



# Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. X, No. 3

## 10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

## This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care Partner with Parents

### All in the 'Ohana

One of the most important aspects of a high-quality family child care program is the relationships between the provider and children as well as their 'ohana. A provider not only cares for the child, but also respects diverse family structures and recognizes the strengths of each family. These diverse family structures may include married, never married, separated, or divorced parents. As child care providers, it is important to be sensitive to the unique challenges that all families may have, especially those who are in the midst of family conflict such as going through separation and divorce.

According to the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC), children of separated, divorced, or never married families who are experiencing conflict may experience a range of emotions that you may notice. This may include:

- Crying/Moodiness
- Withdrawal (loss of interest in being around others)
- Hitting/tantrums
- Stomach aches/headaches
- Regression (whining, clinging, toileting accidents)

Child care providers are in a unique position to help children navigate the changes and challenges that they are facing. Children often spend the majority of their time in your program which can provide a safe and predictable space away from the turmoil that they may be experiencing at home.

This newsletter will highlight four key elements to keep in mind when working with diverse families:

- **Approach** – working together toward a shared goal;
- **Attitudes** – awareness of attitudes can create positive partnerships;
- **Atmosphere** – creating a welcoming environment;
- **Action** – providing support and encouragement for all families.



# Approach

According to Leon and Spengler, University of Missouri Extension Specialists, viewing your relationship with families from a partnership approach emphasizes working together toward a common goal. The partnership model involves three things:

- two-way communication,
- appreciating family strengths, and
- mutual problem-solving.

**Two-way communication** is essential for building positive relationships with families. This means that both families and providers communicate about important events and activities at home and at the child care program. When there is ongoing communication, such as daily chats during drop off and pick up, both families and providers are better informed to provide the best care for the child. In addition, a communication log via email or a notebook allows open communication to all, including families with a nonresidential parent, encouraging involvement in the child's life unless the court order specifies otherwise.

In order to form successful partnerships with families, it is critical to have a strength-based approach. By **appreciating family strengths**, you are noticing the positive qualities that each family brings such as *flexibility, extended family network, or independence*. Children must be flexible and learn to adapt to different environments, rules, and expectations. Blended families may



also have an *extended network* of family and multiple adult role models, whereas children from single-parent homes might be given more responsibilities and become more capable and *independent*.

Lastly, when partnering with families, it is critical to work together to solve a problem. **Mutual problem-solving** involves both families and providers sharing their perspectives on issues that come up and working on mutual solutions.

## Attitudes

Our attitudes can create a positive partnership with families. One way to create a positive mindset is by viewing family involvement on a continuum. This means instead of labeling someone as “involved” or “uninvolved”, we take on a mindset of all being involved to some degree. Create opportunities for family members to be involved in a variety of ways as they are able, such as chaperoning field trips, sharing food or activities with the children in your program, recording themselves reading a story which you can share during story time, getting feedback through surveys, or having ‘ohana nights.

Additionally, our own attitudes have been shaped by our past experiences. Being aware of how our biases may color our attitudes is an important step when working with diverse families. By understanding our biases, we can make a conscious effort to not let them cloud our interactions.



# Atmosphere

Just as attitudes can support or create barriers, so can the atmosphere that you create. Take a look at your program and reflect on whether it provides a welcoming atmosphere for all types of families. Here are some things to consider:

- **Welcome Area** – This space can be used to effectively communicate important information and resources through an ‘ohana board or communication folders in the entryway. If a file crate is used for communication, ensure that the nonresidential parent has a folder as well.
- **Diversity** – Ensure that all types of families are reflected in books and materials.
- **Letters Home** – Address families and special occasions with sensitivity (e.g., ‘Ohana Brunch vs Mother’s Day Brunch and send home letters to both parents unless restricted by court orders).
- **Conferences** – Offer separate times to talk to individual parents. This can convey a supportive environment for families going through a divorce.
- **Open Door Policy** – Allow families to join their child for breakfast or to read a story. This can be an effective way to provide a welcoming atmosphere.



## Action

Providers can be a large source of support for families going through divorce or transitions. Some ways that you can communicate encouragement and support:

- Provide resources that support positive parent-child interaction such as Sesame Workshop for families: <https://sesameworkshop.org/topics/divorce/>
- Encourage family engagement at home by providing a calendar of activities or a lending library of books to read together.
- Encourage family networking.
- Plan activities and read books that expose children to different types of families, support self-awareness, and discuss feelings.
- Choose daily helpers. This can support inclusiveness and social emotional growth for all children.

## Training Opportunity

### *Rhythms of Resilience*

Learn resilience-building practices to gain a better understanding of what resilience is, and how it can be nurtured in young children and families affected by crisis.

<https://sesameworkshop.org/resources/rhythms-of-resilience-course/>

## Featured Activity

### Family Display



#### What You Need

- Family photo(s) of each family in your program (\*Some may bring 2 or 3 photos if they have multiple households)
- Colored Cardstock
- Glue
- \*Optional collage items

#### Directions\*

1. Send a letter to the child's family requesting family photos.
2. Cut the cardstock 1 inch larger than the photo (5x7).
3. Glue the photo to the middle of the cardstock.
4. \*Optional – have the children glue collage items to the border of the cardstock.
5. Display the photos at your entryway, on the refrigerator, or on a shelf.

\*Alternatively, place the photos in an album for children to look at in the book area.



Join us on Facebook!  
University of Hawaii Learning to Grow  
[www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii/](https://www.facebook.com/learningtogrowhawaii/)

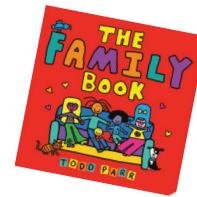
## Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org)

### ***The Family Book***

by Todd Parr

The message in this vividly illustrated board book is that every family is special and the only thing that matters is love.



### ***Families***

by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly

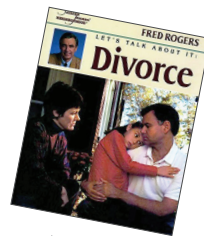
This book includes photos of all types of families helping young children providing a mirror into their own families and an awareness of other types of families.



### ***Let's Talk About It: Divorce***

by Fred Rogers

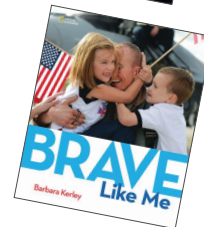
Mister Roger's simple, yet effective way of explaining difficult topics shines through in this book about divorce.



### ***Brave Like Me***

by Barbara Kerley

This book deals with the emotions that children may experience when dealing with separation when a family member is deployed.



## Citations

Conciliation Courts. (n.d.). *An educator's guide: Interacting with separating, divorcing, never-married parents and their children*. Afcnet.org. Retrieved September 29, 2023, from <https://www.afcnet.org/Portals/0/Committees/CEFCP%20-%20Educators%20Guide.pdf?ver=EBnAm2n4A3R43WUrPx1gBw%3D%3D>

*Helping children adjust to divorce: A guide for teachers*. (n.d.). Missouri.edu. Retrieved September 29, 2023, from <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/gh6611>

Modigliani, K., & Bromer, J. (2019). *NAFCC Benchmarks to Quality* [Review of *NAFCC Benchmarks to Quality*]. The National Association for Family Child Care. <https://nafcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Benchmarks-2020-English.pdf>

**Learning to Grow Quality Child Care for Registered Home-Based Providers** is a project of University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services ★ 808-462-4700 ★ [www.learningtogrowhawaii.org](http://www.learningtogrowhawaii.org)