



Pre-K Lead Teacher: Family and Community

- ▶ **Audience:** Pre-K Lead Teachers
- ▶ **Type:** Self-Paced with Rolling Enrollment
- ▶ **Enrollment:** September 1, 2022-April 14, 2023
- ▶ **Duration:** September 1, 2022 - May 19, 2023

Description: Parents have been teaching their children since birth. Educators have much to gain by recognizing the role of the parents and including them as partners in their child's education. Traditionally, parent involvement was defined as time parents spent in the classroom volunteering. Today many parents work or have responsibilities outside the home. Educators must think of parent participation in new ways. Since families vary in their cultures, ethnicities, belief systems, experiences, compositions, parenting abilities, and geographic locations, developing positive relationships with families both formally and informally is crucial in the early childhood setting. Good communication is essential for building partnerships with families. When young children observe respectful and genuine interactions between their families and teachers, they see that their two worlds – home and school – are connected. The Early Childhood Curriculum course has been specifically designed for early childhood educators working full-time in West Virginia Universal Pre-K classrooms.

Course Goals:

- ▶ Define differences and similarities in families.
- ▶ Define family engagement in a child's education.
- ▶ Investigate strategies to learn about family interests.
- ▶ Demonstrate ways to help families feel welcome.
- ▶ Develop ways to convey a positive message in the classroom for families.
- ▶ Discover strategies to create a welcoming environment.
- ▶ Demonstrate the importance of sharing positive and specific information about the child's interests, skills, and abilities.
- ▶ Discuss ways of using clear and objective descriptions of the child's behavior and accomplishments.
- ▶ Explore strategies to help parents become effectively involved in their child's education.
- ▶ Discuss ways to make classroom participation meaningful for families.
- ▶ Identify the importance that parents, families, and communities can and must play in facilitating student learning.
- ▶ Recognize the four major forms of school community partnerships and factors that influence their implementation and results.
- ▶ Identify goals and activities for a One Year Action Plan for a school, family, and community partnership.
- ▶ Understand the importance of collaborating with community—families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.
- ▶ Develop a plan for working with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance students' skills and parent involvement.



Session Overviews

▶ **Session One - Getting to Know Families**

Children have increasingly diverse backgrounds. Families vary in their cultures, ethnicities, belief systems, experiences, compositions, parenting abilities, and geographic locations. To ensure continuity and give meaning to what is learned in school, teachers must become familiar with children's everyday lives. During this session participants will define differences and similarities in families, investigate strategies to learn about family interests, and learn to appreciate cultural differences in families of children in their classroom.

▶ **Session Two - Making Families Feel Welcome**

Developing positive relationships with families both formally and informally are crucial in the early childhood setting. During this session participants will learn to use what they know about families to help families feel welcome in the classroom. The environment in the classroom and ways you introduce your program can make families feel they belong and that they have a role to play. During this session participants will also learn strategies to create a welcoming environment so parents will know about the classroom and begin to build a trusting relationship.

▶ **Session Three - Communicating with Families**

Effective communication is essential for building partnerships with families. When young children observe respectful and genuine interactions between their families and teachers, they see that their two worlds – home and school – are connected. During this session participants will learn the importance of sharing positive and specific information about the child's interests, skills, and abilities as well as using clear and objective descriptions of the child's behavior and accomplishments.

▶ **Session Four - Partnering with Families**

Parents have been teaching their children since birth. Educators have much to gain by recognizing the role of the parents and including them as partners in their child's education. Traditionally, parent involvement was defined as time parents spent in the classroom volunteering. Today, many parents work or have responsibilities outside the home. Educators must think of parent participation in new ways. During this session participants will explore strategies to help parents become effectively involved in their child's education.

▶ **Session Five: Supporting Children and Families - Community Resources**

Community resources can strengthen the family's ability to be lifelong educators for their child. During this session participants will discover ways to identify resources and activities available in the community to support the needs of each individual family based upon observations and interactions with the family.

▶ **Session Six: Informing Families - Community Resources**

It is important for families to have community resource information—working in a partnership with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities is crucial for a child's success. There are many opportunities for parents to become involved with their child's education, from volunteering in the classroom, to serving on the school improvement team, to participating in the PTA. During this session participants will discuss ways in which to locate and provide information to families to be active in their community.

Course Grades

All grades in the course gradebook must be a checkmark for successful course completion. A checkmark indicates that all work has been completed and the work meets the expectations for that assignment. Quiz scores must meet the minimum expectations as stated in the course.

