

Getting Buy-In From Families

This Tip Sheet is a resource for Program Staff and Leaders to facilitate communication and collaboration with families.

Having positive, strong relationships with the families of the children in your care is vital to the success of any Behavior Support Plan. Like a tree, the roots (relationships) must be nourished for the trunk (respect) and leaves (collaboration) to flourish.



Collaboration/Teamwork (Leaves)

- **Use a strength-based approach** with families as well as youth. Focus on what families are doing well.
- **Lead with compassion.** Families may be facing difficult circumstances. Respectfully ask if anything is going on in their lives that might impact the child's participation and relationships in the program.
- **Listen for the family's priorities.** What social, emotional, or developmental goals are important to the family? Offer resources and strategies to help the family meet these goals.

Communication/Respect (Trunk)

- **Call families with good news and accomplishments**, not just the problems!
- **Get to know each family.** Greet them by name and customize your in-depth interactions; avoid scripts or one-size-fits-all strategies.
- **Listen and validate families' feelings.** You don't have to solve every problem. Sometimes it's enough to say, "Yes, I hear you. I understand."

Relationships (Roots)

- **Treat families as partners!** Avoid the "staff vs. families" mentality and view families as your team members.
- **Include caregivers and support staff** in orientation or introductory meetings. It's reassuring for families to become familiar with the people they and their children will interact with daily.
- **Families are the Subject Matter Expert** on their child! Utilize their expertise on their child's behavior.