

Tip Sheet: Talking with Families

Families are important partners when you have concerns about a child's social, emotional, or behavioral development and are considering a referral to SUCCESS. Consider the following tips to guide conversations.

Establish Regular Communication and Positive Relationships with Families

- Start building relationships with families early. Conversations about a child's development and behavior will be most effective when you already have a positive relationship with the family.
- Communicate positive information to families about their child's behavior, learning, and play. Families will be most likely to listen to your concerns about their child when they feel that you understand both their child's strengths and challenges.

Engage Families in a Conversation about Concerns

Talking with a family about your concerns will be most successful when it is a collaborative discussion in which both you and the family share your perspectives. You and the family may view the child's development differently, based on differences in experiences, culture, and beliefs. Give the family time to think and encourage the family to share their thoughts.

- 1. Describe what you see:** Give the family details about specific behavior(s) that you and the child's teachers have observed that concern you. Describe how often it happens, when it occurs, and how your program has tried to support the child's growth and development. Avoid labels and suggesting diagnoses to families.
- 2. Ask what the family sees at home:** Ask the family if they have observed similar behaviors at home. How often does it happen? When does it happen? How has the family tried to respond? What do they think about this behavior? Do they have other concerns?
- 3. Communicate that your goal is to support healthy development:** Keep the focus on supporting the child's development, positive adjustment to the classroom, and readiness to start school. Communicate that you want to work together to do what is best for the child.

Collaboratively Discuss a Referral to SUCCESS

If you and the family determine that accessing additional support for the child will be beneficial, there are a variety of options, including SUCCESS. Consider the following when discussing a referral to SUCCESS.

- 4. Review the brochure together:** Discuss the goals of SUCCESS and the types of services offered. It is important to note that SUCCESS services begin with staff and family conversations, a classroom observation, and caregivers completing questionnaires. After this information is collected, the consultant provides feedback and recommendations to families and your program. Short-term follow-up supports are also available to families and programs to integrate recommendations.
- 5. Review the Family Agreement Form:** Give the family a copy of the form to read and sign if they agree to participate. Explain that by signing the form, the family gives permission for SUCCESS services and for the early learning program to provide information about their child to SUCCESS.
- 6. Make a plan for next steps:** If the family agrees to participate in SUCCESS, let them know what the next steps will be.
 - Early learning program will contact SUCCESS to provide information and submit the referral paperwork.
 - Referral paperwork can be submitted by fax (401-793-8799) or email (success@brownhealth.org).
 - The SUCCESS Intake Coordinator will call you to gather brief information about the child and the reason(s) you are making a referral.
 - SUCCESS consultation will be scheduled.