



RELATIONSHIP-FOCUSED FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Family engagement is created from relationships between caregivers, helpers, and communities in support of a child. Research shows that when families and helpers build strong partnerships, children learn and grow. The Pennsylvania Family Engagement Birth through College, Career, Community Ready Framework offers a resource for promoting effective family engagement. Here, the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College builds on this tool and shares relationship-focused considerations for families of children with disabilities as they develop strong partnerships with their children's helpers.

You Are Just What Your Child Needs

There are many points in the process of learning about, understanding, and advocating for your child. Remember that what a child needs more than anything is a supportive adult who loves them. It is your being there and loving your child that matters most of all.

Trust Yourself

You bring a wealth of knowledge to family



"I voiced my opinion on what I wanted for my child, but I also trusted what the educators were saying and doing because at the end of the day they are doing this job because of a passion."

- Parent

engagement relationships. You can advocate for your child by asking questions and sharing what you know about the child's needs. For example, you might share parts of your family's situation with the helper or offer thoughts on how the child is reacting to their experiences.

You Are Not Alone

As you navigate building relationships with your child's helpers, keep in mind that you are all on the same team together. Each adult in your child's life can bring different value to your child and to you, just as you bring so much value to your child's life.

