

## Q&A WHAT PARENTS AND EDUCATORS CAN DO TO STRENGTHEN THEIR PARTNERSHIP.



FOR PARENTS

### Q I would like to be more supportive of my child in preschool. How can I build a good relationship with his teachers?

Secure relationships with adults provide a strong foundation for young children to develop emotionally, socially and cognitively. Apart from parents, teachers play an increasingly important role as children spend more time in preschool. It is therefore crucial for parents to work together with their children's teachers.

Here are a few ideas to nurture a positive partnership:

- 1. Get to know the teachers.** Introduce yourself to your child's teachers. Thank them for caring for and educating your child. Let them know how they can stay in contact with you.
- 2. Help them understand your child.** Share with teachers your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, as well as specific aspects (e.g., a special toy or wake-up routine) they will need to know about him.
- 3. Model positive interactions with teachers and other children.** Seeing their parents engage in warm and positive interactions with their teachers and peers helps a child develop trust and foster healthy relationships with others as well. It also builds self-esteem and confidence.
- 4. Share struggles and helpful tips.** Keep each other informed when you encounter challenges. Have an open mind and learn from each other on how to better support your child's learning and development.

### Q How do we build collaborative partnerships to enhance teaching and learning practices?

When preschools build collaborative relationships with families and community agencies, it enriches children's learning and develops their sense of belonging to the community.

Here are some ways that educators can get the ball rolling:

- > With families.** Spend time to get to know each family. Understand their social, economic and cultural background. For example, some families may be financially strained, causing stress to both parents and children. Ethnic and cultural beliefs may influence parenting styles and children's learning. It is thus important for educators to engage families meaningfully and in culturally appropriate ways to support their children's holistic development.

To begin, organise surveys or tea sessions to get to know each family better and find out their interests, cultures, languages spoken at home, etc. Find time to have informal chats with families to further strengthen communication and build closer relationships.

- > With community agencies.** Invite local professionals from community partners (e.g., museums, libraries, bakeries, hospitals) to share their experiences or solve a problem together with the children. This builds children's awareness of and connection to these communities.

Discuss with partners on how the collaboration can meet or be adapted to align with your centre's curriculum goals, as well as teaching and learning practices. Reflect and review how the collaboration has benefited young children's learning, and identify areas for improvement.



FOR EDUCATORS



**DR KENNETH POON** is Co-Director of the Centre for Research in Child Development at the National Institute of Education. Trained as a clinical psychologist and early interventionist, he is also a member of the Ministry of Social and Family Development's Advisory Panel on Parenting.



**KATHRYN GOY** is an Executive Principal at PCF Sparkletots and an ECDA Fellow. She volunteers with disadvantaged families with young children and believes that family-preschool-community partnerships are critical to supporting families and children in need.