

## Applying the Crucial Cs for Families

### Helping children feel **CONNECTED**:

1. Provide opportunities for cooperative interaction
  - a. Develop family rules and problem solve at family meetings
  - b. Play games cooperatively. Helping is not seen as cheating. Check out cooperative games on Amazon! Engage in singing, playing music together, working around the house and yard, and other group projects as a family
  - c. Take turns with different members together planning an outing or surprise for the whole family
  - d. Develop a family identity. Talk about what your family is like, what you have in common
  - e. Engage in cooperative learning activities. Research an upcoming trip, learn about an area of the world, adopt a fish at the aquarium and study and visit it, volunteer together for a valued cause.
2. Give positive attention
  - a. Make time to spend with each child individually at some regular interval
  - b. If a child wants your attention and you're busy, arrange a time to talk.
  - c. Acknowledge each child's special skills and hobbies. Ask each child to share and teach other family members. Display their creations when you can
  - d. Don't make comparisons with other children
  - e. Acknowledge children's moods. i.e. Looks like you're having a hard day. Want to talk about it? You look awfully happy today. What's up?
3. Find and recognize strengths and talents.
  - a. Look for strengths – not just academic, but mechanical, artistic, athletic, creative, social.
  - b. Be a talent scout – Find something the child is good at, and uncover the skills used in that activity. Then show how these qualities are used in other areas. For example, hat does it take to be good in math? Logic, some memorization, concentration, practice, stick-to-itiveness, being a good detective. These same skills are evident in games, athletics, and other hobbies
  - c. As the old song says, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative."
4. Show acceptance – separate the deed from the doer.
  - a. With both positive and negative behaviors
  - b. Be specific – I liked the way you handled \_\_\_\_\_. I liked it when you \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. When you \_\_\_\_\_ I felt \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Hold family meetings regularly

### Helping children feel **CAPABLE**

1. Make mistakes a learning experience
  - a. Demonstrate learning from mistakes. Ask, "What did you learn from it? What will you do differently next time?"
  - b. Follow Piaget's advice: look for logic behind an answer. Be more interested in why a child answers the way he or she does (it may be incorrect but it is rarely illogical.) "How did

- you come up with this? When you did that, what did you think would happen? Did you learn anything new or surprising? What will you do next time?”
- c. Note the way you respond to errors. Allowing children time to try again, offering clues, and suggesting alternatives conveys that errors are a part of the learning process. Calling on another student immediately conveys the message that errors are failures and we are interested in performance and not process.
  - d. Look for analytical ability, critical thinking, good judgment, effort, improvement, how far the person has come, not how far they have to go.
  - e. Concentrate on the effort, not the errors. We need to be willing to accept mistakes if we want children to risk trying new things. Creative ideas are often built on a so-called mistake.
  - f. Set the tone in the family: At the family meeting ask, “Who worries about making a mistake or saying something wrong sometimes? If someone makes a mistake, what should we do? Do you think we should make fun of each other when we make a mistake?”
2. Build confidence.
    - a. Focus on improvement not perfection
    - b. Notice contributions
    - c. Build on strengths
    - d. Believe in the children
      - i. Have realistic expectations
      - ii. Allow them to struggle and succeed if the job is within their capabilities. Don’t feel sorry for or save; both are disrespectful and discouraging
      - iii. Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation
      - iv. Focus on the present, not the past, or the future
    - e. Analyze successes to see what they did right. Why was an approach successful? Would they be willing to teach others?
    - f. Ensure successes, divide up large tasks into smaller more manageable ones. Give opportunities to repeat successful experiences
  3. Hold family meetings regularly

## Helping children feel he or she COUNTS

1. Through contribution
  - a. By helping the family:
    - i. Offer jobs that are meaningful. Give positions of responsibility.
    - ii. Provide choice of projects – brainstorm:
      1. What could we do?
      2. What do we need to do it?
      3. How can we get what we need?
      4. Who can do what part?
    - iii. Invite input into scheduling (when should we do our jobs? Go on an outing?)
    - iv. Make rules together. Discuss different types.
      1. Rules that cover behaviors that make being here easy and fun
      2. Rules that cover behaviors that sabotage or interfere with others’ rights to play, participate, learn, or feel safe.

- b. By helping each other.
    - i. Teach each other skills:
      1. Make a list of “Skills I am willing to teach” and “Thing I would like to learn”
      2. Brainstorm what kids would like to learn: knitting, clay, jump rope, basketball, etc;
      3. Ask or identify who is good at specific skills (teacher may need to identify valuable talent in a discouraged child)
    - ii. Helping each other solve problems at family meetings
  - c. By helping in the community
    - i. Charity drives, community cleanup projects etc;
    - ii. Regular visitation of nursing homes, volunteering at shelters
    - iii. Tutoring younger children
2. Through recognition
    - a. Set up an “I Can” box. Have kids fill out cards on something they did that they are proud of or something they recently learned or something positive they noticed about someone else. Share these cards at family meetings.
    - b. Have friendly discussions where family members periodically evaluate themselves, develop and discuss goals, and assess improvement. Make sure that this is a time for self-evaluation, not criticism.
    - c. Give appreciations and compliments at a classroom meeting
  3. Hold family meetings regularly

## Helping children develop **COURAGE**

1. Have the courage to be imperfect: don’t expect perfection of self or others
2. Point to strengths, not weaknesses
3. Don’t make comparisons to others
4. Ask questions (Do you understand? Do you need help? Is this what you meant?) in order to:
  - a. Encourage active participation
  - b. See if the child’s understanding is the same as yours
  - c. Learn where help and/or correction are necessary
5. Ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Am I inspiring self-evaluation or dependence on other’s evaluation?
  - b. Am I respectful or am I patronizing?
  - c. Am I seeing the child’s point of view or only my own?
  - d. Would I say this to a friend?
6. Avoid debilitating help, such as,
  - a. Don’t overlook misbehavior. Don’t avoid taking appropriate action.
  - b. Don’t regularly do for children what the children can do for themselves.
  - c. Don’t rescue kids from uncomfortable consequences of their actions. (We have to intervene whenever a situation is dangerous if the outcome would be extreme discouragement but discomfort isn’t dangerous!)
7. Avoid criticism

- a. People often become defensive when they feel criticized. You must have a secure relationship to ensure you can hear each other.
  - b. Check out what the child is asking for. Is it encouragement or correction? Do they want you to give feedback on ideas or presentation?
8. Hold family meetings regularly.