

## Professional Development Toolbox

### Relationships with Families



- ❖ Ask teachers how they include families in developing children's mathematical thinking. Work with the teachers to create a list of possible intentionally-planned activities to build a connection with families through math (See the Engaging Families section of "Creative Pathways to Math" by Doug Clements for more ideas.). Support the teachers in creating a concrete action plan to include one of these ideas.
- ❖ Discuss the importance of using the home language in the classroom—specifically for mathematical development—for programs with multiple home languages. Work with the teachers to create a list of concepts for parents to teach at home in the home language, such as shapes, numerals, and quantities. (PCF, Vol. 1, pp. 235, 294)
- ❖ Ask teachers how they can communicate the value of using mathematical language in every day interactions with parents. Suggest a "math word wall" that parents can use as a reminder to incorporate these words daily—in and out of the classroom. (PCF, Vol. 1, pp. 257, 279, 289)
- ❖ Give teachers a copy of "Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins, Mathematics" to read before the next visit. Focusing on strategies to support families, ask teachers

to develop two ideas to implement that will help parents support children's mathematical development. (PCF, Vol. 1, p. 294)

- ❖ Invite teachers to read the following quote on page 88 of *Family Partnerships and Culture*: “Children’s early mathematical knowledge and skills develop and are strengthened through the math-related experiences they have at home (Benigno and Ellis 2008).”

Ask teachers to share their reactions to this quote; then invite teachers to consider the following questions:

- What do you know about the math-related experiences children have at home?
- How do you build on these experiences at school now?
- How could you learn more?

Suggest that one strategy might be to send a letter home inviting families to share how they use math on a daily basis. Some families may use it daily for cooking while others use it daily in their job at a construction site. Work with the teachers to draft a letter inviting families to share their everyday use of math.