

# Guidelines for Educators

## When using the materials: “Families are Children’s First Teachers”

The “Families are Children’s First Teachers” materials were designed to assist early childhood educators when working in partnership with families to support and enhance each child’s development. The materials were designed to accompany the work that educators are doing related to the **New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines**.

A guiding principle in the **Early Learning Guidelines** is that family members are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, throughout both the **Guidelines** themselves and in these family materials, you will see the uniqueness of families validated and celebrated, and attention paid to cultural and linguistic diversity. The information in these materials can be used with families in any early childhood program including child care centers, family child care, Early Head Start, home visiting, PreK, preschool, Head Start, kindergarten, or special education programs.

## What educators can do with these materials

We recommend that you present these materials with *all families in your program in a variety of ways through face-to-face interactions*. By sharing this information, we hope that families and educators can recognize and celebrate how much teaching families are already doing. This can lead to meaningful activities and discussions.

We suggest that you do NOT distribute *all* of the materials in the “Families are Children’s First Teachers” at the same time. Instead, we recommend that you share each document with family members at a different time throughout the program year. In this way, you are building on the ideas, sharing them in small doses, and not overwhelming the families in your program.

Here are some suggestions for when you can distribute portions of the materials:

- Integrate materials into orientation sessions, family events, and family/educator conferences.
- Use materials as part of classroom or program newsletters to tie to the curriculum in the program (for example, if you are doing cooking activities in the classroom, you may want to distribute the “In the Kitchen” pages).
- Post these activities on your program website or classroom blog, or use as part of a web calendar under “family updates.”
- Use these materials at family involvement activities such as family nights, literacy events, etc. (for example, if holding a literacy night, you may want to distribute the “When Reading with Your Infant, Toddler, or Preschooler” pages).
- Invite family members to share examples of activities they are doing at home with their children. Create a Family Activity Board where photos of families involved in learning experiences together are displayed.

The information in these materials is not meant to be all inclusive but rather to provide a starting point for an ongoing dialogue between educators and families. We hope this information is helpful to you as you implement the **New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines** and communicate about them with the families of the children in your program.

Download the “Families are Children’s First Teachers” materials and related documents at [www.newmexicokids.org](http://www.newmexicokids.org) under the Caregivers & Educators tab.

