



Everything Happens in the Context of Relationships

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Goals for Session



- ▶ Understand the value of building authentic relationships.
- ▶ Learn what gets in the way of building positive relationships.
- ▶ Explore ways to build positive relationships.
- ▶ Share how children's books can be used to support relationship building.

Christina Peterson



Smart Start


Daphne Alsiyao



What kind of relationships are in your life?







(CHILDREN FALL IN LOVE
WITH BOOKS BECAUSE
OF THE MEMORIES (CREATED
WHEN THEY SNUGGLE UP
AND READ WITH
SOMEONE THEY LOVE.
-RAISING READERS

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Why are relationships important?



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Human Beings Are Wired
for Connection...

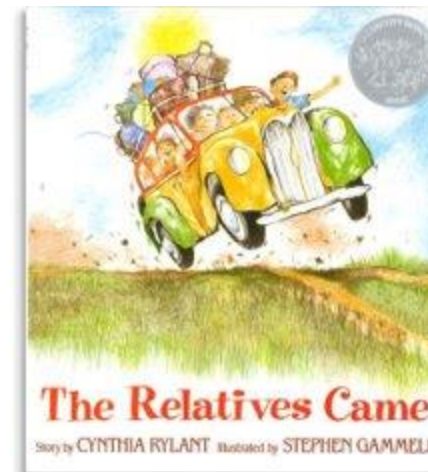
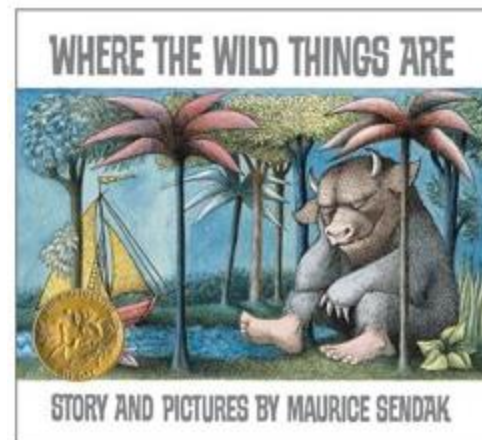
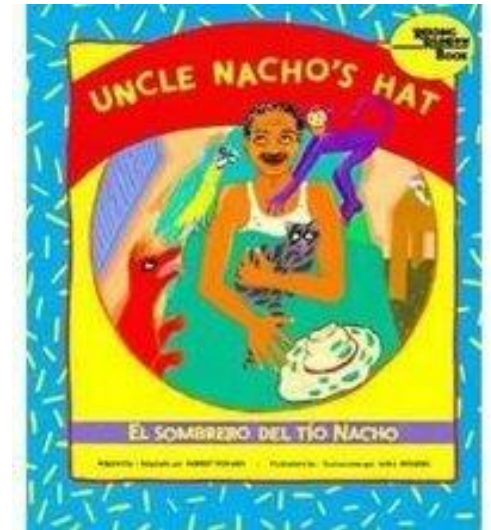
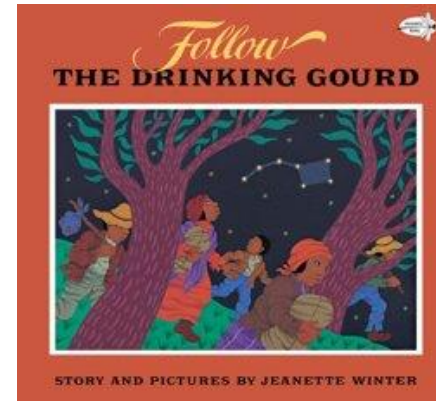
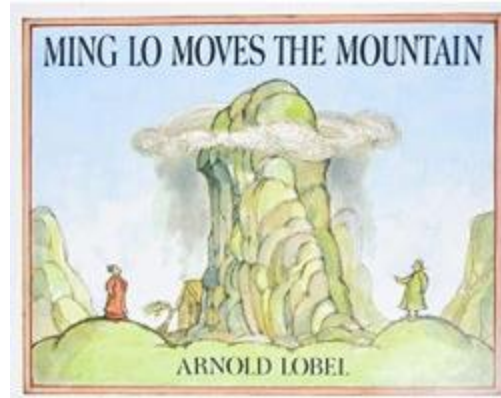
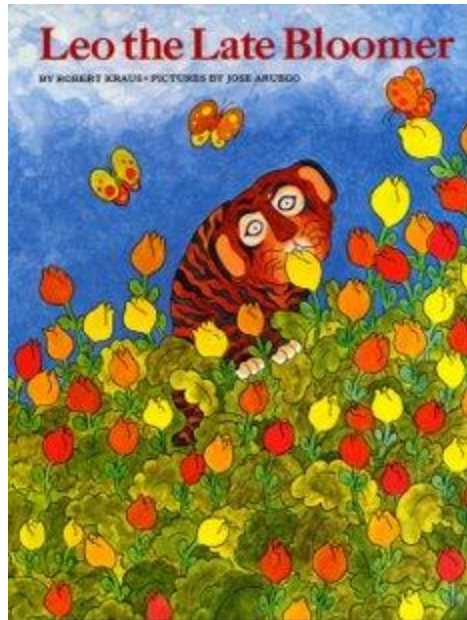


Building Authentic Relationships


- ▶ We get more done.
- ▶ Meaningful lasting change
- ▶ It's more fun while we're doing the work.
- ▶ We are healthier.
- ▶ We hold one another accountable.
- ▶ Harvard Study on Happiness



What do children's books have to do with this?







CHILDREN'S BOOKS ARE
ENGINES FOR EMPATHY.
THEY ALLOW US TO SEE
THROUGH THE EYES OF
OTHERS.

BY TRANSPORTING US TO
OTHER WORLDS THEY
HELP US TO UNDERSTAND
OUR OWN.



CHRIS
RIDDELL

What gets in the way of deepening relationships?



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TABLE TALK

What gets in the way?

I JUST CAN'T.



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Personal Things

- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Personalities
- ▶ Social Skills
- ▶ Expectations
- ▶ Lack of Trust

me.

Me.



Cultural Things

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Assumptions
- ▶ Ethics
- ▶ Political Beliefs
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Standards
- ▶ Values



Interpersonal Things

Lack of:

- ▶ Participation
- ▶ Open-mindedness
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Patience
- ▶ Organization



Organizational Things

Organizational Culture

- ▶ Fear of Open Conflict
- ▶ Paternalism
- ▶ Perfectionism
- ▶ Power Hoarding
- ▶ Sense of Urgency
- ▶ Valuing Quantity over Quality

Funding Restrictions

Lack of understanding that relationship building IS the work



Systemic Things

- ▶ Funding
- ▶ History
- ▶ Remote/Virtual
- ▶ Silos
- ▶ Territorialism





What supports better relationships?



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What does it feel like to be unwelcomed and not valued?

What does it feel like to be welcomed and wanted?





The Art of the One to One

Things to keep in mind:

- ▶ The tone of your voice
- ▶ Expressing vulnerability must be made by both parties present
- ▶ Being aware that past experiences with groups and organizations may impact the participant's willingness to open up
- ▶ The first meeting is an investment
- ▶ Not everyone expresses themselves or processes the same way
- ▶ Relational, not transactional

**The Art of Effective One to Ones:
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS & GROWING TRUST**

Building relationships with participants is crucial for a successful family engagement and leadership effort. Trust takes time to acquire and the way to reach that level within a relationship is by a series of direct communications where the mentor authentically makes contact with the participants and gets to know them. Ideally the series of communication will consist of potential recruitment for the program, an introductory to the program one to one, brief check-ins with the participants before and after each meeting, another thorough one to one to take place at some point during the program, and one last one to one at the end of the program.



It is important to acknowledge that there is an art to doing one to ones. There will be successful interactions and unsuccessful interactions. The consistency of positive one to ones comes with time and practice. We have found that some of the most successful one to ones happen once a shared self-interest is discovered.

The first one to one you will have with a participant sets the tone for the relationship you have with them throughout the program. (No pressure!) We have all heard about the importance of first impressions and this is your chance to start building a healthy relationship with the participant. It is important to keep a few things in mind for the initial one to one:

The tone of your voice will shape power dynamics. Family leaders are most likely to feel comfortable if you approach them as a peer. If you come in with an authoritative tone, the participant may not feel as comfortable sharing with the group or be willing to make themselves available in the future. If you approach the participant with a submissive tone, they may not believe their time is best spent in this space.

Expressing vulnerability must be made by both parties present. Keep in mind that a one to one is mainly to get to know the other person. However, that person will not be as willing to open up to you if



Design meetings to support relationship-building

- ▶ Use icebreakers
- ▶ Be willing to go off-script
- ▶ Build in time for heart and humanity
- ▶ If virtual, try using partner or small group discussions in breakout rooms



Elevating Voices: Intentional facilitation to hear from everyone

The intention of using this technique is not to prioritize one person's voice over another, but rather to ensure that we are creating space for those with greater stakeholder perspective.

Elevating Voices Continuum: A GUIDE TO EQUITABLE FACILITATION

Developed by Jessica Gillard, EdD

One way to ensure that all voices are given space at the table is to have individuals who are closest to the topic be offered clear space to participate. One suggested facilitation technique is the elevating voices curriculum. This approach ensures the people who will experience the most impact from the policy change have full opportunity to share their perspective.

In the elevating voices protocol, you ask participants to consider which category best describes them individually and to self-assign the appropriate number. The categories are as follows:

1. In my role, I interact with children and families every day.
2. In my role, I interact with children and families occasionally.
3. In my role, I do not regularly interact with children and families, but I do have a vested interest.

After each participant has decided where they see themselves, ask them to hold up the appropriate number of fingers based on how they self-identify.

Explain that whenever we engage in small or large group dialogue we are going to ask that participants invite number 1's to speak first (if they have something to say), then 2's, then 3's.

The intention of using this technique is not to prioritize one person's voice over another, but rather to ensure that we are creating space for those with greater stakeholder perspective.



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In Summary...

We're wired for relationships from the beginning, but so many things get in the way. We have to be intentional and thoughtful in the spaces we occupy to create opportunities that build connections.



What are other ways we can use children's books to talk about and strengthen relationships?



Questions?

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