

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- Demonstrate deep respect for each child and family.
- Greet children individually and help them engage in activities to ease their *transitions* from home.
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in each child. Smile, laugh, and spend time with them. Make comments that focus on positive qualities and contribute to their self-esteem.
- Respond to children according to their individual preferences and needs for daily *routines* such as feeding, sleeping, and comforting.
- Observe how families interact with each other. Ask parents and guardians questions to help learn more about their children. Use what is learned to provide consistent, predictable, loving care.
- Keep notes on each child to develop an individualized plan to meet each child's unique needs.
- Offer objects to comfort, such as a favorite blanket or stuffed animal to help a child feel secure when he or she appears upset.
- Take plenty of time to interact with each child in a relaxed way during everyday *caregiving routines* including diapering, dressing, and eating. Plan ahead so all supplies are readily available before starting routines. This enables full attention and focus to be on the child.
- Talk with children and narrate, putting words to their actions as they explore ("I see that you are rubbing your fingers across the bark of the tree. How does it feel?").
- Play and interact with children at their level, getting down on the floor, or cuddling close together while reading a book.
- Provide opportunities for children to repeat successful activities, gradually providing similar but slightly more challenging experiences.
- Help children develop a positive *sense of self* by providing many opportunities to make choices, allowing them to make decisions and plan (which book to read, song to sing, or game to play).
- View mistakes as opportunities to learn. Be supportive and let children know everyone makes mistakes. *Model* that it is important to keep trying.
- Use children's *home language* as much as possible in daily conversations with them. Put words to feelings and emotions.
- Read books about families and encourage children to talk about them. Invite children to share photos of their families. Discuss similarities and differences.
- Provide positive role models for both boys and girls. Read books that feature positive role models for boys and girls.
- Provide opportunities for children to identify themselves in pictures and to identify their names from a group of other names.
- Prepare children for new situations and changes in routines (such as a field trip or visitor) by using pictures, verbal explanations, and acting out what will happen.
- Have frequent conversations with children. Listen carefully, respond, acknowledge and give them credit for their ideas.
- Expand on children's ideas and interests. For example, a child's interest in vehicles may become a play theme or topic of study.