

Building Relationships with Children

Relationships are the most important and influential ingredient to a child's healthy development, especially brain development. Dr. Jack Shondoff states, "young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, and these relationships affect virtually every aspect of their development". (National Scientific Council of the Developing Child, 2004)

Strategies for promoting authentic relationships with children

- **Schedule home visits and phone calls.** You can learn so much about a child during a short visit to their home. Home visits and phone calls also help build relationships with families!
- **Connect with Children.** Be authentic and genuine by making eye contact, getting down on the child's level, smiling and engaging in meaningful conversation.
- **Play games, sing songs, team-build.** Children who enjoy school will likely become lifelong learners!
- **Share ownership of the room with children.** Allow plenty of room for children to display their work and make decisions about how space should be used. Ask children to provide input on class expectations, jobs, and big decisions.
- **Address classroom conflicts.** Provide materials and ongoing support for developing emotional literacy, perspective taking and social problem-solving skills.

Quick Tips: Concise guidance for Early Childhood Educators

Quick Tips provide early childhood educators, at all levels of practice, concise guidance on specific and relevant topics. Each Quick Tip is intentionally designed to inspire growth and learning, elicit reflection, and support best practices for all children and their families. Quick Tip content embraces inclusiveness across all topics and embeds inclusive practice throughout.



Early Educator Support Office





NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development

Guiding Principles

- Many factors influence a child's development, including relationships with family member and others and experiences within the home, early learning setting, and community (GP #5)
- Nurturing and responsive relationships are essential (GP #7)



Resources:

Staying Connected Series:

<https://ceme.uncc.edu/early-educator-support-office-unc-charlotte/early-childhood-educators/staying-connected-series>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>

Foundations Guiding Principles handout

<https://ceme.uncc.edu/sites/ceme.uncc.edu/files/media/Foundations%20Guiding%20Principles%20Handout.pdf>

Conscious Discipline:

<https://consciousdiscipline.com>



NC Professional Teaching Standards

- **Standard 1, Element A:** Teachers lead in their classrooms
- **Standard 2,** Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of children
- **Standard 4, Element E:** Teachers help young children develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- **Standard 4, Element F:** Teachers help children work in teams and develop leadership roles
- **Standard 4, Element G:** Teachers communicate effectively
- **Standard 5, Element C:** Teachers function effectively in a complex, dynamic environment

Reflective Questions

- What kinds of daily rituals can I use to make meaningful connections with children?
- What are some activities I can implement that reflect similarities and differences among children and families within the classroom?
- What are some ways I can allow children to share ownership of the classroom?