ACKNOWLEDGE, ASK ADAPT
Communicating with Families to Resolve Issues

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE: Reflect and Listen**
   - Communicate awareness of the issue
   - Convey sincere interest and responsiveness
   - Involve the family in seeking a joint solution

2. **ASK: Learn About the Family Member’s Point of View**
   - Gather data, clarify
   - Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal responses
   - Restate what you think the family member is saying

3. **ADAPT: Work with the Family Toward a Solution**
   - Listen for areas of common agreement
   - Negotiate around important issues
   - Seek win-win solutions
ACKNOWLEDGE, ASK, ADAPT
Process in Communicating

Step 1: Acknowledge

How do you recognize the need for communication with the other person? How does your attitude convey sincere interest and response? What can you say to the other person to communicate an awareness that there is a problem you need to jointly solve?

◆ Take time to think about how you feel about this issue and get clarity on the reasons behind your feelings.

◆ Listen carefully to the other person’s concern. If you bring up the concern, do it respectfully with an attitude of wanting to understand the issue. Seek the other’s point of view without being critical, arguing, disagreeing or trying to solve the problem.

Step 2: Ask

How can you get information that will help you understand more precisely the other person’s point of view?

◆ The next step is data gathering, trying to get to the real sources for conflict or misunderstanding for the other person or for you. There is more than one way to ask. It may be appropriate to ask directly and then follow with more questions to clarify. Or there may be other ways you can find out through observations or other means rather than asking direct questions, which sometimes are culturally inappropriate.

◆ Pay attention to verbal and nonverbal responses. Restate what you think is being said, take time to be sure you are meaning the same thing in the language you are using.

Step 3: Adapt

How do you work with the other person to define the issues and boundaries of the problem? Do you seek “common ground” as the basis for negotiation? Do you open up a negotiation with the other person about what to do?

◆ Once the issues have been defined, seek out the common ground by stating your areas of greatest importance to each other. Listen carefully for areas of common agreement.

◆ Negotiate around the areas of important agreements and boundaries. Come to a resolution that addresses the real/major issues. Sometimes we have to agree to disagree.
When Parents and Staff Disagree

Adapted by Linda Brault from an activity by Janet Gonzalez-Mena

Parents and staff sometimes hold very strong views about how children are supposed to be cared for. These deep-seated ideas are embedded in each of us and remain mostly subconscious and nonverbal until challenged by someone with a conflicting view. We must find ways to manage and resolve conflicts, both cultural and individual. My aim is to help people find ways to manage and resolve conflicts so they can work together. The more the adults in their lives work at settling disagreements, the fewer inconsistencies in approach the children will experience. My theory is that with adults working hard to manage their conflicts the child will be exposed to fewer culturally assaultive experiences. So what do you do when you’re a teacher and you and a parent disagree about what’s good for the child? I see four outcomes to cultural and individual conflicts in these situations.

1. **Resolution through mutual understanding & negotiation**
   - Both parties see the other’s perspective and give a little or a lot
   - These conflicts result in a “win-win” negotiation with movement from both sides

2. **Resolution through teacher education**
   - Teacher sees the family’s perspective. Teacher changes.

3. **Resolution through family education**
   - Family sees the teacher’s perspective. Family changes.

4. **No resolution**
   - Agree to disagree and learn to cope respectfully
   - Neither changes and conflict continues
ACKNOWLEDGE, ASK, ADAPT
Process in Communicating

Practice Feedback

Directions: Listen and watch the conversation. Observe carefully. Look at the behaviors, attitudes, and words that:

First Story
◆ Open up the communication process (List them here)
◆ Block the communication process (List them here)

Second Story
◆ Open up the communication process (List them here)
◆ Block the communication process (List them here)

Third Story
◆ Acknowledge (List them here)
◆ Ask (List them here)
◆ Adapt (List them here)