

## **TIPS TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES**



# Communicate openly and listen actively

🕒 Encourage families to *tell their stories*.

✓ *Listen to identify* unique hopes, dreams, strengths, needs, and preferences.

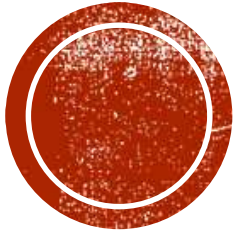
✓ *Ask open-ended questions* about the people, places, and activities that are important to them.

✓ In conversations with families, *refer to stories they have shared* in the past to let them know you have listened and are taking into consideration what they have shared with you.



## Be confident in a child's and family's future possibilities.

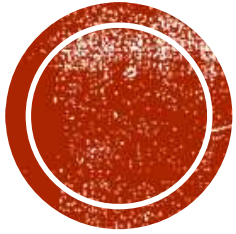
- 🕒 Use a *strengths-based approach*, focusing on what the child does well and enjoys doing.
  - ✓ Ask families *what they see as their child's strengths* and share your observations.
  - ✓ Tell families that by focusing on the child's strengths, you are *better able to meet their needs*.
  - ✓ When sharing difficult news, remind families of their own and the child's strengths that will help them through this difficulty.



## Respect families and demonstrate this through actions and words.

🕒 *Identify and incorporate the family's cultural values* into decision-making.

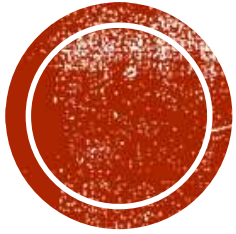
- ✓ Listen to families, *paying attention to what they share* with you as it may reflect their family cultural values.
- ✓ *Ask families what is important to know* about their culture, celebrations, and customs. Show genuine interest.
- ✓ Examine how *cultural differences may be contributing to differences of opinion* about the child's behavior or program. Discuss ways to find options that are responsive to families' cultural values.



## Demonstrate your commitment to the family and child as more than just a “job.”

🕒 *Be flexible* in accommodating the changing needs of the family and child.

- ✓ Hold meetings at *times and places suited to families’ needs* and availability whenever possible.
- ✓ When addressing challenges, *explore mutual changes*, both at home and in the program, which may be influencing the situation.
- ✓ Demonstrate how disagreements or *differences in opinion do not interfere* with your commitment to the family or child.



## Give families equal power as partners in decision-making.

🕒 Share power by *supporting families as equal partners* in helping their child to be successful now and in the future.

✓ *Ask families' opinions* about goals for their child.

✓ Brainstorm a *wide range of strategies for achieving goals* with the family. Make decisions that will meet the unique needs of their child.

✓ Involve families in all decisions about the child (for example, the decision to refer the child for evaluation).

