

Building a Parental Partnership

Here are some helpful suggestions that may assist in building positive relationships with families.

Appreciate the family's experiences

The family has been on a journey to get to where they are today. Listen to their story, learn from it, and assist them in this new path of that journey.

Seek to understand what life is like for them

Don't assume: listen
Don't judge: appreciate
Don't dismiss: reflect

Do what you can to empathize with their struggles. There are past experiences that contribute to their choices and the decisions they make and will make.

Acknowledge the unique culture of the family

What are the family's "deal-breakers", their non-negotiables – things that they are unwilling to compromise on - and the things they hold in high regard? Use what they give you and work from there.

Acknowledge the limits of our knowledge

We, as helpers, don't have to know how to solve every problem that the family brings to us. Help them identify tools in their community that they can use to problem solve their way through life's struggles.

Recognize how much parents and helpers can learn from each other

The families you work with will learn a lot from you, and you from them. When you receive a "golden nugget" from your family, thank them for that. This will empower them and boost their confidence in themselves. Empowerment paves the way to positive change.