**Family Connections Protocol and Suggestions**

Purpose

* Welcome families
* Begin building strong relationships
* Gather information for families about children
* Focus on the child's strengths

Recommended protocol

* Conduct at least a 30-minute meeting with each family
* *Introducing Me* booklet is used to guide the conversations
* Balance the conversation with sharing information and gathering information
* Observational data may be collected to support WaKIDS documentation
* Refrain from pulling the child aside for 1:1 assessing
* Leave 5-10 minutes for school specific topics, routines and procedures

Suggested ideas

* Extend the conversation beyond the items in the *Introducing Me* booklet
* Ask about previous preschool experience (see PreK Experience Questionnaire)
* Reference the child’s transition report received from the preschool teacher, and kindergarten questionnaire from registration information
* Check to see if the child is right or left handed

Ways to use the *Introducing Me* booklet

* Reference some of the questions and use it to guide the conversation
* Send the booklet home before the family connections meeting; family then brings it completed to their individual meeting for collaboration
* Invite the family to come 5-10 minutes early to complete the booklet prior to the meeting
* Go through the booklet together with the family during the meeting
* Use the booklet as a script to ask the family questions

Additional questions to consider:

* For students:
* What excites you about kindergarten? (GOLD Objective10a)
* What do you notice or wonder about this classroom? (GOLD Objective 10a)
* Tell me something you did this summer. (GOLD Objective 9a)
* For parents:
  + Did your child go to preschool?
  + What makes your child feel successful?
  + What are your child’s strengths?
  + What strategies work best for your child?
  + What triggers, if any, does your child have?
  + What concerns do you have?
  + How can we best communicate with each other?
  + How will your child get to and from school?
  + Any allergies or food preferences (ex- don’t eat meat)?
* Other suggestions:
* You might:
  + Take a family photo (use the photo to create a class family book)
  + Take a picture of the child’s 3-point grip. (Physical Objective 7b)
  + Have student write name on *Introducing Me* booklet (Literacy Objective 19 a)
  + Show the student his/her locker, desk, bathrooms, where to put supplies, etc.
  + Briefly share school procedures (arrival, lunch, recess, dismissal)
  + Share volunteer opportunities
  + Have families fill out transportation information (rides bus, walks, parent pickup)
  + Start a list of any follow-up communication that might need to be made (example: talk to speech teacher, talk with counselor, get parent form…)
  + Have a table outside the kindergarten classroom with books, flyers, resources, and information for families to read if waiting for their appointment
  + Have activities for younger siblings to use to keep busy (puzzles, block, etc.)
  + *Allow 10-15 minutes between appointments for transition*
  + *Save some open slots at the end of day 3 for new students or rescheduling*
* Principal and/or other school staff involvement
  + Greet the parents in the office and walk them to the classroom at set time.
  + Take families on a tour of school before or after meeting
  + Introduce to office staff and other teachers
* PTO/PTA involvement
* Greet families
* Provide snacks, water, etc.
* Table set up with committee sign ups

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sample Family Connections 30-40 minute meeting** | |
| Greet families outside classroom door |  |
| Take family on a tour of the classroom | 5-7 minutes |
| Take a family photo |  |
| Invite the family to sit at a table |  |
| Begin your conversation using the *Introducing Me* booklet. Engage both the family and the child | 5-10 minutes |
| Have pencil/crayons/paper for the child to draw a self-portrait and write name, take a picture of child’s pencil grip  GOLD Obj 7a, 7b, 19a | 5 minutes |
| Share school/classroom specific routines, procedures etc. | 5-7minutes |
| Show the child where they will enter on the first day and what to expect | 5 minutes |
| Walk the families outside the classroom |  |