



# Joyful Engagement Learning Together with Families

**Recommendations for Family Engagement** For All Early Childhood Educators in New Mexico

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#### The Importance of Family Engagement

Download these and related documents at www.newmexicokids.org under the Caregivers & Educators tab.

All URLs listed in this document must be reentered in your browser window; links do not take you to the correct pages on the websites. Family engagement is an essential part of implementing the **New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines.** Educators and family members work together in partnership to support children so they develop to their fullest potential. This document provides recommendations to guide educators in engaging families in effective ways.

The **Early Learning Guidelines** provide reasonable expectations for child development between birth and the end of kindergarten. The continuum of development helps educators and families create an individualized picture of what a child can do and see clearly the next steps for helping the child continue to learn and grow.

Family engagement is different from family education. Family engagement is an interactive process that values the contributions of all involved. Early childhood educators have much to share with children's families. And families have much to share with educators. All parties work toward the benefit of the children. Such engagement can be rewarding and joyful!

Throughout this document, the terms "families" and "family members" rather than "parents" will be used. Educators know that children are being raised in a variety of home settings. They may be living with one or two parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, or foster families. Educators recognize that whether there are two parents in the home or not, there are many adults in the child's life that impact his growth and development and serve as support for the child when he is not at the early childhood program.



#### Primary Goals of these Recommendations

Effectively engaging families requires thoughtful consideration on the part of educators. In this set of recommendations, many ideas will be shared to involve families in their child's early childhood program. These suggestions focus on three primary goals:

To support each family's efforts to raise a happy, healthy child. To invite families into meaningful participation in their child's early childhood program.

(2)

**3** To support a seamless transition for children and families within and across programs.

## **3 Primary Goals**

These recommendations are written as a guide for *all* early childhood educators in New Mexico who are working with young children and their families in these programs as well as others:

- Family Child Care
- Center-Based Child Care
- Home Visiting
- Early Intervention
- Early Head Start
- Head Start
- New Mexico PreK
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Preschool
- Kindergarten
- Training, Technical Assistance, and Consultation Programs
- Higher Education

There are many ways to refer to those who work with young children and their families in any of the above programs. For the purpose of consistency, the all-encompassing term "educator" will be used throughout these recommendations.

#### Foundational Principles for Family Engagement

These are foundational principles for effective family engagement that are the basis for all recommendations in this document:

- A commitment to invite families to take an active role in making decisions concerning their child's care and education
- Engagement in ongoing two-way communication with families about their child
- Creation of a truly reciprocal partnership between educators and family members on behalf of the child

Most importantly, in these **Family Engagement Recommendations**, educators are invited to:

- Listen to a child's family members with an open mind and an open heart,
- Reflect about their own attitudes and potential biases,
- Intentionally create ways to establish respectful relationships, and
- Honor family input as they help each child develop to his or her fullest potential.

Family engagement can be a joyful endeavor! Early childhood educators and family members *can* learn together!



Joyful family engagement begins with listening to families' voices.

## **General Introduction to Family Engagement**

#### Working Toward Joyful Family Engagement

Joyful family engagement begins with listening to families' voices. What about their child makes them proud? What are their worries and concerns? What are their hopes and dreams for the life their child will lead? What are their fears about educational settings and educators? Setting a tone for open communication is an important step in engaging families successfully.

Educators set a positive tone by considering their own attitudes and potential biases toward families, welcoming the family members' perspectives, and communicating in a way that builds a strong partnership.

Educators can review the checklist below to reflect on their own communication style with families in their program.

# Below are ideas that educators can incorporate into their family engagement.

- O Establish friendly contact with families at enrollment and/or early in the year.
- O Focus on the strengths of children and families.
- O Ask families to fill out an information sheet with their home and work addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses as well as the best times/ways to communicate.
- O Use strategies for getting family members to attend meetings such as extending a personal invitation so they know they're genuinely welcomed.
- O Communicate with families in many different ways to promote engagement, because one memo or announcement just won't do.
- O Contact families promptly about potential or serious problems because early contact helps.
- O Carefully plan how to communicate about difficult topics with family members by using active listening, remaining calm, and looking for areas of agreement.
- O Share personal experiences in order to break down barriers and establish strong relationships with families in the program.

There is no question that educators have knowledge and information about child development, educational strategies, the **New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines,** and best practices. They are experts! Family members are experts as well. They know their child in ways an educator never can. They have wisdom about their child. They have insights to share.

Keeping a positive and compassionate perspective with families will serve to strengthen educators' relationships with the children in their care. The children, too, will develop more trusting relationships with their educators because they know that educators have their best interests in mind as well as those of their families.

Family Engagement Ideas: COMMUNICATION

#### The Organization of the Recommendations

These recommendations are organized into four major parts: **General Introduction**, **Part 1: Spending Time with Families, Part 2: Sharing Information with Families**, and **Conclusion**. In Parts 1 and 2, tips, strategies, ideas, and tools for building partnerships with families are offered. The recommendations are based on joyful interactions between educators and families so that all mutually benefit.

Each section includes the voices of family members and educators to illustrate the differing perspectives from which the focus of the section should be considered. Practical suggestions are offered throughout, along with resources that educators have found helpful in engaging families successfully. Cautions are offered so that educators can be thoughtful and intentional as they work toward effective family engagement. The sections are formatted so that they are separate for easy reference.





# PART 1

# **Spending Time with Families**

Families are an integral part of early childhood programs. As an early childhood educator, you may get to know children and their families better by intentionally planning for opportunities to spend time with them. There are multiple ways to do so from the very first contact a family has with the program to ongoing involvement in the child's classroom and beyond the classroom.

In these recommendations, we suggest that you use the following opportunities to spend time with families:

- Welcoming families to the early childhood program
- Enrollment process
- Rituals and routines at arrival time
- Successful separation
- Departure time considerations
- Family members visiting or helping in the classroom when children are present
- Family participation beyond the classroom

# 

"When my child and I visited the program, we saw posters of other Native American children. My daughter said, 'Mommy, look. They're just like me.' The staff was warm and friendly, the setting welcoming. And the smile on my daughter's face convinced me that this was the right program for us." "Being in ranch country, many of our families live miles from their nearest neighbor. We provide a family area for the parents to meet after they drop off their children at our program. We have noticed that they are developing friendships with each other."

## Educator

### **Family Member**

Making the physical environment of the early childhood program welcoming to families is essential. There are some easy steps to consider that will communicate to both children and family members that everyone in the program is delighted to have them as part of the community. Here are some ways to make the environment warm and inviting. What other ideas can you add that work for you at your program?

- Hang welcome posters or signs that include all of the languages spoken in the community.
- Display posters, photos, books, and other resources that reflect diverse families.
- Post clear visitation practices. (Do they need to check in at the office first, sign in, or wear a nametag?)
- Create a family area (two or more comfortable, adult-sized chairs, a table with family resources, perhaps with coffee or tea available).
- Create a family reflection, suggestion, and comment area (a bulletin board where families can post sticky notes with thoughts to give input – anonymously, if they wish).
- Help families develop friendships with other families in the program.

First impressions matter! Consider signage to guide first-time visitors to someone who can greet them and share basic program information. Above all, welcome them as valued members of their child's team.

RESOURCES

Article: "It's the Little Things that Count: How We Welcome Families to Our Full Day Preschool Program," by Ann Gadzikowski Available at: http://tyc.naeyc.org/articles/pdf/Gadzikowski.pdf

#### SECTION 1.2 • The Enrollment Process

"Our family has two moms. I was so excited to see that the enrollment form at our son's new child care center had a spot for Parent 1 and Parent 2. For once I did not have to cross out Father and write Mother 2!" "We recognize that coming to a new program is hard for families and children. We try to make them know that we are interested in them – that we want to know more about their family and their child. And that we will do everything we can to make the transition go smoothly for them."

### **Family Member**

#### Educator

As you meet your families for the first time, use welcoming words and actions to help families trust you, recognize the value of your program, and your desire to work in partnership with them. Whether a family is touring the program or meeting to engage in the enrollment process, some strategies will help the process be most effective.

It's important for you to be thoughtful and considerate in the enrollment process so you do not overwhelm families with too much information or early childhood education terminology. When using written pieces, it is more effective when you are aware of the family's home language and understanding, and when you welcome the family to share relevant information about their child and their lives.

Here is a list of strategies you may use when sharing information with families newly enrolling in the program. What others can you add that work for you at your program?

- Have friendly, welcoming staff on the phone, at the door, in the office, and in the classrooms (if possible, have staff members who speak the family's home language).
- Give family members a flyer with brief program information.
- Offer a tour of the facility.
- Assure families about the program's open door policy.
- Inform families of ways both administrators and educators will communicate and be available to hear their concerns.

٠	Post a short biography about the educators in your program (where families
	will see) so they are no longer "strangers." Post photos as well.

• Give families a folder and/or binder to take home to store information from the program.

It's also important that you invite families to share information about their family and their child. Here is a potential list of strategies for gaining information from new families. What other strategies can you add that work for you at your program?

- Ask the family how to correctly pronounce the child's name and other family members' names. Does the child or family member prefer a nickname?
- Ask what names the family members would like to be called.
- Have a program-wide contact form with information such as phone numbers, email addresses, preferred family language, preferred form of contact, best time to be contacted, etc. (For a model, see Appendix A.)
- Engage in an initial conversation with each child's family members. Make the conversation a casual, give-and-take to gather information. (Find a list of suggested questions and topics in Appendix A.)

∠!\ CAUTIONS

Be sure to use clear friendly language on all forms. Families may be rushed for time or have limited literacy skills. Read through your enrollment forms and consider how families will feel filling them out. Are they too long? Do they repeat information on multiple documents? Ask staff and families how they might be improved. It is often true that less is more!

#### RESOURCES

ES Article: "ELLs [English Language Learners] in Early Childhood Education: Recruiting Immigrant Families," by Kristina Robertson Available at:

#### www.colorincolorado.org/article/25820

Website: http://families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care

Article: **"Talking to Your Child's Preschool Teacher"** Available in English at: http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-to-preschool-teacher.html?ref=search

Available in Spanish at: http://kidshealth.org/es/parents/talk-to-preschool-teacher-esp.html?WT. ac=pairedLink

"When I drop my child off at the child care center, I am amazed that a teacher is always there to welcome us. I know there is a lot going on at that time. When greeted, my child's face lights up and when we are so warmly welcomed, I light up too." "For a while, arrival time was crazy at my program. Now, we as a staff have designated one teacher to stay close to the door and welcome each and every family. It has not only made a difference in arrival time, it has positively affected the whole day."

#### **Family Member**

### Educator

Arrival and departure times can be difficult for family members and their children, as well as for you and your colleagues. Being thoughtful about arrival and departure times and planning for smooth transitions will help everyone involved. Not doing so may diminish the educator's own sense of competence, and negatively influence the child's growing trust in his caregivers and the family's sense of positive involvement with the program.

As children and families arrive at the program, you have an opportunity to set the tone for the day and create a sense of calm and well-being for everyone. Here are some suggestions for intentionally planning for arrival time to be more magical than manic. What other ideas can you add that work for you at your program?

For all children:

- Divide tasks with colleagues to ensure that each child and family member is greeted and welcomed.
- Greet children and adults by name with awareness of all family members and all children (not just the more outgoing ones).
- Ask how the child's evening/night was, how the morning is going (or whatever part of day has passed thus far), and for any special care instructions for the day.
- Ask about any new changes to the child's life that may affect her while at school (such as new foods introduced, changes in sleep or napping patterns, and, for infants and toddlers, teething issues, etc.).
- Ask how the family wants to handle the transition to the program that day.

For older toddlers and preschoolers:

- Use greeting rituals with the children, such as:
  - Special handshakes or hugs.
  - Routine tasks (such as putting things in the cubby, signing in, moving a picture from the "home" to "school" column, saying "hello" to friends).
  - Read a special "hello" book.
  - Sing a special "hello" song.



In the 21st century, most families and educators have cell phones. It is important that you address the appropriate uses of cell phones in relation to arrival and departure times. First, there should be a clear policy that NO educator will engage in conversations on cell phones as children and families are arriving. And programs may want to also establish a clear policy that explains to families why cell phone usage is not to occur at arrival and departure times. (Find a sample Cell Phone Usage Statement in Appendix A.)

#### RESOURCES

Book: *I Love You Rituals,* by Becky Bailey Available at: http://www.amazon.com/Love-Rituals-Becky-Bailey-2000/dp/ B00DEK3VOA/ref=sr\_1\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1457634507&sr=1-2&keywords=i+love+you+rituals+by+becky+bailey

DVD: "Daily Dilemmas: Coping with Challenges" (Addresses daily challenges that arise during transition times, arrival/departure, naptime, and washing/toileting) Available at: http://www.naeyc.org/store/node/478

Plan for arrival time to be more magical than manic. Article: "Helping Your Child Adjust to Preschool" Available in English and Spanish at: http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/?search=y&getfields=description&q=helping+your+child+adjust+to+preschool&site=kh&client=ms\_p\_en&output=xml\_no\_dtd&gsaRequestId=7457070404200936186&filter=0



"As I walked into the center with my child crying and not wanting to stay, I was very conflicted that I had to leave him and go to work. The teacher approached me and asked how I wanted to handle the situation. She said, 'Just let me know when you are ready for me to take him.' I told her I needed to leave and for her to take him. She let me know that they would call or I could call throughout the day." "Taking care of the family members emotionally as they leave a crying child is important to our relationship. On one occasion, I approached a dad with a crying child and asked if he wanted me to take his child. He was uncomfortable and eventually said, 'Yes, I need to leave.' Over the past few weeks, the child has settled into the separation routine and the dad said to me, 'Thank you for helping me back then!'"

#### **Family Member**

#### Educator

Separation from loved ones can be difficult for children as well as for their family members. Work with each child's family to help their child go through the process as easily as possible. Children pick up on their family members' feelings and often react in kind. Some family members may feel guilty about leaving their child in an educator's care. Some do not yet feel trusting of the care that will be provided. By talking this through with the family member and giving them some practical strategies, you will build reassurance and trust.

Remember to avoid cell phone use during arrival and departure times; encourage families to do the same. This will allow for everyone's full attention during the separation process.

Below are some suggestions for helping families and children separate successfully. What other ideas can you add that work for you at your program?

- Encourage each family to bring in a special item from home (such as a blanket, bear, etc.) to help ease their child's transition to the program.
- Invite families to bring in their child for a short visit to the classroom before the child actually begins attending, especially if this is their first time in an early childhood setting.
- Explain to families the importance of saying "goodbye" rather than sneaking away without doing so (see suggestions in article, "Separation Anxiety," in the Resources listing for this section).

٠	Provide a ritual	for saying	"goodbye"	that is followed	l each and	l every day:
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- Designate a "goodbye window" where the child can stand and see the family member and wave to them as they leave (there is no sneaking away).
- Encourage the family member to kiss the child's hand in the middle of the palm so the child has that kiss with him all day long (read the book "The Kissing Hand" to your children, if appropriate for the age group).
- Determine with family members how many kisses and hugs make a "goodbye" (i.e., three kisses and two hugs!).
- Invite family members to sit down with the child and get involved with something with her for five to ten minutes before leaving (eating breakfast, playing with toys at a table, drawing a picture, etc.).
- To help family members who are upset by a child's difficulties in separating:
  - Invite them to stand in the hall and see how their child adjusts.
  - Offer to phone them or invite them to call so they can be reassured that the child has calmed down.
  - Ask them what will work best for them to move towards successful separation.
  - Invite them to stay longer in the program day if necessary.

#### **CAUTIONS**

Separation is hard on parents too! Every once in a while we meet a family member who is really challenged by drop-off. In their desperation they may try things that we know are not helpful. For example, they may ask a crying child, "Do you want to just go home?" or try to sneak away when the child isn't looking. It can be frustrating to see things like this. Instead of reprimanding the parent, talk to them with compassion about how hard goodbyes are at first. Brainstorm with them to discover ways you can support the family as they adjust.

Book: *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn, Ruth E. Harper and Nancy M. Leak Available at: http://www.amazon.com/s?ie=UTF8&page=1&rh=n%3A283155%2Ck%3Athe%20 kissing%20hand

Article: "Separation Anxiety" Available in English at: http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sep-anxiety.html?ref=search

Available in Spanish at: http://kidshealth.org/es/parents/separation-anxiety-esp.html?WT.ac=pairedLink

#### **SECTION 1.5** • Departure Time Considerations

"My child's teacher talks with me and my little one every day. I love that as we arrive and when we leave she is so warm and caring. She uses both our names, asks about our lives, and shares things that have happened with my child during the day." "I have learned that when I call family members by name and take the time to talk with them a bit, I am letting them know that I care about them and their child."

## **Family Member**

#### Educator

Much like arrival time, departure time is another transition that can be difficult. At departure time, you are setting the tone for the child's transition to home. You have the opportunity to create a sense of calm and well-being for everyone.

Here are some suggestions for intentionally planning for a departure time that sets a calming tone for the family's evening at home. What other ideas can you add that work for you at your program?

- As the family leaves, tell them something positive or interesting the child did during the day no negatives!
- Use names of children and their family members.
- Use goodbye rituals with the children, such as:
  - Special handshakes or hugs.
  - Sing a "goodbye" song.
  - Routine tasks (such as getting things out of their cubby, signing out, moving a picture from "school" to "home" column, saying "goodbye" to friends).
    - Read a special "goodbye" book (a model of one is included in Appendix A).

/!\ CAUTIONS

Goodbye time is not the time for a behavior report. Too often family-educator relationships are damaged by negative daily reports. If behaviors have become a real concern, set an appointment with the family and discuss the matter in private at a convenient time. Helpful information about how the child ate and slept is good to share, but this is not a time to complain about how long it took him to fall asleep.

RESOURCES

Book: *I Love You Rituals* by Becky Bailey Available at: http://www.amazon.com/Love-Rituals-Becky-Bailey-2000/dp/ B00DEK3VOA/ref=sr\_1\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1457634507&sr=1-2&keyword s=i+love+you+rituals+by+becky+bailey

Book: *Transition Time: Let's Do Something Different* by Jean Feldman and Rebecca Jones

Available at: http://www.amazon.com/Transition-Time-Lets-Something-Different/ dp/087659173X

Book: Transition Tips and Tricks for Teachers: Attention-grabbing, Creative Activities That Are Sure to Become Classroom Favorites! by Jean Feldman Available at: http://www.amazon.com/Transition-Tips-Tricks-Teachers-Attention-grabbing/dp/0876592167/ref=sr\_1\_fkmr0\_1?s=books&ie=U TF8&qid=1457653068&sr=1-1-fkmr0&keywords=Transition+Tips+and+ Tricks+for+Teachers%3A+Attention-grabbing%2C+Creative+Activities-+That+Are+Sure+to+Become+Classroom+Favorites%21

#### SECTION 1.6 • Family Members Visiting or Helping in the Classroom When Children Are Present

"Tomorrow I get to help at my little sister's preschool. When I walk in my sister wants me to play with her. She gets mad when I help other children. I tell her that I will play with her at home. I read, help with snack, play ball, and push them on the swings. I want to be a teacher someday." "The only time her father was able to spend in the program was the afternoon he came to rototill our new garden spot. The children loved watching him work and what a wonderful memory for his daughter!"

Educator

#### Family Member (Sibling)

When family members are invited to visit or help in the classroom, the program is enriched and enhanced. You can get to know them better and strengthen your bond with them. Many family members have talents, interests, hobbies, or knowledge they can share with all of the children, thus extending the curriculum.

Not all family members have experience working with young children in group settings. They might need suggestions about the best ways to be helpful. Having written guidelines for helping with activities in the classroom or chaperoning field trips can guide them to participate successfully.

Learn more about the ways your family members feel comfortable participating in the program. When you show delight with whatever ways families can help, you'll build a stronger, more positive relationship which may lead to more extensive participation down the road. Ask those who volunteer what they would feel most comfortable doing.

Here are some ideas for ways family members can participate. What other ideas can you add that work for you at your program?

- Visit and let their own child sit on their lap during a story time.
- Rock babies and toddlers to sleep.
- Help prepare and serve snack.
- Join in on a walk with the children.
- Help with projects or play experiences (post ways family members can interact with children in each play area).
- Share their talents and hobbies, expertise, or cultural interests and heritage with the children.
- Help with classroom laundry needs.
- Help with disinfecting toys.
- Come in to help clean a teacher storage area and rearrange the shelves.

## SECTION 1.6 • Family Members Visiting or Helping in the Classroom When Children Are Present

CAUTIONS	Family volunteers must never be counted in staff-to-child ratios unless they have had the required background checks, documentation, training, and approval from licensing. It can be easy to think of a regular volunteer as another educator in the classroom, but there are legal and privacy issues that must be considered. Volunteers should not be left alone with children and should not be involved in private matters such as changing a child's soiled clothes.
RESOURCES	One-Page Resource: "Tips for Family Involvement" Available at: https://www.newmexicoprek.org/Docs/PreKOnePageResources/11Family%20 InvolvementOnePagerFINAL.pdf
	Article: "Engaging Families in Early Childhood Education" by Lily Sanabria-Hernandez Available at: http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/family/engagingfamilies
Show delight with whatever ways families can help in the program.	

#### SECTION 1.7 • Family Participation Beyond the Classroom

"One weekend, our family created a tissue paper rainbow together and sent it back in to school. My child and I were so excited to see it displayed on the bulletin board as we entered the classroom. I am glad that I can be involved, even though I can't be present at the school." "A family member wanted to be involved in the classroom but did not have the time to come during the day. She noticed that many of our books were in need of repair and asked if she could take them home and fix them. She began to call herself 'the book doctor'!"

### Family Member

Educator

There are many ways families can participate in the early childhood program that do not involve being in the classroom. By inviting their participation in this way, you honor the busy lives families lead and provide a way for them to be involved.

For some families, the only realistic way they may be able to be involved is by contributing from home or at the program after their working hours. Here are some ideas to facilitate that. In what other ways have you and your colleagues invited families to contribute to your program?

How families might participate:

- Serve on a committee or the advisory board to review program policies and plan for fundraising events.
- Participate in evening or Saturday volunteer opportunities.
- Share home experiences that include their cultural heritage.
- Serve as family advocates at the legislature.

How you can facilitate:

- Invite families to send in needed materials (paper towel tubes, old stationery and envelopes, fabric scraps, etc.).
- Ask them to help make photo albums of recent activities.
- Ask them to make an audio recording of themselves reading a story or singing a lullaby.
- Request that they prepare a snack (it may represent their cultural background).
- Ask them to create something for the program with their child at home (give materials and clear instructions).



## PART 2

# **Sharing Information with Families**

There are many important purposes for sharing information with families and there are multiple ways to do so. What's most important is that as you share information, you also welcome input from families. Families have much to share! When you are open and ready to communicate with families in a reciprocal way, you will find this communication style leads to a truer, more meaningful partnership.

Here are some purposes for which you may share information with families:

- To give a report about highlights of the child's day at the program.
- To communicate with them in an ongoing manner about their child and about the program.
- To establish a positive connection between children's homes and the program.
- To share the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines with families.
- To provide opportunities for families to come together (such as family nights or weekend activities).
- To visit with families in the home and community.
- To conference with families about their child's progress.
- To support transitions within and across programs.

Any of the above can be done at the program or in ongoing home visits. In these recommendations, you'll find ideas and suggestions for both.

# 

# SECTION 2.1 • Reporting Highlights of the Child's Day

"I worry about how my three-year-old behaves each day at school. I'm always holding my breath hoping for a good report from his teacher."

#### Family Member

"When I greet family members as they pick up their children, I remind myself that the last thing I want to do is give them a negative report. I think of something interesting or new their child did that day. Or, if I have a concern, I ask to arrange a time to talk."

#### Educator

Giving families daily reports at the end of the day is something that takes thought and consideration. If those reports are only negative in tone, they add to the stress of an already difficult time. Instead, daily reports should be helpful to families, giving them information that leads to an easy transition from the program to home. Talking about concerns or behavior is much better left to formal conferences (whether by phone or in person), not to a couple of minutes at the end of the day.

Here are some ideas to consider when talking with a family member at the end of their child's day in the program:

- Greet family member(s) warmly.
- Describe the child's participation in routines of the day.
  - For infants and toddlers, this will involve napping, feeding, diapering/ toileting, and participation in exploratory activities indoors and outside.
  - For preschoolers, this will involve what was served for snack and/or lunch, napping, and participation in play activities and group times indoors or outside.
- Focus on strengths and/or positives.
- Maintain confidentiality in front of other families.

Some programs formalize the daily reporting process with either a posted daily report, or a daily report form that is completed for each child. One infant/toddler program dedicated a white board for this purpose. Each child's name is listed next to columns where the following information can be written: Diapering/Food/ Sleep/Play/Parent comments. Nothing is posted that would be disrespectful of confidentiality. (A photograph of such a board is included in Appendix A.)

Two examples of daily report forms (one for infants/toddlers and one for preschoolers) are included in Appendix A of this document. Review these examples to plan your own format. As you do so, think about what information you'd like families to receive each day, as well as the overall tone of the information shared. It's important to have the materials in each family's language if possible.

Some programs occasionally attach photos of children to their daily reports. These photos are well-received by the children's families. With the ease of digital photography, this can be a valuable addition to daily communication. However, one must be respectful of children and their families for permission to take and post photos.

For older toddlers and preschoolers, you might encourage the child to share something with the family member at the end of the day. The child can show the family member something he created in the classroom, or tell about an exciting incident that happened that day. The educator can facilitate that conversation and contribute if appropriate.

Here is another idea for reporting on individual children's participation in the day:

• For preschool children, some educators have children write/dictate/draw notes or celebration cards to their family members during the day. These can be ready for the family member at departure time, available in the child's cubby or the family's mailbox. Or the child can present it to their loved one himself!

Here are ideas for reporting on groups of children on a daily basis:

- Display photos of the children in action throughout the day near the sign-out area or on the family bulletin board (be sure to have permission to display).
- Add documentation explaining what *Early Learning Guidelines* the children are demonstrating or what they are learning as they play.
- Purchase a digital photo frame that you can easily load with a few photos from the day. Turn the frame on so the photos rotate as family members arrive at the end of the day (be sure to manage this so that all children are pictured).
- Add photos daily to the program website or classroom blog (if the program has one). In this way, families can keep updated on what happened during the day when they get settled back at home (be sure to have permission to display).

## ⚠ CAUTIONS

Some family members seem like they are always in a rush during pick-up times. Consider sending a quick picture or note that shares one thing the child enjoyed that day. The family member will know you care and the relationship will be strengthened.

RESOURCESPhoto of White Board Daily Report: Available in Appendix A of this documentModel Daily Report Forms: Available in Appendix A of this document

# SECTION 2.2 • Ongoing Communication Strategies

"I felt so much better after I received the text from my child's teacher telling me that my daughter had settled in after a tearful departure."

### Family Member

"To keep track of my contact with families I have a spiral notebook with a couple of pages for each. I note phone numbers, addresses, and relevant information. Any conversations with the family are documented in the notebook. I review the notebook regularly to see when contact was last made with the family and, if several weeks have passed, I phone them to touch base."

### Educator

Ongoing communication between you and your children's families is an essential part of best practices. Whenever possible, provide information (both written and oral) in the family's home language. Encourage families to share information and stories with you about their child.

There are many ways to communicate with families on a regular basis. Below are some suggestions. What other ways have you found effective at your program?

- Texting, emails, and/or phone calls during the day or in the evenings.
  - Check with the program administrator to learn the policies around texting, emailing, or calling family members.
  - If allowed, check with individual families to find how they would like such communication to occur and when is most convenient or appropriate for them.
  - Then, use such communication styles wisely. Don't waste families' time, and don't use these methods only to discuss concerns.
  - Establish how families can reach you via texting, emails, and/or phone calls as well so that they can get and share information.
- Sharing photos of children via texts or email.
  - If allowed, be respectful of family permission to take and share photos.
  - Only use occasionally as a way to reassure families or to help a child share what she is doing that day.

- When face-to-face communication is not possible, develop a home-to-school communicator (a folder that is sent daily or weekly in which the educator writes brief notes to the family and the family can reply and share home information).
- Write a weekly or monthly newsletter that includes lesson plans with focused **ELGs** for the week, calendar events, snack list, needed items, upcoming family meeting information, community events, etc. (An example is included in Appendix A.)
- Share helpful articles and/or pamphlets with families (see Resources).
  - Be careful not to overwhelm families with too much information.
  - Inform families that the articles are available and invite them to take them at arrival or departure, or make them available at family nights or conferences.

#### / CAUTIONS

Be careful with technology! Many families and educators are now using Facebook, texts, and blogs to stay in touch. It's important to have clear policies about what staff and families should and should not do with these technologies. Now more than ever we must be aware of privacy issues. Consider having a login and password for families to access classroom blogs and photos. You never know who is looking at or sharing those photos!

#### RESOURCES

#### Articles for families Available at: http://families.naeyc.org/

Multiple web resources: The New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance: Quality Through Shared Services/Alianza Para Calidad

Sign up for free membership in the New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance: Quality Through Shared Service and visit the LIBRARY for an abundance of family-friendly materials, tips, and resources. Go to Library and then Parent Handouts and Family Communication Topics. Includes many bilingual resources. Available at:

www.newmexeca.org

#### SECTION 2.3 • Establishing a Positive Home-Program Connection

"After we made tortillas in class, a child wanted to help make tortillas at home. His grandmother let him help and brought a picture of him stirring the flour. She said, 'We had so much fun and I never thought of letting my grandchild do that but he is a good tortiero now!'" "A teddy bear that my students named Buddy Bear goes home with a different child each weekend. Families are encouraged to write a story about the activities Buddy Bear does with them. We read the story to the class when Buddy Bear returns. At the end of the year, each child receives a copy of 'The Adventures of Buddy Bear."

#### Family Member

### Educator

Family engagement involves recognizing the fact that families are their children's first teachers. Educators can give them practical and fun ideas for home activities that will help their children grow and develop. The early childhood program will benefit. Families will benefit. And, most importantly, children will benefit.

It's most important that these ideas be offered with respect to the circumstances and needs of each family. Some may embrace them wholeheartedly, while others may find them difficult to squeeze into their busy lives. Acceptance of what they can do is essential.

Look over this list of suggestions. What other ideas have you found successful at your program?

- Send home family/child magazines from various educational companies.
- Encourage children to check out books from the program library to take home for reading with family members or to visit the public library.
- Suggest that families have a special family night at home such as:
  - Game night
  - Cooking night
  - Special book night
- Send materials for families to use at home to do art activities together.



#### SECTION 2.4 • Sharing the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines with Families

"Wow! I am amazed how much my child is learning while he is playing! We went on a scavenger hunt through the learning centers at his school. At each center I saw the Early Learning Guidelines that were being addressed. When he started school I didn't even know what Early Learning Guidelines were. Now I find myself connecting them with his play at home." "At least four parents have come to me with concerns about what their children 'can't do'. The *ELGs* have provided me with a research-based document to use when reassuring them that their children are developing and building needed skills to move forward. Together, we will support their children as they move to the next steps."

#### Family Member

#### Educator

The **New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs)** are designed to help you and your families communicate more effectively about children's growth, development, and learning. The **guidelines** document is not meant to be handed out to families. It is designed as your reference tool. If a family member asks to see the document, you may share it with him or her. However, if such a request is not made, there are other ways to effectively share the **ELGs** with families.

Family Engagement Materials have been developed for educators to share more information about the **ELGs** with families. Two sets of materials are available. Both sets include guidelines for teachers when using the materials. These materials can be accessed for printing at **www.newmexicokids.org** under the **Caregivers & Educators** tab.

#### What are the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines? A Brief Introduction for Families

This brief introductory document describes the **ELGs** and their purpose. Written in family-friendly language, it explains what families can expect their children's educators to do related to the **Early Learning Guidelines**. It is recommended that you give this document to the family in person at an initial family/teacher meeting (either at the program or at an initial home visit).

#### **Families are Children's First Teachers**

The second set of materials, "Families are Children's First Teachers," includes several one-page cards designed to recognize and celebrate what families do in everyday routines and home-based activities that enhances their children's learning and development. These brochures cover such topics as "Teaching Your Child When in the Kitchen," "When Sorting Laundry," and "When You Both Are in the Car." In the guidelines for educators about using the materials, it is recommended that these pieces be given out individually rather than all at once. You may distribute and explore the materials in person with families and engage in discussions about the importance of their everyday interactions with their children. Many ideas are shared for how to pair the above documents with family events or conferences.

There are many other ways to share the **ELGs** with families. Here are some suggestions. What other ideas can you and your colleagues consider for your program?

- Post ELGs for the appropriate age group near the sign-in/out sheet or on the family bulletin board.
- Post **ELGs** in various areas of the classroom (in play areas, near diapering table, etc.) on signs with Velcro® so they can be changed out regularly.
- When displaying children's work or photos, add labels or descriptions that tie what the children are doing in the photos or what they have created to the **ELGs.**
- Put **ELGs** on lesson plans as goals for various play experiences, daily routines, and group experiences.
- Build portfolios tied to the **ELGs** and share with families.

## ⚠ CAUTIONS

All families want their children to do well and some may desire to know how their child does in comparison to other children. Be careful to only compare a child's progress to his or her own previous skill level. This will highlight growth and protect the privacy of other children.

#### 

The two sets of documents (with guidance for teachers) referenced above are available at:
 http://www.newmexicokids.org
 Click under the Caregivers & Educators tab.

"Our family felt so supported at our last family event. The teachers knew that my child has severe food allergies. They set up activities in a 'food-free' room, in addition to the potluck. We were finally able to participate without fearing that the night would end in a trip to the hospital because of an allergic reaction." "At our end-of-the-year cookout, we grilled hot dogs. Each family brought a favorite dish to share. We listened to the children sing and celebrated the completion of our new playground! The children played in a safe environment and 40 families sat and visited throughout a wonderful evening."

#### Family Member

#### Educator

Many early childhood programs have found that hosting family events (either on weekday evenings or during the day on weekends) can lead to stronger relationships among educators, children, and their family members. The purpose of such events can be to share information, to socialize, or to celebrate a special event. They can involve the whole family or only adult family members.

When planning such events, it's important that you include families by surveying their interests and welcoming their ideas. Personal invitations (older toddlers and preschoolers can help make them) will help make each family feel special and wanted. All family members (siblings and extended family) can be invited. When planning, schedule the event at a convenient time for families. These events do not need to be long as great connections can be made even in a short time – one to two hours maximum. Provide food and fun (although be attentive to food allergies).

Here are several ideas for family events. What other ideas can you and your colleagues develop? Think in terms of what the families at your program are interested in.

- Include music in some way: children singing favorite songs, families joining in a sing-a-long, or playing background music.
- Have children's work on display and/or present a project that children are working on to showcase learning that is taking place.
- Provide nametags that have the family member's name with the relationship to the child (i.e., Josie Martinez, Julian's Grandmother).
- Invite families to share what children are doing at home (it could be related to the project that is showcased!).

- Look at these events as a way to build a community of families (introduce families to each other they want to know who their child plays with).
- Plan a family orientation event (where the program philosophy, handbook, and calendar are introduced and some get-acquainted activities are included).
- Host an Early Learning Guidelines family event.
  - Share some of the Family Engagement Materials.
  - Have families go on an ELG scavenger hunt.
  - Answer questions about the ELGs.
- Plan a learning-through-play event.
  - Invite adult family members only and describe play-based curriculum, inviting them to play with some of the materials themselves. One program had each family member create something for their child – a painting, block structure, drawing, playdough creation – that was waiting for the child when he arrived the next morning.
  - Invite the whole family and have a structure where families move through the play centers together.
- Plan a literacy, math, or science event.
- Plan a family community event where families meet at a local park for a picnic and group play date, or hold an end-of-year cookout.
- Invite families to come to a family show and tell (see model for invitation in Appendix A).
- After an event, gather feedback, record attendance, reflect on the successes, and start planning to address improvements needed.

#### 

Be mindful of how much time you schedule for events. For young children and their families, most formal activities should be completed within 30 minutes. If you are going to share information or hand out awards organize the task so that it can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. You can then have an informal time afterward for visiting. This allows families to participate as much or as little as they like.

#### RESOURCES

#### New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines Available at: www.newmexicokids.org

## SECTION 2.6 • Visiting with Families in the Home and Community

"Our child's teacher offered to come to our house for a home visit before our daughter begins in her program. She said this will help us get better acquainted. We're looking forward to it!" "I find it really helps me begin to build a warm and friendly relationship with my children's family members if I schedule a visit with them. I meet them at the community library and I make it a relaxed conversation. I invite them to share with me what they would like me to know about their child."

#### Family Member

## Educator

Another way to begin the process of building strong partnerships with families is to visit them in their homes or somewhere in their community (such as the library, community center, a local coffee shop, or a church). Of course, this is done only with their permission. When educators visit with families in their homes or community, they take important steps toward establishing warm and respectful relationships.

Here are some reasons to schedule visits. For what other purposes have you and your colleagues conducted visits with families in their homes or community?

- To get to know the family and the child better.
  - In the home or community, the atmosphere is more relaxed with fewer distractions than at the program.
  - You can listen and observe to understand the family's perspective.
  - Children often act differently at home or in the community. They may be more relaxed themselves, and are often thrilled to have you see where they live and the places they go and spend time with their family members.
- To begin a conversation about the child's daily routines at home as well as the family's hopes and dreams for their child.
- To offer materials and home-based activities and to model how to use them with children.
- To give families resources and support materials.
- To have a family/teacher conference.

There are important factors to keep in mind when planning for home or community visits. Asking for permission is most important. Here are some other factors. What considerations would you and your colleagues add?

- Remember and respect family members as the child's first and primary teachers.
- Schedule at a time convenient for the family.
- Focus on the family's strengths and the child's strengths.
  - This is not a time to raise only negative concerns.
- Invite the whole family to participate in the visit (that means you need to bring materials for the other children, too).
- Bring materials and fliers to leave with the family.
- Plan for the visit but also be flexible to meet the family's needs.

CAUTIONS While visiting with a family at home or in the community, it is possible that you may see something that is of grave concern. Perhaps a child is injured and not being taken care of – or you are concerned about other forms of abuse or neglect. If that is the case, you must remove yourself from the visit and call your supervisor immediately. You or your supervisor may need to file a report with Child Protective Services. Always work closely with your supervisor in any such situation.

RESOURCES

Article: "What Parents Want Teachers to Know" Available at: www.educationworld.com/a\_curr/profdev/profdev103a.shtml

One-page resource: Tips for Home Visits Available at: https://www.newmexicoprek.org/Docs/PreKOnePageResources/ 16HomevisitOnePagerFINAL.pdf

Booklets and Guides for Both Families and Educators (Too Small to Fail worked with partners at Sesame Workshop and the American Academy of Pediatrics to create free, downloadable guides for families and those who work with them. Inside are tips and activities around talking, reading, and singing with young children.)

Available in English at: http://toosmall.org/community/resources

Available in Spanish at: http://toosmall.org/en-espanol

Articles for Families Available at: http://families.naeyc.org/

"A week or so before conference time I received a form from my child's teacher on which I could select a time that was most convenient for me for the conference. The form also had a place for me to write down questions I wanted to ask and things I wanted to talk about. The form was helpful. I felt prepared and looked forward to the discussion." "When I have conferences I want the focus to be on the family and the child. I want the family to feel comfortable, welcomed, and unrushed."

#### Educator

### **Family Member**

While a child attends an early childhood program, you may meet with his family multiple times. The program calendar may include conferences as part of the assessment process so that you can share portfolios and reports with families about children's progress, growth, and development. You may ask to meet with families at other times because a problem has arisen. In addition, family members can ask to meet with you to raise concerns or share important information. Conferencing happens in a private setting where you and the child's family members can talk confidentially. The conference can be scheduled to take place in the family's home, in a private setting in the community, or at the program site.

The following are important considerations when scheduling a family/teacher conference. What other factors do you and your colleagues keep in mind?

- Provide a private place for the meeting to occur so that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- For an assessment conference, send an invitation letter about the conference that gives an idea of the content of the meeting and identifies topics for discussion so that family members can organize their thinking and identify any questions they might have.
  - You may want to have the children create interesting invitation cards for the conferences.
- Schedule any conference around the family's availability and at a convenient location, and inform them of the time allotted for the discussion.
- Be flexible about who can attend the conference.
  - Include siblings, if necessary (provide child care or have activities for them to do in another part of the room where they can still be supervised).
- Serve as the timekeeper, letting the family know when time is growing short so they can get their questions answered.
  - If time runs out, schedule ways to continue the conversation (another face-to-face meeting, phone call or email).
- Provide materials (and oral communication) in the family's home language when possible.

In assessment conferences, you may use the **Early Learning Guidelines** Family/ Teacher Summary Report form to record what you have learned about the child in various domains. You may also share the portfolio items you have collected (in the various formats that are available for the **Early Learning Guidelines**) with the family. The agenda for an assessment conference should flow something like this.

- Welcome them, make them feel comfortable, and express enjoyment in working with their child.
- Invite family members to talk first.
- Share portfolio items and the Family/Teacher Summary Report.
- Together with the family members, identify goals and next steps related to the **ELGs** and plan strategies to support the child both at the program and at home.
- Give family members copies of the completed Family/Teacher Summary and portfolio items.
- Thank them for coming and let them know how to engage in ongoing communication.

Occasionally, it may be necessary to engage in a conversation with family members about a difficult topic related to their child. Sometimes, educators need to raise concerns in assessment conferences. Other times, they may need to schedule a separate meeting to discuss something that may be challenging. It's best that the time to meet be arranged with the family's needs in mind. Then, they can be prepared with their questions as well. If the family raises something of concern, assure them that you are willing to arrange a time for such a discussion. When serious problems, issues, and concerns need to be addressed, it's important to meet with families as soon as these issues arise so that the conference can focus on joint efforts to address these problems.

When discussing difficult topics, work with the family to set some ground rules before engaging in the conversation:

- You and adult family members will move to a private place for this discussion.
  - Do not have such a conversation in front of the child or anyone else.
- Everyone agrees that the discussion will focus on the best interests of the child.
  - Everyone is on the same team the child's team!
  - This is not a conversation about judgment or condemnation this is a problem-solving conversation.
- Everyone agrees that if emotions run high, the conversation can be paused, and the topic can be revisited at another time.

Even when you plan to address a challenge, it's best to start and end the conversation with something positive about the child. Then, as the conversation progresses:

- Use reflective listening.
- Invite family members to share their perspective, including how they handle such situations.
- Respond with reflective comments like, "I hear you saying that ... "
- Pay attention to body language and non-verbal expressions.
- Stay positive.
- Aim to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution.

Here are two other important points to consider:

- When discussing behavioral issues, use the "this is how we handle this" approach.
  - It takes the stigma off the child and reframes the discussion as a learning process for the child, the family members, and the educators.
  - Ask the family to share how they handle similar issues.
- Remember that only specialists can determine if a child is delayed or qualifies for special education services.
  - You may raise red flags with a family and ask permission to bring in such specialists for diagnostic evaluation.
  - Provide referral information to families.

It is wise to alert your supervisor before you schedule a meeting to discuss a difficult topic with a family. You may want to invite your supervisor to join in the discussion for extra support.

Lt is important to keep things in perspective. The challenges we face in the classroom are important, but they are rarely life-or-death crises. Stay focused on understanding the child's and family members' perspectives. Offer support and strategize together to find solutions. Look to the program's policies for guidance and ask for supervisor help if you don't know how to address a situation. There are times when a family member will ask for a solution that is not appropriate, such as expelling a child who bit. Acknowledge their feelings, but also be prepared to explain why that is not a workable solution.

Even the most challenging child deserves to have a positive family-educator conference. Focus on the skills being built and be careful not to complain about the child. If you must bring up concerns, do so in a supportive manner and brainstorm solutions together. Concerns should not take more than a third of the allotted time. Use two-thirds of the time to talk about positive things.

RESOURCES

Article: "Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences at Your Child's School" Available at:

#### www.colorincolorado.org/article/19516/

Article: "Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences with Bilingual Families" Available at:

#### www.colorincolorado.org/article/19382

Article: "Handle with Care: The Difficult Parent-Teacher Conference" by Mary Rose Available at:

www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/handle-care

"As my daughter was finishing PreK, a kindergarten teacher visited her classroom. She brought pictures of her school and answered the children's questions. When we attended the kindergarten orientation and visited the classroom, my daughter was so excited to recognize the room and told me about the new things she would do in kindergarten!" "The transition to kindergarten is an exciting and sometimes stressful time for children and families. When I visit PreK classrooms, the children have many questions about what they will do, what they will eat, and who will help them if they need assistance. They feel comforted when their questions are answered and look forward to their next school adventure with excitement."

Family Member

Educator

Transitions within and across programs can be exciting and difficult for everyone: children, family members, and educators. Whether a transition is due to beginning child care for the first time, moving to a new classroom, or leaving a program for a new setting, children may have a hard time separating from their loved ones and making the transition. In addition to program transitions, life event transitions can impact children and families. Events such as the arrival of a new baby in the family, serious illness and loss, moving, divorce, military service, incarceration, etc., affect every aspect of children's lives. Even with these challenges, transitions can be prime times to engage with families in positive, relationship-building ways.

#### **General Transition Support**

- Talk to the child and family members about the upcoming transition event.
- Ask family members what they feel would be the best ways to support the child during the transition.
- Read stories and talk about how the characters handle changes. Encourage children to share their concerns and talk about possible ways to handle difficult emotions.
- Encourage children to express their thoughts through conversations or drawings. Answer any questions they might have.

#### **Transition Support Within/Across Programs**

- Take the child to visit the new classroom and meet the new educators.
- Allow the child to spend time in the new classroom and gradually extend the length of time.
- If a visit to a new program is not an option, gain as much information from the new program as possible to share with the child and family members.
- Take photos of the child with educators and peers. Print, label, date, and give these photos to the child/family.

A child successfully adapts and copes with changes within supportive family and classroom systems. You have an extremely important role in planning for smooth transitions and facilitating the process of change that will help everyone involved. What other ways have you found to effectively support children's transitions at your program?

#### CAUTIONS

Some programs like to send a file with a child who is moving on. This may include work samples or written observations. The child's privacy is the biggest concern in selecting material to share. You do not want to negatively influence the perception of the child for the new educator. For example, the educator of the three-year-old room does not need the incident reports from the child's biting phase in the toddler room the year prior. If the family feels that history is relevant, they can share it. Stick to information about the child's developmental skills.

RESOURCES

Books (14 books to help ease children through transitions) Available at:

#### http://theartofsimple.net/14-books-to-help-ease-children-through-transitions/

List of children's books (to support social-emotional development) Available at:

#### http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf

Information to support military families Available at: www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/military-families/ Toolkit: Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration Available at:

#### http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/incarceration#

Article: "Saying Goodbye – Helping Children in Foster Care as They Leave a Child Care Center" Available at:

http://www.zerotothree.org/policy/docs/state-meeting/arkansas-project-play-toolkit.pdf

Article: "Transitions to Kindergarten," Teaching Young Children, Vol 6, No 4 Available at:

www.naeyc.org/tyc/ARTICLE/TRANSITIONS-TO-KINDERGARTEN

#### Family Engagement Benefits Children

Educators in early childhood programs across the state must be thoughtful and intentional when building partnerships with families to ensure strong communication and to support the development of each child. Educators and families can refer to the **Early Learning Guidelines** to support children's growth and development and to respect and celebrate the uniqueness and strengths of each child.

Educators can take many steps to help families get the information they need and to feel welcome and involved in the early childhood program. Families need to feel supported and included in each program's efforts on behalf of their child. They need to hear the following message:

Family members are a child's first and most influential teachers. You help your children grow and develop, encouraging them to learn to do things that are just beyond their reach. When children feel safe and secure, they are more confident and will try new things, take risks, and gain new skills. As educators, we are here to support both you and your child. Our role is to help shape them into the students, workers, and productive adults that they can be!

Thanks for allowing us to be part of your children's lives.

And, early childhood educators are important, too! Thanks for all that you do not only to support the children in your programs, but to support their families. Educators work hard on building relationships with each and every family member with whom they come in contact. We hope that these Recommendations for Family Engagement have given you many ideas, suggestions, and tools for strengthening your efforts in creating strong family/program partnerships.



When children feel safe and secure, they are more confident.



#### Contact Information Form

Child's Name			
Primary Family Contact Name/Relationship			/
Phone Cell	_Work		Home
Email		Preferred language	
Additional Family Contact Name/Relationship		/	
Phone Cell	_Work		Home
Email		Preferred language	
Preferred form of contact In-Person	Phone	Email Text message	Other
Best time of day to reach you Morning		Afternoon	Evening
Are you able to receive images via your phone	plan?	Yes No	
Is there any other information that would help	o us to comn	nunicate more effectively?	

#### Suggested Questions for Initial Conversations with Families

- What delights you about your child?
- What are your goals for your child?
- How does your child like to learn best (watching, hearing about something, hands-on, etc.)?
- Do you have any concerns about your child's development?
- Does your child have any allergies or medical concerns?
- What is important for us to know about the family (any exciting or difficult events, traditions, celebrations/holidays, etc.)?
- What language do you speak at home? Could you give us some key words in your home language that might help comfort the child as they begin in a new classroom?
- Are there any legal issues we need to be aware of? Do we need to have copies of any legal documents related to the care of your child?
- What does your child like (to eat, play with, special interests, etc.)?
- What does your child dislike?
- Do you have any pets?
- How does your child prefer to be comforted when upset? Does your child have a special comfort item (i.e., blanket, stuffed animal, pillow, book, etc.)?

#### For infant/toddlers:

- What is your child's sleeping schedule? Are there any special ways you help your child go to sleep?
- Eating schedule?
- Is s/he teething?
- What is your favorite soothing technique (rocking, singing, cuddling, etc.) for your child?
- Where are you in the process of toilet teaching or potty training?

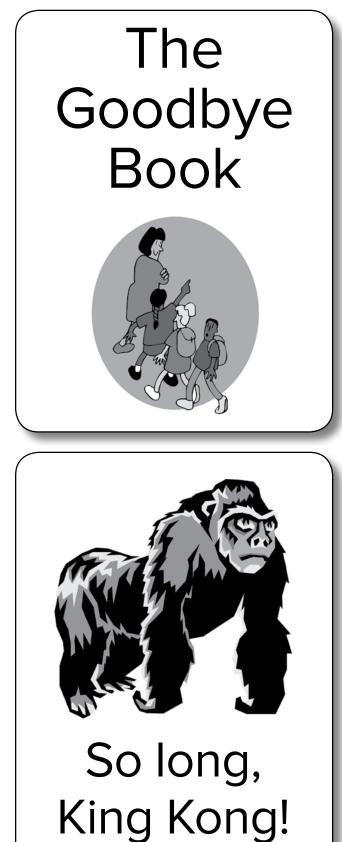
#### Sample Cell Phone Usage Statement

#### A.3 Sample Cell Phone Usage Statement

The time you spend dropping off and picking up your child are the primary opportunities for you to assist your child as he or she transitions into and out of our program. In order to make the best use of these times, to be attentive to your child, and to communicate with your child's teacher(s), we ask that you not use your cell phone at any time while visiting the program. If an emergency arises, please be courteous to others and take your call in private.

Our staff will also follow these guidelines regarding cell phone usage.

Goodbye Book



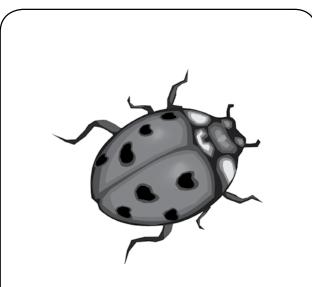


See ya later, alligator!

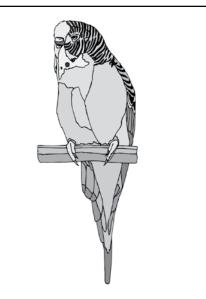


Bye bye, butterfly!

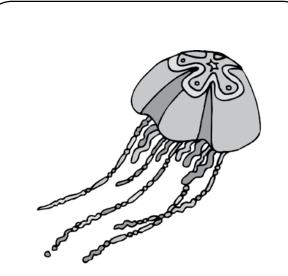
Goodbye Book



# Give me a hug, ladybug!



## Be sweet, parakeet!

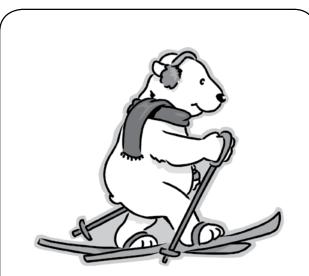


# Blow a kiss, jellyfish!



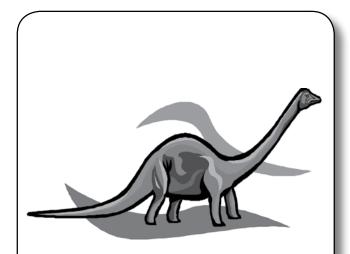
See ya soon, raccoon!

Goodbye Book



## Take care, polar bear!





# Out the door, dinosaur!

#### White Board Daily Report

Infants	Age	Bottles	Meals/Snacks	Nap	Playtime Interest	Outdoor
Abigail	2	Organic Similac 9am - 50z	8am-cheerios, rice cereal, ½ jar fruit 11:30-cereal, ½ jar veggie	1:00-1:15	Practicing crawling forward. *peek.a.boo/hide a toy *pull to standing *steady sitter	LOVES stroller ride. ·interested in birds ·Movement on uneven surfaces
Adeline	9months	Organic Similac 9- 6-702 12:30- 6-802 4pm - 602	Sam-cherrios, rice cereal, 12 jar fruit 11:30am-cereal, 12 jar veggie 2:30-3:00pm-cherrios, small/ cooked/Saff fruit or veggie	9:15 am 1-1:15 pm 4:15 (optional) Back to Sieep	<ul> <li>prefers to stand</li> <li>practice to crawl forward</li> <li>preck-a-boo/hide a toy</li> <li>fast roller</li> <li>Soft toys</li> </ul>	LOVES stroller rid Mavement on wheren Surfaces • interested in wind s leaves
Reese	12 Months	4-602 EVERY	ALLERGIES - EPI Pen Action plan NO dainy egg, best or lamb 9:00/12:00/3:00 Menu food or food from home	10:00am 3:00pm #Skeps W/ blankie	<ul> <li>practice walking W/ push toys</li> <li>loves musical instruments</li> <li>loves books</li> <li>practice pointing out dans in room.</li> </ul>	Loves swings enjoys pushing trucks on grass practice climbing up step.
Gabriel	5months	*Man brings breastmille in bottles. Narm in bottle Narm 8/11:00/2:30 *5pm if late day	"Starting solids, hold for feedings 9am # 1pm 2 Tospn rice cereal w/ center provided formula	after each bottle Skeeps abt 30 min Wears Skeep Sack	+tummy time wy toys	·Stroller rides (falls asleep) ·rolling on soft mat *Always wear hat



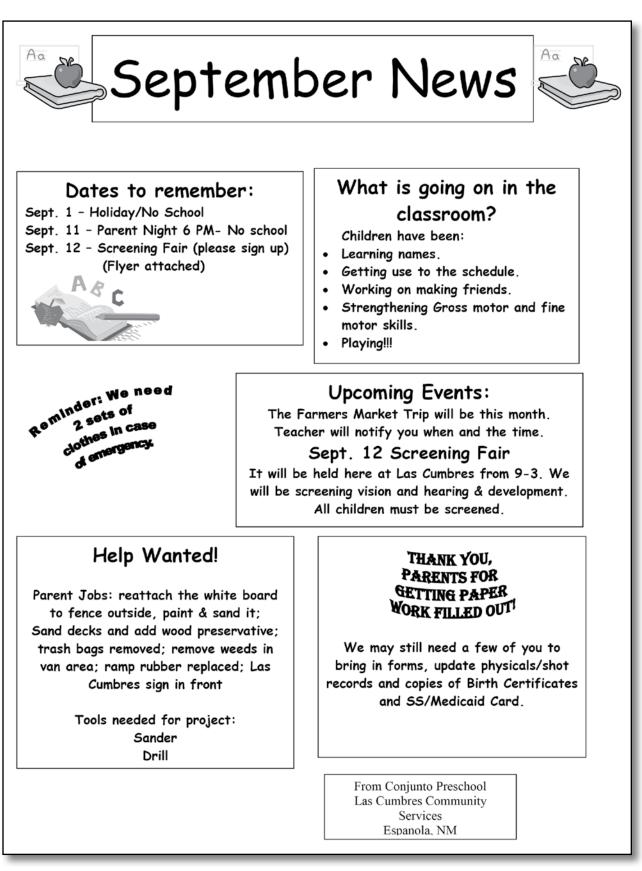
#### Sample Daily Report Form for Infants and Toddlers

Child's Name:						REPORT			
Parent Work Ph	one:				Date: Parent Ho	me Phone	:		
MY CHILD'S DA Did your child s My child had br Parents Comme	Y BEFOR leep well? eakfast:	<u>EWEAR</u> Yes N Yes No	RIVED TO	<u>) THE CEI</u> Time ch	NTER: nild woke	up:			
ls your child cu What new skills	rrently on have you	medicati noticed	ons? Yo your child	es No Laccompl	lish this w	eek?			
YOUR CHILD'S I ate: most / som	DAY AT T e/ none of	HE CENT my food	<u>ER:</u> today. I t	ried some	thing new	today:			
			Play	Activities	/ Observa	tions:			
Goal #1: Observations: _									
				-					
Home Activity S	uggostica	· · ·							
nome Activity 3	uggestion								
Goal #2:									
Goal #2: Observations:									
Home Activity S	undestion	e.							
nome Activity o	aggestion	J							
	e.								
Other Comment									
Other Comment									
Other Comment									
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet	to ing:								
Other Comment	to	9:30am	10:30am	11:30am	12:30pm	1:30pm	2:30pm	3:30pm	4:30pm
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am	to ing: 8:30am	9:30am							
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am Wa	to ing: 8:30am Wet E	9:30am M=Bowel	movemen	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T	3:30pm	
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am	to ing: 8:30am Wet E	9:30am M=Bowel	movemen	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T		
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am Wa	to ing: 8:30am Wet E	9:30am M=Bowel	movemen	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T		
I slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am Wa	to ing: 8:30am Wet E	9:30am M=Bowel	movemen	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T		
Slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am Wa	to ing: 8:30am Wet E	9:30am M=Bowel	movemen	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T		
Slept from: Diapering /Toilet 7:30am Wa	to ting: 8:30am Wet E Skills you	9:30am M=Bowel want to	movemen begin to p	t LB=L	oose BM	D=Dry	TT=T		

#### Sample Preschool Communications Form

M	 /eek ot	:	
	Check Pouch	Message from School:	Ate all Ate well Ate some Ate very little
Monday	Teacher Initial Parent Initial	Message from Home:	Did not eat
	Check Pouch	Message from School:	Ate all Ate well Ate some Ate very little
Tuesday	Teacher Initial Parent Initial	Message from Home:	Did not eat
	Check Pouch	Message from School:	Ate all Ate well Ate some Ate very little
Wednesday	Teacher Initial Parent	Message from Home:	Did not eat
We	Initial		
_	Check Pouch	Message from School:	Ate all Ate well Ate some Ate very little Did not eat
Thursday	Teacher Initial	Message from Home:	Dia not eat

#### Sample Monthly Newsletter



Sample Invitation to Family Show and Tell

## Family Show and Tell

During the month of November, we will have Family Show and Tell. This is a time that family members can visit preschool, and the children can show their family and tell their peers about them. You can sign up for any time of the day and month. We encourage you to stay and enjoy daily activities with your child as well as eat lunch with them.

We look forward to seeing you!

Lunch is served at 11:30 and the cost is: Adult-\$4.00 High School/Middle School child-\$2.20 Elementary or younger-\$1.70

Please list family members who will be coming and their relation to the student.

#### Appendix B

Selected and Excellent Resources Supporting Families and Early Childhood Educators

#### Family Fun: Learning to Read through Play/Diversión de Familia: Aprender a Leer por Juego, by Mary Dudley

A New Mexico bilingual guide for families. What families can do at home to help their young children learn to read – while having fun!! www.nmaeyc.org/resources/families

Scroll down to Education Resources

### For Families, from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

http://families.naeyc.org/ Full of great resources and tips for families

#### Colorín Colorado

#### www.colorincolorado.org

A bilingual site for families and educators of English language learners, offering a variety of wonderful resources.

#### Tip Sheets for Families, Caregivers and Early Learning Educators – Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day!

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/talk-read-and-sing-together-every-day The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Administration for Children and Families offers family-friendly resources to families.

#### The New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance: Quality Through Shared Services/ Alianza Para Calidad

#### www.newmexeca.org

Sign up for free membership in the New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance: Quality Through Shared Services and visit the LIBRARY for an abundance of familyfriendly materials, tips, and resources. Go to Library and then Parent Handouts and Family Communication Topics. Includes many bilingual resources.

#### Kids Health

http://kidshealth.org/ Many resources available in English and Spanish.

#### https://www.newmexicokids.org/

A New Mexico website with many resources for children and their families.

#### New Mexico PreK

**www.newmexicoprek.org** A New Mexico resource for three- and four-year-old children and their families.

#### NM Family Infant Toddler Program

#### www.fitprogram.org

The New Mexico Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program offers resources for families and their infants and toddlers who have a developmental delay or disability.

#### UNM Center for Development and Disability

#### http://cdd.unm.edu/

CDD offers resources for families and their children with disabilities.



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