

Professional Development KITS

in-house

Trainer Guide

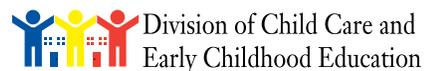
2013

Focus Area Discussed

Families

Guides are available for the other three focus areas in this series. They are:

- Professionalism
- Learning Environment / Program for Children
- A Supportive and Caring Community of Learners



**Professional Development KITS
In-house Trainer Guides**

FOCUS AREA: Families

Introduction

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The material in KIT II is designed as a guide for in-house trainers as they involve staff in four professional development sessions, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. The objectives of the sessions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support participants in developing positive relationships with the families of the children in their group • To provide participants with strategies for communicating effectively with families • To support participants in providing family and program connections
<p>Outline of Sessions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relationships with families 2. Daily exchanges with families 3. Written and verbal communication with families 4. Family and program connections
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>The four sessions in this Focus Area have been designed to be presented in sequential order. However, if your program chooses to use an individual session, each session can stand alone.</i></p>
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Consider these suggestions prior to beginning the 4 sessions in this Focus Area:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review the Trainer Tips and Techniques section that introduces the Trainer Guides.</i> • <i>Review each of the 4 sessions in this Focus Area before beginning Session 1. This review will give you a complete picture of how the sessions flow and what is to be covered. This will also give you an opportunity to make any adjustments to the materials that you think are necessary to meet the needs of the participants in your group.</i> • <i>Pay particular attention to the handouts for participants. Each handout is numbered (HO #). Some handouts are followed by a Trainer Support document with the same handout number and title. This document is included so that you have a guide for appropriate answers for the assignments and activities. Should participants not include all of the suggested answers, introduce into the discussion those you think are important for participants to</i>

	<p><i>know.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Decide on dates, times and location for sessions and give this information to participants.</i> • <i>Review the materials listed at the beginning of each session guide.</i> • <i>Collect the materials and place them in a container such as a storage tub.</i> • <i>Prepare a file folder for each session, copy the handouts, place in the appropriate folder and add to container.</i> <p><i>Now you are ready for the session!</i></p>
--	--

Resources for Focus Area 2: Families

Family-Friendly Communication for Early Childhood Programs by Deborah Diffily and Kathy Morrison, editors, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C. (1996)

Obtain the following documents from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
Call: 501-682-9699 or 1-800-445-3316 or find online at www.arkansas.gov/childcare

- ✓ Infant and Toddler Family Connection published by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (2005)
- ✓ The Family Connection published by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (2004)
- ✓ Picture This: A Framework for Quality Care and Education for Children from Three to Five, published by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (2002)
- ✓ Picture This: A Framework for Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers, published by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (2003)

FOCUS AREA: Families

Session # 1	Relationships with Families
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Handout #1: Welcome Committee ✓ Trainer Support – Handout #2: Welcome Committee ✓ Handout #2: How Well Do I Know My Families?
Trainer Note Preparing for Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Distribute HO #1: Welcome Committee, two or three days prior to the training session and ask participants to complete the requested information, bring the completed handout to the session and be prepared to discuss with the group.</i>
Session 1 Introductory Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to partner up with the person sitting next to them. • Explain to them that you will begin two statements which they will take turns completing and discussing with their partner. • Begin this statement: “I become upset/disturbed/angry/frustrated when a parent/ family member...” • Invite brief sharing with others how statement was completed. • Begin this statement: “Parents/family members probably become upset/disturbed/angry/frustrated when my child’s teacher/caregiver/director...” • Invite brief sharing with others how statement was completed. • Involve participants in a brief discussion about why they think each party “becomes upset/disturbed/angry/frustrated.”
Trainer Note	<p><i>Some possible reasons why participants and parents/family members become upset/disturbed/angry/frustrated:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participants may not know enough about the families. They may make judgments about families without sufficient information</i> • <i>Participants may not have shared sufficient information with families</i> • <i>Communication between participants and family may be limited; may focus primarily on problems</i> • <i>Communication focuses on “who is right” rather than “how can we work this out together?”</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family expectations and what the program provides may be different (for example, family expects preschool child to be clean at end of day and program includes messy activities or parents want children to be doing worksheets and program believes there are more appropriate ways to involve children in learning experiences)</i> • <i>Parents/families may not know what is going on in the center/classroom</i> • <i>Parents/families may feel unwelcome</i> • <i>Parents/families may not trust the caregiver/teacher</i>
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Conclude the activity by stating the following:</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes we all become upset/disturbed/angry because</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We’ve not taken time to get to know each other better</i> • <i>We’ve failed to share information with each other</i> • <i>Our lines of communication may not always be open”</i> <p><i>“During these sessions that have a family focus, we’ll explore strategies that’ll help us eliminate or reduce the negative feelings of everyone.”</i></p>
<p>Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute HO #2: How Well Do I Know My Families? to participants and allow them about 6 to 8 minutes to complete it. • Involve them in discussing with others at their table questions such as: Did you remember all of the families’ names? Were some names easier to remember than others? Why? • Designate 3 areas of the room as follows: eyedropper area, 8 ounce measuring cup area and gallon bucket area. • Conclude discussion of HO #2 by inviting participants to rate how well they know their families by choosing and going to one of the areas of the room when you state the following: “What I know about my families would fit in a. an eyedropper b. an 8 oz measuring cup c. a gallon bucket” • Ask if they are surprised by the number of participants in each area. • Invite participants to share with the group why they chose the answer they did. • Have participants return to their seats.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to discuss some of the ways they can get to know more about their families and how this can be a good thing and also the potential problem this may cause. • Invite participants to share an experience where knowing more about a family situation helped them to better meet the needs of a child in their care.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind participants that they should avoid including the names of the children and their families during group discussions; that this should be considered as confidential information. • <i>Suggestions for ways participants can get to know more about families:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review enrollment application (except for confidential information that only the Director/Administrator is to know) ○ Talk with families at arrival and departure ○ Listen to children’s comments ○ Visit with families at an open house or family activity night ○ Send home an informal family survey that asks about hobbies and interests of family member, favorite family foods and activities, for example • <i>Knowing more about families can be helpful:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In planning experiences and activities with children that include information about families ○ In planning menus and food experiences ○ In involving families in the center or classroom ○ In understanding the child ○ In planning for the child • <i>Potential problems of knowing families:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Being judgmental about families; especially if their life style or values may be different from that of participants ○ Treating a child a certain way because of family background ○ Gossiping with others about a family ○ Sharing confidential family information with others
<p>Activity</p> <p>Welcome Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite each participant to share from completed HO #1: Welcome Committee one idea they have for making families feel welcome in the building and specifically in their classroom. • Ask others to “give a little clap” if the idea given was one they included so that participant will know that they agree with the idea presented. • Allow each participant a turn to share a different idea. • Add ideas that you think are important if they were not included. • Suggest that participants add ideas to their list.

Follow-up Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain to participants that you will post a chart sheet in an area such as on the wall in the staff lounge or on the door of your office. The sheet will be labeled: Welcome Committee Ideas.• Ask each participant to record on a large sticky note or on a small index card and attach to chart sheet one new activity they have initiated or will initiate to make families feel more welcome in their classroom. They are to include their name and the date the new activity will start. They may want to include a photo of the activity if appropriate.• Explain that their notes are to be added to the chart sheet within ten days of this session. Give the exact date.• Ask all participants to review the completed Welcome Committee chart sheet.• Suggest that they visit a colleague's classroom to see the plan in action.
---------------------------	---

HO #1: Welcome Committee

Directions: In preparation for the upcoming session that focuses on families, please do the following:

- Think of yourself as a member of the **Welcome Committee** for your program. As a member of the committee, you are the person responsible for making people feel welcome to your program and your classroom.
- List all of the things you do or could do to make parents/families feel welcome in your building and your classroom.
- Describe some possible positive results from the Welcome Committee approach.
- Add to your list any new ideas you receive as you discuss this activity with colleagues.

Welcome Committee Strategies

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Positive Results

Trainer Support – HO #1: Welcome Committee – Possible Responses

Here are some possible responses participants might include in HO #1: Welcome Committee

Welcome Committee Strategies

- Take families on a tour of the classroom as part of orientation process
- Be available to greet children and families at arrival and to tell them “goodbye” as they leave
- Greet families by name when they bring in and pick up their child (they have a name and it is not “Rachel’s mother”)
- Photos or displays of their child’s work which conveys the message, “We want you to know what your child is learning”
- A special place where messages are left for families
- Bulletin-board with current information on program activities and community events that may be of interest to families
- Display of photos of children and their families
- Books and pictures that reflect the diversity of the families
- Sign-in sheet for families to sign their children in and out each day
- Displays of children’s work or teacher-made materials that incorporate items brought in by families
- Suggestion box with slips of paper and pens
- **Families Always Welcome** sign
- Opportunities for participating in their child’s program
- Open house or family activity event, family appreciation night

Positive Results

- Families more likely to keep their child in your program
- Families more likely to want to be involved in program activities
- Families feel like they belong
- Families learn to trust you
- Families more open to communication with you

FOCUS AREA: Families

<p>Session # 2</p>	<p align="center">Daily Exchanges with Families</p>
<p>Materials Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prepared chart sheet – Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families ✓ Handout #3: Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families ✓ Handout #4: Positive Comments/Observations ✓ File Folders, one per participant
<p>Trainer Note Preparing for Session</p>	<p><i>Prior to the session, prepare a chart sheet as follows:</i></p> <p align="center">Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Avoid negative comments or bringing up problems</i> • <i>Make positive comments that are specific</i> • <i>Avoid judgment words</i> • <i>Make comments that focus on child's progress or development</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p align="center">Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid negative comments or bringing up problems • Make positive comments that are specific • Avoid judgment words • Make comments that focus on child's progress or development </div>
<p>Session 2 Introductory Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to create in their mind's eye a picture of the parents/family members as they bring in or pick up their child each day. • Ask them to discuss with the person sitting next to them these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “What are some negative things that may have occurred before they brought their child in that day...events at home or on their way to the center that may influence their mood?” ○ “What may be on their minds when they come to pick up their child; thoughts about their day at work or the evening ahead?” ○ “What are some things they probably don't want to hear from you?”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to share their discussions about the 3 questions with the entire group. • Conclude the discussion by reminding participants how important it is that they be welcoming and positive with their families rather than adding to their daily stresses.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Possible answers to discussion questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Had to chase after dog</i> • <i>Forgot to buy diapers to bring to the center</i> • <i>Car wouldn't start</i> • <i>Had to take a detour because a street was closed</i> • <i>Boss yelled at me all day today</i> • <i>Three stops to make before going home to prepare supper</i> • <i>School age child has a ball game and forgot his sports shoes at home</i> • <i>Laundry needs to be done so we'll have clothes to wear tomorrow</i> • <i>Wonder what my husband and I will argue about tonight</i> • <i>Don't want to hear "That Sam bit two children today; that I forgot to bring baby food for Elise; that Josh used bad language today; that Nora wouldn't stay on her cot during nap time."</i>
<p>Daily Exchanges with Parents / Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post chart sheet titled "Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families" where all participants can see it. • Distribute HO #3: Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families. • Point to and say first statement on chart sheet: "Avoid negative comments or problems". • Invite one participant to read the negative comments from the handout. • Seek agreement from participants that the statements are negative and should not be made to parents. • Follow the same pattern with the other three statements on the chart sheet and the examples given in the handout. • Point out to participants that the comments are actually observations made about a child. • Conclude the activity by suggesting that participants think about different areas of the room or playground when they make comments to parents. For example, what did a child do in the block or library center? What was an infant doing when she was on the mat or rug? What skill did a child master on a specific piece of equipment outdoors?

<p>Activity</p> <p>Snowball Fight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each participant two or three half-sheets of paper. • Ask them to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Record on each piece of paper one positive comment they might make to a parent as a child is brought in or picked up each day; comments that meet one of the criteria, other than negative, listed on the chart sheet. ○ State that they are not to sign their names to the comments. • Invite participants to wad each slip of paper into a “snowball” and on the count of three begin to throw the balls at each other. • Explain that they are to pick up and continue throwing the balls at each other until time is called. • Call a “stop” signal and ask participants to pick up the same number of snow balls as the number they made. • Invite participants, one at a time to read the statement on one of the snow balls. • Involve participants in evaluating each comment. Was it positive, specific, without judgment, did it focus on progress or development? • Help them reach an agreement as they evaluate the comments.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Refer to chart sheet as a guide when evaluating each comment.</i></p> <p><i>How many snowballs each participant completes or how many are read in the group will depend upon the number of participants and time available for this activity.</i></p> <p><i>Because comments are anonymous, no one is singled out. However, be prepared for comments that might be negative or hurtful and turn the comment around so that is positive and helpful.</i></p>
<p>Follow Up Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute HO #4: Positive Comments/Observations and a file folder in which to keep the handout. • Explain to participants that, for the next week, they are to jot down an observation of each child in their group; an observation that could become a positive comment to share with families. • Remind them that the observation is to meet one of the criteria, other than negative or a problem, discussed earlier. • Ask them to share at least one positive comment with each family during the week and to record the date and any reaction from families.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review with each participant her completed Positive Comments/Observations handout and guide her to evaluate any comments that you think do not meet the stated criteria. Schedule the reviews the week following the assignment.
--	---

HO #3: Daily Exchanges with Parents/Families

Avoid negative or problem comments such as:

- “I hope Megan has a better day today than she had yesterday.”
- “Addie had to go to time out three times today.”
- “We really need to have a conference to talk about Trey’s behavior.”
- “Derrick didn’t have as many temper tantrums today as he usually does.”

Make positive comments that are specific; that describe what the child did. For example:

- “Josie saw herself in the mirror today. She smiled and patted her reflection.”
- “Joseph said his favorite book was the one we read today. It’s about animals in the jungle.”
- “Ask Cole to tell you about the new computer math game he played today.”
- “Jordan enjoyed dressing up in a vest and tie today. He said he was going to work.”

Avoid judgment words such as good or pretty. For example, do not say:

- “Anna painted a pretty picture.” Say, instead: “Anna used lots of colors in her painting.”
- “Marcus had a good day.” Instead, describe something specific that Marcus did. “Marcus helped set the table for snack.”

Make comments that focus on a child’s progress or development. For example:

- “You told me Melinda was taking a few steps and she did it for us today.”
- “Today Jordan worked a five piece puzzle all by himself.”
- “Today, Eli shared his play dough with a friend.”
- “Nate wrote his name on his painting.”
- “Toby helped pick up the blocks today.”
- “Trey told me he needed to go to the quiet corner and be by himself for awhile.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepare a chart sheet titled: Completing Accident/Incident Reports and add the following guidelines:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Record facts only</i> ✓ <i>Use brief and complete sentences</i> ✓ <i>Use correct spelling and sentence structure</i> ✓ <i>Avoid interpretation or opinion</i> ✓ <i>Refer to other child/children as peer/peers</i> ✓ <i>Avoid erasures, white-outs, mark-throughs</i> ✓ <i>Complete all parts that apply</i> ✓ <i>Complete report soon after accident/incident</i> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Completing Accident/Incident Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Record facts only ✓ Use brief and complete sentences ✓ Use correct spelling and sentence structure ✓ Avoid interpretation or opinion ✓ Refer to other child/children as peer/peers ✓ Avoid erasures, white-outs, mark-throughs ✓ Complete all parts that apply ✓ Complete report soon after accident/incident </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">Introductory Activity</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How and What to Communicate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall with participants that the previous session focused on daily face-to-face exchanges with families. They developed positive and specific comments to share with parents about their child. Some of the comments focused on the child’s progress and development. • Invite participants to imagine that they don’t have an opportunity to speak with families on a regular basis or they want to share additional information with them. Ask this question: “What are some other ways you can communicate with families?” • Allow a few minutes for brainstorming different methods of communication and record their ideas on the chart sheet. • Ask this question: “What are some things you might want to communicate to families?” • Record their ideas below the second heading on the chart sheet.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review both sets of ideas and state that there are many different ways to communicate with families and lots of different information to communicate to them. • Explain to participants that they will be involved in examining some of the different methods of communicating with families They will suggest benefits and possible problems for each method.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Some methods of communication suggested by participants may include: e-mail, telephone, notes, newsletters/class letters, accident/incident reports, parent conferences, open house, family activity night, parent meetings, daily infant report and text messages</i></p> <p><i>Suggested information to communicate to families: child’s development and progress, dates to remember, classroom activities, field trips, calendar of events, holiday closings, materials to collect, parent/child home activities, community events, health and safety information. problems with child, appropriate toys for children, recommended children’s books</i></p>
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Consider this alternative method for conducting the Introductory Activity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Post the prepared chart sheet on the wall where all can get to it.</i> • <i>Provide self-stick notes for each table; enough for at least two per participant.</i> • <i>Invite participants to read the two headings on the chart sheet and to record one idea for each on a self-stick note, then post the note on the chart sheet under the proper heading.</i> • <i>Collect the notes from the first heading and read them to the group. If more than one note has the same information, read only one.</i> • <i>Add ideas that were not suggested by participants.</i> • <i>Repeat this process with the second heading.</i>
<p>Activity</p> <p>Written and Verbal Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute HO #1: Written and Verbal Communication with Families. • Explain to participants that the handout includes examples of some of the types of written and verbal communication they might have with families and that they will have an opportunity to have input into each type. • Form small groups by having participants draw a craft stick from the can. Those with matching sticks become a small group and will be given a type of communication to discuss. They are to read the description of, or guidelines for each type, discuss it, and identify benefits and potential problems for each type of communication. • Assign communication type by color of sticks: Journal – red stick, for example.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask groups to get together, select a recorder who will record the benefits and potential problems for their assigned type of communication on a chart sheet and a reporter who will report back to the total group. Remind the recorder to write large enough so the entire group can see what is written. • Explain to participants that they will have 5 to 7 minutes for the activity. • Invite the reporter from one group to read the guidelines for the group's assigned type of communication and to state the benefits and potential problems recorded on the chart sheet. • Invite discussion from others about what has been recorded and seek consensus from the group. Ask for additions they think should be included and add them if they are appropriate. • Add benefits and/or potential problems that you think are important. • Repeat this process with each type of communication. • Allow participants time to copy the recordings to their handout. • Invite participants to share any new ideas they gained from the activity and discussion; ideas they plan to put into practice.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>You and your staff may be communicating with families through some of the methods just reviewed. You may also be communicating with families in other ways.</i></p> <p><i>Should you decide that this an area in which you want to expand or improve, consider using the guidelines suggested in this session as a starting point. Seek input from staff in deciding on strategies for improving communication between your program and the families served.</i></p>
<p>Activity</p> <p>Review of Accident/ Incident Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post chart sheet with Completing Accident/Incident Reports guidelines. • Read from Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR), the section that addresses accident reports. • Ask participants to suggest additional information that should be included in the report. • Invite a volunteer to read the guidelines from the posted chart. • Ask participants if guidelines are clear to them. If they say they understand them, proceed with the activity. If they say they are unclear about one or more of the guidelines spend time explaining and clarifying.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute copies of HO #2: Review of Accident/Incident Report to each participant. • Ask them to silently review the report, use information from the Minimum Licensing Regulations and the posted guidelines to evaluate it and highlight any parts of the report that they feel do not meet the guidelines. • Invite discussion of their review and seek consensus on the parts of the report that don't meet the guidelines. • Involve participants in discussing the importance of following the guidelines when completing the reports. • Ask participants this question: "What might a review of Accident/Incident reports over a period of time tell us?" and allow a few minutes for discussion. • Provide each participant a copy of HO #3: Guidelines for Completing Accident/Incident Reports to add to their notebook.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>From Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers (Rev. 02-2006): Child Records 1. The child care facility shall maintain a record for each child in care which shall contain the following information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>601.i – A record of all accidents or injuries indicating the location, time of day, area or piece of equipment where the incident occurred. (pages 20-21).</i> <p><i>Should Minimum Licensing Requirements be updated, use the latest edition for the activity.</i></p>
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>Examples of what a review of Accident/Incident Reports over a period of time might show:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>better supervision is needed in a certain area of the classroom or playground or on a specific piece of equipment</i> • <i>a piece of equipment may be inappropriate for the children and should be removed</i> • <i>classroom arrangement may be contributing to problem; for example, "blind spots" where teacher cannot see all of the children at all times</i> • <i>increased interaction with children is needed</i> • <i>too many children are in an area or on a piece of equipment at the same time</i> • <i>children may need more guidance in appropriate and expected behavior</i> • <i>continued conflict between two children</i> • <i>a child may appear to be a target for behavior such as hitting or biting by others</i> • <i>a child is behaving inappropriately at certain times of the day such as at arrival, transition times or rest time</i>

<p>Follow up to Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute copies of HO #4: Accident/Incident Report Form. • Explain to participants that they are to use the blank form to rewrite the information contained in the Accident/Incident Report just reviewed. They are to use the information from the discussion, and the information in HO #3: Guidelines for Completing Accident/Incident Reports. • Ask that they complete the report in two days and give it to you for review. • Review each report according to the guidelines. Refer to Trainer Support – HO #2: Accident/Incident Report for an example. • Schedule a brief conference with each participant to discuss her report. If the report is completed correctly, let participant know this and ask that she complete future reports as she did this one. If report is completed incorrectly, highlight the incorrect sections and ask participant to review those sections and the guidelines and tell you why the section is incorrect. • Continue working with participant who is having difficulty correctly completing reports until she has mastered the task.
------------------------------------	--

HO #1: Written and Verbal Communication with Families

Journal

- Provide one spiral notebook (medium or small size) per child in the group.
- Write the name of the parent(s) and child on cover of notebook.
- Introduce the notebook to parents by telling them that this will be a way for the two of you to communicate in writing on a regular basis; a way to share information that will be helpful to both of you and to the child.
- Assure parents that information can still be shared verbally; that this is just another way to communicate.
- Show them where the notebook will be kept – in the child’s cubbie or in a designated place in the room, for instance. Another suggestion is for parents to take the notebook home and make their recordings when they may have more time and bring it back the next day.
- Suggest that parents date and sign each entry. The signature is especially important if more than one family member brings in or picks up the child.
- Record the first entry, telling the family something interesting that their child did that day. Date and sign the entry. For example, record that *Emily patted the hand of the new baby in our room and said “ba.”* or *Brennan played a sink and float game in the water tub today.*
- Assure families that you will check the notebooks daily and will discuss with them anything you don’t understand or would like to know more about.
- Avoid recording negative information. For example, recording that *Isaac bit two children today* is a negative comment and is something to be discussed in a conference, not recorded in the journal. The journal is for sharing information with families about their child’s day in the center, not for tracking negative behaviors or problems.

Identify benefits of a Journal:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Identify potential problems with a Journal:

-
-
-
-

E-mail Messages

Suggested guidelines for communicating with families through e-mail:

- Be aware of your program’s policies on e-mail messages between you and families and follow them
- Keep e-mail messages brief
- Avoid including negative information
- Have a regular time for sending and responding to e-mail messages (if e-mail messages are a primary method of communicating with families)

- Avoid including e-mail addresses of other families
- Think before responding to an e-mail message
- Reread an e-mail message before sending it
- Copy to Director all e-mail messages to families

Identify benefits of e-mail messages:

-
-
-

Identify potential problems with e-mail messages:

-
-
-
-

Telephone Conversations

Suggested guidelines for communicating with families by telephone:

- Be aware of your program's policies on telephone conversations with families and follow them
- Avoid delivering negative information
- Ask parents when it is convenient to call them
- Avoid calling parents on the job except for emergencies such as a sick or injured child
- Keep call on topic and brief
- Listen to what parents are saying
- Allow time for parents to ask questions

Identify benefits of telephone conversations:

-
-
-
-

Identify potential problems with telephone conversations:

-
-
-

Newsletters/Classroom Letters to Families

Guidelines for newsletters and classroom letters to families:

- Determine if newsletters are to convey information about the entire center. If so, they are often written by Director, sometimes with input from staff.
- Determine if newsletters or letters are to convey information about individual classrooms. If so, they are usually written by the classroom teacher and approved by the Director.
- Decide on content for the newsletter or classroom letter.
- Design a format for the newsletter or classroom letter and use it consistently.
- Use a word processor or legible handwriting for the document.

- Use spell check or a dictionary to insure correct spelling.
- Write in complete sentences or use brief bullet points.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid lengthy newsletters.
- Use “family friendly” language rather than the jargon sometimes used by early childhood professionals.
- Make sure that each family receives a copy of the newsletter or letter.
- Have Director review and approve classroom newsletters or letters.

Identify benefits of newsletter and classroom letters

-
-
-

Identify potential problems with newsletters and classroom letters

-
-
-
-
-

Trainer Support - HO #1: Written and Verbal Communication with Families

Journal

- Provide one spiral notebook (medium or small size) per child in the group.
- Write the name of the parent(s) and child on cover of notebook.
- Introduce the notebook to parents by telling them that this will be a way for the two of you to communicate in writing on a regular basis; a way to share information that will be helpful to both of you and to the child.
- Assure parents that information can still be shared verbally; that this is just another way to communicate.
- Show them where the notebook will be kept – in the child’s cubbie or in a designated place in the room, for instance. Another suggestion is for parents to take the notebook home and make their recordings when they may have more time and bring it back the next day.
- Suggest that parents date and sign each entry. The signature is especially important if more than one family member brings in or picks up the child.
- Record the first entry, telling the family something interesting that their child did that day. For example, *Emily patted the hand of the new baby in our room and said “ba.” or Brennan played a sink and float game in the water tub today.* Date and sign the entry.
- Assure families that you will check the notebooks daily and will discuss with them anything you don’t understand or would like to know more about.
- Avoid recording negative information. For example, recording that *Isaac bit two children today* is a negative comment and is something to be discussed in a conference, not recorded in the journal. The journal is for sharing information with families, not for tracking negative behaviors or problems.

Identify benefits of a Journal:

- Sharing of information can be beneficial to families, teachers/caregivers and children
- For families: a way to better understand their child’s day
- For teachers/caregivers: insight as to what is happening with child at home
- For child: stronger connection between home and center
- Way to communicate with parents of children who do not or cannot speak
- Way to share child’s development and progress

Identify potential problems with a Journal:

- Time consuming for both parties
- Can become so routine that comments are meaningless
- How to maintain confidentiality so that parents do not have access to journals other than their own
- Parent with poor literacy skills may feel intimidated by this form of communication

E-mail Messages

Suggested guidelines for communicating with families through e-mail:

- Be aware of your program’s policies on e-mail messages between you and families and follow them
- Keep e-mail messages brief
- Avoid including negative information

- Have a regular time for sending and responding to e-mail messages (if e-mail messages are a primary method of communicating with families)
- Avoid including e-mail addresses of other families
- Think before responding to an e-mail message
- Reread an e-mail message before sending it
- Copy to Director all e-mail messages to families

Identify benefits of e-mail messages:

- This is a quick way to communicate with parents
- For many families this is a primary method of communication
- E-mail messages leave a trail or record of what was communicated

Identify potential problems with e-mail messages:

- Messages can become lengthy and time consuming to read
- Messages can be misinterpreted because there is no face-to-face contact
- Inclination by some to send messages that do not relate to intended purpose
- Director/supervisor may not be aware of information communicated to families
- Staff may continue sending emails outside of work and this could turn into an unprofessional relationship between staff and families

Telephone Conversations

Suggested guidelines for communicating with families by telephone

- Be aware of your program's policies on telephone conversations with families and follow them
- Avoid delivering negative information
- Ask parents when it is convenient to call them
- Avoid calling parents on the job except for emergencies such as a sick or injured child
- Keep call on topic and brief
- Listen to what parents are saying
- Allow time for parents to ask questions

Identify benefits of telephone conversations:

- Most parents have telephones at home and at work
- Most parents have cell phones
- Phone calls allow time for two-way communication
- Is more personal than written communication

Identify potential problems with telephone conversations:

- There is no record of what was said or not said
- One or both parties may not listen to the other
- Potential for misunderstandings because callers cannot see each other or may not have time to work out misunderstandings

Newsletters/Classroom Letters to Families

Guidelines for newsletters and classroom letters to families:

- Determine if newsletters are to convey information about the entire center. If so, they are often written by Director, sometimes with input from staff.

- Determine if newsletters or letters are to convey information about individual classrooms. If so, they are usually written by the classroom teacher and reviewed and approved by Director.
- Decide on content for the newsletter or classroom letter.
- Design a format for the newsletter or classroom letter and use it consistently.
- Use a word processor or legible handwriting for the document.
- Use spell check or a dictionary to insure correct spelling.
- Write in complete sentences or use brief bullet points.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Avoid lengthy newsletters.
- Use “family friendly” language rather than the jargon sometimes used by early childhood professionals.
- Make sure that each family receives a copy of the newsletter or letter.
- Have classroom newsletters or letters reviewed and approved by Director.

Identify benefits of newsletter and classroom letters:

- A good way to deliver the same information to the families of every child in the center or classroom.
- An excellent way to let families know what is happening in their child's group.
- A way to provide information to support families in their role as parents; for example, appropriate toys or books for children, health and safety tips, and child guidance ideas.

Identify potential problems with newsletters and classroom letters:

- Time consuming
- Is a one-way form of communicating with no feedback from other party
- May not be read by parents
- May not be understood by parents with poor literacy skills or whose home language is not English
- Limited availability of equipment such as word processor, printer and/or copier

HO #2: Review of Accident/Incident Report

Topsy Turvey Center
Accident/Incident Report

Check Appropriate Box: Accident Incident

Child's name: John Date: Tuesday Time: In the morning

Staff on duty (all): Me

Location of staff when accident/incident occurred: I was in room. Lisa on break

Location accident/incident occurred (where did it occur) (indicate area or piece of equipment if applicable) In the classroom

Describe accident/incident (what happened): John & Chris was playing in the block center when John decided he wanted Chris's block so they was fighting over the block when John got angry and hit Chris with another block and he started crying.

Identify parts of body injured & describe injury: Chris quit crying, so I didn't think he was hurt so I didn't look

Describe actions taken by staff: Told John to go sit in corner facing the wall and told both boys they wasn't allowed to play in the block center ever again if they couldn't share

Was parent notified? Yes X No ____ If yes, complete the following:

Who was notified? Mom Time of notification: After the boys fought

Method of notification: Texted

Parent's comments/directions: She texted that she hoped we punished Chris

Name of person notifying parent: Me

Comments by Director _____

Signature of staff completing report

Signature of Director

Trainer Support - HO #2: Accident/Incident Report Form

The Center
Accident/Incident Report

Check Appropriate Box: Accident Incident

Child's name John Marshall Date 2/9/10 Time 10:30 a.m.

Staff on duty (all) Ms. Lisa & Ms. Debby

Location accident/incident occurred (where did it occur) (indicate area or piece of equipment if applicable)

Classroom 112 in the block center

Describe accident/incident (what happened) John and peer were playing in the block center. John grabbed a block that peer was holding. Peer held on to the block. John hit peer on the head with another block.

Identify parts of body injured None

Describe actions taken by staff I talked with the children about why it is never OK to hit and what we should do when we are upset. I sat in the block center with the children and helped them take turns stacking and building with the blocks

Was parent notified? Yes ___ No X If yes, complete the following:

Who was notified? _____ Time of notification _____

Method of notification I will give mother a copy of the report when she picks up John.

Parent's comments/directions _____

Name of person notifying parent Lisa Perry

Comments by Director _____

Lisa Perry
Signature of staff completing report

Jennifer Jackson
Signature of Director

HO #3: Guidelines for Completing Accident/Incident Reports

Definitions:

Accident: relates to any type of injury to a child

Incident: relates to the behavior of a child that is noteworthy enough to require documentation for parents and staff

Note: *Incident can also relate to the behavior of an adult, for example the behavior of a parent or a staff member, that is noteworthy enough to require documentation for facility records*

Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers (Rev. 02-2006) states the following:

Child Records 1. The child care facility shall maintain a record for each child in care which contain the following information:
601.i – A record of all accidents or injuries indicating the location, time of day, area or piece of equipment where the incident occurred.
(pages 20 & 21)

Completing Accident/Incident Reports

- ✓ Record facts only; what you observed, not what you think happened or why it happened
- ✓ Use brief and complete sentences
- ✓ Use correct spelling and sentence structure
- ✓ Avoid interpretation or opinion
Words such as “because” and “so” infer why a child did something. For example, recording that *Chris was crying because John took the block away from him* is an opinion, not a fact.
- ✓ Refer to other child/children as peer/peers, not by name
- ✓ Avoid erasures, white-outs, mark throughs
- ✓ Complete all parts that apply
- ✓ Write a report for each child involved in the accident/incident
- ✓ Complete the report as soon after the accident/incident as possible while not neglecting supervision of children. If possible, complete within an hour of the accident/incident or by the end of the day

HO #4: Accident/Incident Report Form

Name of Center/School: _____

Accident/Incident Report

Check Appropriate Box: Accident Incident

Child's name _____ Date _____ Time _____

Staff on duty (all) _____

Location accident/incident occurred (where did it occur) (indicate area or piece of equipment if applicable)

Describe accident/incident (what happened) _____

Identify parts of body injured _____

Describe actions taken by staff _____

Was parent notified? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, complete the following:

Who was notified? _____ Time of notification _____

Method of notification: _____

Parent's comments/directions _____

Name of person notifying parent: _____

Comments by Director _____

Signature of staff completing report

Signature of Director

FOCUS AREA: Families

Session # 4	Family and Program Connections
<p>Materials Needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chart paper and markers (or marker board and markers) ✓ Handout #1: Sharing Experiences with Families ✓ Trainer Support: Role Playing – A Family Conference of Sorts (2 copies) ✓ Trainer Support: Possible Participant Responses to Role Playing ✓ Handout #2: Conducting an Effective Conference with Families ✓ Handout #3: Sample of an Effective Family Conference ✓ Handout #4: Planning a Family Conference <p>The following handouts are from Infant and Toddler Family Connection (http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/services/printedmats/pdf/inftodcon.pdf) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Family and Caregiver Connections – Language Development & Activity #8: “Looking at Books and Turning the Pages” (Young Infants) ✓ Family and Caregiver Connections – Language Development & Activity #20: “Where is My....?” (Mobile Infants) ✓ Family and Caregiver Connections – Language Development & Activity #31: “My Book of Favorite Things” (Toddlers) ✓ Family Response <p>The following handouts are from The Family Connection (for 3 & 4 year olds) (http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/services/printedmats/pdf/familyconnection.pdf) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Classroom Connection Activity #10: “The Joy of Reading With Children” ✓ The Family Connection Activity #10: “The Joy of Reading With Your Child” ✓ Family Response
<p>Trainer Note</p> <p>Preparing for Session</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prepare chart paper with the following across the top: Sharing Experiences with Families</i> • <i>Prepare the Family Connection handouts so that each participant has the handouts that are designed for the age of the children in her group and the appropriate Family Response sheet. Some participants may have more than one set of Family Connection activities. For example, a caregiver may have both young and mobile infants, or both mobile infants and toddlers in her group.</i>
<p>Introductory Activity</p> <p>Review of Previous Sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the session by reviewing with participants some of the main ideas that have been discussed in the previous sessions that focused on families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Getting to know families ✓ Making families feel welcome ✓ Having positive daily exchanges with families ✓ Engaging in written and verbal communication with families: journals, e-mail messages, telephone conversations, newsletters and classroom letters, accident/incident reports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to share some of the successes they have had with the ideas presented in the previous sessions. • Explain that this last session will focus on more in-depth connections between families and their child’s program.
<p>Activity</p> <p>Sharing Children’s Experiences with Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite participants to discuss with a partner the following question: What are some ways I can truly share with families their children’s experiences when they are in my care? • Record on chart paper their suggestions. • Distribute HO #1: Sharing Experiences with Families • Allow time for participants to review the handout. Ask them how the list they helped to develop compares with the handout. • Discuss their thoughts about what they read. • Invite them to state which of the strategies they think would be most effective for their families and why. • Ask participants to ponder this question and share their thoughts with the group: “If I could share only one thing with families about their children’s experiences in my room, what would it be?” • Accept all of their ideas.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suggestions for ways to share experiences with families include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Open house</i> ○ <i>Family activity night</i> ○ <i>Guided tour of classroom</i> ○ <i>Family visits while program is in session</i> ○ <i>Video/DVD of activities</i> ○ <i>Conference</i> ○ <i>Sharing of child’s portfolio</i> ○ <i>Family connection activities</i> • <i>Guide discussion to include activities you already have in place and those you would like to implement.</i>
<p>Activity</p> <p>Family Connection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show either copies of or the covers of <i>Infant and Toddler Family Connection</i> and <i>The Family Connection (for 3 and 4 year olds)</i>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that these two publications are available on the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education website and can be downloaded, copied and shared with families. • Distribute to participants the Family Connection handouts for their particular age group of children: young infants, mobile Infants, toddlers, 3 and 4 year olds, plus the Family Response Sheet for their age group. • Allow time for participants to review the handouts. • Invite discussion about the Family Connection activities. Ask how they think their families would respond to this type of family connection activity. • Explain that the activities are based on the Arkansas benchmarks for each age group; that there are 12 Family Connection activities for young infants, 12 for mobile infants, and 12 for toddlers. For 3 and 4 year old children, there are suggested classroom activities, plus 32 Family Connection activities.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review both Family Connection publications. Keep your staff and your families in mind during the review.</i> • <i>Decide if your program is interested in getting families involved in the Family Connection project.</i> • <i>Involve your staff in implementing the Family Connection project if you decide that it can be an effective method for strengthening the ties between your program and the families you serve.</i>
<p>Activity Family Conference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to participants that they will be observing two people role playing a family conference. One person will be the teacher and the other a parent of a toddler. • Ask that they jot down notes about what they observed about the conference and how the parent probably felt at the end of the conference. • Involve two people in role-playing the conference using the script in Trainer Support: Role Playing – A Family Conference of Sorts. • Invite participants to share their observations about the conference. • Solicit their thoughts about how the parent probably felt at the end of the conference. • Invite participants to share some of their experiences with family conferences when they were the parent. How did they feel at the end of the conference?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute HO #2: Conducting an Effective Conference with Families. • Allow participants time to review the handout and briefly discuss. • Distribute HO #3: Sample of an Effective Family Conference. • Explain that you will read the teacher's part and invite a participant to read the family response. Suggest that participants follow along from the handout. • Invite participants to compare the two family conferences and note some differences. • Solicit their thoughts about how the parents felt at the end of the second conference.
<p>Follow-up Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute HO #4: Planning a Family Conference. • Explain to participants that this is a form they are to use to plan a conference with one of the families of the children in their group. • Ask them to complete the planning form in the next week and give it to you for review and discussion. • Decide if you want staff to be involved in conferences with families of the children in their group and guide them in the process.
<p>Trainer Note</p>	<p><i>If your program is already involved with family conferences, review your procedures and determine if any of the information presented here can strengthen the process.</i></p>

HO #1: Sharing Experiences with Families

Open House

During an open house, families visit their child's classroom after the center/school is closed for the day. This is an opportunity for caregivers/teachers to explain the program to parents.

Some open houses are held just before the beginning of a program year, while others are held during the first couple of weeks of the new program year.

Guided Tour of the Classroom

Families may take a guided tour of the classroom before enrolling their child or after their child is enrolled. A guided tour is one-on-one time with a family and may involve in-depth discussion about what goes on in the classroom.

Family Activity Night

During a family activity night, families come in with their children and have “hands-on” experiences with the different activities in the classroom. Staff is available to explain what the child is learning in each of the activity areas. Families may be given handouts with suggested activities for home. If a facility has a church hall or a gym, activities can be set up in this space to allow more room for family participation.

Family Visits to the Classroom

A family visits the classroom while the program is in session. They may be an observer or they may participate in classroom activities. They may bring in something special to share with the group.

Video/DVD

A video, DVD or slideshow can be developed with photographs of the children and an overview of classroom experiences or activities that can be shown at a parent meeting, a family activity night, or a dinner and movie night.

Family Conference

A family conference is a time that is planned with families; a time to share with families their children's development and learning and to discuss any concerns.

Child's Portfolio

A portfolio is a system for collecting and organizing samples of a child's work to document progress over time. It is a purposeful collection of items that is representative examples of a child's efforts, achievements and progress. The collected items create a profile of the child and his/her learning over time. A portfolio is often shared with families during a conference

Note: Portfolios will be discussed in-depth in Focus Area III: Learning Environment/ Program for Children.

Trainer Support: Role Playing – A Family Conference of Sorts

Directions: Role Play

- Trainer, another staff person or a participant play the role of the teacher/caregiver and a parent.
- Teacher sitting across the desk or table from the parent.
- Parent sitting in a child-size chair.
- Teacher folds her arms, doesn't smile and looks at her watch several times

Teacher's monologue goes like this:

"Thank you for coming in. I know you wanted your husband to be here for the conference, but this was the only time I had. And we don't have a lot of time because I have two more parents coming in after you and it's already 5:30. (Look at watch)

"I was supposed to have Jodie's (pause)...You are Jodie's mother, right? Anyway, I was supposed to have Jodie's portfolio to show you, but I took it home last night to put it together and forgot to bring it with me this morning.

"I think I remember from our first conference that you wanted us to help potty train Jodie. We have so many children that it's hard to remember to keep them on a bathroom schedule. And Jodie just doesn't want to cooperate. (Look at watch)

"Here is a list of things I want you to do with Jodie at home so she'll be ready to move into the three-year old classroom in a few months.

"I see the next family standing in the hallway waiting for me, so we need to wrap up this conference. (Look at watch)

"Thanks for coming in. I'm glad we had this opportunity to exchange information about Jodie."

Trainer Support: Possible Participant Responses to Role Playing

What they observed about the conference:

- Unfamiliar with family
- Lack of preparation
- Lack of time
- Lack of consideration for family
- Lack of cooperation with families' request about their child
- Table/desk a barrier between teacher and parent
- Uncomfortable chair for parent
- No opportunity for input by parent; one-way communication
- Nothing to share with parent about the child; what she is learning or her progress

How parent probably felt after the conference:

- Frustrated
- She had wasted her time
- She nor her child were important to teacher
- Not sure how well the teacher knows her child
- Teacher not interested in her ideas
- Family's time and schedule had not been considered
- She had no idea of what her child does in the center or what she is learning
- Request about her child had been ignored

HO #2: Conducting an Effective Conference with Families

Family Conference: A time to sit down with families to share information, discuss the child's progress, identify future goals for the child, and to discuss any concerns

Preparing for the Conference

- Decide on number of conferences to schedule during the year. Two to three are recommended as a way to keep families informed of their child's progress.
- Include conference information in parent handbook and discuss at time of enrollment. This will prepare families for conferences.
- Coordinate with families on times for conferences.
- Let families know the purpose of the conference
- Allow enough time for the conference
- Review what you know about the family.
- Review your observations of the child and his/her portfolio
- Have a plan for what to discuss during the conference.
- Choose a comfortable setting with adult size chairs and tables.
- Ensure privacy.

Conducting the Conference

- Sit beside family members at a table with comfortable chairs; not behind a desk.
- Take time to build rapport. Talk with families about something of interest to them.
- Explain to families that this is a time for sharing of information and discussion of concerns if there are any.
- Review with the family your observation notes about the child's development and learning.
- Share samples of a child's work and make positive comments (samples are usually portfolio items).
- Allow families time to review the samples of their child's work.
- Invite families to share their own observations.
- Discuss with families what they think is important for their child to be experiencing in your program.
- Invite families to share their child's special interests, what he/she likes or dislikes about coming to the center/school.
- Involve families in setting goals for their child both in the center and at home.
- Avoid coming across as the "authority."
- Use language the family will understand.
- Acknowledge that families are their child's first and most important teacher.
- Conclude the conference by summarizing the discussion.
- Begin and end the conference on time.
- Thank the family members for coming and sharing information about their child.

HO #3 – Sample of an Effective Family Conference

Note: “T” indicates the teacher and “F” indicates the family

Setting: Teacher, Ms. Ivory, and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, sitting side by side at an adult size table with comfortable adult size chairs. Ms. Ivory has child’s portfolio with her.

Greet family

T: *“Mr. and Mrs. Jones, thank you so much for coming in for this conference. I’m so glad we were able to arrange a time when both of you could be here.”*

Talk about something of interest to them

T: *“For the last week Jodie has been telling us about her Granny and Papa visiting her.”*

F explains that Mr. Smith’s parents have come from California to visit; that this is the first time they have seen Jodie. They will stay a month. They know that Jodie will be sad when they leave.

T: *“If you’ll tell me when they leave, I’ll make sure and spend some extra time with Jodie.”*

Time for sharing and discussion

T: *“As we discussed when we set up this conference, this is a time for us to share information about Jodie at home and at the center. Let’s begin with Jodie at home. Tell me about some things she likes to do.”*

F says that Jodie sings when she gets up in the morning and is still singing when she goes to bed at night. They didn’t think she could learn so many songs.

T: *“Jodie certainly does like to sing. She jumps up and down for joy when it’s music time. In fact Jodie enjoys most of the things we do here.”*

Portfolio

T: *“I’ve brought Jodie’s portfolio to share with you. I started the portfolio when she entered my group and add to it regularly. It has my observations and photos of her in the classroom and on the playground. There are samples of her drawings and lists of her favorite songs and stories. Jodie’s portfolio shows that she is developing and learning. It shows the things she likes to do.”*

F looks at portfolio items and comments that the songs on the list of her favorites are some of the ones she sings at home. They comment that my observation about Jodie having to be reminded to pick up the toys is just like Jodie at home.

T: *“The next time you’re in the classroom, look at the containers we use for storing some of the toys. Maybe you could use some containers like that to make it easier for Jodie to put away her toys.”*

Concerns and goals

T: *“At our first conference, you said you wanted us to help you with potty training Jodie. It has been a challenge, but she really has made a lot of progress and seldom has an accident.”*

F discusses progress at home which is similar to that described by me. They said that the tips I shared with them about potty training really helped them.

F asks if I think Jodie will be ready to move up to the three year old class.

T: *“Jodie and six other children will be moving up to the three year old class in about two months. Having children she knows moving up with her will really make the transition easier. There are some things we’re doing to help them with this change. We’re really stressing independence. We’re encouraging Jodie and the other children to do more things for themselves; putting away toys, putting on and taking off their own coats, serving their own plates at lunch, and helping to fold their blankets after rest time. Do you think there any of these things you can encourage Jodie to do at home?”*

F discusses this and agrees that Jodie can begin to help more with putting away her toys and that maybe containers would help. And they will try and let her put on and take off her coat, but this is hard because it takes more time.

Summarize the conference

T: *“It’s so good that we could sit down together and share information about the things Jodie’s doing at home and some of the things she is learning at the center. I’m so glad you brought up your concerns about her move to the three year old room. We’ve agreed on some ways to help Jodie be more independent which will definitely help her be ready for the move. I’ll miss Jodie and her songs, but she’ll be next door, so we’ll still see each other every day.”*

Thank family

T: *“Thank you again for coming in. Until Jodie moves to the three year old group, you can let me know if you have any questions or concerns.”*

HO #4: Planning a Family Conference

Directions:

- Use this form to plan a conference for the family of a child in your group.
- Complete this planning form within the next week and submit to your Director for review and discussion.
- Review the handouts you received in training as a guide.
- Review additional resources such as the Family Connection specific to the age of the children in your group.

Child's Name _____ Name of Family Members _____

Purpose of conference _____

Something I might discuss with this family to put them at ease (their interests, jobs, vacations they took, for example:

How I will prepare for the conference:

Information I plan to share with the family:

Information I will invite families to share about their child:

Ideas for connecting the family to their child's program; ideas I would like to share with them:

Name

Date