



## Infants & Toddlers

# Family Engagement

Family members are the most important people in young children's lives. In this course you will learn how family-centered practice, strong family engagement, and positive, effective communication all contribute to high-quality early childhood practice. You will also learn effective strategies for working with and strengthening families of children with special needs, military families, and families facing other challenges.



Course Guide



Competency Reflection



Crosswalk

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## **Families: An Introduction**

Family members are the most important people in young children's lives, and impact how infants and toddlers develop and learn. To effectively develop partnerships with families and to help create an environment that meets the needs of each infant and toddler in their care, it is important for caregivers to understand families as a system and the impact of parenting in early childhood. This lesson shares perspectives for understanding families and provides an introduction to family-centered practice.

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## **Promoting Family Engagement**

Strong family engagement is an integral part of high-quality early-childhood practice. Research indicates that family engagement is essential to infant and toddler development and can lead to positive results in their readiness for school. This lesson defines and shares perspectives for understanding family engagement and highlights the benefits for infants, toddlers, families and caregivers.

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## **Promoting Family Engagement: Communicating With Families**

Infant and toddler development occurs so quickly. When families and caregivers communicate and share what is observed and experienced, it creates opportunities to better understand and support this rapid developmental growth. Asking questions, communicating and listening with families helps support continuity of care between home and the care setting. This lesson will highlight ways to collect and share information with families in caring, supportive and easy-to-understand ways.

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## **Working With Families of Children With Special Needs**

This lesson will highlight the ways in which you can play an important role in supporting families of children with special needs in your early care and learning program. You will learn recommendations for effective collaboration with families and other professionals and begin to understand the additional roles and responsibilities placed on many families of children with special needs.

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## **Strengthening and Supporting Military Families and Families Facing Challenges**

Many times, families are faced with challenges that put them and their children at risk. Families of infants and toddlers will need your support and assistance with accessing resources. Similarly, military families in your care will experience unique circumstances that can affect their functioning and well-being. This lesson will help you become aware of factors that can affect infants, toddlers and families in your program and will highlight effective ways to support these families.