

e-clips

Transcript for the [Video:](#) ***Involving Families***

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Dr. Jeffrey Trawick-Smith (Host): You know how important it is for parents to become involved in their children's learning. And you've probably found some great ways already to get parents to participate, but it's a continuing challenge. Fuel your thinking with ideas from Jaime Klein, the Director of the Child and Family Development Resource Center at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Parent: How did things go today?

Teacher: He had a good day.

Parent: Ok. Good, good.

Jamie Klein (Director): The research really suggests that children do better in school when their parents are involved. Trust is the foundation of really any good early childhood program. If you build trust with the family, then, you know, the world is your oyster. You can really do anything. Because then that allows you to develop a really intimate relationship, and it also allows you into their world.

Parent: She actually gained 7 pounds.

Teacher: She gained weight, that's good.

Parent: Yeah, I had to buy her new clothes and everything.

Susan Cowan (Parent): Leaving a child at any center, there is always an anxiety level; a mixture of relief that you have them in such good hands with anxiety that you're not there every moment and again relief that you're not there every moment of the day. They're in the hands of other people so not only is it an advantage in reassuring to the parent to know what's happening when they're at school but also creates a kind of cohesion with what you do at home. Knowing where they are in terms of language and skills and motor abilities. You sort of notice as a parent but it becomes part of the blur of watching a child grow up.

Jamie Klein: Sometimes parents really need coaching on how to ask their children questions.

Teacher: Want to tell mom what you did at circle time?

Parent: Yeah. Tell me.

Teacher: Do you remember?

Jamie Klein: And one of the things that we teach parents is to ask very specific questions.

Parent: You guys still learning about spiders?

Child: Yes...

Parent: Yes... Yes?

Jamie Klein: And when they actually spend time in the classroom, they become so familiar with the routine that they automatically know how to ask questions like, “What did you have for snack today?” When a parent is involved in a child’s schooling, it impacts their educational experience because they have a basis, they have a foundation and they have some knowledge as to what that child is learning and why that child is learning that at that particular time. So it’s that tie-in of extending the learning from the classroom to home.

Parent: Well, he said, “Is it when it’s cold? And we huddle?”

Jamie Klein: So that’s why that link from home to school is so important. That’s why we want parents in the classroom. That’s why we provide parent newsletters. That’s why at the end of the day we’ll have a little wipe off board that says what the highlights of the day were. We have parent volunteers who just really want to just come in and be in the classroom for whatever amount of time they can volunteer, and that’s really a wonderful way to develop relationships with parents.

Child: These grow on trees, right?

Parent: Yeah.

Child: These grow on trees?

Parent: Yes, they do grow on trees.

Jamie Klein: One of the things that has been so successful is giving parents actual hands-on materials. It may be just a list of favorite books that their children enjoy reading and taking them home from the library at school. We have the PTO, the parent teacher organization, which is an organization that meets at least monthly. They plan different activities both in the classroom, and then they plan events out of the classroom, family events.

Parent: I’m hoping that what it will develop into is also for a sort of feedback mechanism for parents that we develop a way of having conversations with teachers.

Jamie Klein: There are so many ways that parents can get involved. The key is to offer a variety of ways so that the parent can find some way that they're comfortable. I think once parents really have the foundation and understand why we do certain things the way that we do them, then they understand and it's much easier for them to become involved and stay connected and try to practice those things at home.

Child: Mommy.

Parent: Look at his tongue!

Child: It's big.

Parent: Hi Melanie!

Child: I'm the baby.

Parent: Hi baby.

Child: What are you doing, Mommy?

Reflections

1. Build trust with families.
2. Involve families in learning.
3. Invite families to volunteer.
4. Create family involvement events.

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