

F is for **Family-Professional Partnerships**

Building Trusting Partnerships That Benefit Everyone

Families interact with doctors, teachers, and other professionals beginning from the time children are born. Strong family-professional partnerships are built when families and professionals use each other's knowledge and resources to support children's healthy growth and development. Research shows that when families and professionals work together as partners, everyone benefits.

Strategies for Building Family-Professional Partnerships

Here are six strategies with tips for building strong family-professional partnerships.

1. Establish effective and ongoing communication.

- Use communication methods that are convenient for and preferred by families.
- Ask questions and share updates on a regular basis.
- Share information and resources that are easy to understand and use.

2. Be respectful.

- Ask about each other's values, beliefs, and goals.
- Offer ideas for achieving shared goals with each other.
- Let each other know their ideas and recommendations are helpful.

3. Focus on strengths.

- Discuss the family's and the child's strengths.
- Always discuss strengths first and then talk about how to build on them.
- Celebrate small successes often.

4. Set shared goals.

- Invite each other to share what they think is important for the child and family to know or be able to do.
- Talk with each other about why the goal is important and how everyone will know when the goal is met.

5. Share information and strategies.

- Talk about existing supports and resources.
- Talk about what information and strategies are needed to accomplish family and child goals.
- Check in regularly about whether the information and strategies are beneficial or whether new ones are needed.

6. Facilitate decision-making and goal-setting for family and child priorities.

- Support families as active decision-makers in the goals they set for themselves and their children.
- Share resources and information to help guide family decision making.

What We are Doing

The Anita Zucker Center and our collaborators are helping families and practitioners learn how to use strategies that will support strong family-professional partnerships.