

Network News

*e-Newsletter of the
VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network*

VIRGINIA
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST
NETWORK

“Achieving Excellence in Early Care”

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Issue #17

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10 Ways to Develop an Individual Relationship with Each Parent

*Gigi Schweikert, Contributing Author
Early Childhood Education and Parenting Expert*

1. Expect relationships to be different.

Some parents want a lot of contact interacting with us and others maintain a greater distance and seek fewer details about care and education. With my first child, I wanted to know if she got a paper cut. By my fourth child, I didn't need any information from the program unless he was headed to the hospital.

2. Ask parents what is important to them.

How do you know if a parent needs more than just the basic daily greeting and sharing of care information? You ask. Ask each parent when their child enters your program or transitions to a new room

what's important to them. Questions like, do you need to leave quickly in the morning or can you stay a bit? I will call you if your child is sick or hurt, but are there other things that are important to you that I should inform you about before you arrive for pick-up?

3. Don't judge the parent's parenting ability by their relationship with you.

It's easy to think that the parent who attends every workshop or social function our programs have to offer and spends time chatting with us is a better parent than the one who maintains their distance and is seemingly uninterested. Yes, it is good for children to have their parents participate in school events, but sometimes job constraints or even a parent's energy level may keep them from being present. That doesn't necessarily mean that the parent isn't a good parent or doesn't care.

4. Talk about their child.

Every parent wants to hear positive things about their child. The easiest way to develop a relationship with a parent, whether he or she is close or distant, shy or outgoing, is to talk about their child. Share something they said or did. Let the parent know you notice the positive qualities in their child by using one of the conversation starters below:

Positive Parent Conversation Starters

Your child is so eager to learn. Let me tell you what I saw him do today. . .

Your child works so hard. Today she was trying to. . .

Your child is a good friend to others. I watched him. . .

Your child said something clever. He said. . .

Your child will make you so proud. Today she. . .

Your child loves you so much. She told me. . .



5. Work on the individual parent relationship.

Any type of relationship, including friendships and marriages, take work. Notice the types of things that the parent appreciates, like voicemails, special notes, reminders about bringing in supplies and continue those efforts.

6. Give more to the relationship than you expect to receive.

Our efforts to develop an individual relationship with each parent may create equally beneficial bonds between parent and teacher, but it is unlikely that we will experience a personally rewarding relationship with each parent. As professionals, it's our job to try and develop those important relationships.

7. Help even when you don't feel like it.

Some parents are just easier to love and want to help more than others. Some parents will be critical of us and the program, demanding, and uncooperative. Those are the parents who need us the most. Keep working on those relationships.

8. Ask the parent questions.

It's difficult to anticipate what each parent wants or needs. The best way to do that is to ask. "What else can I do to partner with you?" is a good start.

9. Don't take things personally.

People who care for young children are usually quite loving and supportive which is a good thing. It's also easy to be overly sensitive to the comments and requests of parents. Try not to take things personally when parents don't respond as you want or make comments that make you feel they don't think you are doing a good job. It certainly feels good when parents appreciate our efforts and applaud our work, but keep in mind that we are working for the parent to help the child.

10. Be a professional.

Early childhood educators should always look for ways to put parents at ease. Parents should feel

welcomed and comfortable with the relationship they have defined and clear that we really do want to hear what they have to say.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT ON: Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development

Are you interested in professional development? Virginia Cross-Sector Professional Development (VCPD) promotes high quality training for early childhood practitioners.

Check out their website at www.vcpd.net for information on regional activities, conferences, online training, tips for trainers, and more!

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

Celebrating Families **BABIES AND TOTS** *2016*

March 12 Newport News
Christopher Newport University

May 14 Charlottesville
Omni Charlottesville

April 23 Arlington
Westin Crystal City

May 21 Lynchburg
Liberty Mountain Conference Center

These valuable professional development institutes will focus on child care professionals building strong partnerships with families to create a better environment for infants and toddlers to learn and grow.



Keynote speakers with early childhood education expertise will focus on the importance of partnering with families and the steps to take to ensure that each family has a positive experience.

Workshop session I, *Families Are Welcome Here*, will explore the reasons why families should be engaged in child care programs as well as issues and situations that may hinder engagement.

Workshop session II, *Communication, It's More Than Just Talking*, will help providers understand why it is vital to build relationships with families and keep them informed about the growth and development of their children.

Institute Agenda

8:30 am - 9:00 am	Registration
9:00 am - 9:15 am	Welcome and Opening
9:15 am - 10:15 am	Keynote Session I
10:15 am - 10:30 am	Break
10:30 am - 12:15 pm	Workshop Session I
12:15 pm - 12:30 pm	Break
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Lunch/Activity Session
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Keynote Session II
2:30 pm - 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 pm - 4:30 pm	Workshop Session II



For more information or to register on-line, please visit www.va-itsnetwork.org
Training hours will be awarded,
and participants will be eligible to receive CEUs.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . that most challenging behaviors such as biting and hitting can be prevented by using strategies taught in the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model Module 3 Training?

Training Details:

You will learn about the CSEFEL Pyramid Model Module 3 and become equipped with tools to reduce challenging behavior in your work setting and support the healthy social-emotional development of infants and toddlers! This content builds on CSEFEL Module 1 & 2 training content. You MUST have attended a

CSEFEL Module 1 & 2 Training event to attend this training!

What's in it for me?

- 7 hours of training for \$25 (training hours count towards licensing hours)
- Social and Emotional items for your work setting worth up to \$40
- Opportunity to sign up for one-on-one coaching to help you practice what you learn

When and where:

There will be five CSEFEL Module 3 Provider Training events, sponsored by Project SEED, throughout the state. Dates and locations, to be determined, will be posted to the Training/Events tab of the ecmhva.org website.

For more information, contact:

Kristen Stahr
khstahr@vcu.edu
(804) 828-9920

Working on Wonderful (WOW)

Congratulations to the following programs that have recently completed Level 1 services with the VA ITSN!

Baruna Rana
Northern Region
Frances Motley
Piedmont Roanoke Region
Laurel Learning Center
Northern Region
Leigh-Ann Vaughn
North Central Region
Minnieland at Dulles
Northern Region
Minnieland at Sully Station
Northern Region
New Heights Academy
North Central Region
Sheena Stitt
North Central Region
Susan Gallier
Northern Region
Vanessa Gunter
Piedmont Southside Region
Violeta Borgona
Northern Region

Working on Wonderful WOW

We are striving to achieve excellence in
early care for infants and toddlers!

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For more information contact Amy Stutt, VA ITSN Statewide Director at (757)566-3300.