

Keeping Parents Present for Children While at School

It is essential for early childhood professionals to keep parents present for children while they are at school as it reinforces the connection that exists between school and home. As young children learn to navigate their world, it is helpful to create a sense of security and sameness. When professionals acknowledge and discuss families, it helps children feel secure and valued, knowing that their home life and parent-child relationship is an important part of who they are. This connection fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance within the classroom community. By involving parents in classroom activities and discussions, professionals show children that their families are respected and valued partners in their learning journey. Additionally, keeping parents in children's minds throughout the school day helps create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where children can thrive both academically and emotionally.

Transitional Objects

A transitional object is something that a child holds onto for comfort, often when they are away from their parents or caregivers. It is like a little piece of home that they can carry with them wherever they go, helping them feel safe and connected even when they are apart from their loved ones. Allowing young children to have a transitional object, like a favorite stuffed animal or blanket, can be a big help in many ways. These special objects act as a link between home and school, providing comfort and support during times of separation. They help children remember their families throughout the day, which can be reassuring and comforting. Having their transitional object nearby can also help children manage their emotions, providing a sense of security during stressful moments. Plus, these objects can be a great conversation starter, allowing children to talk about their families with teachers and peers.

Family Photos

Displaying family photos at children's eye level throughout the classroom can be a wonderful way to keep parents present for young children. These photos serve as visual reminders of home and loved ones, helping children feel connected to their families even when they're at school. In addition to displaying photos, children can benefit from having a family photo that they can hold onto and carry with them for support when they are missing their families. Much like a transitional object, seeing familiar faces throughout the day can provide comfort and reassurance, especially during times of separation or stress. Additionally, family photos create a sense of belonging and identity within the classroom environment, as children are reminded of their unique family

backgrounds and experiences. Teachers can use these photos as opportunities for discussions about families, encouraging children to share stories and memories from home. Overall, incorporating family photos into the classroom not only enhances the learning environment but also strengthens the bond between children, their families, and their teachers.

Nap Notes

Nap notes are a thoughtful and engaging way to keep parents connected with their children during school hours, especially at nap time. Young children are used to parents helping them transition to nap or bedtime, so parents not being present at school for naptime can increase a child's worry or desire to be with their parent. These personalized notes, written by parents, are read aloud by professionals as children transition to their nap routines. Nap notes can include reassuring messages, loving affirmations, or simple reminders of the day's events, providing children with a comforting link to home. This practice helps ease the separation anxiety that young children might feel when away from their parents, creating a sense of continuity and security. By incorporating nap notes into the daily routine at school, early childhood professionals foster a nurturing environment that supports emotional well-being and strengthens the bond between children and their families.

Conversations

It is crucial for early childhood professionals to engage children in conversations about their families, recent or upcoming family events, home routines, and how parents assist them with various tasks. These discussions not only validate the importance of children's family lives but also help them feel valued and understood. Additionally, it is just as important to have conversations with parents who can share home routines, practices or phrases typically used in the home. By showing interest in their family dynamics and mirroring some of the words or actions performed in the home, professionals create a supportive environment where children feel comfortable expressing themselves. Understanding a child's home life provides valuable insights into their experiences and challenges, enabling educators to offer personalized support and foster stronger relationships and a sense of belonging for both children and their families.