Developing Structures to Support Family Partnerships

Presented by Patricia Montes Pate & Ana Marisol Sánchez

Hosted by SEAL.org

- Our mission: To prepare all Dual Language Learners/English Learners in California to learn, thrive and lead.
**Purposes**

- **Research on Family Engagement**
  - Families of Dual Language Learners (DLL)

- **Share resources that support building strong family partnerships**
  - State & Federal
  - SEAL strategies

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**Research on Family Engagement**

- Strong connections between DLL families and schools are associated with important benefits for children.
  - Academic achievement *(early literacy, cognitive & language development, social-emotional skills)*
  - Preservation of their language and culture
Research on Family Engagement

- DLL families participate in their children’s educational programs at lower rates than families whose members are not DLLs.
  - Body of literature did not take into consideration the unique challenges faced by DLL families when interacting with education program.

- Language barriers, lack of linguistically diverse staff & interpreters
- Different definitions & views of family engagement
- Nontraditional strategies are not recognized as family involvement
- Issues related to the families' educational histories
- Different cultural norms
- Some DLL families report that educational programs are not welcoming.
Research on Family Engagement

Six Characteristics of Family Engagement

1. Joint decision making
2. Regular two-way communication
3. Collaboration and exchange of knowledge
4. Learning in home and in the community
5. Joint family-program goal setting
6. Professional development

English Learner Roadmap – Principle #1

Assets-Oriented & Needs-Responsive Schools
- Share the benefits of bilingualism with families
- Engage families in two-way & ongoing communication
- Implement a home language interview
- Communicate with & provide written materials to families in their home language
- Evidence that the program values children’s home language and culture
**Guideline 4: Engaging Families & Communities**

1. Build trusting collaborative relationships.
2. Value the role of families.
3. Create a climate in which families members feel empowered & comfortable as advocates for their children.
4. Support teachers’ responsiveness to the families’ goals.
5. Use effective communication strategies that reflect the diversity of families served.
6. Provide a welcoming space.
7. Provide information about their children’s learning & development.
8. Support & are advocates for strong families.
9. Engage families in supporting their home language.

**Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework**

**Family Outcomes**

1. Family Well-Being
2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships
3. Families as Lifelong Educators
4. Families as Learners
5. Family Engagement in Transitions
6. Family Connections to Peers and Community
7. Families as Advocates and Leaders
Guide to Developing Relationships with Families

Strengths-Based Approach

• Acknowledging the strengths of families first
• Respecting & learning from differences
• Showing openness to adapting practice based on family preferences
• Sharing decision-making
• Approaching families as equal & reciprocal partners in support of their child

Guide to Developing Relationships with Families

Strength-Based Attitudes

• All families have strengths.
• Families are the first and most important teachers of their children.
• Families are our partners with a critical role in their child’s development.
• Families have expertise about their child and family.
• Families’ contributions are important and valuable
Guide to Developing Relationships with Families

**Relationship-based Practices**

- Focus on the family-child relationship.
- Observe and describe the child’s behavior to open communication with the family.
- Reflect on the family’s individual and cultural perspectives.
- Reflect on your personal and cultural perspectives.
- Support parental competence.
- Value a family’s passion.

Tools to Guide Relationship-based Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Tools: Relationship-based Practice #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflect on the Family’s Perspective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Authors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td>Invite family to share their perspective on their child’s behavior and development.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the family’s observations and interpretations to inform how to foster the child’s healthy development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Before sharing data about a child, consider why you think the information is important and whether it will be important to the child’s family in the same way.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invite family to share insights about their child. Partner with families to set goals and make decisions.</td>
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<td>Ask family members what they would like to know about the program and other services in the community.</td>
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**Example:**

I wanted to talk with you about Michael’s progress as learning to get along with the other children. I’ve seen a lot of changes. I wondered what you’ve been thinking about this.

 Jasparine is working so hard to learn to do things by herself. This morning she wanted to put her coat on by herself. She got very frustration and started to cry. I wanted her to be successful and, at the same time, I need to go outside to help someone and the other children. She was very determined. I want to learn from you about what you do for others. Jasparine is struggling with this, but I really like to work together on this with you. What are you doing at home?

Last month you mentioned that you were going to learn more about the community center in your neighborhood. I’m curious if you found any programs that your family is interested in?”

“I wanted to follow up with you on our conversation about toilet training last week. Can you tell me how you think it’s going so far?”
SEAL and Family Partnerships

Building strong family partnerships between families & schools to support children’s success while also valuing the home language and culture of every family and child.

SEAL Strategies for engaging in Family Partnership

- Offering guidance for teachers in creating classroom environments and activities that incorporate the cultures and community experiences of their students, and that allow students to connect their life at home to their life at school
- Instituting volunteer systems
- Designing visitation opportunities that regularly invite families to visit and participate in various family activities.
- Utilizing multiple forums for teacher-family communication including weekly newsletters, posted photos of class activities, family conversations and home-school projects related to themes being studied
- Planning evening events that engage families in fun, interesting, and high-level academic activities
- Providing family workshops
Family Conversations and Projects

- Family activities that promote oral language
  - open-ended--no right/wrong answers
  - do not require background knowledge
  - occur in their HOME LANGUAGE

Family Workshops

**Facilitator**
Strategies that support Oral Language Development

1. Observing Pictures
2. Extended language interactions
3. Draw and Dictate

**Home**

Families engage in their home language
Family Workshop Structure

Facilitator Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Approximate Time</th>
<th>Content per section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Facilitator</td>
<td>Opening: personal connection</td>
<td>Facilitator offers an opening to connect with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How are you doing?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What something that brings you comfort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is bringing you joy right now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Facilitator</td>
<td>Key Points to share</td>
<td>Observing and talking in detail about photographs and illustrations in books are powerful ways to engage preschoolers in meaningful conversations.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The use of images helps children engage in seeking knowledge and understanding through images, developing their observational skills and noticing details to make sense of what they see.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A child’s efforts to look closely at images is the beginning of analytic encoding and as they practice the skill of adding detail, they are building a strong foundation for future writing.</td>
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<td>We recommend that conversations occur in your home language.</td>
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Facilitator Models Interactive Reading (15 mins)

- Model:
  - Teacher/facilitator uses their own family photos or illustration in a book to model engaging in observing pictures focused on:
    - making predictions
    - noticing details
    - elaborating and extending their ideas
    - social/emotional language
    - Model questions and prompts

Materials Needed

- Family photos
- Any book you have available at home that contains interesting illustrations
- Images that you have available either from your phone or an electronic device

1. Connect with families
2. Share purpose & key points
3. Model
4. Questions and ideas
5. Families practice
6. Final Questions

Materials Needed
Family Workshop #1 Observing Pictures

Purpose:

• practice the skill of observing and noticing details
• helps children engage seeking knowledge and understanding
• supports early literacy development

Observing Pictures (photos and/or illustrations)

Focus on one or more aspects of observation:

• noticing details
• making predictions
• elaborating and expanding on ideas
• social-emotional language
Observing Pictures (photos)

Facilitator shares photos and models key aspects of strategy

Reflection Questions for Families

• How did the mother extend the children’s language and vocabulary?

• How else might she have supported their language development?

• What experiences have you had extending your child’s language?

• How might you extend language interactions with your child?
Family Resource: Observing Pictures

Observing Pictures

**In their HOME Language**

With family photos or books, families ask questions that help children observe pictures and illustrations more closely.

Focus can be on:
- make predictions
- noticing details
- elaborate & expand their ideas
- social-emotional language
Family Workshop #2: Extended Language Interactions

Purpose:

• Support children with engaging in meaningful conversations
• Exposes children to interactions where they
  - expand their vocabulary
  - focus on a topic through multiple exchanges
  - hear various ways of verbalizing thoughts

Extended Language Interactions

• Encourage back & forth exchanges
• Extend children’s language
• Invite children to talk about what they are doing
• Encourage higher-level thinking
Family Resource: Extended Language Interactions

Extended Language Interactions

In their HOME Language

• When a child is engaged in an activity, start a conversation by asking the child “What are you doing?”
• Follow the child’s lead
• Take turns communicating
• Provide time for children to respond
Family Workshop #3: Draw and Dictate

Purpose:
• Supports early literacy
  - helps children understand that what they say can be turned into print
  - Offers exposure to experiences in which they see print take on meaning

Draw and Dictate

• Ask permission before writing on child’s paper
• Write exactly what they say
• Prompt them to say more by asking questions to elicit more language
• Notice their language progress and share with teacher
**Draw and Dictate**

Facilitator shares key points and models.

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**Family Resource: Draw and Dictate**

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Draw and Dictate

Home

In their HOME Language

- Any time children are drawing, families can ask questions and take dictation of the child’s response
  - related to an activity
  - after reading a book

Circle back with Families Sharing

Facilitator

Families engage in their home language

Home
Questions?

Thank You

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