

# Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development



## Orientation

Learning extension activities will help you deepen your knowledge about family engagement. These activities can be used to support your work daily or as part of a long-term goal. The activities in this guide provide ideas for reflection and opportunities to practice skills learned in the family engagement modules. Each activity uses resources located in the Quality Counts Family Engagement Toolkit or by using the directions provided with the activity.

## How to Use This Guide

Activities are designed for early childhood learning and care professionals including family child care providers, teachers, administrators, coaches, home visitors, and librarians. Each activity can be used:

- **Individually** for self-study, self-reflection, and integrating family engagement practices into your work
- **With a partner** to learn about, explore, and reflect on implementing family engagement in your setting
- **With a group** as part of staff meetings, association events, or workshops to learn and reflect together about family engagement

## Activities in This Guide

1. Engaging Families in Early Learning
2. What Happens Next: Describe the Child's Behavior
3. Simulation Variations

This guide focuses on the value of using strengths-based relationships and strategies for building relationships with families. The following activities focus on applying the three strategies: Use a Strengths-based Approach, Listen Actively, and Take Informed Action.

## 1. Engaging Families in Early Learning

This activity can be repeated using your own examples.

### Resources You Will Need

- Engaging Families Cards (located at the end of this activity)
- Companion Resources
  - [Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development](#)
  - [Engaging Families in Early Learning](#)
- California Learning Foundations
  - [California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1](#) (located on the California Department of Education's website)
  - [California Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations](#) (located on the California Department of Education's website)

**Time:** 30–60 minutes

### How to Use This Learning Extension

#### • Individually

Complete activity steps 1–3 by either working with an example on one of the cards or working with a situation you are currently experiencing with a child and family. If you work with your own situation, in step 4 choose the option to try the prompt and practice what you decided to say to the family. Then, reflect on what happens, using the questions in step 5, and on what you learned, in step 6.

#### • With a Partner

Complete step 1 individually or together. Then choose one of the following:

**Option 1:** Choose one example in step 2, work together to respond to the questions, and then complete step 3. In step 4 role-play the conversation and reflect together on what happens using the questions in step 5.

**Option 2:** In step 2 choose two examples to work with. Work with one of the examples, completing steps 2–3 individually and then debriefing with your partner. For step 4, either role-play for each of the examples you chose or collaborate to work through what you will say and how you think the family might respond for each of the examples. Individually reflect using the questions in step 5, and then share your reflections with each other.

#### • With a Group

Individually complete step 1. Then complete the following tasks below:

1. Have each person in the group select an example.
2. Ask each person in the group to quietly reflect on their response to the questions in step 2. Then, discuss as a group.
3. As a group, select a prompt and collaborate to decide what to say to this family to open a conversation about the child's development and learning.
4. To complete step 4, ask group members to select a partner to role-play the conversation, or work through the example as a group.
5. To conclude, ask each person to complete step 5 and share their response with someone else in the group.

**Activity Directions**

Prepare for this activity by reviewing the Engaging Families Cards and adding examples of your own on the blank cards provided. Cut the cards apart and place them face down on a table.

**STEP 1**

Review the section called Understanding the Developmental Process in the companion resource **Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development**.

**STEP 2**

Pick a card and read the example. Take a minute to reflect on the example and what else you imagine may be happening. Reflect on the age of the child. What do you know about children and their development in this age group? Use the California Preschool Learning Foundations or the California Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations to review what skills children at the same age as the child in your example are typically developing. Then, respond to the following questions:

- What skill is this child working on gaining?
- What regressions is this child experiencing or might be experiencing during this time of developmental change?
- What do you think the experience is like for the child, the child's parents, and the provider?

**STEP 3**

Review the list of prompts in section 2 of the companion resource **Engaging Families in Early Learning**. Choose a prompt to work with and identify what you would say to this family to open a discussion about their child's learning and development.

**STEP 4**

Try out the prompt with what you decided to say using one of the following options:

- Imagine how a family might respond and what a family might experience when you use the prompt in a conversation with them. Document this imagined conversation.
- If you are working with your own example, try out the prompt and practice what you decided to say in your next conversation with this family.
- Role-play the conversation with a partner.
- With a group, practice what you will say and how you think the family might respond.

**STEP 5**

- a. Reflect on what you discover using the questions below.
- b. How did using the prompt help engage the family in the child's early learning?
- c. What might you do differently if you had this conversation again?
- d. How else can you use the developmental process and the conversation prompts to help you engage with families in their child's development and early learning?

**STEP 6**

Reflect on what you did and learned as part of your ongoing professional development.

**Engaging Families Cards****DAWN, 48 MONTHS**

Dawn was playing outside with her friend Marco. As they were running, Marco fell down and began to cry. Dawn immediately walked to her teacher and said, "Marco is crying. He fell down."

*Preschool Learning Foundations*

*Volume 1: Social and Emotional Understanding*

**JOAQUIN, 48 MONTHS**

When Joaquin arrived this morning, he immediately began to tell his friends about his morning, saying, "My daddy's truck broke down. We walked to school. It was a long walk."

*Preschool Learning Foundations*

*Volume 1: Language and Literacy*

**SIMONE, 60 MONTHS**

At lunch yesterday Simone kept a chair next to her open, waiting for her friend to arrive. When other kids tried to sit next to her, Simone would tell them that was not their chair.

*Preschool Learning Foundations*

*Volume 1: Social and Emotional Understanding*

**KIRK, 18 MONTHS**

Yesterday, when a new aide walked into the room, Kirk ran to his mother and hid behind her legs. Even when his mother reassured him that it was OK and the new aide greeted him, he shut his eyes and refused to come out.

*Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations*

*Social and Emotional Understanding*

**SHELBY, 36 MONTHS**

Shelby was playing next to Xio. Shelby reached over and grabbed the dinosaur Xio was playing with and said, "my dinosaur." Shelby's father, Zach, took the dinosaur from Shelby and returned it to Xio, saying, "It's not nice to take toys from other kids!" Shelby burst into tears, crying out, "It's mine!"

*Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations*

*Social and Emotional Understanding*

## 2. What Happens Next: Describe the Child's Behavior

This activity can be repeated using different scenarios and examples.

### Resources You Will Need

- Scenario Options (located at the end of this activity)
- Companion Resource
  - [Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development](#)
- Tip Sheets
  - [Use a Strengths-based Approach](#)
  - [Listen Actively](#)
  - [Take Informed Action](#)

My Family Engagement Journal (optional): If you completed Module 3 Unit 1, you may also find your journal helpful.

**Time:** 30–45 minutes

### How to Use This Learning Extension

#### • Individually

Complete all the activity steps, and then reflect on what you learned or discovered.

#### • With a Partner

**Option 1:** Complete activity steps 1–4 individually. Discuss the guiding questions in step 5 with a partner.

**Option 2:** Choose one of the options listed in step 4 and complete it with a partner. Reflect together using the questions in step 5. How are your responses different or the same? What are some things you learned from your discussion? Then complete step 6 and reflect together on what you learned.

#### • With a Group

As a group, complete steps 1–2 and proceed with the following steps:

1. Discuss the reflections and responses to the questions in step 2.
2. Have group members review the process outlined in step 3. Then, have group members role-play the interaction with a partner following the process in step 3. These steps can also be found on pages 5 and 6 of the companion resource **Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development**.
3. To conclude, engage in a group discussion using the guiding questions in step 5 and reflection in step 6.

### Activity Directions

#### STEP 1

Choose a scenario from the scenario options below or continue to work with a family you identified in your **My Family Engagement Journals**. Review the scenario or your example.

#### STEP 2

Imagine that you are having the next conversation with the family.

##### a. Reflect on:

- Your personal and cultural perspectives
- The family's individual and cultural perspectives
- The child's development and perspective

##### b. Inquire using these questions:

- What came up for you, both positive and negative?
- How might these feelings or reactions influence your relationship with the family?
- What regressions and bursts are or might be happening with the child's development?

**STEP 3**

Use the tool **Observe and Describe the Child's Behavior** to open the communication and to engage with the parents. Reflect on the following:

- a. **Observe the child's behavior:** What did you observe about the child's behavior?
- b. **Describe the behavior to the parents:** How would you describe to the family what you observed?
- c. **Pay attention to what the parents share:** What do you think the parents might say and share in response to what you shared?
- d. **Collaborate with the parents:**
  - i. Reflect on what you think the behavior means and what the parents might think the behavior means.
  - ii. Identify how you would respond to the parents to open a discussion about this behavior and collaborate with them to decide what to do next.

**STEP 4**

Continue to work with the Relationship-based Practice of **Observe and Describe the Child's Behavior to Open Communication with the Family** to complete one of the following options:

- Journal.
- Role-play your scenario with a partner.
- With a group, work through what you will say using the Relationship-based Practice and how you think the family might respond.

**STEP 5**

Reflect on the interaction with the family using these guiding questions:

- a. What did you discover about this family and child?
- b. Was there an interaction you felt went well? What happened during the interaction to indicate it went well?
- c. What do you think this interaction was like for the family?

**STEP 6**

Reflect on what you did and learned as part of your ongoing professional development.



## Scenario Options

### Option 1: Crystal Moving Around (Video)



*You can locate this video among the Quality Counts California Family Engagement Toolkit videos.*

### Option 2: Diane and Marcus

Previously, Diane shared that she and Marcus, her three-month-old baby, enjoyed singing together. Diane sang while she changed his diaper. She enjoyed smiling and making funny faces with Marcus. Marcus would make sounds and wave his arms. At the end of the song, they giggled together.

Now, Marcus is almost seven months old. Marcus has learned to roll over and is starting to crawl. It's hard to keep Marcus still to fasten his diaper. At one point, he rolled over, and Diane quickly caught him before he rolled off the table. She tried singing, but he was looking around the room and seemed too distracted to sing with her. Diaper changing used to be enjoyable; now, it feels like Marcus is disobeying or rejecting her.

### Option 3: Stefan and Julia

Stefan, a three-year-old, is crying and disrupting storytime. Stefan's grandmother, Julia, feels that the child should be able to cry it out, whereas the provider feels that Stefan should be picked up and consoled. This problem usually happens with Stefan every time they have storytime. The provider can tell that it is disruptive to the other families and children because they can't hear the story. When Stefan starts to cry, the other children start to get fidgety and distracted. The provider wants to say something to Julia but doesn't know what to say.

### 3. Simulation Variations

#### Resources You Will Need

- Module 3 Simulations
  - Practice: Respect the Family's Role
  - Practice: Engaging Families
- Companion Resource
  - [Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development](#)
- Tip Sheets
  - [Use a Strengths-based Approach](#)
  - [Listen Actively](#)
  - [Take Informed Action](#)

**Time:** 30–45 minutes

#### How to Use This Learning Extension

##### • Individually

Choose one of the options listed in the activity directions and complete it. Then, in your journal, reflect on the questions listed under the option you selected.

##### • With a Partner

Choose one of the options listed in the activity directions. You and your partner can choose the same option, or you can choose different options to work with. If you choose the same option, complete the activity together and then reflect on the questions listed under the option you selected with your partner. If you each choose a different option, complete the activities individually. Then meet to debrief what you each learned and how you will use that in your work with families. Complete step 2 with your partner.

##### • With a Group

As a group, complete the activities under each option. If your group is large, consider working on the activity in small groups or individually before coming together to share and discuss the learning. End by having each member complete step 2 and share with another person.

#### Activity Directions

##### STEP 1

Choose one of the options below to continue using the simulations in this module to support your family engagement work. You can return to these activities repeatedly for different experiences and as many times as you would like to deepen your practice.

**Option 1:** Intentionally make choices throughout the simulation you feel aren't the best options to support the family's role in their child's development; what do you notice? Reflect on:

- a. Your personal and cultural perspectives
- b. The family's individual and cultural perspectives
- c. What you discovered and how it might influence collaborating with this family to support the child's development
- d. How you would use the Relationship-based Practice of **Observe and Describe the Child's Behavior to Open Communication with the Family** to re-engage with this family based on what you learned

**Option 2:** Role-play with a partner what happens next in the simulation scenario. One partner can take the role of the professional, and the other can take the role of the parent.

Try describing the child's behavior to open communication by:

1. Observing the child's behavior
2. Describing what you observed
3. Paying attention to what the parents share
4. Collaborating with the parents

For more information about this process go to page 2 of the companion resource **Respect the Family's Role in the Child's Development**. Reflect on what happened and what you discovered.

**Option 3:** Work with the simulation and pause each time the provider in the simulation reflects.

- a. Journal your own reflections about what is happening at those times using the questions below:
  - What is being discussed about the child's behavior?
  - If you were the provider, how might you explore what this behavior means to them and what matters to them?

- b. Review your reflections and identify how you will use what you discover to inform your own work with families.

**Option 4:** Complete the simulation and review your Performance Dashboard at the end of the simulation. Use the results of your Performance Dashboard to consider the following:

- a. What did you discover about the strategies and about using them to build a strengths-based relationship with the family in the simulation?
- b. Note the strategies and tools you feel you used well and which ones you have opportunities to improve.
- c. How will you use what you discovered about applying the strategies in the simulations in your own work with families?

### STEP 2

Reflect on what you experienced and learned as part of your ongoing professional development.

