

**Coaches Corner: Building Relationships**  
**Part 1 of 3: Colleagues**



This is a 3 part article:

1. Building Relationships with your colleagues
2. Building Relationships with families
3. Building Relationships with children

Building meaningful relationships is the cornerstone of any Early Childhood Program. Strong positive relationships will result in effective communication, cooperation and collaboration. Think of relationships as a car, if it is taken care of and full of gas, it runs like a dream and is reliable. If you neglect your car and let it get low on gas, you nervously watch the control panel for lights to appear, saying you are out of gas or you need to check your engine. If you run your gas tank dry and/or that engine light comes on, your car is in for some major repairs....which you may not be able to handle yourself. The mechanic (the expert) lets you know that he needs to overhaul the engine due to the damage and gives you an estimate that you will not be able to use your car for a month. It is much easier and less stressful if you keep your car in good working order. The same goes for your relationships.

The next few articles will discuss ways you can build strong positive relationships with the families and children in your program. In this first article, we will be focusing on building relationships with colleagues.

Tips for building and nurturing your relationships with colleagues:

- **Communicate Openly**
  - Don't hide important information from each other or only grant the information to a select group. Being aware of how the program is doing and what is happening in the program helps others see how their role fits into the bigger picture; it also makes them more likely to respect and trust you.
  - Always keep your team members in the loop.
- **Gratitude and Appreciation**
  - Saying "please" and "thank you" go a long way.
  - Be empathetic to your colleagues and appreciate the efforts that they contribute to your program.
  - When a colleague consistently does great work yet receives no recognition, you can be sure that his/her job satisfaction and morale is low. She might even consider finding a program that does appreciate his/her work. To make this scenario unrealistic at your program, be grateful for the work your colleagues do and show your appreciation through public or private recognition, parties, gift cards or whatever else would appeal to your team.
- **Consistent Feedback**
  - In order to improve, a person must receive feedback, both positive and constructive. People find it frustrating when their work has been changed or a project isn't used but receive no feedback as to why these actions have happened.
  - As for supervisors, help your staff grow by offering them frequent feedback on their work. Set up monthly or weekly meetings to check in with them about their progress and what goals they want to accomplish. When you take these steps, you'll see staff more engaged with their work.
- **Following Through**
  - Nothing makes you lose credibility faster than when you overpromise and don't deliver expected results. No matter what the scenario is, as a part of a program, you owe it to your colleagues to follow through on your commitments. Evoke trust and respect from your colleagues by showing that your commitment to them is important.



Adapted from Workplace Insights: <http://blog.capital.org>

Other source: Right Management [www.right.com](http://www.right.com)