

Relationships with Families



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CALIFORNIA PRESCHOOL LEARNING FOUNDATIONS



Watch the "scarf video" with staff members. Allow participants to openly share thoughts and responses to the video. After spontaneous conversation slows down, pose the question, "Did you notice the music? The music was brought by a parent and thus represents family culture. Do you have opportunities for parents to share music?" Discuss what that same activity would look like with other music.

Children often consider their family members to be experts at many tasks. Foster this feeling by creating a wall of artists. Ask families to bring in pictures of their family and have children dictate what kind of artists their family members are. A mom may report she is a musician while a child may believe her to be an illustrator. The teacher can use the perspective of the families and children or only the children.

Multiple communities have begun holding art walks downtown. Brainstorm with teachers what a school or classroom art walk may look like. Together create lists different types of art teachers and children may exhibit for parents to experience (e.g., art walk and display sculptures, drawing, paintings, and photographs of dancing, child made costumes, backdrops, etc.). Together make a list of all action steps that may need to occur to hold an art walk for parents (contact administrator, create art, invite parents, etc.).

Give teachers the tip sheet "Drama and Young Children" from the Illinois State Board of Education. Help teachers involve families in creating a "pet store." Suggest asking families to donate pet props such as collars as well as old stuffed animals. Families can also send in empty pet food containers. Work with teachers to turn the dramatic play area into a pet store using these props.

Read pages 89-90 of the Family Partnerships and Culture publication with teachers. Make a list of ideas that teachers can invite families to share their culture's visual and performing arts. Invite teachers to read page 52 of the Best Practices Integrated Nature of Learning. After reading reinforce the definition of a dynamic curriculum as described by this document. Then pose the question " how do you and your program use your families to support a dynamic curriculum in visual and performing arts?" Based on what you know about your current children and families how might you expand on this to create a deeper, richer more dynamic VPA experiences?