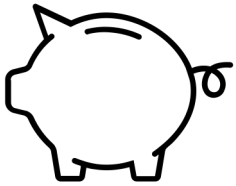


How to Build Relationships with Young Children



Making Relationship Deposits: Think of building relationships as making a deposit in a piggy bank.

- When you have positive interactions with children and use strategies for building relationships, you are making a deposit.
- When you are harsh with a child (scolding, criticizing, demanding) and have negative interactions, this is like a withdrawal from the piggy bank. It takes away from the relationship you've built.
- You can reflect on your interactions with children and ask yourself questions like "Am I making a deposit or a withdrawal?" or "Have I made a deposit in Jamal's piggy bank today?"
- Try to make sure you have a positive balance in each child's piggy bank by making more deposits than withdrawals.

How to Build Relationships with Young Children

Basics Strategies for All Ages

- Get to know each child's life outside of school by having their guardians fill out information surveys about them. Learn the names of pets and siblings.
- Ask parents what the child did over the weekend so you can talk to them about their experiences outside of the classroom.
- Listen to children when they speak and show interest in what they are trying to communicate.
- Learn about each child's interests and preferences, including how they like to be comforted.
- Find something you have in common with each child.
- Learn basic words or even a song in the child's home language.
- Learn a favorite song the child likes to sing with their parents.
- Respond to distress with warmth and kindness.

How to Build Relationships with Young Children

Basics Strategies for All Ages

- Post family pictures in the classroom and talk to children about their families.
- Make sure the children see you having positive interactions with the adults who pick them up and drop them off.
- Tell children how much they were missed when they are out of school and celebrate their return.
- Engage in one-on-one, face-to-face interactions with each child. Move to the child's eye level for interactions.
- Follow the child's lead during play and show interest in what they do.
- Provide warm, responsive physical contact.

How to Build Relationships with Young Children

Strategies for Infants

- Respond to their cues and attempts at communication.
- Engage in back-and-forth interactions with infants. Repeat and expand on their vocalizations and give them your attention when they are attempting to communicate. Pause to listen to their responses.
- Use a soothing tone of voice and physical contact to help them feel safe when they are distressed.
- Play simple, interactive games such as peek-a-boo.
- Make routines fun and interactive for infants. Talk to them about what you're doing when you change their diaper and interact while feeding them.
- Find opportunities throughout the day to give each infant your full attention.

How to Build Relationships with Young Children

Strategies for Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Create “All About Me” books for each child and share them at circle time. Keep these books in the book area so children can look at them with teachers and classmates.
- Provide choices when possible, such as offering the choice to hop or crab walk to the sink to wash their hands.
- Take children’s questions seriously. Answer them whenever possible. If you do not know the answer, look it up together.
- Let children choose how they want to say hello and goodbye for the day. Make a poster or even an apron with options such as a hug, high five, or wave.
- Respect children’s bodily autonomy by asking before touching them whenever possible.

References

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/wwb12.pdf>

<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout5.pdf>