

GROUP CONNECTIONS THAT WORK!

Presented by Susan Lane and Melissa McCord
Francis Howell School District



Welcome!

- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ Inclusion Activity
 - ▶ Catch the Widget!



Objectives of today's presentation

- ▶ **What is:**
 - ▶ The Why?
 - ▶ The When?
 - ▶ The What?
 - ▶ The How?

The Why?

- ▶ Group connections strengthen the programming offered to families:
 - ▶ Avenue to present additional information
 - ▶ Opportunity for families to network and form friendships/support networks
 - ▶ Families are able to discover new ideas for facing daily challenges of parenting
 - ▶ Good chance it is a program requirement 😊

The When

- ▶ Let's talk about scheduling:
 - ▶ MO Early Learning Guidelines-ECDA 1.8 & 2.8
 - ▶ Location
 - ▶ space needs
 - ▶ Timing
 - ▶ targeted population
 - ▶ location availability

The What

- ▶ Family interests or needs
- ▶ Staff member expertise
- ▶ Focused around a theme
- ▶ Feedback from families



The What-Formats of Group Connections

- ▶ Group connections
 - ▶ Use a variety of formats
 - ▶ Topical Discussions
 - ▶ Age Group Discussions
 - ▶ Developmental Play Hours
 - ▶ Parent-Child Activity
- ▶ Parent Group Social Activities
 - ▶ Planned by parent group
 - ▶ Highlight holidays, special events
 - ▶ Outings

The What-Group Connections that Work!

- ▶ **Topical Discussions**
 - ▶ Ready, Set, Go! It's Potty Time
 - ▶ Raising a Responsible Child
 - ▶ Bringing the Story to Life
 - ▶ Bookmaking 101
 - ▶ Sleep Issues -check with the hospital for a speaker
 - ▶ Understanding Your Child's Temperament
 - ▶ Conscious Discipline Series
 - ▶ Nutrition-Healthy Habits, Happy Kids-local dietician or hospital speaker
 - ▶ Grow Your Reader-local library speaker

The What-Group Connections that Work!

- ▶ Hot Topics (a.k.a. Age Group Discussions)
 - ▶ Taming the Temper Tantrum
 - ▶ Power of Play
 - ▶ A Whole New World of Adventures-new people, new foods, and (brushing those) new teeth
 - ▶ FAQs and Facts-Everything you wanted to know about Eating and Talking
 - ▶ Play Your Way to Kindergarten
 - ▶ The 4th Trimester
 - ▶ Your Baby's Amazing Brain

The What-Group Connections that Work!

- ▶ Developmental Play Hour
 - ▶ Fall-ing Into Fun or Happy Harvest
 - ▶ Snow Babies
 - ▶ Magic of Music
 - ▶ Blooming Buddies-Play with Friends
 - ▶ Picasso Penguins-Fun with Art



The What-Group Connections that Work!

- ▶ Parent Child Activities
 - ▶ Full STEAM Ahead*
 - ▶ Family Reading Night-bring in Clifford!
 - ▶ Go Dad Go*
 - ▶ People In Our Neighborhood
 - ▶ Beats and Balls*
 - ▶ Little Sprouts-Gardening with Children
 - ▶ Fun for Fives-Kindergarten Transition
 - ▶ Healthy Little Chefs
 - ▶ Marvelous Math* -highlight preschool curriculum
 - ▶ Polar Party/Spring Fling-collaboration with a neighboring school district and local library



The What-Group Connections that Work!

- ▶ Parent Group Sponsored
 - ▶ Spooktacular
 - ▶ Bunny Brunch
 - ▶ Pee Wee Bop
 - ▶ PALS @ the Patch
 - ▶ Picnic at the Park
 - ▶ Outings
 - ▶ Safety House
 - ▶ Disney on Ice, etc
 - ▶ *WIDGET TIME - What is one you want to try?*



The How-Planning a Group Connection

- ▶ **Goals and Objectives**
 - ▶ Why you are providing the meeting
 - ▶ How you are getting the information across
- ▶ **Outline your Plan**
 - ▶ What are your resources?
- ▶ **Develop/Determine Parent Handouts**
 - ▶ Original or part of your curriculum
- ▶ **Required Forms**
 - ▶ DESE Forms
 - ▶ Individual Agency forms
- ▶ **Table Partners activity**
 - ▶ Generate ideas for planning a group connection

The How-Quality Facilitation

- ▶ **Group Involvement**
 - ▶ Inclusion activity (a.k.a Icebreakers)
 - ▶ Group activity
 - ▶ Prompts
- ▶ Preventing dominance

The How-Quality Facilitation

- ▶ Addressing Questions
 - ▶ PRER
 - ▶ Begin with your POINT
 - ▶ Give the REASON why it is valid
 - ▶ ELABORATE your reason with example
 - ▶ Close with RESTATEMENT
 - ▶ Want to state another POINT or REASON?
 - ▶ Complete initial thoughts-add second suggestions..." Another point to consider..."

The How-Quality Facilitation

- ▶ Professional Appearances
 - ▶ Handouts
 - ▶ Visual Aids
 - ▶ Personal Movements
 - ▶ Personal Attire
 - ▶ Projection-can you be heard?



The How-Promoting Your Group Connection

- ▶ Communication
 - ▶ Flyers
 - ▶ Family visits
 - ▶ Preschool
 - ▶ Other program components
 - ▶ Facebook
 - ▶ Program Facebook
 - ▶ School District Facebook
 - ▶ EC Newsletter
 - ▶ Building Level newsletters
 - ▶ Twitter

Bringing It All Together!

- ▶ **Know your resources!**
 - ▶ Library, local hospital speakers, district staff (OT/PT, Counselors, etc)
 - ▶ PATNC Curriculum-videos, parent handouts
- ▶ **Collaborate with other programs**-Shared workload and more opportunities for families
- ▶ **Missouri PAT Consultants**
 - ▶ <https://www.missouripat.org/resources/group-connections-ideas>