Connecting with Families

With children learning at home, our connections with families are so important. These tips will help you be focused and responsive during those calls or virtual meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Check in</th>
<th>Make a plan</th>
<th>Problem solve</th>
<th>Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“How is everyone?” “How are you?”</td>
<td>Ask about child and family progress since your last conversation.</td>
<td>Share information and strategies related to learning at home.</td>
<td>Respond to any new concerns or questions.</td>
<td>Review and summarize ideas or activities for implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validate challenges “Sounds like it’s been an exhausting week.”</td>
<td>Celebrate child progress.</td>
<td>Ask family for ideas for embedding instruction in their routines.</td>
<td>Provide suggestions or trouble-shooting.</td>
<td>Confirm time for next conversation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Invite the family to share one high point and one low point since the last conversation.</td>
<td>Identify if there are new concerns to discuss.</td>
<td>Identify a plan for next steps that includes family ideas and suggestions.</td>
<td>Offer to share notes or a text to summarize the conversation.</td>
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Tips for your conversation:

- Anticipate needs and have resources available to share with families (e.g., community agency phone numbers or web sites).
- Map out what you want to share using this guide before you make the call.
- Help families identify their strengths and provide affirmation.
- You don’t have to be the expert or solve all the problems.
  - That is a good question. Let me see if I can find out for you.
- Use active listening phrases:
  - So you feel…
  - It sounds like you…
  - What I’m hearing is…
  - I wonder if…
- Ask open-ended questions:
  - How might you do that?
  - What times of the day might work better?
  - What is most important to you right now?
- Validate families’ emotions and thoughts.