PARENT-CHILD PRESCHOOL ORGANIZATION

# ASSISTING IN THE CLASSROOM: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

A Family Education Article - October 2025

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This guide offers a variety of topics designed to support family helpers when working in the preschool classroom. Each section includes multiple types of resources—such as short videos, podcasts, visuals, articles, and tip sheets—that make learning both easy and flexible. While not comprehensive, this collection is meant to serve as a starting point. If your school has additional resources related to these topics, we encourage you to share them with your school community.

You may also find this guide helpful for planning family education meetings by selecting a topic to learn about and discuss together.

Whether you're new to the classroom or simply looking for a refresher, we hope this guide feels like a friendly resource to support you as you grow in confidence and joy while working in the classroom.

## The Power of Play

*Guiding Question: Why is play such an important part of a child's learning and development?*

- Article: NAEYC, "The Power of Playful Learning"
- Article: The Power of Play-based Learning
- Article: Play-based vs. Academic Preschools
- Video: The Importance of Play

## Entering a Child's World

*Guiding Question: How can we as adults, position ourselves in the classroom to enter a child's world rather than lead it?*

- Tip Sheet: Connecting with Children
- Article: Understanding Children's Play: Wisdom from a Preschool Teacher
- Video: Ways to Play: Child Centered Play

## Following the Child's Lead

*Guiding Question: What does it look like for adults to take a backseat during play, while still being engaged with the child?*

- Video: Stepping Back From Play
- Tip Sheet: Following Your Child's Lead
- Tip Sheet: People Play-Follow your Child's Lead
- Podcast: The Parenting Space: Child Led Play

## Building Connections with Children

*Guiding Question: In what ways can we shift our words, body language, and mindset to better connect with children in the classroom?*

- Podcast: "Navigating Toddlerhood with Dr. Cathryn Tobin" Starting at minute 19:55
- Visual: Adult Toolbox
- Tip Sheet: Engaging withdrawn Children

## Helping Children Build Connections with Others

*Guiding Question: What role do we as adults, play in helping children connect with one another?*

- Video: Children build connections with each other
- Article: Teaching Preschool Partners: Collaborates with Others
- Article: Teaching Preschool Partners: Communicates with Others

## Praise vs. Encouragement

*Guiding Question: What is the difference between using praise vs. encouragement language, and how does it impact children in the classroom?*

- Tip Sheet: Watercolor activity
- Podcast: The Parenting Space - Descriptive Play
- Article: Encouragement vs. Praise for Teachers
- Article: Moving from Praise to Encouragement

## Narrating vs. Questioning

*Guiding Question: In the classroom how can we lower the demands so that children feel safe to share their own ideas and thinking?*

- Article: Declarative Language
- Podcast: Declarative language with Linda Murphy: from introduction to in-depth application
- Visual: When Adults ask too many Questions

## Behavior is communication

*Guiding Question: If children's behavior reflects their needs, how can we adjust our responses to both support those needs and model appropriate ways of expressing them?*

- Video: Bright Horizons
- Article: All behavior is a form of communication
- Article: Responding when other adults are having big emotions

## Navigating Conflict in the Classroom

*Guiding Question: How might conflict between children be used constructively for learning and the development of emotional regulation?*

- Tip Sheet: Flexible and Stuck thinking
- Tip Sheet: Helping Young Children Resolve Conflict
- Article: Cognitive Flexibility

## How to Support Children with Difficult Behavior

*Guiding Question: How can I as the adult co-regulate with a child to help them navigate big feelings, while keeping everyone safe?*

- Podcast: "Sensory Need or Behavioral Challenge", starting at minute 11:06.
- Article: Hitting, Kicking and Biting
- Tip Sheet: What to do During a Meltdown

This resource guide was developed by PCPO exclusively for member schools that have purchased a Family Education package for the 2025–26 school year. We kindly request that it not be shared or distributed outside of your school community.

Questions or Comments?
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