

Family Connections and Engagement

Teacher Ideas

- An orientation and invitation for families to visit before children start.
- A family board and or website with staff bios/photos and other information.
- Open door policy. Greet families and take a moment to ask how they are.
- Discuss preferred ways of communicating at the start of the year and revisit, as needed.
- Daily reports and photos, group texts and newsletters.
- Be aware of language barriers and avoid using terms that might not be familiar.
- Send messages home in the home language. Provide translators, if available.
- Learn about each family's home culture. Understand the diverse ways that families describe themselves.
- Be aware that cultural differences might affect parenting decisions; for example feeding a 2.5 year old vs. helping them learn to self-feed. Share how developmental progress is viewed and the goals for each child.
- If delivering challenging news about a child's day, start off with a positive, address the issue and end with another positive comment.
- If staff observations are different from that of the family, different perspectives can be acknowledged. Example: "I know you are eager for S. to write his first and last name but we find that..." Use the MELDS to explain developmental progress.
- Affirm a family member's willingness to be open and to share personal information.
- Twice yearly conferences, including an introduction to the MELDS.
- Work with the family on setting goals and check in with them on how their goals are coming along.
- Celebrate families and communicate that small growth steps are successes.
- Family resource notebook. Take home activities and a lending library.
- Send home words to fingerplays and songs. Engage families to use Zoom to read or tell a story.
- "Home Tips": These are simple things families can do at home like having a child make her own version of a grocery list or finding colors at the grocery store.
- Send a stuffed animal home with a different child every weekend and a journal. Encourage children to dictate to a family member and illustrate what they did with the stuffed animal. Consider inclusive language practices such as dictation, recording and translation.
- Field days and family nights.
- At the end of the year, ask parents of children who are transitioning to a new site if there is anything we can do to ease that transition. Child portfolios are kept by the families.