

# Reflect to Connect!



Strong family engagement is rooted in strong listening. Each time we meet with families it's an opportunity to listen and learn more about their strengths, needs, stories, and traditions.

Asking yourself these three questions sets you up to form strong connections with families.

## When Meeting Families Ask Yourself...

### 1 Am I assuming the best?

All families want to be engaged and want to do what they can to support their child's learning. When we assume families share our goal of great outcomes for their children, we start strong.

### 2 Am I applying a differentiation mindset?

As an educator, you know every child is unique and has individual needs. Your relationships with families benefit from applying that same differentiated approach! The more we learn about families the more we can discover how to best scaffold their engagement.

### 3 What can I learn from the family?

Understanding your students' families can give you invaluable insights that will help their children thrive in school. When meeting with families remain curious and:

#### • Practice active listening.

- What language do they speak?
- What is their background?
- How does the family perceive and value education?
- What are their hopes and dreams for their child?

#### • Look for points of connection.

- Can you connect on parenting? Culture? Likes? Traditions? Food?
- Can you connect them with other families who share similar experiences, cultures, languages, or backgrounds?

#### • Flip roles. How can they teach you?

- Look at a map together. Can they tell you about their home country? Their connection to this community?
- Can they share some words in their language (if you don't know how to say hello, ask and practice with them)?
- Can they introduce you to foods? Music?

Remember that, more often than not, people want to share experiences and have their stories heard.