



Dr. Rosemarie Allen
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Institute for Racial Equity and Excellence

Trauma Informed Family Engagement Practices

To fully
engage
families, we
must
suspend
judgement
and be
aware of our
own biases





Impact of Implicit Bias

IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias is the mental process resulting in feelings and attitudes about people we view as different.

It is an unconscious process and we are not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that develop **over the course of our lifetime.**





About Hidden Bias

So even though we believe we see and treat people as equals, hidden biases may still influence our perceptions and actions.

Ladder of Inference

Makes the process of thinking visible.

A process by which we determine meaning about what is occurring around us.

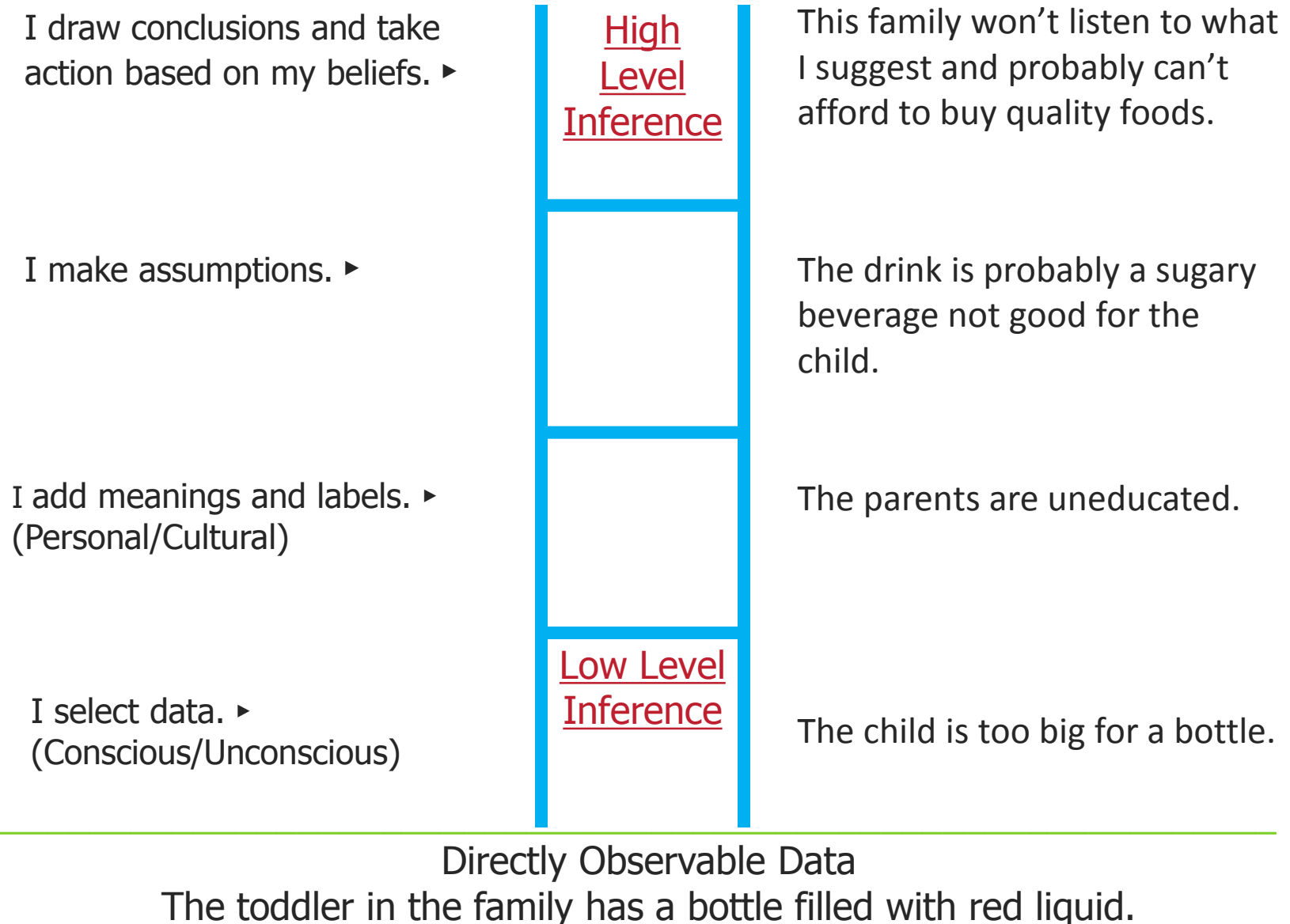
This process takes milliseconds to complete and we are often unaware that it is happening.

High
Level
Inference

Low Level
Inference

Directly observable data

Ladder of Inference



Ladder of Inference

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs. ▶

High Level Inference

They will probably not listen to what I say and continue to do things as their culture dictates so why bother?

I make assumptions. ▶

I add meanings and labels. ▶
(Personal/Cultural)

I am going to have to spend a lot of time educating this family.

They could be here illegally & don't understand how things work in America.

I select data. ▶
(Conscious/Unconscious)

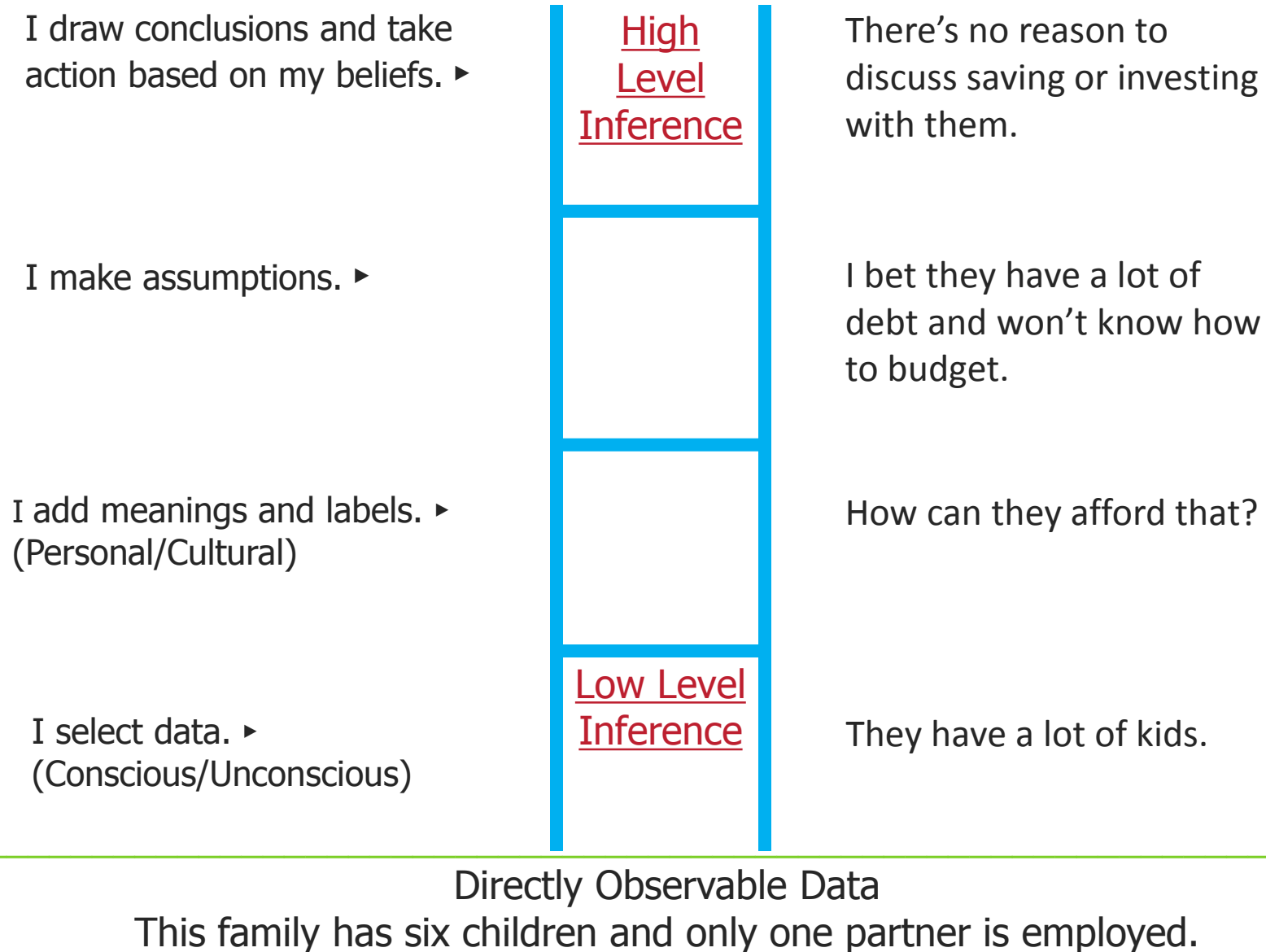
Low Level Inference

They are immigrants.

Directly Observable Data

The child and his family self-identify as Mexican and speak Spanish as their first language.

Ladder of Inference



YOUR Ladder of Inference

I draw conclusions and take
action based on my beliefs. ▶

High
Level
Inference

I make assumptions. ▶

I add meanings and labels. ▶
(Personal/Cultural)

I select data. ▶
(Conscious/Unconscious)

Low Level
Inference

Directly Observable Data



Implicit Bias: Aware is Halfway There



Fathers' Involvement

Involvement of fathers with activities of their children under age 5.

FATHERS LIVING WITH CHILDREN


| | Hisp. | White | Black |
|---|---------------|-------|-------|
| | (Percentages) | | |
| <i>Fed or ate meals with children daily</i> | 63.9 | 73.9 | 78.2 |
| <i>Bathed, diapered or dressed children daily</i> | 45.0 | 60 | 70.4 |
| <i>Played with children daily</i> | 74.1 | 82.7 | 82.2 |
| <i>Read to children daily</i> | 21.9 | 30.2 | 34.9 |

FATHERS NOT LIVING WITH CHILDREN

| | Hisp. | White | Black |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| <i>Fed or ate meals with children daily</i> | 8.6 | * | 12.6 |
| <i>Bathed, diapered or dressed children daily</i> | 7.3 | 6.6 | 12.7 |
| <i>Played with children daily</i> | 10.0 | 6.6 | 16.5 |
| <i>Read to children daily</i> | * | 3.2 | 7.8 |



Racial Inequities

A close-up portrait of a young Black boy with a joyful expression, showing his teeth. He is wearing a red polo shirt. The background is a solid, dark grey color. Overlaid on the lower half of the image is white text.

While there are inequities throughout
our society. Today's conversation is
about RACE.



Why Should We address Racial Equity?

- On every single indicator of child well-being, Black and Brown children are at the bottom (Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2016).



Children of Color are less likely to be referred to gifted programs, even when they excel academically.

Ford, D.Y., Harris, B.N., Byrd, J.A., & McZeal Walters, N. (2018).



The graduation rate for White students is 80%, compared to 69% for Blacks and 73% for Hispanics.

(National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.)



Boys of color born in poverty have an 8% chance of becoming affluent or upper-middle-class, compared to 26% of white boys who are born poor.

(Gutierrez, 2018)



African American children are nearly **four times** more likely to be suspended and expelled from school

United States Department of Education, 2016

What is Racial Equity?

- The condition that would be achieved if race no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.
- It is a part of racial justice that includes work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation
- It includes the elimination of **policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages** that reinforce differential outcomes by race.

(Center for Assessment and Policy Development; Frank Porter Graham Race, Culture, and Ethnicity Committee)



A photograph of two young girls walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk. The girl on the left is wearing a white dress with small colorful patterns and has her hair in braids with white bows. The girl on the right is wearing a dark dress with a colorful heart pattern and has her hair in braids with pink bows. They are holding hands. The background is a grassy field with some plants on the left.

What Now? Moving Forward:

- Address Implicit Bias
- Address Inequities
- Trauma Informed



Trauma:
What stories
haven't you
considered?



Historical Trauma



Not ACES, Not Toxic Stress, but Historical Trauma

Historical Trauma

- Historical trauma is a form of trauma that impacts entire **communities**.
- It refers to cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, as a result of group traumatic experiences, **transmitted across generations within a community**


(Ford & Courtois, 2009).





- The long-lasting impacts of trauma stemming from slavery, racism, and discrimination, in addition to the cultural, historical, and intergenerational trauma

(Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007;
D. R. Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

- 
- The legacies from enslavement of African Americans,
 - displacement and murder of Indigenous people,
 - Jews who endured the Holocaust
 - Disenfranchisement of Mexicans after the Mexican-American War

have been transferred to current descendants of these groups and others.

The result of these events is traumatic stress experienced across generations by individual members of targeted communities

The impacts have resulted in **mental and social scars** including: feelings of inferiority, paranoia of government systems, powerlessness, and problems with self-identity (Carter, 2007).





This type of trauma is often associated with racial and ethnic groups in the US who have suffered **major intergenerational losses** and **assaults on their culture and well-being**.

(Ford & Courtois, 2009).

-
- The impact is not only about what has happened in the past, but also about **what is still happening** in the present to target a group of people or actions by others that serve as reminders of historical targeting (Evans-Campbell, 2008).





Research shows that services should be offered that: “acknowledges and incorporates, at all levels, the importance of culture, assessment of cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences , expansion of cultural knowledge and adaptation of services that meet cultural needs”.

Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, and Ananeh-Firempong, 2002, p. 294



Think about the role of historical trauma and racism on today's communities...

This is a BIG
problem.
What can
we do about
it?



First, take the blinders off
Aware is Halfway There!





Consider the **policies** that are in place that reinforce inequities...



What **practices** are in place that reinforce inequities?



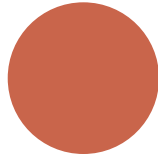
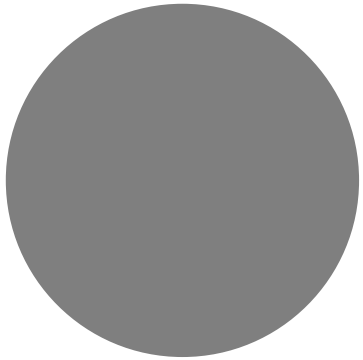
What **resources** are lacking that promote inequities?

How can you use the
information related to
historical trauma to
connect with families?



Caution!!!

Expert



Engage families and
communities as equals

Avoid Savior Mentality



Trauma
is **not**
the new
BLACK.

@MRJASONOWILSON





Trauma is NOT the New Poverty

A photograph of a weathered wall. The top half shows a light-colored, textured surface with a large, irregular hole on the left side. The bottom half shows a red brick wall. The words "DON'T STEREOTYPE ME!" are written in a bold, black, stylized graffiti font across the top half of the image, partially overlapping the hole and the brick wall.

DON'T
STEREOTYPE
ME!

Trauma is NOT a Stereotype



Must Be Strength-Based




“Hard to Reach Families”



Who Are We Talking About?

- It is critical that we have an understanding of the families we are trying to reach.
- To support and engage these families we must be able to identify, target, and interact with them.

A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and curly hair. The child is looking upwards with a wide-eyed, curious expression. Their hands are raised in front of their face, palms facing forward, as if they are reaching out or expressing surprise. The background is dark and out of focus, with some blue light visible on the right side. The overall mood is one of wonder and discovery.

Under-represented
Invisible
Service Avoidant
(Barrett, 2008)

The Under-Represented

*Marginalized, economically disadvantaged,
socially excluded*

-
- Families who are un-housed (experiencing homelessness)
 - Refugee and asylum-seeking families
 - Undocumented families
 - Families of Color
 - Families involved with the Justice system
 - Parents of disabled children
 - Parents with disabilities
 - Parents with learning difficulties
 - Non-English speaking families



Overlooked Families

Slip through the net, may have difficulty articulating needs

- Young parents
- Fathers
- Parents with mental health issues
- Domestic violence/abuse victim/perpetrator
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered parents
- Socially isolated parents
- Refused-asylum-seeking families

Barrett, 2008



The 'Service-Avoidant'

Unwilling to engage? Suspicious of services? Suspicious of providers?, Disengage from opportunities? Over-targeted?

- Long-term, complex, multi-leveled needs
- Legal barriers
- Domestic violence/abuse
- Culture of privacy
- Substance dependent





Families experience difficulties that prevent them from accessing resources and opportunities .

Extending Dignity





Extending Dignity

“Dignity is the desire to be treated well. It is an unspoken human yearning that is at the heart of all conflicts, yet no one is paying attention to it”, what we must do so that others feel their dignity is recognized.

(Donna Hicks)

Acceptance of Identity

Approach families as neither inferior nor superior to you; assume they have integrity.



*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Acknowledgment

Give families your full attention by listening, hearing, validating and responding to their concerns and what they have been through.

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Inclusion

Make families feel that they belong at all levels of relationship (community, organization, nation).

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*

Safety

Put families at ease at two levels: **physically**, where they feel free of bodily harm; and **psychologically**, where they feel free of concern about being shamed or humiliated, that they feel free to speak without fear of retribution.



*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Fairness

Treat families justly, with equity, and in an even-handed way, according to agreed-upon laws and rules.

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Independence

Empower families to act on their own behalf so that they feel in control of their lives and experience a sense of hope and possibility.

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Understanding

Believe that what others think matters; give families opportunities to explain their perspectives, and express their points of view; actively listen in order to understand them.

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Benefit of the Doubt

Treat families as trustworthy; start with the premise that they have good motives and are acting with integrity

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Accountability

Take responsibility for your actions; if you have violated the dignity of a parent, apologize; make a commitment to change hurtful behaviors.



Recognition

Validate their talents, hard work, thoughtfulness, and help; give credit for their contributions, ideas and experience.

*By Donna Hicks,
Adapted by R. Allen from The White Ally Toolkit by D. Camp*



Cultural Humility

- Challenges us to become the student, learning about those with whom we interact more personally, within a cultural context, suspending judgment.

I wish my teacher
knew how much I miss
my dad because he got
DePorted to Mexico when
I was 3 years old and
I haven't seen
him in 6 years. I wish
my teacher knew



What Do Your Families Wish You Knew?

It is challenging to engage some families.

Rather than viewing families as ‘hard to reach’, think about services as ‘hard to reach’ (McDonald, 2010).



Challenges Families Face Accessing Services

- Location of services/transportation issues
- Negative experiences with similar services
- Intimidating personnel or practices
- Lack of knowledge about availability
- Lack of knowledge about eligibility

(McDonald, 2010).





Strategies for Engaging Families

(McDonald, 2010)

<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/are-disadvantaged-families-hard-reach-engaging-disadva>

Built on the work *Engaging Hard to Reach Families and Children study* (Cortis, Katz, & Patulny, 2009)



Methods for Engaging Families

- One method will not meet the needs of all families
- Methods must be varied, flexible, customized, and ongoing

(Katz, Spooner, & Valentine, 2006).

Go to Where the Families Are

- Families may not seek services in unfamiliar places.
- Rather than waiting for families to show up, go to where they are:
 - Parks
 - Shopping Centers
 - Places of worship
 - Shelters

(McDonald, 2010)





Promote and deliver services in a non-stigmatizing and non-threatening way

(McDonald, 2010)

- Avoid negative labeling of families
- Deliver services in a universal venue to reduce the potential for stigma
- Consider casual, informal and social interactions
- Provide activities that are free or low cost



Employ Strategies That Empower Families

- Empowerment involves enhancing families' ability to solve problems for themselves.
- Listening to families about what they need and implementing their suggestions.
- Adopting a strengths-based approach to families, that focuses on the skills and abilities of families.
- Encouraging participants to take a facilitation or leadership role in a group

(McDonald, 2010)



Considerations

- Are families confident about expressing what they need and want from a program or activity?
- Are families actively participating in decisions about the planning and/or delivery of services?
- Are families encouraged to take on facilitation and/or leadership roles?
- Does your program adopt a strengths-based approach with families?

(McDonald, 2010)

Develop Relationships

- Relationships with families
- Relationships with communities
- Relationships with other services/agencies

(McDonald, 2010)



Relationships with Families

- Non—judgmental
- Respectful
- Encouraging
- Empowering
- Authentic

(McDonald, 2010)





Relationships with Communities

- Attend a service
- Get recommendations from key groups.
- Respect the local values, norms, and rules of the community.
- Always remember you are a guest, an outsider, until the community says otherwise.

Relationships with Other Service Providers

- Assists in reaching families
- Provides access to a wide range of services
- Builds the capacity of local services

(McDonald, 2010)



Relationships
are at the
heart of
engaging all
families!



Contact Information

- Email:
 - Rallen49@msudenver.edu
- Cell Phone:
 - 303-881-3220
- Books:
 - LoveBeingBlack.com
- Website:
 - Rosemarieallen.com
- Social Media:
 - twitter.com/RosemarieAllen4
 - facebook.com/rosemarie.allen.50

