

Demonstrate partnership-oriented practices

Objective(s)

In this activity learners demonstrate ways to incorporate partnership-oriented practices when dealing with parents.

Description

Learners use role play to demonstrate examples of partnership-oriented practices.

Required Materials/Resources

Learner Materials

- [Handout 4.2: Partnership-Oriented Practices: Observation Checklist](#)
- Parent Role Play
- Teacher Role Play

Detailed Facilitator Instructions

1. Provide access to handout and print out Parent Role Play and Teacher Role Play instructions below.
2. Divide learners into groups of three.
 - a. Allow learners to determine who will play the role of the parent, the teacher, and the observer.
 - b. Ask learners to follow instructions listed on the learner form.
 - c. After the role play, ask learners to share with the class their responses to the following:
 - i. The teacher's strengths in using partnership-oriented practices
 - ii. Specific suggestions for how partnership-oriented practices can be incorporated into future interactions
3. Provide feedback.

Facilitation Tips

- Have learners wear nametags to indicate which role they are playing.
- As this is a role play activity, it is not recommended for online-only courses.

Alternate Version(s) (refers to different levels of difficulty)

- [Activity Guide 4.7a](#): Incorporate additional partnership-oriented practices

This activity is part of Module 4: Family-Professional Partnerships. To view the content related to this activity, go to [Step 3: Evidence](#).

Instructional Method
Role Playing

Level
Advanced

Estimated Time Needed
5 minutes for instructor preparation

15-20 minutes for learner activity

Parent Role Play

Role Play Participants

- Parent – Allison Cooper played by yourself.
- Childcare teacher – Darla Fuller played by another group member.

Background Information

You will be assuming the role of **Allison Cooper** who lives on a large Army base with her three children, Tess (an 8th grade student who is in the gifted program at school), Charlie (a 3rd grader who is excelling in playing the violin), and Seth (a 4-year-old who attends a full-day military childcare center). Your husband, Thomas, is deployed for his second combat tour. On this second tour, he has been gone for five months and will not be back home for at least 10 more months.

Current Situation

When you look back on the first preschool experiences of Tess and Charlie, you wish that it could be so simple for Seth. You clearly are worried about the delays that you see in his development. He was born five weeks early and weighed only 4½ lbs. Right from the start, it seemed that he was slower to develop than your older two children. You thought his months of colic would never end, and you wearily remember the intense bouts of crying throughout the night. Seth rolled over, sat up, crawled, and walked 3-6 months later than his older sister and brother. Your husband has always been in the top of his class at every level of his education, and now he is rising faster than usual in his military career appointments. It is not part of the family history to even be average, much less below average.

Undoubtedly, Seth has strengths. He is highly verbal and loves to talk to everyone. He also has a great sense of humor and becomes very amused when he can engage with others in riddles and “knock-knock” jokes. You are especially worried, however, that he seems to get so very excited and hyperactive that he fills up every space of any room that he is in. When he has been in childcare settings in the past, his childcare providers often complained that he was too disruptive in class, too noisy, and too rough with the other children. Even though Seth just thought he was playing, some of the other children were afraid of him because he often hurt them with his roughhousing.

You share your husband’s commitment to “serve his country,” and you are proud of his dedication and self-sacrifice. On long days with the children, however, you question whether the lifestyle of continual separation and frequent moves is one that can possibly be manageable for you over the long haul. Some nights Seth cries because he misses his Dad so much. Every night you show him a scrapbook of his Dad’s pictures and read him messages about how much his Dad misses him and loves him. Ironically, your husband is the one in the family who can best manage the kid’s behavior, and he is halfway around the world at a time when you really need him.

Developing an Initial Friendly Relationship – Beginning Ground

You have enrolled Seth in the childcare center that is on the military installation where you live. Your meeting with Seth's new teacher, **Darla Fuller**, is just about ready to start. Over the last week, you have been wondering how much you should tell her about Seth. You have mixed feelings about whether it would be better to share your concerns from the outset or to just hope that the new childcare situation will resolve his current problems. You clearly are worried that Seth is not experiencing the success that his siblings have experienced all of their lives, and you wonder what impact it will have on his self-concept.

Engage in Role Play for Beginning Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Making Shared Decisions – Middle Ground

Seth's problems at home are escalating. Every night you feel that not only your husband is in combat, but you also are in combat with Seth. Getting him to go to bed is clearly a battle. He engages in every postponing activity he can think of and then has a complete melt-down when you push for bedtime. He is even getting up 5-7 times after you put him to bed to walk around the house, get a snack, and try to play with his toys.

In his backpack, his teacher has been including notes about increasing problems at the center. You think it's time to have a meeting, but you are worried about what you might hear. You wish your husband were home because you know that his tougher discipline would help Seth toe the line.

Darla sent a note yesterday asking if the two of you could have a phone call later today. As you look back over the time that Seth was in preschool and that first meeting that you had with Darla, you feel thankful that the two of you have been able to be on the same wave length and that she is sensitive to Seth's needs and to your priorities of keeping the family afloat until your husband returns. Feeling as if the two of you are on the same team in helping Seth is a relief.

Engage in Role Play for Middle Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Addressing Challenging Issues – Firm Ground

Darla has just sent an email asking if you will meet with her when you pick up Seth tomorrow. She says that she wants to bring you up-to-date on her latest thinking about how Seth is doing. You have noticed that Seth is increasingly being resistive in the mornings in terms of going to the childcare center. He tells you that he doesn't feel good or has a tantrum and tries to convince you to keep him at home. He also has stopped talking about a couple of his friends. You get the idea that maybe the other kids don't like him as much as they have in the past. On the one hand, it doesn't surprise you that concerns are escalating at school because they are at home as well. On the other hand, you clearly are worried about Seth's performance and what this might mean for his schooling in years to come.

Darla's email was very vague in terms of just saying that she wants to share ideas. You were wondering if she is going to recommend that Seth's behavioral needs are more than she can handle in the childcare center.

After worrying about the meeting since you got the email yesterday, you are walking into the room and ready to sit down at the table with Darla.

Engage in Role Play for Firm Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Teacher Role Play

Role Play Participants

- Darla Fuller – Childcare teacher played by yourself.
- Allison Cooper – Parent played by another group member.

Background Information

You will be assuming the role of **Darla Fuller** who is a first year teacher at a full-day childcare center on a large Army base. You graduated just several months ago from a community college in the same locale, and you are greatly relieved to have a job and are excited about getting started. Although you have grown up in the same community as the Army base, you don't know very much about Army life. You have been aware, however, that classmates of yours throughout the elementary and secondary years whose parents were in the military seem to move every year or so. You often hesitated to become friends with them because you knew that they would likely not be around for a long time.

Current Situation

You just started your job last week and had some professional development experiences and a chance to get your classroom set-up. You have scheduled 20-minute parent conferences with all of the parents of the children in your class. These conferences are spread out across two days, and you clearly are feeling nervous about meeting so many new people. You wonder if they will think you have had enough experience to really know how to best support their children's development. You also are wondering about the families in which one or both of the parents are deployed, and you especially want to be sensitive to the needs of their children. Your own parents were divorced when you were two, and from that time on your father lived very far away from you. He would call and write periodically, but you often just wished that he could be home. You are eager to understand the challenges associated with deployment for the military parents of children in your class.

Developing an Initial Friendly Relationship – Beginning Ground

The first parent coming in for a meeting is **Allison Cooper**. All you know about her is that she is the mother of Seth who is a new four-year-old who will be starting the childcare program this week. You are looking forward to meeting Allison, as well as all the parents. In your childcare program you learned about the importance of developing trusting partnerships with parents. It all sounded so much out of the textbook during the course, but now it is all too real. You are trying to recall exactly what it was that you learned that can help you get off to a good start and earn the trust of the parents you will be meeting over these next couple of days.

Allison has just walked into the room and sat down at the table with you. You open the conference by welcoming her.

Engage in Role Play for Beginning Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Making Shared Decisions – Middle Ground

After your sixth week of teaching, your concerns are escalating about Seth's behavior. You thought at first that he just needed more time to get adjusted, but his outbursts seem to be increasing rather than decreasing. He seems to start the day on a fairly even keel. He loves circle time, engages in lots of conversation, and sometimes has a hard time refraining from telling continual riddles and "knock-knock" jokes. He seems to tell the same ones over and over, and the other children get tired of it. Toward mid-morning and lunch, his behavior deteriorates to the point that he is very disruptive and distracting to other children in the class. Even though Seth perceives that he is playing and just having fun, some of the other children are afraid of him because he has hurt them with his roughhousing.

For the last several weeks, you have sent a couple of notes every week home to Allison about his behavior. Although you try to always point out good things that are happening, your notes have become increasingly negative in letting her know that Seth is very disruptive on most days.

You hate to tell Allison these things, because you know that it is hard for her, given that Seth's father is on a second deployment and the whole family, including Seth's older brother and sister, miss him very much. You don't want to add to Allison's worries.

Yesterday you sent a note home asking if you could have a phone call later today. You know it is hard for Allison to come in for meetings, but you want to have an extended conversation with her to see how things are going at home and also whether she has any ideas about why Seth's behavior seems to be getting worse rather than better. You know that it is very important for discipline to be consistent between home and school. You appreciate Allison's commitment to doing anything she possibly can to help Seth. You look forward to seeing if together you can come up with some constructive approaches.

Engage in Role Play for Middle Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Addressing Challenging Issues – Firm Ground

Maybe today is the day that was the straw that broke the camel's back. Seth came in with increased agitation, and his agitation seemed to grow hourly throughout the day. He knocked over furniture, knocked down his classmates, argued with you and your teaching assistant, and even had a couple of toileting accidents. By the end of the day, he had had a temper tantrum in the classroom when he didn't want to engage in your planned activities, and he also had a tantrum on the playground when it was time to come back inside. The assistant had to stay out on the playground with him for 20 extra minutes, because he absolutely would not budge and was kicking and screaming the whole time.

You know the time has come to take an additional step. There is a developmental clinic at a nearby medical center, and the director of your program has advised you that it is time to talk with Allison about initiating a referral for Seth to be evaluated by a psychologist who is a specialist in positive behavior support. You hope very much that this approach will provide help for Seth and also guidance for how you can be effective with him and prevent him from disrupting the whole class.

You have decided to send Allison an email to ask if she will meet with you tomorrow afternoon when she picks up Seth. You don't want to scare her in the email so you tell her very vaguely that you want to share some ideas with her about next steps.

She is just walking in the room and is joining you at the table. You open the conversation with her.

Engage in Role Play for Firm Ground

Debrief from Role Play

Credits

The CONNECT Content Team