

Tips and Things to Remember:

Tips for Communicating with Families

(From: An Early Education Provider's Guide to Early Intervention Services in Pennsylvania)

- All families want their children to learn, grow and be included. Learn what this means for your families.
- Remember that families of children with special needs typically have a lot more people in their lives that they must coordinate with, fill out paperwork for, keep track of, etc. Be patient and supportive.
- Families of children with special needs are often referred to multiple services/supports from multiple people (doctor, family, friends, and other service providers). It can be overwhelming to figure out where to start and to coordinate.
- Be a resource to the family: help them to connect to their community and to other families.
- Get to know kids as kids first!
- Ask parents what information would be helpful for them to know about their child's day.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions, but understand that parents may not have all of the answers.



- If a concern arises, address the concern as soon as possible. Do not wait until the concern becomes a crisis, or until you have numerous concerns to address.
- When addressing concerns, make it clear that you are interested in overcoming the barrier and wish to come up with a solution that will work for everyone. Start with the positives-what you have to build on/work with! What is going well?
- Remember that parents may have had previous negative experiences. Treat them with respect, and encourage open communication. Let them know that you are interested in working with them and their child.
- Seek out support for yourself! Don't be afraid to say you don't know. Or need more information. Connect with others who can help to guide and support you.