



*From Parents to Partners*  
*Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program*

*Second Edition*  
*Janis Keyser*

**Book Study Facilitator Guide**  
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## ***From Parents to Partners Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program***

### **Facilitator Guide**

This book focuses on supporting participants as they explore ways to connect with parents in meaningful ways. According to the text, “The relationships between a teacher and children’s family members have tremendous potential for affecting the lives of young children.” This facilitator guide provides a framework to support educators in a book study format. Through study, reflection, and interactive discussion with colleagues, participants will build more family-centered practice.

### **Book**

***From Parents to Partners Building a Family-Centered Early Childhood Program***

**Second edition by Janis Keyser**

### **Format**

This book study can be facilitated using a virtual or in-person format. Participants can easily apply discussion questions with either option. The timeline below is an example and can be adjusted to meet the needs of the group. Class meetings are designed to take about 60-90 minutes. Each meeting begins with a connecting activity to encourage participants to focus and be present as they transition to the class. Collaboration partners will share their reflections and application of new learning at each meeting. Facilitators can use small and large group discussion questions online using a Facebook group or Google or in-person.

### **Timeline/Assigned Reading Schedule**

Meetings	Date and Time	Assigned Reading
1		Introduction xi-xii
2		Chapters 1-2 pages 1-31
3		Chapter 3 pages 32-46
4		Chapters 4-5 pages 47-67
5		Chapter 6 pages 68-85
6		Chapters 7-8 pages 86-118
7		Chapters 9-10 pages 119-152
8		Chapters 11-12 pages 153-174

**Goals and Objectives**

- Identify the principles of family-centered care.
- Examine connections between the philosophy of Reggio Emilia and the principles of family-centered care.
- Explore the use of effective communication strategies, including technology, to overcome challenges including, how technology can support connections.
- Identify ways to ensure family-centered principles extend to formal communication and events.
- Understand the importance of designing environments and curriculum to strengthen relationships with families.
- Apply new learning to effectively include families as valued members of the early childhood team.

The following is a possible class meeting schedule for participants:

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**Meeting 1**

Introductory Meeting (Virtual or In-Person)

**Introductions:**

Participant Introductions:

- Name/Background in early childhood and current position.
- Tell about a family member who has been influential in your life.
- Share a favorite activity your family enjoys together.

**Group Expectations:**

- Complete reading assignments (including exploring websites in the chapters) before each meeting
- As you read, take time to reflect and make connections. Be prepared to share your insights and possible application of new learning during each session.
- Participate in discussions either in a virtual session or in-person.
- Choose a collaboration partner and complete the discussion opportunities between class meetings. Ideally, your partner should be another participant in the class but could also be a colleague, friend, or local WYECPLC facilitator.
- As with any professional learning opportunity, set goals, and next steps to ensure you apply this new learning to your practice.

**Exploring the textbook:**

- Take a few minutes to explore the book.

- Look through the Table of Contents, find a chapter that interests you, and explore that chapter.
- Share out why you are looking forward to digging into that chapter.

**Discuss pages:** Discuss pages xi-xii

**Choose a Collaboration Partner:**

One way to deepen learning and impact practice is to share and reflect with others. Each week there will be an activity for you to complete with your partner. During this first session, choose a partner, exchange contact information, and agree on a day and time to complete the weekly discussions. Depending on your needs, the discussions can take place using phone, Zoom, Google, email or, in-person.

**Closing Activity:**

What are your feelings about working with families? Participants will answer this question and create a Word Cloud (or chart paper if not using technology). Keep this initial Word Cloud and generate another during the last meeting as visual documentation of a deeper understanding of partnering with families.

<https://www.polleverywhere.com/word-cloud?ref=PIW0qgbZ&campaignid=1880835747&adgroupid=69292988799&keyword=%2Bword%20%2Bcloud%20%2Bfor%20%2Bme>

**For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: Chapters 1-2 pages 1-31
- Participants will make initial contact with their collaboration partner and decide on a format and time to connect between meetings.

**Meeting 2**

**Chapters 1-2**

The Importance of Family-Teacher Partnerships/Five Principles of Family-Centered Care

**Connecting Activity:**

Encourage participants to take a moment to transition to the meeting. Write down on paper some of the things you brought with you. (E.g., worries, concerns, to-do lists, family needs, and work issues are just a few examples of things that make it hard to be present). Circle the things you can let go. If you are willing, share one thing on your list.

**Discuss pages: 16-31**

**Small-Group Discussion (In small groups or break-out sessions if virtual):**

- Look at the list of information families have about their children on pages 17-18. What information on this list is helpful to know about children and families in your program? How could you create a system to invite families to share this information?
- In what ways are you already partnering with families? In what ways would you like to further build partnerships with families? One person from each small group share-out with the large group.

### **Large Group Discussion:**

Read through the gray box on page 28

What are the obstacles you face in building family-centered care?

Identify obstacles for families?

### **For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 pages 32-46
- Partner Discussion (between class meetings): Look at page 31 and read through the strategies for building family-centered care. Discuss with your partner how you will respond to the challenge of implementing new strategies for ensuring a more family-centered program. Decide who will share your thinking with the group at the next meeting.
- Have participants visit the following websites for the next class:  
[www.boulderjourneyschool.com](http://www.boulderjourneyschool.com)  
[www.cowhollowschool.org](http://www.cowhollowschool.org)  
[www.c5children.org/philosophy/guiding-principles](http://www.c5children.org/philosophy/guiding-principles)

## **Meeting 3**

### **Chapter 3**

Inspirations From Reggio Emilia: Looking At Family-Centered Care Through Another Lens

### **Connecting Activity:**

To prepare for the meeting, take a breath, and be present. Reflect on the websites listed in the chapter this week. Write down three words or phrases to describe what resonated with you as you explored the program websites. Circle the word or phrase you would like to share with the group.

### **Partner Share-out:**

Have partners share reflections from their discussion.

**Discuss pages 32-37 and websites:**

[www.boulderjourneyschool.com](http://www.boulderjourneyschool.com)

[www.cowhollowschool.org](http://www.cowhollowschool.org)

[www.c5children.org/philosophy/guiding-principles](http://www.c5children.org/philosophy/guiding-principles)

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

#### **40 points of Entry: Cow Hollow School-A New Look at Parent Participation**

Page 43-46

Think about the many ways the Cow Hollow School has identified to connect with and involve families in meaningful ways. Read through the entry points on pages 43-46. In break-out or small groups, share which of the entry points you are currently using, which ones you would be willing to try in your practice. Take notes and have a representative from your group share out in the large group.

### **Large Group Discussion:**

Look at the gray box on page 37.

Reflect on a time when someone really heard what you were saying. How did you feel? How did this affect your relationship? Reflect on a time when you were trying to talk to someone who wasn't listening to you. How did this affect your relationship? What implications does this have for your work with children and families?

### **For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: Chapters 4-5 pages 47-67
- Partner Discussion: Choose one of the websites from chapter 3 and explore it. Look for ways the program connects with families. What new strategies did you identify, and could you implement any of ideas in your program?

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## **Meeting 4**

### **Chapters 4-5**

Effective Communication With Families: An Overview/Daily Communication

### **Connecting Activity:**

Read a children's book about families to the class (or share a YouTube video). Choose a book about different kinds of families. Understanding all the ways people define and live in families can inform how programs communicate with each family. One example is the book, *Families* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Z9tZSWpTT4>

After listening to the book, discuss how different kinds of families will impact communication between school and home.

## **Partner Share-out:**

**Discuss pages 47-67.**

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

Some messages support family-centered care, while other messages can impede it. After looking through the lists on pages 48-49, think about the messages communicated by your program. Share some examples within your small group. What are some ways you could more clearly communicate with families? Be ready to share out in a large group.

### **Large Group Discussion:**

Acknowledging and Respecting Diversity

You may not currently have families in your program who speak a language other than English. After reading through pages 56-57, reflect on how you have communicated effectively with diverse families in the past. How you might ensure effective communication with families in the future.

### **For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 pages 68-85
- Partner Discussion:  
“Families and teachers each bring unique expertise and experience to the partnership. Recognizing and respecting the knowledge of each person is essential to building an effective partnership. Parents have funds of knowledge about their individual children and family over time and in many different circumstances that can provide a wealth of information to educators about their children.” (Moll et al.1992; Gonzalez et al. 1995). How will you encourage families to share their expertise and knowledge with your program?
- Have participants visit the following websites for the next class:  
[www.opalschool.org](http://www.opalschool.org)  
[www.c5children.org](http://www.c5children.org)  
[www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/assessment-for-learning](http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/assessment-for-learning)

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## **Meeting 5**

### **Chapter 6**

How Can Technology Support Family-Centered Care?

### **Connecting Activity:**

Close your eyes, and picture a family.

When you have a picture in your mind, open your eyes.

How does your image of family compare to your childhood family? The families you are currently in your program? The family you are in now? What does your definition of a family need to include to inclusive of all families?

### **Partner Share-out:**

**Discuss pages 74-85 and websites:**

[www.opalschool.org](http://www.opalschool.org)

[www.c5children.org](http://www.c5children.org)

[www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/assessment-for-learning](http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/assessment-for-learning)

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

According to the text, “In a family-centered program, it’s critical to provide opportunities for shared decision making and collaboration. Several technological tools invite this kind of partnership.” After considering the examples, share how you are currently using technology and what tools you might want to explore.

### **Large Group Discussion:**

After reading the Journey of Discoveries on pages 80 and 81, what intrigued you most about this project? How might you apply this kind of innovative collaboration to your program?

### **For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: pages 86-118
- Partner Discussion: According to the chapter, technology can be a useful tool to encourage educator collaboration. Share with your partner ways you collaborate with fellow educators and document student learning.

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## **Meeting 6**

### **Chapters 7-8**

Challenges to Communication: Problems Affecting the Child at Home or at School

Challenges to Communication: Conflict Between Family and Program

### **Connecting Activity:**

Write down three challenging situations with a child/ family you have dealt with in the past week. Circle one you would like to focus on as you look at solutions in this week’s chapters.

## **Partner Share-out:**

**Discuss pages 86-93**

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

In your small group, share with the group the challenging behavior you circled in our connecting activity. As a group, think about the possible reasons for the behavior. Discuss strategies for sharing with the child's parents using developmental information. Choose one example to share with the large group.

### **Large Group Discussion:**

Reflect on the impact of the language we use with families. Read through the statements in the gray box on page 97. Imagine you are a parent. Respond to the statements and answer the questions in the box.

### **For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: pages 119-152
- Partner Discussion:

On page 116, read through the examples in the gray box, Practicing Limit Setting with Families. Choose one example and brainstorm with your partner how you would set limits with parents in these situations.

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## **Meeting 7**

### **Chapters 9-10**

Formal Communications: Conferences and Written Communication

Creating Successful Parent Meetings and Events

### **Connecting Activity:**

Imagine a child you have never met before. Think about all the things you would like to know about this child and his/her family that would help you provide the best possible care and education. Make a list and circle one thing you want to share with the group.

## **Partner Share-out:**

**Discuss:** Pages 119-152

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

Reflecting on Family Conferences. Read through the gray box on page 124 and reflect on your programs' current practice of conferencing with families. Identify strengths in your practice and

areas you are interested in improving? As a group, choose both strengths, and strategies for positive changes in your practice. Share with the large group.

### **Large Group Discussion: (Final Project )**

Discuss writing a philosophy statement for a family handbook (Read through the gray box on page 130). The statement can be completed individually, with co-workers or with partners. Participants will share their philosophy statements during the last meeting.

### **For Next Meeting:**

- Reading Assignment: pages 153-174

Bring an Item to Share:

For next week, think about an item from your childhood that has special meaning for your family. Bring the item or an image of the item to the meeting and be prepared to share why you choose the item.

- Partner Discussion:

Consider your goals for parent meetings. Read through the gray box on page 142.

Together, make a list of 5-10 goals for parents in a successful parent meeting. Complete the tasks listed in the box and choose what you will share with the group.

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## **Meeting 8**

### **Chapters 11-12**

Classroom Environments/Curriculum in a Family-Centered Classroom

### **Connecting Activity:**

Share your item and memory with the group.

### **Partner Share-out:**

Discuss pages 153-162

### **Small-Group Discussion:**

Look at the gray box on page 154, Reflecting on What Messages Your Space Gives Families.

Think of all the spaces in your environment where families interact with your program. Use the questions in the box to guide a discussion about ensuring your spaces are genuinely welcoming to families.

Briefly discuss pages 163-174

### **Large Group Discussion:**

What experiences have you had encouraging input from families in curriculum decisions? Can you think of families who have skills or interests that they might like to share?

**For Next Time:**

- Reading Assignment: pages 175-206
- Partner Discussion: Look at the gray box on page 171. Read through the activity and share your ideas with your partner. Choose one children's book from your list that provides an accurate representation of children and families in your program and share at the next meeting.

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**Meeting 9**

**Chapters 13-14**

Families as Teaching Partners at Home and at School/Welcoming Families into the Partnership

**Connecting Activity:**

Ask the question from the first meeting: What are your feelings about working with families? Have participants answer this question and create a Word Cloud (or chart paper if not using technology).

<https://www.polleverywhere.com/word-cloud?ref=PIW0qgbZ&campaignid=1880835747&adgroupid=69292988799&keyword=%2Bword%20%2Bcloud%20%2Bfor%20%2Bme>

Compare this Word Cloud to the one from the initial meeting.

Discuss pages 175-206

**Partner Share-out:**

**Small-Group Discussion:**

Imagine having families involved in the classroom in meaningful ways. After reading the gray boxes on pages 176-177, create a list of the issues and challenges you have faced with parents spending time in the classroom. Next, develop guidelines that would respectfully address the challenges. Share in the large group.

**Large Group Discussion:**

Sharing of Philosophy Statements