



Successful Family Engagement Strategies During a Pandemic

About the Texas Infant-Toddler Specialist Network

Through a partnership with the Texas Workforce Commission, the Children's Learning Institute (CLI), created the Texas ITSN to improve specialists' and teachers' practices and increase availability and quality of infant and toddler care. The Texas ITSN offers professional development opportunities and collaborative experiences covering a wide range of topics specific to supporting infant and toddler development.

About your Presenters

Terri Bledsoe and Elizabeth Diaz work as Internal Specialists and Teacher Mentors for the Children's Learning Institute which is housed at the UT Health Science Center in Houston and provide training and support to both teachers and child development specialists on behalf of the Texas ITSN. Contact information: Terri.Bledsoe@uth.tmc.edu Elizabeth.Diaz@uth.tmc.edu,

Learning Objectives (goals)

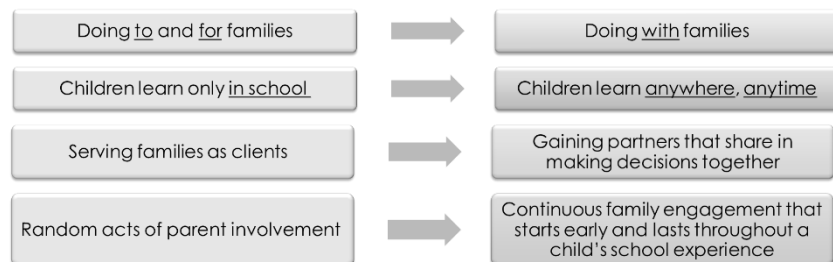
After this training, participants will be able to

- Define family engagement and explain how it differs from parent involvement.
- List 4 ways that you can encourage family engagement at your school.
- Identify at least 2 ways you could adapt your current family engagement plan considering the current pandemic.
- Name at least 3 benefits to joining the Texas ITSN Teacher Program.

What is Family Engagement?

The Texas Education Agency defines family engagement as "The _____ responsibility of families, schools, and communities is to build _____, to support student learning and achievement and to support family well-being and the _____ learning and development of children, families, and educators."

Family engagement represents a shift in mindset:



Family Engagement Topic: Partnering with Families

Teachers partner with families by building _____ relationships and connecting _____ with them.

Notes about partnering with families:

Recommended CLI Engage Family Engagement Resource:

Tips for Building Relationships with Families document

https://public.cliengage.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2019/05/FE_TipsforBuildingRelationships.pdf

Things to remember about partnering with families:

- A pandemic resurgence may make it difficult to maintain relationships with families.
- Be ready to get creative in how you partner with families!
- You can use the document *Tips for Building Relationships with Families* to help you with ideas.

Family Engagement Topic: Encourage Play-Based Learning at Home

Play-based learning provides opportunities for children to _____ in learning experiences while at _____.

Notes about encouraging play-based learning at home:

Recommended CLI Engage Family Engagement Resource:

CIRCLE Activity Collection: Family

<https://cliengagefamily.org>

Ways to encourage play-based learning at home using the CIRCLE Activity Collection: Family

- Share the direct link with families (no sign-in is required!)
- Tie home learning to concepts and skills being worked on in the classroom.

Family Engagement Topic: Talk with Families about Child Progress

Talking with families about their child's developmental progress keeps families _____ and helps _____ the support children need.

Notes about talking with families about child progress:

Recommended CLI Engage Family Engagement Resources:

Developmental Milestones Checklists and ***Family Roadmap for Navigating Concerns***

<https://public.cliengage.org/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/>

Key points to remember:

- The two recommended resources can be used by teachers and families.
- Even if you already have a child assessment tool, the Developmental Milestones Checklist can be used to supplement your data collection efforts.

Family Engagement Topic: Hosting Family Events

Family events can be used to prepare parents to be _____ home educators and to engage as _____ in their child's educational support team.

Notes about encouraging play-based learning at home:

Recommended CLI Engage Family Engagement Resource:

Supporting Sprouts family education resources

<https://public.cliengage.org/tools/quality/family-engagement-resources/hosting-family-events-to-support-childrens-development/>

Remember:

- Parents are their child's first and most important teacher
- Hosting planned, purposeful, playful family events help prepare parents to be successful home educators.

Learning More Family Engagement

Visit the CLI Engage website at <https://cliengage.org>. Click on the **Tools & Resources** tab and then select **Family Engagement Resources** from the right column.



The resources are divided into the topics that we discussed today. We suggest that you start by downloading a copy of the **Family Engagement Strategies: Infant-Toddler Teacher Checklist** from the **Getting Started** section.



Information about the Texas ITSN Teacher Program

To receive access to even more free resources on CLI Engage we encourage you to sign up for the ITSN Teacher Program. Teachers in the program receive:

- Access to online courses and webinars on CLI Engage to earn professional development hours
- Opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in live online Professional Learning Community (PLC) trainings
- Opportunities to earn participation-based incentives, such as a tablet, priority registration to 2-day Foundations Training, classroom kit, and/or stipend

Ready to join? Talk to your program director and get them on board too, as they will need to take the first steps to get your program registered!

Visit www.TexasITSN.org and click on **Teacher Program** in the Teachers menu to learn more.

Tips for Building Relationships with Families

https://public.cienage.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2019/05/FE_TipsforBuildingRelationships.pdf



Tips for Building Relationships with Families

1 Show respect in communications with families.

- ☑ Always refer to parents as Mr. and Ms. (unless they tell you otherwise).
- ☑ Pronounce names correctly (ask if you're not sure).
- ☑ Be aware of the message you intend to communicate and the nonverbal signals you are sending (i.e., to listen and understand vs. to end meeting quickly).
- ☑ Use body language and tone of voice that is welcoming and respectful.
- ☑ Practice compassionate, active listening.
- ☑ Share difficult news in a careful, productive way that is focused on solutions.

2 Build relationships with families by connecting informally.

- ☑ Be approachable; greet warmly.
- ☑ Invite/encourage parents to enter classroom.
- ☑ Initiate conversations with parents.
- ☑ Conduct get-to-know-you phone calls with every family.
- ☑ Ask about and use each families' preferred method of contact.
- ☑ Always make your first contact with parents a positive one.
- ☑ Balance negative communications with positive ones.

3 Ensure classroom environment and communication with families are free from biases.

- ☑ Design your classroom to reflect the different cultures represented and languages spoken by the students in your classroom.
- ☑ Have translated materials/information posted and available for parents as they enter your classroom.
- ☑ Be flexible and adaptive to the expectations and desires of different cultures, and even different expectations of families within a culture.
- ☑ Keep an open mind to different suggestions or approaches parents might offer. Be willing to change your approach in working with families if their cultural backgrounds dictate another response.
- ☑ Check yourself for any biases about the cultures represented in your classroom.

4 Uses a strengths-based approach by focusing on parents' strengths and empowering them to use those strengths as part of their child's education team.

- ☑ Identify parents' strengths and maintain a positive attitude about families.
- ☑ Brainstorm creative ways to use a parent's strengths in classroom or as a part of their child's educational team.
- ☑ Ask for and use parent insight.

Body Part Rhyme – family activity

<https://cliengagefamily.org/body-part-rhyme/>

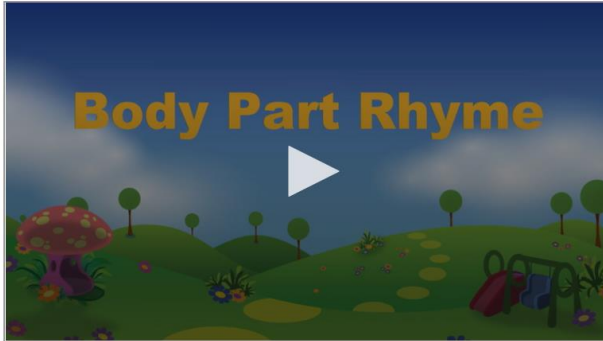
PRINT ACTIVITY

ADD TO MY ACTIVITIES

Body Part Rhyme

Babies naturally love to hear rhyming chants, and this chant helps babies become familiar with common body parts. Face-to-face play also promotes bonding with a baby's parent or primary caregiver.

Learning Area(s): Language and Communication, Social and Emotional



AGE GROUP(S):

- 0-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9-12 months
- 12-18 months
- 18-24 months

ACTIVIDAD DE LENGUAJE DUAL

Ver Actividad en Español

MATERIALS

- None

LET'S PLAY

As you hold your baby facing you, or place her on her back on a mat or blanket facing you, sing this chant and touch her body parts as you sing:

These are baby's fingers,

These are baby's toes,

This is baby's belly button,

Round and round it goes.

These are baby's ears,

This is baby's nose,

This is baby's belly button,


Round and round it goes.

TIPS

- You can substitute your child's name for the word "baby" in the chant.
- Toddlers may sit or stand during this chant and point to their body parts with you. They may also mimic the "round and round" motion. You can encourage them to do this and to try saying the chant with you.
- Once children know the above basic body parts, you can add other body parts to the chant (e.g., knees, chin, elbow) and use the same repeated phrase: "This is baby's belly button, round and round it goes."

CLI Developmental Milestones Checklist

<https://public.cienage.org/tools/assessment/infant-toddler-checklists/>

	<h1>12-18 months</h1>	<p>Child's Name:</p> <p>Administrator's Name:</p> <p>Date(s) of Administration:</p> <p><i>Tip: If completing multiple times (e.g., once per month), use a different colored pen for each administration.</i></p>
	DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKLIST	

<h3>HEALTH & MOTOR</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Rolls a ball<input type="checkbox"/> Climbs up stairs<input type="checkbox"/> Walks independently<input type="checkbox"/> Squats to pick something up<input type="checkbox"/> Pushes/pulls toys while walking<input type="checkbox"/> Points to things<input type="checkbox"/> Turns board book pages<input type="checkbox"/> Holds crayon in fist and makes marks on paper or surface<input type="checkbox"/> Begins to stack blocks<input type="checkbox"/> Holds and drinks from cup by self<input type="checkbox"/> Begins to eat with a spoon with some spilling<input type="checkbox"/> Begins to help with undressing	<h3>LANGUAGE & LITERACY</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Understands names of many objects<input type="checkbox"/> Points to several body parts<input type="checkbox"/> Follows simple commands with gestures<input type="checkbox"/> Shows early pretend play (e.g., uses spoon as telephone)<input type="checkbox"/> Uses 5 to 50 words, including names<input type="checkbox"/> Points to show something s/he wants<input type="checkbox"/> Shakes head and says "no"<input type="checkbox"/> May start to combine words (e.g., "more cookie," "car go")<input type="checkbox"/> Gives book to caregiver to read aloud<input type="checkbox"/> Holds book with help<input type="checkbox"/> Turns board book pages<input type="checkbox"/> Points to pictures in a book to show interest<input type="checkbox"/> Copies caregiver's reactions to the book<input type="checkbox"/> Begins to name some familiar objects in pictures<input type="checkbox"/> Grasps a crayon and makes marks on paper or surface<input type="checkbox"/> Holds crayon or marker in fist
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<h3>SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Shows joint attention (e.g., points to car and looks at caregiver to make sure the caregiver sees it too)<input type="checkbox"/> Brings toy to share with caregiver<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys praise and clapping to celebrate accomplishments<input type="checkbox"/> Moves toward or away from people or objects to express comfort/discomfort<input type="checkbox"/> Looks to caregiver for reassurance when faced with a new situation<input type="checkbox"/> Often attached to favorite toy or blanket	<h3>COGNITIVE</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Shows understanding of how objects go together (e.g., cup on saucer, spoon in bowl)<input type="checkbox"/> Tries to make mechanical objects work after watching someone else do it<input type="checkbox"/> Solves problems by trial and error (e.g., inverts bottle to obtain object)<input type="checkbox"/> Engages in simple pretend play (e.g., pretends to drink from an empty cup, feed a doll/stuffed animal, roll a car, talk on a play phone)
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RED FLAGS

Teachers should talk to parents or guardians if they notice one or more of these signs of possible developmental delay. Parents should discuss red flags with their pediatricians or call Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) to ask for a developmental screening.

- ☐ Doesn't point to show things to others
- ☐ Can't walk
- ☐ Doesn't know what familiar things are for
- ☐ Doesn't copy others
- ☐ Doesn't gain new words
- ☐ Doesn't have at least 6 words
- ☐ Doesn't notice or mind when a caregiver leaves or returns
- ☐ Loses skills he once had

Family Engagement Strategies: Infant-Toddler Teacher Checklist

https://cliengage.org/cli/rep/FE/FE_TeacherStrategyChecklist.pdf

cliengage Family Engagement Strategies: Infant-Toddler Teacher Checklist

Partnering with Families	Encouraging Play-Based Learning and Responsive Interactions at Home	Promoting Two-Way Conversations with Families to Individualize Support	Hosting Family Events to Support Children's Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows respect in communications with families (e.g., by monitoring body language and tone of voice and addressing parents in respectful terms) <input type="checkbox"/> Builds relationships with families by connecting informally (e.g., relates a positive story via phone call) <input type="checkbox"/> Ensures classroom environment and communication with families are free from biases (e.g., classroom and communication is welcoming to multiple cultures, backgrounds, and home languages) <input type="checkbox"/> Works with families to minimize language, cultural, emotional, and logistical barriers to partnership (e.g., provides translated materials; asks families about convenient forms of communication) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a strengths-based approach by focusing on parents' strengths and empowering them to use those strengths as part of their child's education team (e.g., expresses positive attitudes about families, involves parents who are good communicators to help disseminate information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Aligns play-based home activities to curriculum and lesson plans (e.g., selects and plans activities to send home that reinforce skills and learning in class) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses data to select individualized play-based home activities to share with families (e.g., selects and plans activities to send home based on interests, developmental stages, or areas of concern identified in Developmental Milestones Checklists) <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in conversations with families about the importance of play-based learning, responsiveness, and language facilitation (e.g., explaining the benefits of play-based learning versus drill exercises) <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes responsiveness by providing families with guidance to adjust home activities based on children's signals (e.g., simplify or challenge the activity, or discontinue the activity if frustrating for child) <input type="checkbox"/> Solicits feedback from families about play-based home activities and responds to feedback with additional support if needed (e.g., helps families troubleshoot if activities aren't successful) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses family observations to inform conversations about their child's development (e.g., invites families to complete Developmental Milestones Checklists and share observations during formal and informal conversations) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses family observations to inform instruction and individualize support to children (e.g., differentiates instruction and targets skill development by combining insights from families with other data) <input type="checkbox"/> Supports flexible conferencing to meet family needs (e.g., offers video conference or multiple scheduling opportunities) <input type="checkbox"/> Describes child's progress in family-friendly ways (e.g., presents data without using educational jargon) <input type="checkbox"/> Provides family-friendly explanation of why early skills are important for later success (e.g., explains how fine motor skills are important for children to learn how to dress and feed themselves and contribute to later writing skills) <input type="checkbox"/> Partners with families to set clear goals and create action plans for supporting children at school and at home (e.g., teachers and families decide together what steps to take to support child's development; collaboratively select home activities to meet their goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engages families in playful events to build understanding of key developmental or academic skills or concepts (e.g., events are content focused and in alignment with age-appropriate learning goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Models and explains activities using family-friendly language and materials (e.g., uses visuals and simple instructions) <input type="checkbox"/> Builds engagement by moving around the room offering guidance and support to families (e.g., assists families who appear unengaged) <input type="checkbox"/> Provides families with ideas or resources that extend family event content to the home (e.g., ends event by modeling a home extension activity)

RELATED CLI ENGAGE TOOLS

- CIRCLE ACTIVITY COLLECTION: FAMILY
- PLAY AND LEARNING STRATEGIES (PALS) SPOTLIGHTS
- DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES CHECKLISTS
- NAVIGATING CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT: A ROADMAP
- UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AND EARLY INTERVENTION VIDEO SERIES
- SUPPORTING SPROUTS FAMILY WORKSHOPS
- CIRCLE ACTIVITY COLLECTION: FAMILY