

## The Connection between Home and School



- **Transition.** A strong connection between home and school is important. For many NM PreK students, the PreK year is their first exposure to formal education. Therefore, a proper transition from home to school is essential.
- **Family outreach.** Family orientations held early in the year will help families understand their role in the PreK program. Home visits help teachers learn about each family and goals each family has for their child. This is important information the teacher can use to tailor their PreK curriculum.
- **Family involvement.** A family's meaningful engagement in their children's early learning supports each child's school readiness and their later academic success (Henrich & Gadaire, 2008).
- **How PreK children learn.** Teachers also have a responsibility to educate parents about the role of play in the classroom. This exchange can be done by inviting parents into the classroom to take part in classroom activities or through classroom displays. A well thought-out and goal-based lesson plan posted where families can see will also help educate any visitors about how PreK-age children learn. Children's play is their work.

### Here are some ways to connect with families:

- Use arrival and departure times as an opportunity to share information about children
- Send home newsletters, communication logs, email reminders of classroom activities, and other forms of written communication
- Use family members' skills to make improvements to the classroom and school (landscaping, hemming dress-up clothes, painting the classroom)
- Ensure that all paperwork uses language relevant to the families you serve

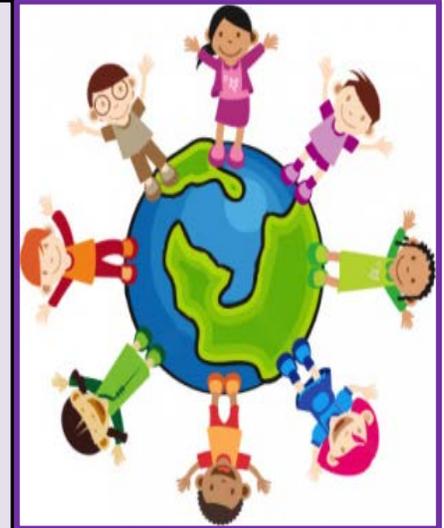
### Tips for working/ communicating with families:

- Keep open communication with families about child's accomplishments and activities in the classroom. It is important that families understand how their child is being taught and what they are learning.
- Establish two-way communication in which parents' feedback is valued as much as the teacher's input
- Communicate how purposeful play is the primary mode of learning for children
- Invite families to observe their children during various activities throughout their PreK day so they can discern the value of different teaching strategies
- Encourage families to share cultural heritage, stories, holiday celebrations, and other languages their families speak to encourage a connection between school and family

# Community Collaboration

## The Connection between School and Community

- The NM PreK classroom is an excellent place for children and families to connect to other important resources within the community. PreK administrators are expected to reach out to local community resource programs to establish relationships that will enrich the lives of PreK families.
- PreK administrators and teachers can improve the quality of services they provided in their community by educating other professionals about the needs of children and families in their neighborhoods.
- NM PreK should be viewed, not only as an opportunity to educate children but also, as an opportunity to educate families and other community members about the growth and development of children. Early childhood professionals have the important job of empowering families to be their child's strongest advocate.



## Here are a few ways to connect to the community around you:

- Hold regular meetings with other PreK teachers and administrators to discuss the needs of the children and families you serve
- Contact local Head Start programs, early intervention programs, food banks, housing resource centers, and health professionals to learn more about the services they provide
- Educate yourself and others about funding available to children and families and be an active advocate for the needs of these funds in your community
- Develop a relationship with kindergarten teachers and administrators at the local public schools; work together to make the transition from PreK to kindergarten easy for children and their families

### References:

Henrich, C., & Gadaire, D. (2008). Head Start and parental involvement. *Infants and Young Children*, Vol. 21 (1), pp. 56–69.

PED. (2019). New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines.