

Strategy: Family Conversations, Home-School Connections & Projects / *Conversaciones familiares, conexiones de escuela a hogar y proyectos*

Families play a critical role in the educational success of their child. Research clearly indicates that when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to have a more positive attitude towards school and perform better in school.

Family Conversations, Home-School Connections, and Projects create opportunities for families to contribute to and build on what is happening in the classroom. They support families in engaging their children in talking about what is being learned in school. Conversations happening at school are reinforced by conversations at home and vice versa. Family Conversations and projects also provide opportunities for families to share their cultural wealth and knowledge with their children and the learning community. These family contributions bridge the world of home and school, helping to make the curriculum both engaging and relevant to children's lives. They can be used to elevate and honor family history and culture as well as to encourage discussion about the thematic content that is being learned at schools. Projects provide extended opportunities for children to think about, talk about and learn about these various subjects. For these reasons, SEAL recommends including a set of family conversations, projects and activities that families can do together.

Implementation

Each month create one-to-two opportunities for families to actively engage with children around content (*thematic and/or identity*) being explored in the classroom. In order for families to participate, it is essential that all instructions and prompts be translated into their home languages.

Family Conversations and Projects are prompts and activities related to the content discussed in the classroom that focuses on developing children's identities and socio-emotional skills. They encourage families to share their cultural knowledge and experiences with their child.

Example of a **Family Conversation** that focuses on Developing a Child's Positive Identity:

- Share family photos with your child and tell the story of the event and people in the photos. Make connections to how the photos make you feel. Be sure to use expressive, complex language. Draw or include a copy of the photo below and a brief story. / *Comparta fotos de su familia con su hijo/a y cuénteles la historia del evento o de las personas en las fotos, por ejemplo, el día en que nació su hijo/a o una fiesta de cumpleaños o evento familiar. Hábleles sobre sus abuelos, primos, tías, tíos, etc. Haga conexiones sobre cómo le hacen sentir las fotos. Use lenguaje expresivo y complejo para hablar de las ideas, eventos, y sentimientos. Dibuje o incluya una copia de la foto abajo y una breve historia.*

Home-School Connections and Projects are prompts and activities that engage families in conversations about the thematic content that is being explored. They can be simple prompts that ask children to share with their families what they have learned in class or invite families to share their perspectives and experiences about a topic.

Example of a **Home-School Connection** that focuses on thematic content:

- *We are learning all about insects. Take a walk with your family and draw the insects that you see. / Estamos aprendiendo todo sobre los insectos. Ve a caminar con tu familia y dibuja los insectos que miras.*

Family Projects may be connected to identity and socio-emotional development or they may be related to the thematic content. These projects are more elaborate in that they require families to participate and work together with their children to create an artifact. Be sure to share examples with families. As needed, provide materials to families or design projects that can be created with recycled items from home or nature.

Example of **Family Project** that focuses on **identity development**:

- *Your child's name is a very important part of their identity. As a Family Project we ask that you spend time talking with your child about the various names others use to refer to them including any abbreviations of their full name, nick names as well as terms of endearments. Please help your child create an **I AM CALLED** poster web or book. Begin with their name first then list the various names for your child and the individual who calls them by that specific name. Have your child draw pictures of each individual and/or include photos of each person. / El nombre de su hijo/a forma una parte muy importante de su identidad. Como proyecto familiar, le pedimos que dedique tiempo para hablar con su hijo sobre los diversos nombres que otros usan para referirse a ellos, incluyendo abreviaturas de su nombre completo, apodos y términos de cariño. Por ejemplo, el nombre de una niña es Maya. Su hermana la llama Mai, su mamá la llama Mayalina y hija, su padre la llama Chiquita, y su amiga Serenity la llama Maya Papaya, etc. Por favor, ayude a su hijo/a a crear un póster o libro titulado **Me llaman _____**. Comience primero con el nombre de su hijo/a y luego agregue los distintos nombres que otros usan para referirse el/ella y las personas que los llaman de esa manera. Pídale a su hijo/a que haga dibujos de cada individuo y / o incluya fotos de cada persona.*

Example of **Family Project** that focuses on **thematic content**:

- *In class we have been learning all about community workers. We ask that you help your child create a poster or a diorama that depicts information about a community worker. This could be your child's favorite community worker; one we have discussed in class, or any community worker your child chooses in the neighborhood. Please include the community worker, where they work, what their job is in the community, and what tools they need to perform their job. / En clase hemos estado aprendiendo todo sobre los trabajadores en la comunidad. Le pedimos que ayude a su hijo/a a crear un poster o diorama sobre un trabajador comunitario. Este podría ser el trabajador en la comunidad favorito de su hijo/a; uno que hemos estudiado en clase o cualquier trabajador que su hijo/a elija en su vecindario. Por favor, incluya, el trabajador de la comunidad, ¿en donde trabaja?, ¿cuál es su trabajo en la comunidad y cuales herramientas usa para destacar su trabajo?*

Set a date for when children are to bring their Family Conversations, Home-School Connections and Projects back to school. It is important, however, to be flexible and find creative ways to support families who are not able to meet the deadline (this may include providing additional time, materials, making phone calls, or finding other adults at school who can work with the child).

