

Quality Care Program

For Home-Based Child Care Providers

Volume II

Issue No. 7

Family Partnership Guidelines

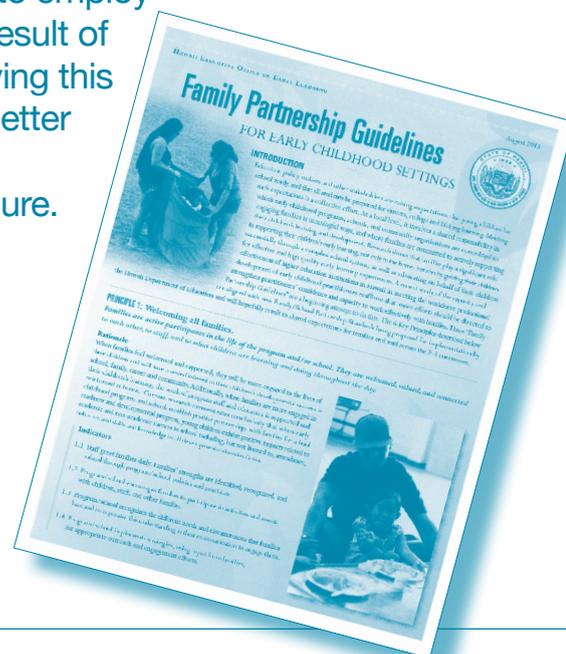
Hawai'i's Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) recently released the *Family Partnership Guidelines (FPGs) for Early Childhood Settings*. The FPG brochure highlights the importance of building and sustaining authentic and respectful connections between early childhood programs and the families they serve. Underlying the development of the FPGs is the belief that families play an important role in shaping their children's healthy development and educational attainment. The FPGs are provided to support practitioners, programs, and schools serving families with young children in becoming more aware of the benefits of partnerships with families, and in encouraging development of ongoing relationships with families. Such relationships are believed to be the foundation for partnerships that result in improved outcomes for children.

The FPGs identify and describe six principles that underlie family partnership goals that child care professionals can strive for:

1. Welcoming all families
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting success
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing decision making
6. Partnering with community

Because these six principles encompass so much territory, this issue of our newsletter will focus on just two guidelines and provide concrete examples of practices that family child care providers can add to their repertoire of relationship-building activities with families. The FPG brochure is enclosed for your information and use, as you consider other ways to use the guidelines to build partnerships with the families you serve. Be sure to read the rationale under each of the principles to gain a better understanding of why the suggested practices are important.

We would love to hear from all of you about the strategies you currently use to form partnerships with your client families as well as some new strategies you may want to employ as a result of receiving this newsletter and brochure.



Principle 2: Communicating Effectively

Families and providers engage in effective reciprocal and ongoing communication to support the success of the children in their care.

Here are some ways you can put this guideline into practice:

- Review your parent handbook at least annually with families so that they are reminded of the important policies you have in place to support their children's learning and development and keep them safe.
- Periodically, ask for feedback (a short survey, or a quick question about how you're doing) so that families know you are willing to hear their concerns.
- Ask family members if it's OK to take photos or videos of their children at play and send texts to keep them connected in real time. Encourage parents to send a "selfie" back so their child can see a picture of them at work.



- Use multiple methods of communication when you want to share information since not all people respond to the same forms. Find out which method each family prefers. Examples include:
 - face-to-face conversations, newsletters, bulletin boards, notes that go home with children, website, e-mail, phone calls, parent conferences, family workdays, or planned social activities (e.g., potlucks or holiday celebrations)
- Remind parents that anything they tell you about their child or family will be held in confidence. Encourage them to let you know when changes are taking place at home that might have an impact on their child's emotions so that you can provide extra support to the child as needed.



Principle 3: Supporting Success

Families and child care providers continuously partner to support learning and healthy development, both at home and in family child care. Families and providers create or find opportunities on an ongoing basis to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

This principle is a model of mutual respect under which information, knowledge, and skills are shared in both directions: from provider to parent and from parent to provider. Here are some examples of putting this principle into practice:

- Participate in other opportunities to learn about child care as a profession in addition to reading the QCP newsletters, e.g. workshops, memberships in child care organizations, conferences, college level classes.
 - Find ways to discuss what you have learned about child development with families in an open and accepting way. i.e., by asking the family member what they think about a particular topic and listening closely to understand their opinions and values.
 - Find out about any special skills, interests, or experiences the family members may be willing to share with you and/or with the children. Or invite that person to share his or her interest with all the families at a family get-together that you organize.
 - Jot down regular observations of the children's growth, development, and learning and periodically (weekly or monthly) send your notes home asking the parents to tell you if what they observe their children doing is the same or different.
 - Encourage family members to participate in your program by spending one hour each week or each month (or whatever they can manage) to sit and read to all the children or to engage the children in an activity of their choice.
- Invite families to be involved in your program by assisting in different aspects of a project you have planned. Not all parents may be able to join you and the children for the whole activity, but they can play an important role in part of it. For example, in planning a small garden for the children, some parents could help you with planning the overall activity, others might help by preparing the planter boxes or selecting seeds, and some could join you and the children to plant and harvest.
 - Update the families weekly about the kind of development their children are experiencing as a result of the activities you plan (refer to the "How This Helps" sections of the *LTG Early Learning Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Young Preschoolers* to get ideas about how children benefit). Suggest ways that families might follow up at home to build on the children's experiences. Then ask them to share their experiences and observations of their child with you.
 - Ask each family what they hope their child will learn while in your care.



Citations:

State of Hawai'i, Executive Office on Early Learning. (2013). *Family partnership guidelines for early childhood settings*. (brochure). Honolulu, HI.

Award Book

To receive the award book for this month, fill out your caregiver's reflection sheet and return it to the Center on the Family by the deadline posted. You will need to:

1. Check the boxes that describe how often you read to and conduct learning activities with the children.
2. Check the box that indicates how useful the newsletter is for your work.
3. Describe how you have or will make use of the information in the newsletter.
4. (Optional) Provide your comments, opinions, suggestions, concerns or questions on the bottom or back of the page.
5. Update your address or contact numbers if any changes have taken place.

For Support

Contact PATCH to speak to a Quality Care Specialist:

Hilo	935-0200
Kona	322-3500
Kaua'i	632-0212
Maui	249-0101
Lāna'i/Moloka'i	800-498-4145
O'ahu	791-2129

Website: www.PatchHawaii.org
Email: qualitycare@patch-hi.org

For help with packet materials or mailings, call 808-956-4133 or email: qualitycare@ctahr.hawaii.edu



REMINDER: Licensed QCP Participants can use their participation history in the program to fulfill the re-licensing requirement of "Increased Knowledge." Ask your DHS Licensing Social Worker about the requirements today.

CENTER
ON THE
FAMILY

Quality Care Program ★ Center on the Family ★ University of Hawai'i at Mānoa ★
2515 Campus Rd. Rm.103 ★ Honolulu, HI 96822 ★ 808-956-4133 ★ qualitycare@ctahr.hawaii.edu