

Making conversations count

6 tips for supporting conversations with families and carers

Collaborative relationships with families are central to achieving positive outcomes for children. Sometimes conversations that raise concerns about a child's development, learning or behaviour can be hard for educators or families because of the sensitivities involved. Thoughtful planning and effective communication with families can support children's access and participation.

Know

Understand your obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*.

Understanding your obligations and sharing information with families about how the environment, program, routines and resources can be adjusted will support their child to fully participate in your service. There is a range of resources available to support your communication with families, including resources on the ACECQA website. Children's education and care services approved for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can also access support through the [Inclusion Support Program \(ISP\)](#).

Knowing the child and family makes a difference.

The better you know the child and family the more prepared you are for the conversation. Raising a concern with a family before you have had time to get to know the child could have a negative outcome.

Think

Think about how you can best support the child and family.

Reflect on the purpose of the conversation and consider the most effective way to raise any concerns you may have with the family and how to convey a message about trying to best support children. It may be tempting to encourage families to seek a diagnosis for their child, especially if you think it will provide greater access to resources and supports. However, if the family are not ready to consider this, it can have a negative effect.

Think about the family's point of view.

Try to understand how they feel and seek their ideas on how to best support their child, including what strategies they are using at home.

Do

Plan and prepare for conversations.

Focus on the holistic picture of the child and consider the needs and views of the child and family. Proactively research the supports and resources available to assist the child, family and the service. Know what you want to communicate and carefully decide on the best time and place to have the conversation. Encourage the family to bring a third party for assistance or support if it makes them feel more comfortable.

Listen actively and respectfully.

Actively listening to children and families will encourage them to feel valued and will provide a foundation for ongoing conversations about their child's learning and development.



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

This project was
funded by the
Australian Government.

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