

The Home–School Connection: Modeling Democratic Ideas



What are some democratic ideas?

**Do teachers in your early
childhood programs want
parents to be involved?**

In what ways?

Partnerships With Families

(video)

NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Standards

- 1.A. Building Positive **Relationships** Among Teachers and Families
- 4.E. **Communicating** with Families and Involving Families in the Assessment Process
- 7.A. **Knowing and Understanding** the Program's Families
- 7.B. **Sharing Information** Between Staff and Families
- 7.C. Nurturing Families as **Advocates** for Their Children

Head Start Performance Standards require programs to

- provide opportunities to increase parents' **observation skills** and **share assessments** with staff who plan learning experiences in the program
- share with parents **staff observations** of children and discuss with parents their child's behavior and development
- discuss with parents how to create and sustain **nurturing, supportive environments** in the home and at the program

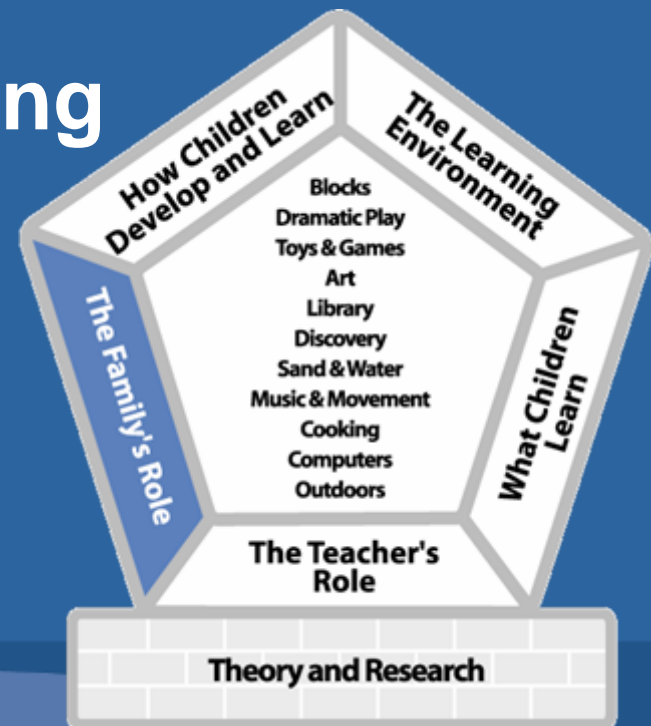
Supporting Family Learning: Training Guides for the Head Start Community (2002-2006). Trans-Management Systems Corporation.

Head Start, continued

- provide **parental involvement and education activities** that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of parents, themselves
- provide opportunities for parents to **enhance their parenting skills**, their knowledge and understanding of the educational and developmental needs of their children and share concerns about their children with program staff
- conduct **staff-parent conferences**

Building Partnerships With Families

- Getting to Know Families
 - Making Families Feel Welcome
 - Communicating With Families
 - Partnering With Families
- to Support Children's Learning



Getting to Know Families

Appreciating Differences

- Structure
- Personality and temperament
- Life experiences
- Culture

Welcoming Families to Your Program

Messages to Families

- We want you to feel welcome here.
- You and your child are part of our classroom community.
- We want you to know what your child is learning.
- We are interested in your ideas and suggestions.
- We want you to contribute to the preschool program.

Communicating With Families in Your Program

Daily Exchanges

- Greet each family.
- Have something specific to say to each one.
- Solicit advice when appropriate.
- Give support when needed.
- Be a good listener.
- Talk about what children are learning.

More Formal Exchanges

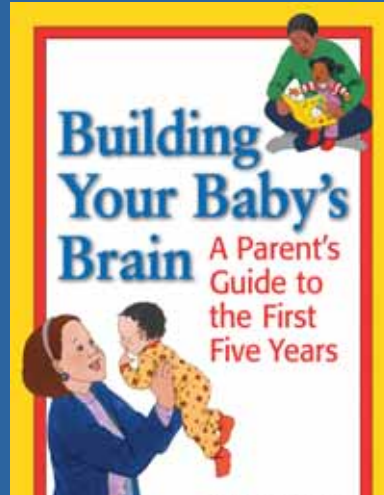
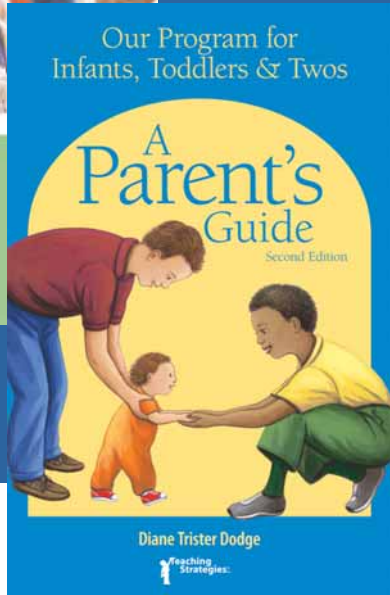
- weekly bulletins
- phone calls
- e-mail
- a class Web site
- journals
- notices

Partnering to Support Each Child's Learning

Sharing Information



a parent's guide
to
preschool



CREATIVE CURRICULUM

A LETTER TO FAMILIES ABOUT THE LIBRARY AREA

Dear Families,

The Library Area is a very important part of our classroom and of your child's life. It's where children gain the foundations for reading and writing. It's also a place where children can relax and enjoy the wonderful world of children's books.

We encourage children to use the library on their own. We invite them to look at books, to listen to taped stories, to retell stories, and to scribble and "write" throughout the day. We also work with children in the Library one-on-one and in small groups. Sometimes children dictate stories to us, which we record in "books."

We read stories to the children every day. Reading introduces new ideas, helps children learn how to handle problems that come up in life, and mostly encourages them to develop a love for books. As children listen to us read, their own reading skills begin to develop. Here are some of the things we do as we read.

We look at pictures together and ask children questions: "What is that silly cat doing?"

We encourage children to predict what will happen next: "What do you suppose will happen now?"

We encourage children to repeat words, rhymes, and phrases they've memorized.

children learn to
your child every
books with good

wonder why...?"
dog looks just like

an experiment with

th your child--
can draw on the
ur child every day,
reusful reader

SHARING THOUGHTS ABOUT GOING OUTDOORS

Dear Families:

Using outdoors gives children an entirely different environment to explore. Outdoors, they can stretch their legs, stretch, breathe fresh air, take in the sunshine (or the rain or snow), and enjoy the freedom of open space. They can expand on the responses they find on the playground, watch the wind blow the trees, and collect seeds and stones. We try to take the children outdoors every day because we know how important it is for their overall development and learning.

When your child does this...	Your child is learning...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crawl through the grass • climb over a low string • pick up pebbles to put in a bucket • roll a ball to another child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to explore with all senses • to use gross motor skills • to group objects • social skills

What You Can Do at Home:

Here are some activities to try next time you go outdoors with your child. You probably do some of them already. Perhaps others are new ideas.

- **Fairy houses:** Talk about the house watching your child. Roll down a grassy hill together. Plant a garden in your yard, a window box, or in a planter box that you can move to the sun. Give a basket to your child to collect things such as stones and leaves. Be sure that the items do not present a choking hazard.
- **Take a treasure walk:** Call your child's attention to natural materials and describe them. For example, you might point out a leaf, a small pebble, and a smooth rock.
- **Invent games:** When your child walks well, create a balancing path by laying a piece of rope on the ground to walk along. Play a game of catch. Set up a bowling game in which your child has to knock down empty toilet brushes by rolling a beach ball.
- **Visit public playgrounds designed for children under age 5.** Playgrounds with equipment for very young children offer wonderful opportunities for children to practice their developing skills and to begin engaging with other children.
- **Take some "house" activities outdoors.** For example, you might sit together under a tree and read a book, take your child a gameboard and have to guess the sets of your house.

By working together, we can introduce your child to the joys and wonders of the outdoors.

Toni S. Bichart
Diane Trister Dodge

Page 2 | September 2011

Family Conferences

Review what you have written about the child's development.

Invite family members to share their own observations and identify objectives important to them.

Share work samples and offer positive comments.

Discuss specific objectives on which you want to focus.



Provide the family with a copy of the plan.

e-CDA: Partnering With Families