

**Communicating with Families Checklist**

**Description:**

This checklist was designed for programs beginning to build a strong foundation in family engagement. It will help you reflect on the way you communicate with the families of the children in your program.

**Directions:**

Use the checklist below to reflect on your program planning resources and practices. After completing the checklist, reflect on your responses to identify your priorities to help your program grow. Staffed Family Child Care Networks and OEC Service Navigators can help connect you to OEC resources and help you choose your next step.

**Read about how one program communicates with families:**

The staff of ABC Child Care have strong systems to communicate with families. After they noticed that paper newsletters and notes don’t always leave the children’s cubbies, they talked to families about a different plan. These conversations happened informally at drop-off and pick-up. Through conversation, the staff learned that email and phone work best for families. They invested in a texting service. They also gave the staff work email addresses to contact families. The staff worked together to share the same information with families across classrooms. The team also built relationships with families by sending home examples of the children’s work. They asked families about what the children were doing at home.

The informal conversations with families were the foundation for annual family conferences. Conferences are a time to discuss each child’s development and growth over the year with family members. The staff also used these meetings to discuss child development and developmentally appropriate practices with the families. Together, families and staff create shared goals for the upcoming year.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overview of Family Communication Practices** | | | | |
|  | **We’ve got this!** | **We’re a work in progress!** | **We’re not there yet!** | **Comments** |
| **Topics of Communication** | | | | |
| We ask families to share their child’s needs, strengths, and interests. |  |  |  |  |
| We help families access special needs services or special education as appropriate. |  |  |  |  |
| We regularly share children’s developmental milestones, positive behaviors, and accomplishments with their family, and ask families to do the same. |  |  |  |  |
| We respect the confidentiality of all family and child information. |  |  |  |  |
| We communicate promptly with families about academic or behavioral concerns. |  |  |  |  |
| **Systems for Communication** | | | | |
| We have a prominent space in the program’s common area to share information with families, including the program’s mission and vision statements. |  |  |  |  |
| We provide a clear Family Handbook to explain our policies and procedures. |  |  |  |  |
| We host at least one annual open house or orientation for all families together. |  |  |  |  |
| We communicate with families using multiple methods, such as phone calls, e-mails, information packets, drop-in hours, school website, social media, or ECE apps. |  |  |  |  |
| As needed, we provide written and verbal communication in families’ home language, including arranging translation services. |  |  |  |  |
| Our Family Handbook includes plans for how families can address disagreements that may arise between the family and the program. |  |  |  |  |

**What Else?**

How do you partner with families to create learning goals for children? How do you share information about child growth and development with families?