

Sense of Self: Building Positive Relationships with Staff Members

Forming positive relationships with staff members helps you understand who staff members are as individuals and how they define their identities. This prepares you to do the important work of nurturing their professional and personal development. Consider the following questions to help you build positive relationships:

1. Get to know each staff member as a professional. Think about:
 - What inspired the staff member to work in child or youth programs? What does he or she get excited about professionally? What drives him or her to come to work and do well?
 - What does the staff member's daily schedule look like? When are good times for conversation outside of the classroom or program day?
 - What is the staff member's style of interacting with other adults and with children? How does the staff member like the classroom or program space organized?
 - What is the staff member's history with the program? Is the staff member new to child and youth programs, or has he or she worked in other child or youth programs before? Does the staff member feel confident in his or her role?
 - What experiences have prepared the staff member for his or her current role?
 - What experiences has the staff member had with coaching or mentoring? What worked well for him or her? What helps him or her learn?

2. Get to know each staff member as a person. Think about:
 - What is going on in the staff member's life outside of the program? Who are the important people in the staff member's life? What are his or her responsibilities to family and/or community?
 - What stories does the staff member share?
 - How does the staff member choose to communicate? Do they tend to be talkative or more reserved? How do they communicate about problems or concerns? How do they communicate about celebrations or success?
 - What can you relate to about the staff member? What do you have in common?

3. Get to know each staff member's priorities. Think about:
 - What is the staff member excited about? What are his or her goals for the next few months or year?
 - What resources does the staff member ask for? Does he or she ask for advice? Materials?

4. Get to know each staff member's achievements. Think about:
 - What does the staff member love to do? What does the staff member do really well?
 - How does the staff member like to be recognized for a job well done? Do they appreciate public recognition, or do they prefer private conversations?