To Begin...

Relationships matter more than anything else. Human beings need to be nurtured. Teachers must nurture in ways that tap into the genius in each child.

Asa Hilliard
Positive Relationships

... between teachers and children are the foundation for children's exploration and learning. Howes & Ritchie, 2002

When Children Trust

... they take on new challenges, demonstrate persistence, and ask questions when confused. Stipek, 2006

Relationships and Learning


When teachers establish emotionally secure relationships with children, these relationships contribute to children's engagement in school. Morrison 2007

When teachers show more positive emotion and sensitivity, and are less harsh and detached, young children are more likely to be engaged in the classroom. Ridley et al. 2000
How do we get to know children and build relationships with them?

- We watch and listen to learn.
- We use what we learn to connect with children.
- We watch the cues they give us that let us know that our invitations to connect are working.
- We have to continually observe with an open-mind!

We use assessment!

- Tools and processes for answering questions about children’s learning in order to make informed decisions.
  - The tool is the Work Sampling 5th edition.
  - The process is the ongoing use of the assessment cycle.
  - The questions help you get to know children well, build relationships with them, and find out what they know and can do in order to more effectively guide their learning.

We rely on the assessment cycle.

- Assessment is a cyclical process that starts with:
  - asking questions
  - collecting evidence
  - interpreting evidence
  - taking action
The greatest opportunity for learning lies in moments of teacher-child interaction, when the teacher crafts learning experiences that stretch children just beyond their current skill level. Munro 2008

Teachers ask questions.

- Work Sampling provides assessment questions. These questions are based on curriculum objectives, the program’s child outcome standards, and/or state early learning standards.
Ask questions that help to build relationships.

- What are some questions you might ask to guide observation if your goal is to build stronger relationships with children?

Be curious!

- Always ask yourself: What’s happening here?
- And watch and listen even before you speak!

Observing Helps You Individualize Your Connection

- Think about what you already know about the child.
- Observe with an open-mind.
- Let the child know what you see.
- Listen to how the child responds.

I feel special when my teacher interacts with me. I know she cares about me. She's interested in my work. She wants to help me learn.
Teachers collect evidence.

- Evidence is: an outward sign, indication, something that furnishes proof.
- As they interact, teachers collect evidence of children’s learning to answer their questions.

Let the child teach you!

- Ms. Shellie wonders what Marcus knows about the magnetic tiles.
- She shows interest by noticing what he is doing.
- What is she learning about Marcus?

Document evidence.

- Documentation is not just a method of preserving assessment information about children.
- It provides a centerpiece for conversations with children, colleagues, and families.
Document facts.

- **Facts** help you keep an open mind:
  - Action verbs (walked, ran, tapped, listened, watched, pointed, smiled, frowned)
  - Quotations (“I want that marker.” “The cube is green.”)

- **Interpretations** close our minds
  - Labels (shy, aggressive, creative)
  - Intentions (wants to, enjoys, eager to, won’t try)
  - Evaluations (good job, beautiful work)

As you collect evidence, say what you see.

- Observe with curiosity.
- Resist the urge to quiz or praise.
- Tell the child what you see him do: “I see that you...”
- Pause to see if/how the child responds.

When you observe and describe what you see as you collect evidence, you:

- Give children specific, detailed information about what they are doing and saying.
- Raise children’s awareness of their own actions, words, thinking, and learning
- Encourage children to repeat and practice learning behaviors, leading to deeper engagement
- Expose children to new language and vocabulary
Teachers interpret evidence.

• To interpret evidence is to make meaning of it.

Teachers interpret evidence.

• Studying evidence and connecting it to WSS performance indicators helps the teacher know more about the child.

Teachers take action.

• While interacting with children, teachers use what they are learning to make on the spot decisions.
Teachers have systems to help them stay organized.

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Teachers take action.

- When planning lessons, teachers use the information about children to make decisions about next steps.

Teachers take action.

- When exchanging assessment information with families, teachers ask questions to learn more about the child and share specific knowledge about children to foster positive partnerships.
Assessing is part of teaching. Tips to help are:

- Reminders on the wall
- Conversations with children
- Jot notes as you interact
- 5 children a day
- Put questions in plans

To use assessment to build relationships...

- Slow down, stay in the moment...
  - Be comfortable and sit.
  - Take a deep breath and count to 10.
  - Coordinate with your teaching partner.
- Watch and listen...
  - Give the child time to think.
  - Convey “I hear you.”
  - Manage interruptions.
- Personalize...
  - Use the child’s name.
  - Learn and use words from home language.
  - Adjust speed and/or volume of your voice.
  - Change the expression on your face.

Assessment can help you build strong positive relationships.

- Ask questions to get to know children.
- As you collect evidence, show respect and appreciation.
- Use what you learn from interpreting evidence to make personal and intellectual connections
- Take action to foster competence and success.
Thank you
Stay in touch...

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