



Reflective Exercise: Engaging in Respectful and Responsive Relationships

Think about one child that you cared for today and the interactions you had with her or him. How did you show respect for her or him? In what ways were you responsive?

Describe how you were:

- ◆ warm and caring;
- ◆ sensitive to the needs of the child as an individual;
- ◆ available when the child needed you;
- ◆ supportive and encouraging; and
- ◆ responsive to the child's efforts to communicate with you.

While caring for a group of children, there may be moments when you are not as responsive as you would like to be toward an individual child. Taking time to think about and recognize these missed opportunities can lead to deeper reflection. As you think about the same child, ask yourself the following:

- ◆ Were there missed opportunities to be responsive? How did you know? What got in the way?
- ◆ What would you do differently next time?
- ◆ Is there any support you need from your colleagues or program?

Think about the last time you interacted with a family member of that child. How did you show respect for her or him? In what ways were you responsive?

While interacting with a group of children, their family members, and your colleagues, there may also be moments when you were not as responsive or respectful with family members as you would like to be. Again, recognize these missed opportunities can help you reflect and consider if there are changes you would like to make in your approach with family members. As you think about the same family member(s), ask yourself the following:

- ◆ Were there missed opportunities to have respectful and responsive interactions? How did you know? What got in the way?
- ◆ What would you do differently next time?
- ◆ Is there any support you need from your colleagues or program?



Set two goals for yourself to have responsive relationships with this child and his or her family members:

1.

2.

In the next couple of weeks, take time to think about your progress toward these goals.

- ◆ Were there times when you had more responsive interactions with the child or family member?
- ◆ Have you noticed changes in the child's or family members' behavior when you have been more responsive?
- ◆ In what areas do you need more support? Who or what can provide that support?

If possible, do this with a partner and discuss your goals and progress with each other.

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