

The Types of Relationships Parents and Center-Based Providers Form and How They Are Negotiated

Katherine E. Speirs
kspeirs@umd.edu

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Introduction

- Partnerships advocated in the ECCE literature (e.g. DAP)
- Benefits for children, parents, and providers

Research Questions

- What kinds of relationships do parents and center-based child care providers create?
- What strategies do they employ to create these relationships ?

Nov.
2009

Dec.
2009

March
2010

Oct.
2010

Dec.
2010

Carousel

Observations

Interviews

Brookside

Observations

Interviews



Interviews

| | Parents | | | Center Staff | |
|-----------|---------|---------------------|---|--------------|---|
| | n | Gender | Race/ethnicity | n | Race/ethnicity |
| Carousel | 11 | 9 Female 2 Male | 7 African American 2 White 1 Puerto Rican 1 Jamaican | 7 | 5 African American 1 African 1 Latina |
| Brookside | 14 | 12 Female 2 Male | 1 African American 9 White 2 Asian 2 African | 10 | 5 African American 1 White 4 Latina |
| Total | 25 | | | 17 | |

What kinds of relationships do parents and providers create?

| | Collaboration | Trust | Communication | |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | Frequency | Nature |
| Basic Familiarity | None | Superficial | Infrequent | Cordial |
| Working Relationship | Low | Beginning to develop | Frequent | Friendly |
| Partnership | High | High | Frequent | Friendly, two-way |
| Independent | Low | High | Frequent | Friendly |
| Discordant | Low | Low | Moderately frequent | Disagreement, at times open conflict |

What strategies do they employ to create relationships?

- **Introductions and small talk**

“To kind of build a relationship, just ask them how they’re doing. Ask them basic questions that you would anybody else to just kind of make small talk, you know, to be polite and make them feel special too.” –Loretta, the mother of two children at Brookside

- **Presenting Themselves as Warm & Approachable**

“You know just being in the field there is just a way to speak to (parents)...Just being warm, not being rough with the words or the attitude, just being... you know, talking at a nice level.” –Danika, a provider at Carousel

- **Explicitly Stating Expectations for Frequent Communication**

- **Going Out of the Way to Engage In and Be Available for Communication**

“When I’m leaving, I see them walking in, they might stop me and ask me how the child’s doing. And I’ll try to give them a minute or two, but I say, “I am leaving.” But I don’t brush them off like “Well there’s a teacher downstairs.”... I still give that minute or two.” –Samantha, a provider in a two year old room at Brookside



- Finding Common Interests
- Carefully Selecting Conversation Topics & Language

“You can make a suggestion, like a friendly suggestion, without insulting them ... So just ‘Can you bring some extra Vaseline for him ... because he gets dry, I noticed that his lips were dry.’ Kinda trying to say stuff like that, rather than, ‘Do you think you should put lotion on him or something?’ There is just a way you have to communicate that. Communication is just so important.” –Ameera the preschool teacher at Carousel

Conclusions

- Need to explore the value of relationships other than partnerships.
- Creating strong relationships requires time and effort from both parents and providers.
- How relationships are formed may differ across settings (e.g. center, day care home).

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