

Family Connection protocol and suggestions for conducting a meeting

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
- 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 Objective 10a)
 - 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 the student write his/her name
 - 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

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| ➤ 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 <i>Introducing Me</i> 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. | 5-7 minutes |
| ➤ Show the child where they will enter on the first day and what to expect | 5 minutes |
| ➤ Walk the families outside the classroom | |