**What to Remember When Talking with Families**

Be mindful that you are the professional and have the skills to teach this child a better way. The family is there as a resource and always remember, “When you know better you do better.”

~Maya Angelou

This is a reference of how to plan conversations with families throughout the year. Also use this as steps when talking with families about;

* Developmental Concerns for example results of ESIR
* BMI results
* IEP
* Challenging situations

Build relationships with children and families. Be respectful and only talk about positive things the child is doing at school in front of the child and at the end of the day.

1. Knowing the appropriate time to communicate with family. Set up a time when you can give your full attention.
2. Talk with Coach 1st to come up with a plan.
3. Talk with staff
   1. Let staff know a meeting has been scheduled.
   2. Reiterate our job in the classroom is to be detectives. As a team brainstorm what might be happening in and around the child’s environment impacting behavior? The goal is for the success of the child. Support and strengthen what the child is in need of.
      1. Stressors = Reduce them
      2. Unmet needs = Meet them
      3. Skills deficit = Teach them
   3. Does the staff have any positive individualized observations or stories they would like to share?
   4. Schedule a time after the family meeting to debrief the outcome(s).
4. Take time 30-45 minutes to think about what you will say, what is the purpose of your conversation? Items you might need ready to share;
   1. Observations based from your CC GOLD documentation?
   2. Strategies classroom staff implemented that are working.
   3. Strategies used at school that can be implemented at home.
   4. Be ready to practice with family on how to implement those new strategies.
   5. Share/offer extra resources or items they might need to make the strategies. Shared successful.
5. During the meeting-
   1. Listen Be curious How can I help? Breathe
   2. Use the family’s input to guide strength base conversation about the behavior the child is demonstrating in the classroom setting. As appropriate use individualized stories as a special way to connect with families. Building connections with family through positive communication will help create success for the child and the classroom.
   3. Parents don’t always know how to help their child, it is you that can teach the family a better way Families might come in with little school readiness or family care knowledge. Staff are professionals that can provide resources, respect and offer a listening ear to families. Show families strategies, share resources, and invite them to visit the classroom to participate.
   4. Be prepared to give families one to two tools to help the children be successful. Examples, social story, visuals, visual routine and or objects.
   5. While with the family teach them how to use the tool.
6. Use the word practice with the child so the expectation is clear—Never expect a behavior you did not teach

Conversation Starters – Place a picture of the child at the table.

* “You know your child best, I thought we could come together today to talk about how to help your child be successful at school”
* “What are you noticing your child is really liking about school?”
* “What can you share with us to understand your child better? Is there anything that you can think of that is bothering your child about school?”
* “I’ve noticed when children know the expectation they are more successful, I made this book for your child. It is our daily schedule, research tells us that when a child has visuals and practices the things they are expected to do, they can be more successful. This is all the things your child does at school, in the order that we do them. If you could read this book with your child every night and encourage your child to read this book and practice the things in the book 1-2 times a night, we can see if this will help him/her be more successful.”

**What to Share with Families at End of Day**

* Share verbally some strategies the staff use during the day.
* Say what you would like family to implement at home.
* Give tools for families to bring home.

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| **Refrain from saying/doing** | **Instead try this** |
| Photographing or videotaping children for purposes other than for program activities. |  |
| “Cody couldn’t play in the art area today because he dumps everything off the shelf”. | “Cody played all of free choice at the art area, he must really love art.” |
| “Bre uses her running feet all day long!” | “Today Bre practiced walking to the sink. She was so successful when I walked beside her and noticed out loud, “you did it you remembered to walk!” |
| “Your child hit today.” | “Today we read a story called Hitting Hurts. Then we made a book together called Gentle Touches. Would you like to take it home and read it tonight?” |
| “Your child threw a block and it hit another kid!” | “Sally really likes to throw and we are teaching her to play catch outside. Do you have a ball at home? Because we have an extra one in the classroom Sally really likes to play with she can bring it home.” |
| “Mike bit three different children today.” | We gave Mike a chewy bracelet to use today. It helps keep his body moving in a positive way. I have bracelets or a necklace would you like to have one for home. |
| “He ran around the room swearing at the top of his lungs during large group.” | We are learning each other’s names at school. Here is a book we made at school called, Children, Children Who Do You See would you like copy to read at home together. |

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