

Creating Classroom Community

Last month, we talked about creating a learning environment that encourages children to explore their environments, make mistakes without fear of failure, and discover new meaning. Feeling safe and respected by your community is a huge factor in successful learning, as well.



Focus on Trust and Relationships



As a parent, we may focus on teaching our children how to behave at school. However, as we learned last month, behaving a certain way is great as a short-term goal. A child who trusts you, the parent, and his teachers, will feel good about learning and following the rules at home and at school (or daycare).

Co-create Rules with Children

This might sound scary, but it's actually very powerful. If someone feels invested in creating

a rule, that person is more likely to follow it (and hold themselves accountable when they break it). This might be a routine more than a rule. How many seconds does a child need to brush their teeth? If the child spends too much time brushing their teeth, what should happen?

Maybe spending too much time brushing teeth will cut into time spent reading a bedtime book. With parental guidance, rules can be created together in order to feel everyone is contributing to the household.



Encourage Child Voice

Along the same lines of creating house rules together, children have many opinions about how they should spend their time. This doesn't mean they get to decide what they do all the time, but if it's play time, it's not a bad idea to ask the child if they want to play outside in the yard or go to the nearby park. If they need to clean up their toys, ask if they want to listen to music while they clean up or sing a song together. Giving children a choice and honoring their decision empowers the child to feel responsible for themselves. This boosts their confidence and self-worth.

Adapted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Smooth Transitions Reduce Stress

Transitions are when children move from one activity to another. Check out these resources from NAEYC:

- [“How to Help Your Child Have a Successful Morning”](#)
- [“How to Help Your Child Have a Successful Bedtime”](#)
- [“How to Use Visual Schedules to Help Your Child Understand Expectations”](#)
- [“How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities”](#)
- [“Creating Routines for Love and Learning”](#)

From The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning:

- [“Some Starters for Giving Positive Feedback and Encouragement”](#)



Samaritan
Health Services

Pollywog was developed to align health care, parenting education, and early childhood services for children, prenatal to age five, and their families in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, in Oregon.

Visit www.pollywogfamily.org for upcoming Linn-Benton Community College Parenting Education classes, Parenting Success Network Parent Workshops, and Prenatal Classes offered through the Samaritan hospitals.