

PRACTICES THAT ENGAGE FAMILIES

Read through the following practices. Write your initial reaction to the practice. Discuss the questions that follow the practices with your small group.

Practice #1: The program has an open-door policy. An open-door policy is where families can come any time during the day while the program is open, to visit, hang-out, have lunch with their child, observe what is happening, and stay as long as they want. They can stay as long as they want during drop-off and during pick-up (until the center closes). If a family visit in the middle of the day, the family leaves and the child stays until the end of the day

- What is your reaction to having an open-door policy?
- Is having an open-door policy engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having an open-door policy?
- What are the drawbacks or potential challenges to having an open-door policy?
- How does an open-door policy connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?

Practice #2: The program has families on its Hiring Committee. When a position is open, the director interviews candidates and sends the top 3 candidates to the Hiring Committee. The Hiring Committee is made up of families and teaching staff (teachers and teacher assistants). The Hiring Committee meets with the 3 candidates that the director has sent and decides which of the candidates will be hired.

- What is your reaction to having families on the Hiring Committee?
- Is having families on the Hiring Committee engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having families on the Hiring Committee?
- What are the drawbacks/ potential challenges to having families on the Hiring Committee?
- How does having families on the Hiring Committee connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?

Practice #3: The program creates spaces for families throughout the center. When families come in there is a place to put and store strollers and for families to hang their coats during drop-off and pick-up. There is a library of resource material for families that has books and DVD to borrow as well as handouts and pamphlets families can take. That space has a work area for families as well, with computers, a conference table and chairs, armchairs and sofas. There is a bulletin board that is updated regularly with information about local events for families. There is seating area in each of classroom where families can sit and be comfortable. There is coffee or tea and snacks available for families.

- What is your reaction to having spaces for families?
- Is having space for families engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having spaces for families?
- What are drawbacks/ potential challenges to having spaces for families?
- How does having a space for families connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?

Practice #4: The program makes home visits. Before the child begins the program, the child's primary caregiver and another caregiver schedule a time that is mutually convenient to visit the child at home. The home visits are brief, normally lasting 30 minutes to an hour at most. The program staff interact with the child and family to learn more about the family, child, their culture the child's preferences, and routines. The family can ask questions about the program and the staff may ask questions about the child's habits, routines, and preferences.

- What is your reaction to having home visits?
- Is having home visits engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having home visits?
- What are drawbacks/ potential challenges to having home visits?
- How does making home visits connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?

Practice #5: The program has space dedicated for mothers who are breastfeeding to come and breastfeed their children as often as they like. The space is separate, quiet, and offers privacy for the mother and child. Families can come to use the space whenever they would like to during the day.

- What is your reaction to having a breastfeeding space?
- Is having a breastfeeding space engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having a breastfeeding space?
- What are the drawbacks/ potential challenges to having a breastfeeding space?
- How does having a space for breastfeeding connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?

Practice #6: The program's Governing Council oversees the program's budget and programming decisions. The Governing Council has 9 members, the Director, 4 members from the teaching staff and 4 family members. The Governing Council supports the work of the Director to ensure the program operates smoothly by making decisions about resources, finances, and programming. The Governing Council makes financial decisions about how much money to spend on supplies, the physical space, and the staff salary scale. The Governing Council plans activities and events, like Family Potlucks and Curriculum Night. The Governing Council also determines how resources should be used, such as if new staff need to be hired or if new, large equipment needs to be purchased (like equipment for the playground).

- What is your reaction to having families on the Governing Council?
- Is having families on the Governing Council engaging families? How?
- What are the benefits to having families on the Governing Council?
- What are the drawbacks/ potential challenges to having families on the Governing Council?
- How does having families on the Governing Council connect to the Koraleck, Nemeth & Ramsey (2019) reading?