Children benefit when their parents and teachers respect each other, communicate openly, and share common goals for the learning and development of the child.

Trust is important in:
- building relationships,
- maintaining relationships, and
- de-escalating conflict.

Parents and teachers can enjoy and celebrate the positive relationship that allows them to work together for the benefit of the child.

When there is a mutually respectful relationship between parent and school, it is more likely that parents will seek greater involvement and will participate more in the child’s educational development.

Parents reported that their trust in educational professionals increased when they perceived these professionals as competent, having the best interests of children at the center of their decisions, and keeping their word.

Trust also affects parental engagement. Parents said they relaxed their engagement in the roles of monitor and negotiator and increased their engagement in the role of supporter when they built more trust and stronger relationships with educational professionals.
When parents and teachers have established a relationship or partnership in working together, there is more likelihood that they can withstand the inevitable differences of opinion, or conflicts, when they arise.

The term “relate” has a connotation of equality. To achieve a relationship, we put aside any preconceptions of “professional distance” and deal with people as people, in a genuine and sincere manner.

The role of parents has changed from being a recipient of services, to being an active participant. Parental participation in the education of their children is a right, not a privilege.

Parents are the ultimate experts on their own children, understanding strengths as well as weaknesses. Parents also have an advocacy role, which can be seen as an expression of their unconditional love for their child. They advocate for what is best for the child, based on individual needs.

In addition to welcoming parental knowledge and views of their child, is a parent’s right to know everything anyone else knows about their child.

For further information on this topic, please see Support for Implementation Tip Sheet: Relationship Building and Trust.

Continuing the Conversation: Questions for Discussion

1. **Children benefit when their parents and teachers respect each other, communicate openly, and share common goals for the learning and development of the child.** What evidence did you see in the video that this was happening?

2. What evidence do you have from your own experience that this is happening in your classroom?
3. What specific strategies did the teacher on the video use to help build a positive and mutually beneficial working relationship with Adrian’s mother? What other strategies might you have used in similar situations?

4. Provision of an opportunity for parents and family members to ask questions and share concerns about the needs and priorities in a supportive and non-judgemental environment goes a long way toward building a collaborative relations with the family. Consider this statement. In what ways do you/could you provide these types of opportunities for families of students in your classroom?

Research References


Acknowledgement: This guide was developed through the leadership of ERLC and is freely provided in support of improved teaching and learning under the following Creative Commons license.