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.
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

www.raisingreaders.org
@raisingreadersmaine
Why are relationships important?
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?
Personal Things

- Trauma
- Personalities
- Social Skills
- Expectations
- Lack of Trust
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?
What does it feel like to be unwelcomed and not valued?

What does it feel like to be welcomed and wanted?
**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
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.
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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