

Building provider/parent self esteem

Building Staff & Parent Self-Esteem

Involving Parents

It goes without saying that most parents are guilt-ridden when leaving their child's care with someone other than themselves. Paving the way for a smoother transition and for better parent/provider communication and acceptance will enhance the quality of care for everyone involved. Here are some ways directors and caregivers can help build parent self-esteem in their child care.

Establish a drop-off routine with each child that will make the separation period easier. This could include a Hug and Good-bye corner, finding ways that work with each child to redirect their attention from the leaving parent to the fun inside the home or centre, etc.

Not overburdening parents with requests for field trip volunteers, snacks or baked goods, assistance with various projects. This only serves to reinforce a parent's guilt when they are not able to help out due to work commitments. Set up a system of allowing parents to volunteer according to their own time, schedule and ability.

Schedule some time once a month to simply ask parents if there is anything they need from the centre/home, if they have any concerns, or if they can tell you how their child appears to be adjusting from their perspective. You could also set up an information station where parents can drop off or pick up notes when they are rushed. This is a great place to leave notes for parents telling them what their child's day has been like, how they are adjusting to care, or if you have any concerns about the child's health etc. Or you could attach a simple Post-It note to each child's cubby or backpack telling the parents a special thing their child did that day.

Host a surprise "Parents Are Kewl" day, complete with child decorated banners, cards, and child-baked treats. Give each parent a note thanking them for using your services and letting them know how valuable they are.

Staff Self-esteem

Child care providers seldom get the recognition they deserve for the valuable work they do. Yet there are many simple ways to let your child care providers/teachers know they are tops in your book.

Take a few moments to attach a note of appreciation to the caregiver's paycheck or fee payment.

Recognize a staff member's or caregiver's achievements such as completed courses, positive feedback from parents, volunteer efforts in the community. Post the appreciation where everyone can see it as well.

Involve the staff in new developments, asking them to coordinate the changes if they are up to the challenge, and ask for their honest feedback on the changes. Listen to them openly and respect their opinion.

Have an open door policy for caregivers as well as parents. Be as approachable as possible.

Encourage humour in your home or facility. Set up a Humour Bulletin Board where everyone can post jokes, cartoons, funny quips, etc. Decorate the area in a fun way.

Free Self-esteem Gifts

Here are some simple ways to boost both parents and caregiver self-esteem that don't cost a cent.

The Gift of Listening: Really listening, no interrupting, no planning a response.

▶The Gift of Affection: Be generous with pats on the back, acknowledgment touches, etc. These small gestures demonstrate a sincere affection to the person involved.

▶The Gift of Laughter: Share funny stories with your parents and caregivers. Encourage them to do the same.

▶The Gift of a Written Note: Sometimes the simplest words mean the most, like a Thank You note, or a few words of appreciation penned on a sticky note.

▶The Gift of a Compliment: A simple and sincere compliment will perk up anyone's day.

▶The Gift of a Favor: Every day, go out of your way to do something, even one thing kind.

▶The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition: A cheerful disposition affects everyone it touches. A kind word, a smile, a happy hello, make a gift that keeps on giving.