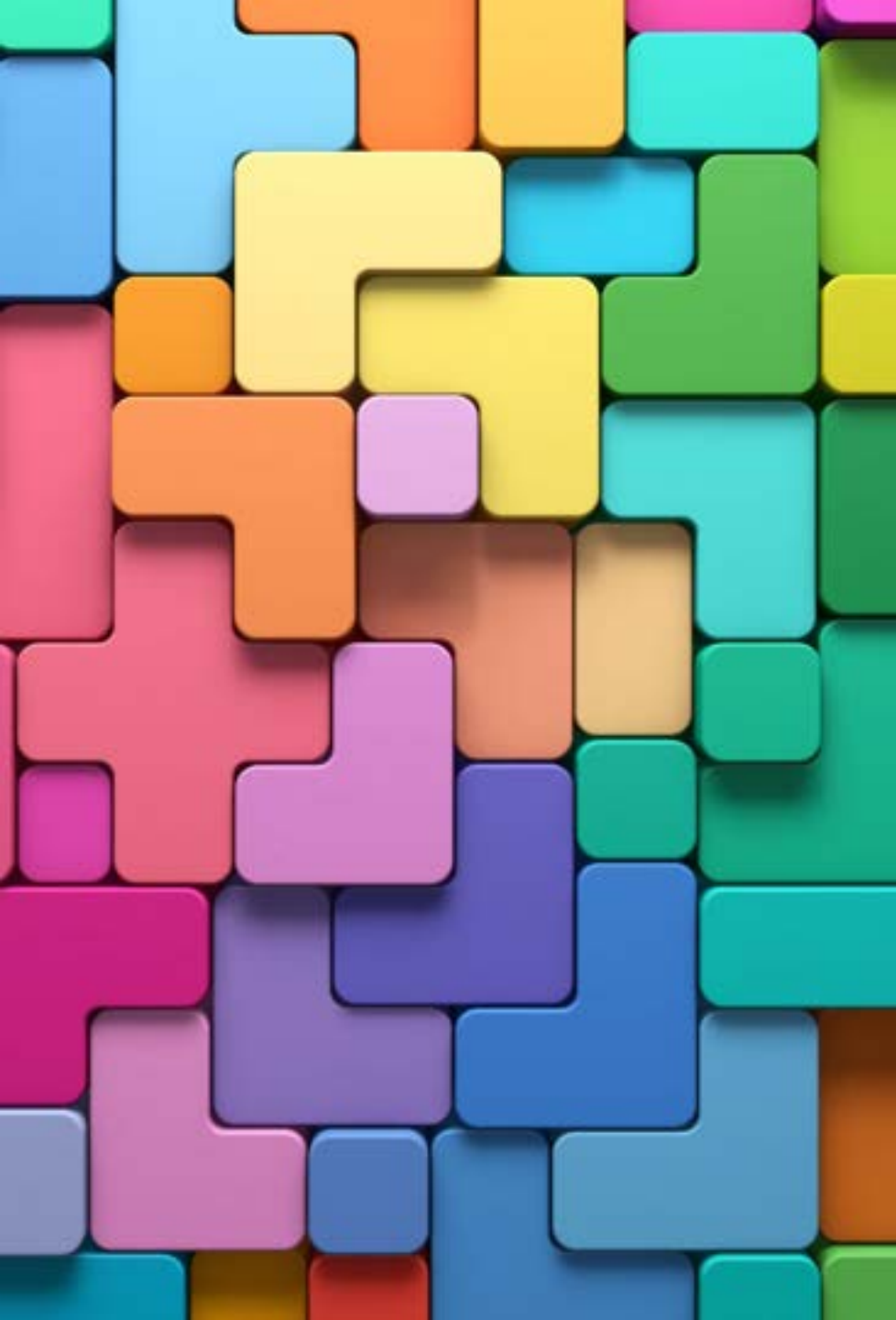




STRONGER TOGETHER: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Center for Early Learning Virtual Professional Development Conference



GOOD MORNING!

t h a n k

y o u

TAKE AWAYS

- Gain a deeper understanding and awareness of family engagement
- Be reminded that family engagement is significant in promoting children's development.
- Recognize how three specific practices can promote family engagement and how you can be **intentional**, **strategic** and **planful** in your work with families to promote partnership and collaboration.

One thing you will take away to impact your work....

TODAY'S TOPICS

- What is family engagement?
- What are the benefits?
- Types of relationships with families
- Three partnership strategies





WHY?

PLAY ALONG

Instructions:

Go to

www.menti.com

Enter the code

3517 5915



Or use QR code



A photograph of a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a green t-shirt, smiling as he plays with a young child. The child, with dark hair and wearing a light blue shirt, is focused on playing with colorful blocks. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting. A semi-transparent dark grey banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

ENGAGING WITH FAMILIES



**“TALENT YOU HAVE
NATURALLY. SKILL IS ONLY
DEVELOPED BY HOURS AND
HOURS AND HOURS OF
BEATING ON YOUR CRAFT.”**

– WILL SMITH



How can you continue to BUILD and REFINE your skills at promoting family engagement and become more intentional about this work?



WHAT IS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT?

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT....

<https://headstart.gov/family-engagement>

- Is a **collaborative and strengths-based process** through which early childhood professionals, families, and children ***build positive, goal-oriented relationships.***
- Focuses on **culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building** with key family members in a child's life.
- Is a **shared responsibility** of families and professionals at all levels that requires *mutual respect* for the **roles** and **strengths** each has to offer.

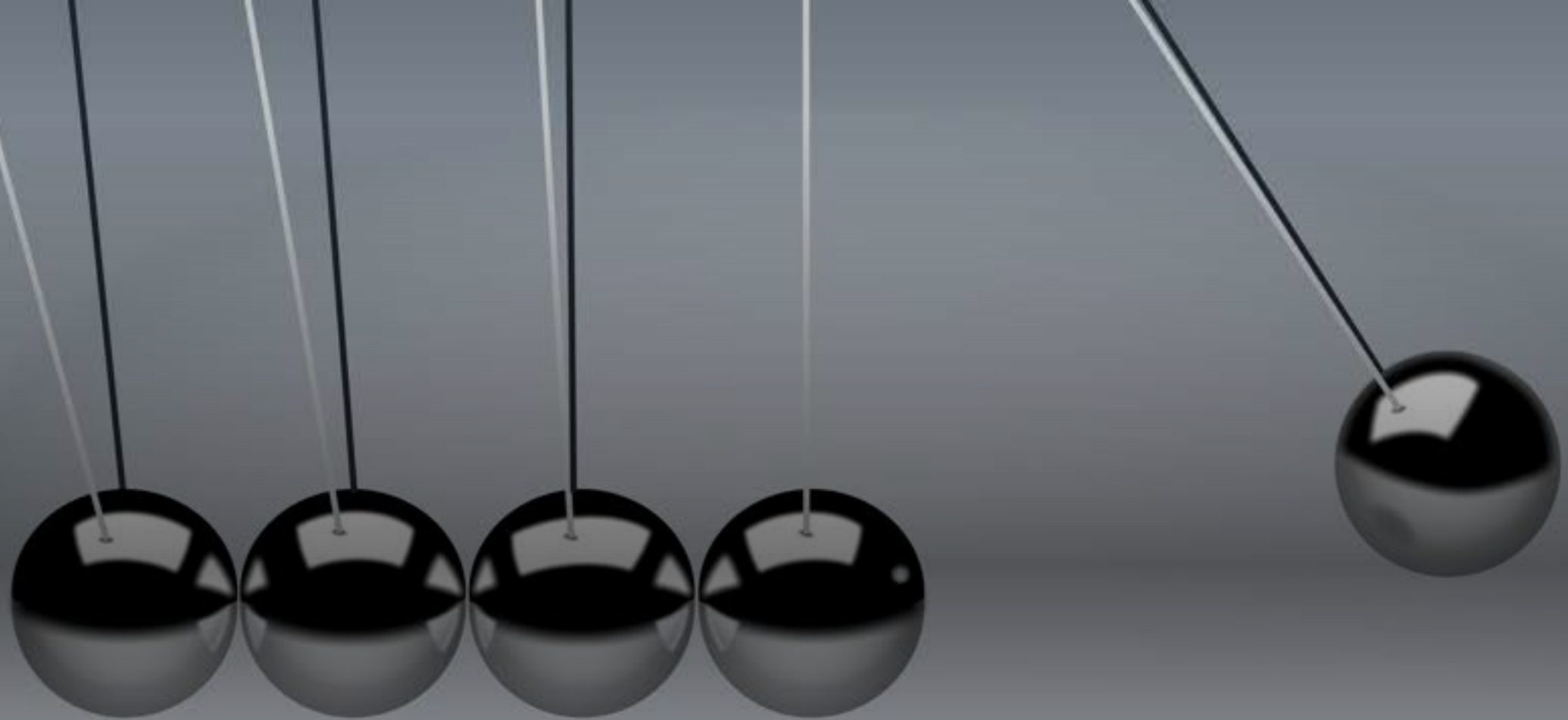
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- Includes **partnerships!**
- Requires making a commitment **to creating and sustaining an ongoing partnership** that supports family well-being.
- **Supports the parent-child relationships** that are central to a child's healthy development, learning, and well-being.



Effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn:

- at home,
- in early childhood programs,
- in the community.



**Family engagement is about
the educator role AND
the family role.**



**WHY IS FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
IMPORTANT?**

WHY IS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Improved family outcomes?

Improved child outcomes?

Improved family/parent-child interactions?

Improved classroom experiences and instruction?

Improved engagement in Early Intervention (EI) services?

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WHO BENEFITS?



FAMILIES



"Your mother and I are feeling overwhelmed, so you'll have to bring yourselves up."



CHILDREN

A long, straight asphalt road stretches from the foreground into the distance, flanked by green fields and a cloudy sky. The word "PROGRESS" is painted in large, bold, white letters on the road surface, receding into the distance. The word "PROFESSIONALS" is overlaid in large, bold, white letters across the center of the image.

PROFESSIONALS

PROGRESS



**HOW CAN YOU
SUPPORT FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT?**

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS





RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

- **DISCONNECTED**
- **PARENT
INVOLVEMENT**
- **PARENT
PARTNERSHIP**

Relationships with Parents

Disconnected

Educators and parents each “**do their own thing**” to promote child learning.

- Communication is **constrained** and limited.
- Educators and parents **decide independently** the priorities for the child’s learning.
- There is **no attempt** to determine the role of parents in the child’s learning.

Relationships with Parents

Disconnected	Parent Involvement
Educators and parents each “do their own thing” to promote child learning.	A “one-size fits all” families approach is used to promote child learning.
• Communication is constrained and limited .	• Communication is generally one- directional .
• Educators and parents decide independently the priorities for the child’s learning.	• Educators are the primary decision-makers about the priorities for the child’s learning.
• There is no attempt to determine the role of parents in the child’s learning.	• Educators determine the role of parents in the child’s learning.

Relationships with Parents

Disconnected	Parent Involvement	Parent Partnership
Educators and parents each “do their own thing” to promote child learning.	A “one-size fits all” families approach is used to promote child learning.	An individualized approach is used to promote child learning considering unique family strengths, culture, priorities, and composition.
• Communication is constrained and limited .	• Communication is generally one- directional .	• Communication is bi-directional and consistent .
• Educators and parents decide independently the priorities for the child’s learning.	• Educators are the primary decision-makers about the priorities for the child’s learning.	• Parents and educators make mutual decisions about priorities for the child’s learning.
• There is no attempt to determine the role of parents in the child’s learning.	• Educators determine the role of parents in the child’s learning.	• Parents and educators mutually determine their roles in the child’s learning.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR BREAK OUT ROOMS

Think about your work with families...

- How are you supporting *parent involvement*?
- How are you supporting *parents and professionals as partners*?
- What, if any, are *opportunities you have to extend from parent involvement to partnership*?



**WHAT ARE YOUR
OPPORTUNITIES
WITH FAMILIES?**

When

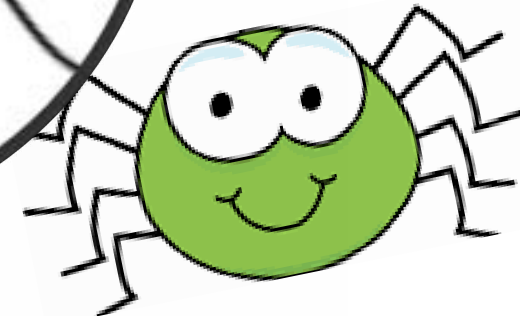
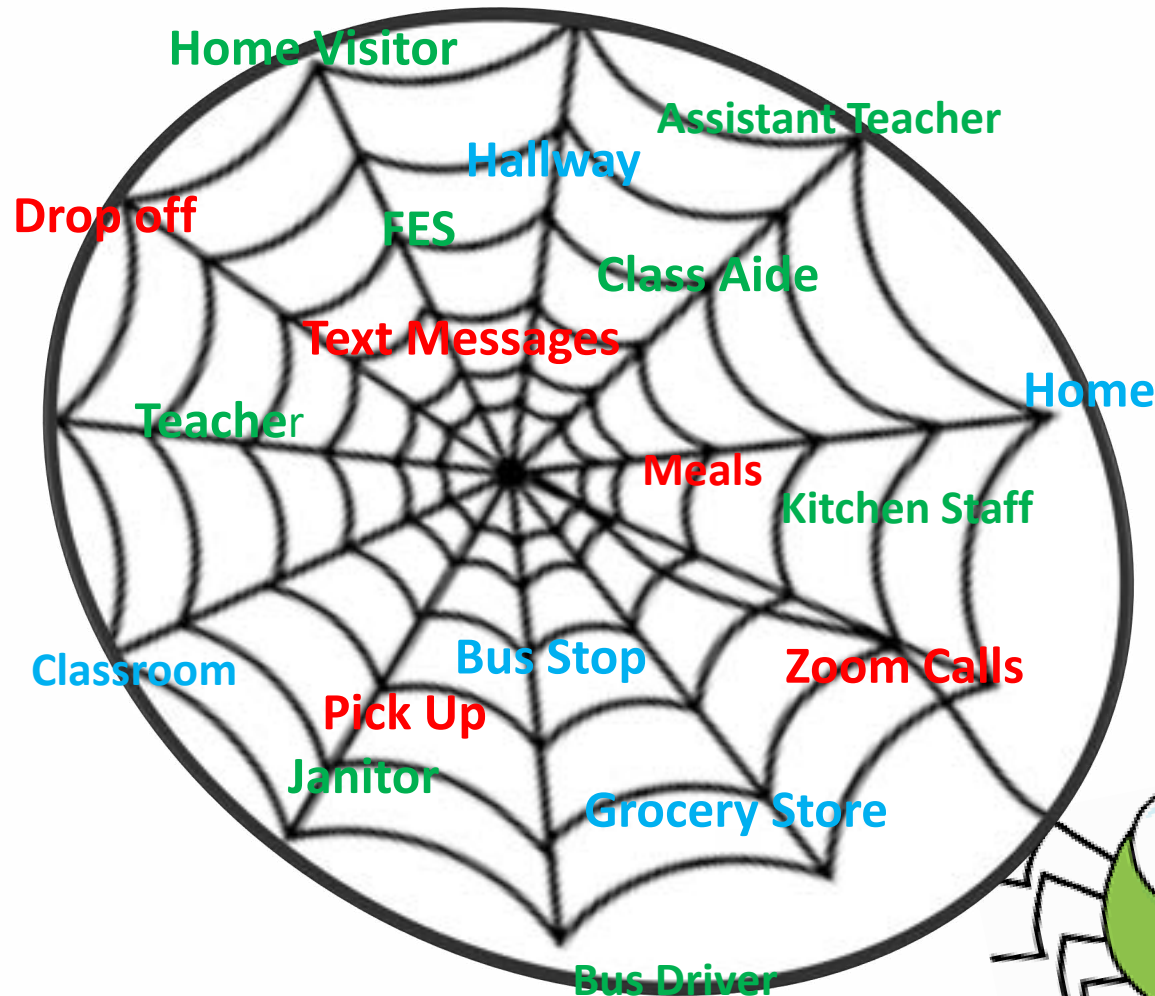
Drop off
Pick Up
Meals
Family Nights
Phone Call
Text Messages
Face Time
Conferences
Enrollment
Parent Meetings

Where

Classroom
Playground
Hallway
Community
Bus Stop
Home
Grocery Store

Who

Teacher
Kitchen Staff
Custodian
Assistant Teacher
Administration
Bus Driver
Family Specialists
Home Visitor
Class Aides



Impact of Strong Web → Family Engagement

**IMPORTANT.....
DESIRE...
OPPORTUNITY.....**





Intentional, strategic, planful

1

2

3

THREE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES



Getting Ready

gettingready.unl.edu



1

**Communicate
openly and clearly**

2

**Affirm parent
competencies**

3

**Focus attention on
child strengths**



1

COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND CLEARLY

COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND CLEARLY

Parents and professional are fully engaged in a **two-way** exchange of information and ideas in which input from parent and professional is valued.



TO COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND CLEARLY:



- Communicate understanding by paraphrasing, summarizing, checking for understanding.
 - ✓ *“So, it sounds like....”*
 - ✓ *“What I’m hearing you say....”*
- Respect parent’s preferred language through use of interpreters, translations of written materials, and use of key vocabulary in the family’s home.

TO COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND CLEARLY:



- Actively listen by using eye contact, head nods, encouraging gestures or vocalizations to demonstrate engagement, empathy, interest and validation.
 - ✓ *“Aha” “Oh no,” “Wow, that’s sounds like fun”*
- Ask open-ended questions that require a statement or elaboration in the response; questions that cannot be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
 - ✓ *“How did that work?” “Tell me about....”*

Closed Question



Did you have a good weekend?



Is that what you wanted?



Does your child eat fruit and vegetables?

Open Question



Tell me about your weekend?



How is that consistent with what you wanted do?



What fruits and vegetables does your child eat at home?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



2

AFFIRM PARENT COMPETENCIES

AFFIRM PARENT COMPETENCIES

Parents' strengths for helping the child grow are **identified** and **acknowledged**.

These strengths are used to **support** child development and parent confidence.



TO AFFIRM PARENT COMPETENCIES:



Describe effective actions parents engage in and connect those parent actions to specific, positive child behaviors and skill development.

Recognize and acknowledge:

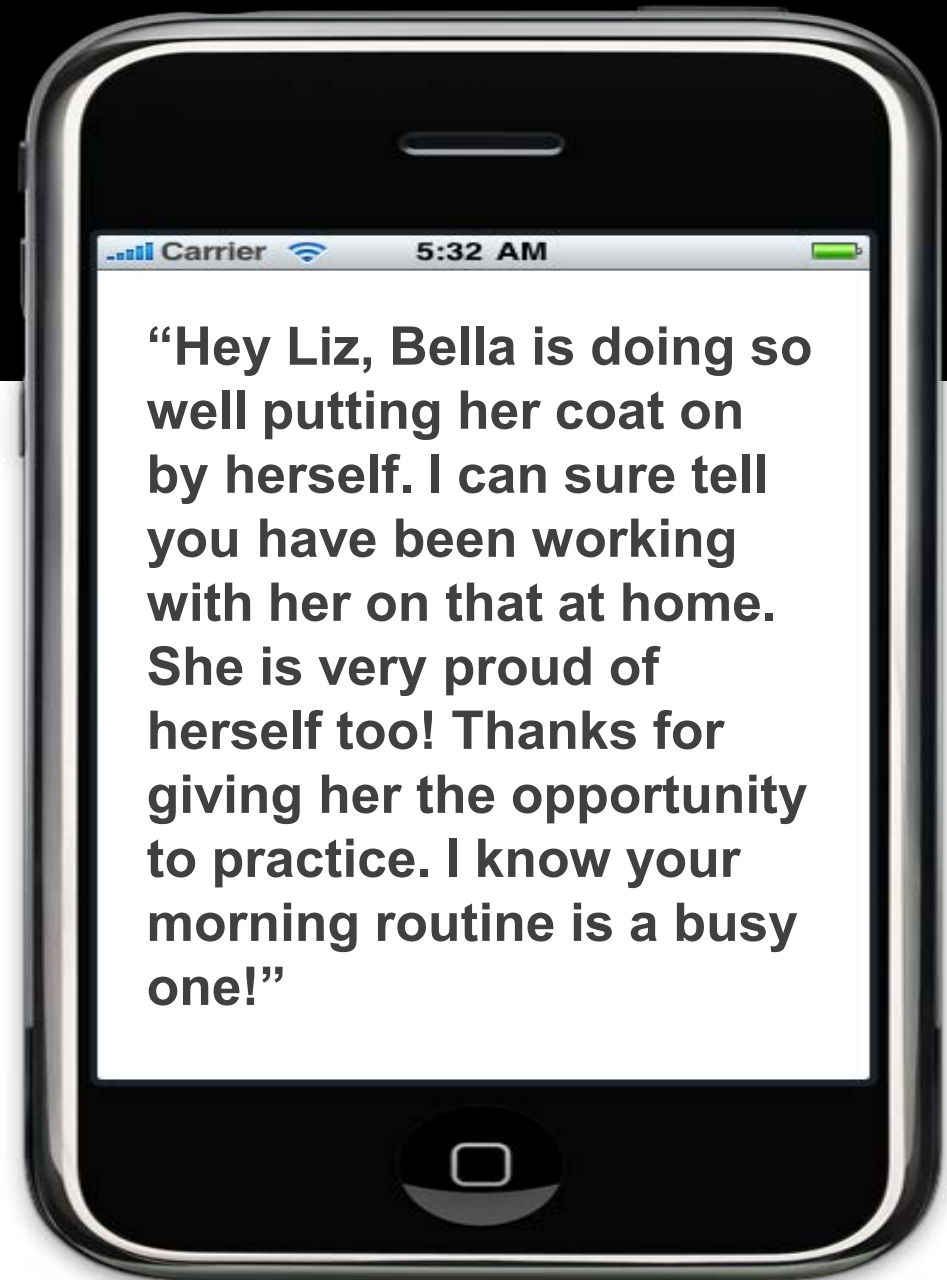
- the value of parent's ideas about how they support their child's learning
- positive and effective actions parents engage in that are linked to their child's progress
- parents' ideas and positive actions towards achieving family outcomes.

Affirmation is both praise AND description!

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Text Affirmation:





3

FOCUS PARENT ATTENTION ON CHILD STRENGTHS

FOCUS ATTENTION ON CHILD STRENGTHS

Strengths and needs of the child are identified as the focus of all interactions.

Strengths can be shared “in the moment” regarding a child’s demonstrated skill or as a reflection of educator and/or parent observations.



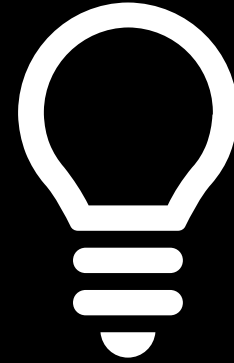
TO FOCUS PARENT ATTENTION ON CHILD STRENGTHS:



- Orient parent toward child's specific developmental strengths and needs
- Identify strengths and needs of child as focus of all interactions
- Share child's strengths "in the moment"
- Share child's strengths based on past observations of parent and educator.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

WHAT'S YOUR SKILL?



Think about your own skills.

What are your strengths? Where do you want to grow?

How well do you...

- Communicate Openly and Clearly
- Affirm Parent Competencies
- Focus Attention on Child Strength

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR BREAKOUT ROOMS

Think about a family you are working with now. In your next parent contact, how would you *intentionally* use these strategies?

If you are not currently working with any families, think about how you might use it in the future or how have used in the past.

1

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openly and clearly

2

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child strengths



WRAP UP

TAKE AWAYS

- Gained a deeper understanding and awareness of family engagement
- Were reminded that family engagement is significant in promoting children's development.
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WHY?

A red wooden toolbox is shown, filled with various tools. A large red-handled wrench is prominently placed across the top. Other visible tools include a hammer, a tape measure, and several smaller wrenches and pliers. The toolbox is set against a light gray background.

**WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE TAKING
AWAY TO SUPPORT YOUR WORK?**



THANK YOU!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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