the Office of Head Start as an Innovation and Improvement Project to strengthen the capacity of Early Head Start and Head Start staff in dealing with parental depression and related adversities. You can find out more about it on their website.



Slide 44: Four Things Caregivers Can Do

When it comes to mental health, many people are unsure of how to respond or what to say. People may be afraid to say the wrong thing. There are strategies for what you can do if you believe a parent may be suffering from depression:

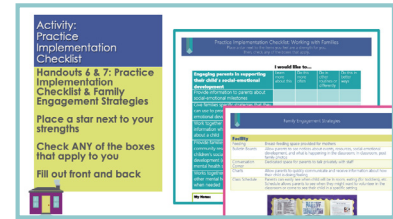
- Inquire about parents' feelings at a time and place where you both feel comfortable
- Listen without interrupting and avoid judgment
- Ask the family member how she is feeling and if she would like extra support. If yes, use your resources to provide a referral in your community.
- Provide information and referrals about local home visiting programs.





Slide 45: Practice Implementation Checklists

Now, you're going to have time to reflect on your own classroom practices that support relationships with families. Take out **Handout 6**, which is a practice implementation checklist that covers engaging and communicating with parents. You also might like to reference **Handout 7**, which has some specific strategies or tools for engaging families. It might help remind you of things you are doing, or give you ideas about things you might like to do to engage families.



Give about 5 minutes for participants to complete.

How can we as teachers/center engage with families to ensure that we are supporting the whole family?

How can we as teachers/center ensure that we are working together to support the child's development?

Leave time for group to respond. Remind participants that Checklists can be used during coaching, action planning, or self-reflection after this session.



Slide 46: Essential Positive Messages

During this training, we have been discussing how social-emotional wellness develops within the context of relationships. We've talked about how we use ourselves to help infants and toddlers develop close, secure relationships, and how to manage significant developmental shifts. We've talked about how important our support is to families.

Now we're going to take a personal look at what we want for young children, and at the messages we want to be sure we are sending to them. Let's step back to your relationship with the children in your room.

Each of us or each group will create one statement that communicates how valuable children are to you and how committed you are to them. Then, write down three ways that you might put the statement into practice.

For example, you might create the statement, "I want you to know that relationships are positive and that people can be counted on and trusted to keep you safe."

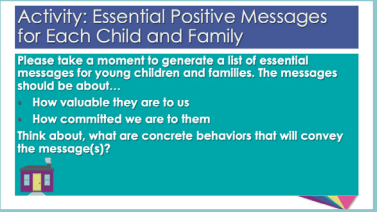
The three practices to communicate the statement could be:

- Respond to your discomfort as quickly as possible.
- Stay close to assure you that I am nearby if you need me
- Smile often and have fun with you

This is a time to reflect and pull together thoughts from everything we've gone over thus far, so let's take a few minutes to complete this activity.

Circulate around the room while individuals or groups work, giving positive feedback.

Ask each group or individual to share.



Presenter Notes:

If you notice groups need support getting started, you can use the Sample Essential Positive Messages & Action Statements to help generate ideas. This list is intended to help you facilitate small group discussions, but is not meant to be read in its entirety.

Sample Essential Positive Messages and Action Statements

We want you to learn that your needs will be met so you can feel free to relax, explore, and learn from the environment.

I will:

- respond to your discomfort as quickly as possible
- speak to you in a soothing voice to let you know I am coming
- stay close to assure you I am nearby if you need me

I want you to know that you can communicate your needs effectively.

I will:

- observe you carefully to read your cues
- respond to you by mirroring your sounds and words
- understand your behavior has meaning

I want you to learn to gradually and eventually build your own skills to soothe, comfort, and regulate yourself.

I will:

- learn and try many ways to try to soothe you
- refrain from ignoring or dismissing your feelings
- stay calm to help you feel calm

I want you to know that relationships are positive and people can be counted on and trusted to keep you safe.

I will:

- keep you safe
- have fun with you
- smile often

We want you to gradually learn to understand your own feelings and express them appropriately.

I will:

- identify my own feelings
- work to match my facial expressions to my words and tone of voice
- talk about emotions and use a variety of feeling words

We want you to treat others with kindness and respect.

I will:

- hold you, pat your back, and hug you
- speak to you at eye level
- tell you what to do instead of what not to do



Slide 47: Major Messages to Take Home

Today we've taken time to focus on relationships. We started with a discussion about attachment and your relationships with the children you care for, and then we moved on to your relationships with families. We discussed the impact of culture and risk factors on relationship. Because early social-emotional wellness and skills develop within the context of relationships, it is essential that caregivers are prepared with a variety of strategies to strengthen relationships. We hope this training has provided you with some new ideas you can use, and perhaps has given you some thoughts or ideas you'd like to discuss with your coach.

Thank you for attending, and I look forward to seeing you next time, where we will discuss (share information about next training).

Major Messages to Take Home

- It is within families that children learn to experience and communicate emotion.
- Early social-emotional wellness develops within the context of relationships.
- Caregivers are critically important to social-emotional development of infants and toddlers.
- Caregivers who use a variety of strategies will be better able to form close relationships with infants, toddlers and their families.