



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ★ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Vol. I, No. 9

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

1. Build trusting relationships
2. Provide consistent care
3. Support children's health
4. Provide a safe environment
5. Provide positive guidance
6. Provide a language-rich environment
7. Foster curiosity and development through play
8. Individualize care and learning activities
9. Partner with parents
10. Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care Partner with Parents

Partnering with Families

The evidence is clear from more than two decades of research—children whose families are involved in their care and education experience greater success in school and in life.

Last year, this newsletter introduced Registered Family Child Care Providers to Hawai'i's *Family Partnership Guidelines (FPGs) for Early Childhood Settings*. The FPG brochure highlights the importance of building and sustaining authentic and respectful connections between early childhood programs and the families they serve. The FPGs were developed by Hawai'i's Executive Office on Early Learning to support child care providers in becoming more aware of the benefits of forging relationships and fostering partnerships with families. Such partnerships are believed to result in improved outcomes for children; including, but not limited to, increased vocabulary and language comprehension, as well as higher self-esteem.

The FPGs identify and describe six principles that underlie family partnership goals that child care professionals can strive for:

1. Welcoming all families
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting success
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing decision making
6. Partnering with community

Last year, this newsletter provided concrete examples for two of the six guidelines: "*Communicating Effectively*" and "*Supporting Success*." In this year's newsletter we will focus on two other guidelines: "*Welcoming all Families*" and "*Speaking up for Every Child*."

The FPG brochure is enclosed again for your information and use, as you consider ways to use the guidelines to build partnerships with the families you serve. Be sure to read the rationale under each of the principles to gain a better understanding of why the suggested practices are important.



Principle 1: Welcoming Families

Families are active participants in the life of the program. They are welcomed, valued, connected to each other, to the provider, and to what the children are learning and doing throughout the day.

All families are alike in one way—they all want what’s best for their children. Yet every family is unique, differing from others in many ways. With a mix of cultures and changes in the roles of men and women, new family lifestyles are emerging. Child care providers are challenged to please and support all different types of families they serve.

Here are some ways you can help to welcome families:

- Greet each adult and child by name when they arrive for drop-offs and pick-ups.
- Take the time each day to share something positive about their child.
- Make your space comfortable and welcoming for family members who might want to sit a while.
- Ask about their own way of doing things with their children such as:
 - Discipline
 - Meals
 - Sleep
 - Toileting and diapering.

Then discuss how you can work together in making these routines consistent from home to child care.



- Post photos of your child care home in action. Pictures of children involved in different activities can be a wonderful way to engage parents when they visit.
- Show an interest in the family’s activities:
 - Do they have any plans for the weekend?
 - How was their vacation?
 - How is Popo/Tutu doing?
- Encourage family members to join you and the children for periodic family events such as potlucks, holiday parties, celebrations.
- Ask about their expectations for their child while in your care.

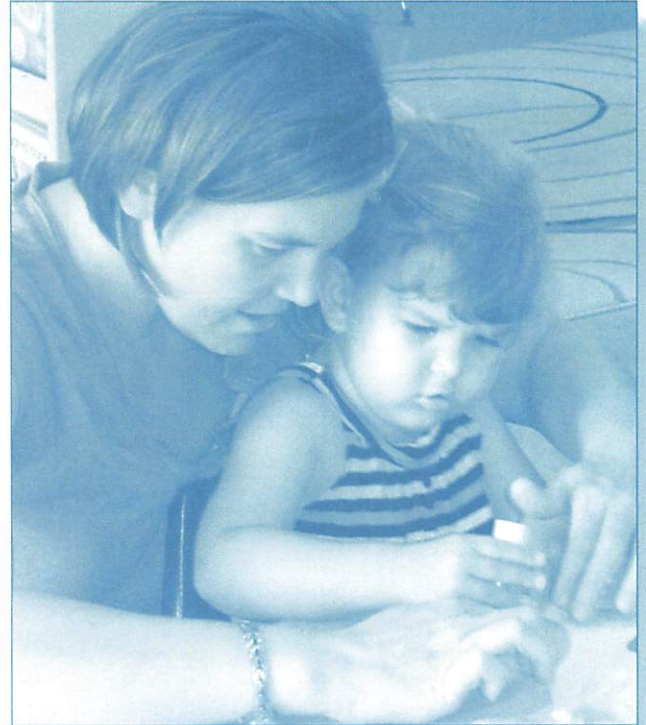
Most families want to be engaged in their child’s learning, and many are able to establish and maintain ongoing and productive communication with providers on a regular basis. Some families, however, must deal with challenging circumstances (e.g. financial difficulties, separation/divorce, health issues, language/cultural difference) that complicate their ability to reach out or respond to your efforts to engage them. By understanding this and leaving the door open for families to join in when they are able and ready to, without putting any pressure on them, families will feel respected and welcomed, and will engage when they are able.

Principle 4: Speaking up for Each Child

Providers support families in being advocates for their own and other's children to ensure that all children are treated fairly and have access to lifelong learning opportunities that support their success.

One way to think about your profession in family child care is as a family supporter. You're in the business of supporting families in meeting the needs of their children while they are at work or school. Often, policies and budgets that are being decided at the County and State level, such as eligibility for child care subsidies, criteria for early intervention services, child care tax credits, shutting down of low-enrollment elementary schools, etc. can cause stress on the families you serve. You can support and encourage families in the following ways:

- Survey your families annually to learn what their most pressing issues are related to child care. Do your best to address their concerns.
 - Help families understand what their educational rights are and what is at stake for their children, as well as for other children. See the Hawai'i Department of Education website at <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/Pages/home.aspx>
 - Before children leave your care to enter another program, preschool, or Kindergarten, find out what you can do to support that transition.
- Find out about your local elementary school's Kindergarten registration deadlines and encourage families to have their children participate in the Kindergarten transition programs.
 - Keep up with local, state, and national issues related to early childhood care and development, so you can be a source of information to families.
 - Encourage families to call their representatives when their children's needs are not being served in their community. Provide families with the appropriate phone numbers and email addresses to take action. Contact information for the members of Hawai'i State Senate can be found at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/members/legislators.aspx?chamber=S>. Contact information for the members of the Hawai'i State House of representatives can be found at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/members/legislators.aspx?chamber=H>.
 - Contact information for Hawai'i's representatives to the United States Congress in Washington D. C. can be found at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/HI>.



Citations:

Harvard Family Research Project (2013). *Family involvement bibliographies 1999–2013*. [accessed on-line 3.15.15] <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/family-involvement-bibliographies>.

State of Hawai'i, Executive Office on Early Learning. (2013). *Family partnership guidelines for early childhood settings*. (brochure). Honolulu, HI.

Reflection Sheet and Award Book

- To receive the award book for this month, fill out your caregiver's reflection sheet and return it to the Center on the Family in the postage paid envelope by the deadline posted.
- Indicate on Question #8 if you would like to receive free technical assistance or support related to a child care issue.
- Update your address or contact information if any changes have taken place.



REMINDER: Registered QCC Participants can use their participation in the program to fulfill the relicensing requirement of “increased knowledge.” Ask your DHS Licensing Social Worker about the requirements today.