



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning



Disabilities Services Newsletter

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Engaging Families in Planning and Goal-Setting

Establishing strong family partnerships sets the stage for planning and goal-setting. Family partnerships require cooperation, honesty, and open communication. Parents and staff must be committed to working together toward a common goal. Building a trusting partnership takes time and an approach that respects and values the individual strengths of each family. A strong family relationship is important for all children and families, and particularly so for families of children with disabilities or suspected delays. In this issue, learn more about effective strategies for engaging families in setting meaningful goals.

Read About It



Aron and Anita say goodbye to 2-year-old Tamara at her Early Head Start program and walk down the hallway to see Jason, the disabilities services coordinator. Tamara has a developmental disability. She just started at the center a few weeks earlier and Jason has asked Aron and Anita to come by to talk about how she is doing. Before Tamara started at the program, Anita and Aron expressed some concerns about whether she was too young to be away from them all day and if she would be better off at home. They also mentioned being financially worried about meeting all of

Tamara's developmental and medical needs. Jason knows that to support Aron and Anita in setting and reaching goals, he will first have to learn more about them and their family.

The Family Partnership Process: Engaging and Goal-Setting with Families

Explore each phase of the Family Partnership Process and learn strategies that support positive staff-family relationships. Jason could draw strategies from this guide for building a strong and effective partnership with Anita and Aron.

Take a Look

Goal Setting with Families

Use this online Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Simulation to explore six relationship-based skills that help staff identify and set goals with families. It provides strategies Jason can use to begin the conversation, explore and acknowledge families' passions and strengths, and support their goals as a family.

Try It Out

Informed Family Decision-Making Practices Checklist

Jason and classroom staff can use this checklist to both plan and evaluate their practices to provide sufficient information and support to parents. It helps staff use informed decision-making to be responsive to family concerns and priorities.

Improve Your Practice

PFCE Professional Development Guide: Family Engagement & School Readiness

Take a deeper look at the role of family and community engagement in healthy child development and school readiness. Discover strategies staff can use to integrate family engagement throughout the program and support a family's role in school readiness goal-setting.

Families, Too!

Family Practice Guide: Professional Roles in Early Childhood Intervention – Learning Guide: Working Together to Achieve Family Outcomes

Share this one-page guide with families for helpful information about family-centered practices and how to know if the professionals they are working with use this approach. It includes a vignette to give readers a clear example of family-centered practices in action.

Ongoing Features

Free access to a specially selected article from Young Exceptional Children (YEC)

Read the YEC article, [Empowering Families During the Early Intervention Planning Process](#). It is available through this newsletter until May 31, 2018.

Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network

Engage with Head Start disabilities/inclusion peers around the country in an online community hosted on the MyPeers platform. Our community has more than 1,000 members who are sharing resources, engaging in conversations, and asking questions. [Register now](#) as a member of MyPeers. If you are already a member, find the Head Start Disability/Inclusion Network community under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

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We Want to Hear from You

The Disabilities Services Newsletter is produced monthly by the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. Submit questions or suggestions for future newsletter topics to ecdctl@ecetta.info.

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