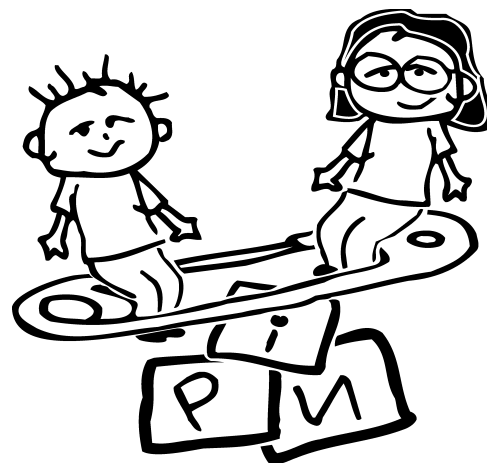


Preschool Inclusion News



Winter 02

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
Child & Family Studies Research Programs

Partnering with Families

Families carry out many activities that support the growth and development of their children. Some of the traditional family functions can be more challenging when a child has a disability or developmental delay. Child care staff who understand families and respect their values and beliefs can both support and build relationships with families.

Forming partnerships with some families is easy, but with other families may be more challenging. In order to build relationships with ALL families, we need to listen to what families want for their children and work together to meet the needs of the child. Some families may need additional resources to meet the increased caregiving demands of their child and their family. It is important that we are aware of which resources are available in the community that will support families.

When developing partnerships with families, it is important to be aware of and respect the family's cultural beliefs, values, traditions and structure. Today, families are organized in many different ways so that the traditional or "standard family" is seldom the rule. Some sug-

gestions for developing partnerships with families are:

- **Work with families to jointly solve "problems":** Address issues, priorities, and concerns in ways that are compatible with family resources, values, and beliefs.
- **Respect families as experts:** Families know their children best. Use this to your advantage: ask questions and listen to what the parents share about their child.
- **View families as team members:** While true for all families, this is especially important for families who have children with disabilities. It is important for all people who work with children to work as a team, in order to support the child's goals.
- **Create opportunities for family participation:** Being open to different levels of participation that families can take part in is essential to family involvement. Be creative with your opportunities!
- **Communicate effectively with families:** Encourage communication about their child by being open and available to the family.

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BOOK NOOK

Partnering with Families

- ♦ Ehrich, M. (1999). *The Anxious Parent's Guide to Quality Childcare: An Informative Step-By-Step Manual on Finding the Finest Care for Your Child.*
- ♦ Lynch, E.W. & Hanson, M.J. (1998) *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families.*

When you come across a book that you think would be of interest to teachers, parents or children, please send the book title, author and brief description of the material to *Preschool Inclusion News*.



Partnering with Families

Continued from page 1

When communicating with families, it is important to listen to what families want for their children in a child care setting. During recent PIN trainings, parents of children with disabilities shared their perspectives on what they look for in a child care setting. Some of the issues they addressed were opportunities for social interaction, more than academic skills. Families wanted their children to be included in friendships with their typical peers. A safe, nurturing environment and teacher feedback that was positive and shared what their child's experiences were that day, were other key issues noted. These are the same things that parents of typically developing children want for their children. Whether children are in a family-based or center setting, families look for the following when choosing a child care setting.

- Caregiver is warm and affectionate with the children—smiling, talking, holding, and being responsive to children's individual needs.
- Caregiver encourages listening and talking with the children.
- Clean, safe, attractive setting with multiple toys and different available learning opportunities.
- Family involvement is encouraged in many different ways.
- Program is developmentally appropriate and is set up to encourage learning through exploration and social interaction.
- Children's interactions with each other are guided by adults in a positive way.



Hints for Partnering with Families

Ways to Include Families in Your Child Care Setting:

- **Volunteer:** Share hobbies or special talents with the children.
- **Classroom Visitor:** Encourage parents to come in and play with the children.
- **Have parents be guest readers:** during circle time or afternoon snack.
- **Social Events for Families and Caregivers:** As suggested by a recent PIN participant: go out to dinner, go bowling, have a picnic, fundraisers.
- **Parent Information and Education Activities:** Host speakers to discuss child development or other topics of interest to the parents
- **Parent-to-Parent:** Have a get-together with both new and experienced parents and introduce them to each other.
- **Parent Advisory Group:** Families can provide feedback on policies and practices of the child care setting.

Information from:
<http://www.circleofinclusion.org>

Strategies for Communicating with Families:

- **Make yourself available to parents when possible:** If your days are hectic, make a time that is convenient for both parties.
- **Make parents feel comfortable about sharing information:** Be open, non-judgemental, and most of all listen!
- **Keep specific records about what each child does during the day:** Parents want to hear about their child's experiences during the day. Telling the parent that Jane made a picture using green, blue, and red paint and had fun is more meaningful than Jane had a good day. **Remember the positives!**
- **Communication is a two-way process!** Caregivers and parents are partners in helping the child be successful. When issues arise, talking them through and coming up with suggestions will be helpful for all parties involved.

Information from:
Young Children, Volume 57, Number 1, January 2002, pg. 24.

"When I talk with my child's teacher, I want to know the good things that he did that day."

—Dan's Mom





"Keep communication open among childcare teachers... and family. Address issues as soon as possible...It is important not to let issues build up."

Parent of a Child with a Disability

PIN UPDATE:

DVAEYC Conference: February 22-23, 2002

PIN Staff will be presenting workshops at this year's DVAEYC Conference in Philadelphia. Session titles are "Learn It, Make It, Take It-It's All About Adaptation" Part I & II on Friday, 2/22 at 1:15 and 3:00, and "If They're Playing...How Are They Learning" on Saturday, 2/23 at 3:00. Please come and join us for these fun and interactive workshops!

There will also be an exhibit table sponsored by PIN! At this table you will be able to sign-up for upcoming PIN trainings, look at the PIN curriculum, receive a newsletter, and meet some of the PIN staff! There will also be a raffle for a new product which PIN has developed, focusing on adaptations for all children in child care settings. This product will be explained later in this newsletter.

Upcoming PIN Trainings:

This spring is going to be packed with trainings! During March and April there will be three scheduled PIN training programs. There will be a Family-Provider training in Northwest Philadelphia, an Infant/Toddler Training will be held in Center City, as well as a Preschool Training in North Philadelphia. A Community-Based Workers training, involving people who do not provide childcare, is also going to be scheduled this spring. Please contact PIN if you are interested in any of these trainings. You can also sign-up at the DVAEYC Conference.

Meet the PIN Staff:

Hi, I'm Natalie Feller. I have been working for PIN since September and I have really been enjoying it! You can see me visiting child care spaces, providing consultations, and coordinating PIN trainings. I have been fortunate to meet so many wonderful people in the few months that I have been working with PIN and I look forward to getting to know even more of you in the near future!



PIN Training Information

Family-Based Providers

Training will be held in NorthWest Philadelphia
March '02 through April '02

Providers Caring for Infants and Toddlers: Birth to age 3

Training will be held in Center City Philadelphia
March '02 through April '02

Preschool Training Caring for Children 3 to 5

Training will be held in North Philadelphia
March '02 through April '02

Training for Community-based Workers (not providing childcare)

If you are interested or would like to recommend a community-based organization please contact us at 215-503-1608.

Training dates and locations to be determined.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE

PIN TRAINING SERIES OPTIONS

PLEASE CONTACT

SUZANNE MILBOURNE

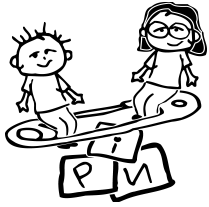
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215-503-1608

"I want my daughter to have friends and be invited to birthday parties just like all the kids."

Parent of a Child with a Disability





Something New:

Recently, PIN has developed a new product called a CARE Pack, Choosing Adaptations for Rewarding Environments. The CARE Pack focuses on making adaptations for ALL children in childcare settings. Adaptations will be presented in the form of "Here's the Situation", "Try this Adaptation" and can be used as a quick reference for caregivers to promote the inclusion of ALL children. The last page of each PIN newsletter will feature a tear-off page with adaptation ideas that can be used and kept on file. There will be different ways of filing these adaptations such as a wall or door hanging, or a file box. Packets of adaptation suggestions will soon be available through PIN and a CARE Pack will be raffled off at the PIN exhibit table at the upcoming DVAEYC Conference. We look forward to sharing more detailed information about it with you in months to come.

PLEASE UPDATE OR ADD YOUR INFORMATION TO THE MAIL LIST

FAX to 215-503-1640 or mail to Child & Family Studies, Thomas Jefferson University, 130 South 9th Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5233.

NAME _____

PROGRAM _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (____) _____ **FAX** (____) _____

E-MAIL _____

I RECEIVED AT COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER _____ **ON** _____
(where) (date)



Here's the Situation...

Try this Adaptation...

General Instructional Adaptations

Here's the situation: Children appear to need direction to listen and pay attention during an activity

Try this adaptation: When speaking to the children, make sure you are using words that they can understand, lower your voice and speak slowly and clearly in short sentences.

General Instructional Adaptations

Here's the situation: Children appear to need direction to listen and pay attention during an activity

Try this adaptation: Establish ground rules for listening such as "only one person can speak at a time while others listen". Have the children help you create these rules as well as practice them.

"I learned how to make things easier for the child that has a disability or even for the child that has a hard time doing things the other children can do."

Training Participant





Sneak Preview

The next issue of the *Preschool Inclusion News*
will feature

Working with Others to Promote Inclusion

Helpful information about Early Intervention
and community resources in Philadelphia

Preschool Inclusion News

Philadelphia Inclusion Network
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Partnering with Families
