

# Parenting Connection Life in 3D: Making Connections

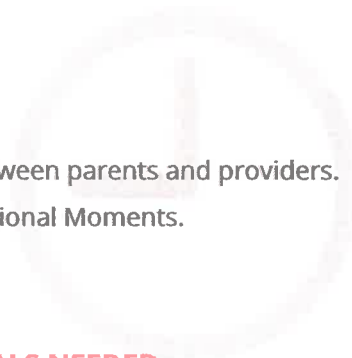
## MODULE FOUR

### TRAINING OUTLINE

1 Hour Continuing Education Credit (CACFP Professionals Certification Specialty 6)

At the completion of training, participants will:

- 1) Understand the importance of communication in general and communication between parents and providers.
- 2) Be familiar with the monthly Parent Connections newsletter template and Motivational Moments.
- 3) Using lesson plans and ideas, complete the newsletter for January.



TIME	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS NEEDED
15 minutes	Introduction Pass the Block Communication Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pass the Block Activity Instructions</li></ul>
15 minutes	Look through the 2021 Parent Connection Newsletters. What features do you see? Ask each participant to make a list of features they notice. Share as a group after everyone has had a chance to make their list. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Customizable</li><li>2. Easy Table Crafts</li><li>3. Easy Recipes</li><li>4. Helpful hints/information for parents</li><li>5. Why CACFP is important</li><li>6. Physical Activities</li><li>7. Nutrition Notes</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monthly Parent Connection Newsletters Printed or Online</li><li>• Blank Paper for Notes</li></ul>
25 minutes	Ask everyone to compose their own version of the January newsletter with their specific lesson plans, announcements, and projects in mind. Ask participants to trade with a partner when finished for editing and suggestions. Share as a group if time permits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• January Parent Connection Newsletter (copies and/or computers with access to files to edit)</li><li>• Lesson Plans for the Month of January</li></ul>
5 minutes	Conclusion Answer any questions participants have and review specific sponsor expectations for the providers.	

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Open, consistent, and frequent communication is key to building a bridge between parents and providers. Their children spend the majority of the day with you as their child care provider. Parents want to know what they are doing throughout the day, what they are eating and what you are teaching them. Many of you have asked for ways to connect families to the CACFP and to the benefits of having their children enrolled where these guidelines are met.

This training module focuses on the information available to communicate and share with parents helping them to understand why CACFP is an indicator of quality child care. We believe you will find this feature helpful and it will assist you in connecting families with the many benefits of the CACFP.

As part of the 2021 NCA Nutrition Calendar, child care providers receive a ready-to-go customizable Parent Connection monthly newsletter template.

This is an opportunity to share with parents examples of the healthy foods you provide, as well as the fun and educational activities their children are engaged in. The best part is that it's all done for you. You just have to fill in the additional information that fits your needs.

NCA sends out monthly emails with the Parent Connection newsletter template to all sponsors who purchase the calendar and the newsletters can also be found online at [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org). These are ready to be emailed or printed to share with families.

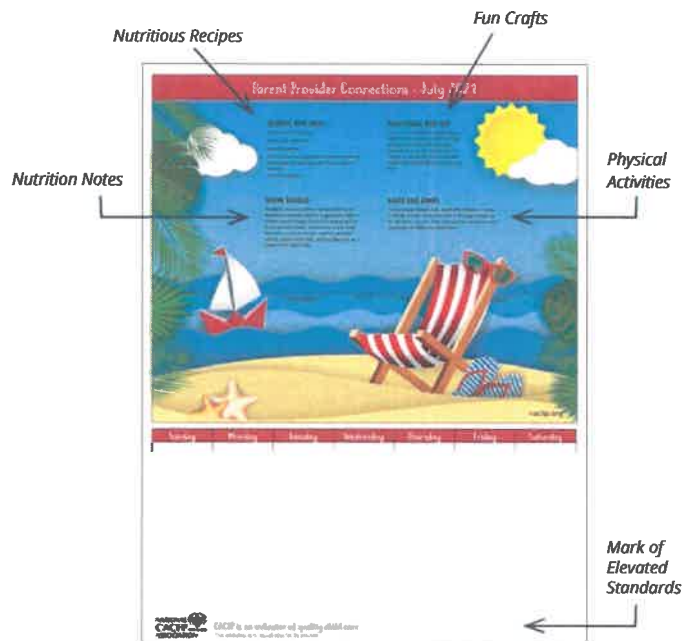
### GOING FROM CHILD CARE FACILITY TO HOME

Sharing the Parent Connection Newsletter with parents each month encourages involvement at home. In December, parents will be reminded of serving vegetables other than just broccoli or a salad. This connection is important because it not only informs the parent about the lessons learned, but provides an opportunity to continue those lessons at home.

Spending quality time with their children is essential to the growth, development and overall well-being. The newsletters provide easy table crafts and games done during the month that can be repeated at home. In October, the children learn yoga positions that represent a garden. They can show their parents the same poses at home. Everyone can join in for a yoga session.

Cooking with your parent is always fun too! Each month a healthy recipe is provided to try at home. Ask parents to try the recipe like Tropical Tuna Salad in July and head out for a picnic.

### PARENT CONNECTION NEWSLETTER



Customizable to fit your parent communication needs.



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### WRITE YOUR OWN

In the body of each newsletter, there is space for you to customize information you would like to convey to the parents. If you have worked on special projects or tried a new, exciting food that the kids have really loved, you should definitely communicate that in this section.

This is also a great space to share anything that you need parents to know for the month ahead. For example, you can include field trip dates and permissions slip deadlines, or supply needs for an upcoming craft.

### CACFP IS AN INDICATOR OF QUALITY CHILD CARE

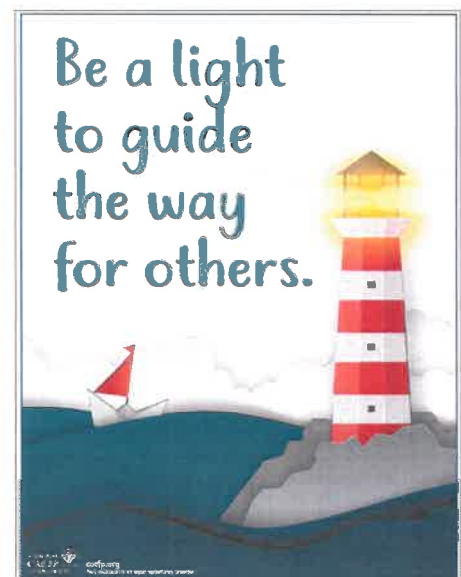
Many parents are unaware that child care facilities can participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or what the program represents. In the monthly newsletter, we reinforce that CACFP is an indicator of quality child care. Parents will learn that because you participate in CACFP and follow the guidelines, their children are in a healthy environment.

Through CACFP you are able to provide more nutritious meals and snacks while receiving regular monitoring to ensure you are meeting the program's high standards. Research shows that child care providers who participate in the food program offer more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats than those who do not participate in the CACFP. As a CACFP provider, you are giving the children in your facility the best care you can possibly give.

Parents need to know that!

### MOTIVATIONAL MOMENTS

While the communication between parents and providers is important, we also must remember that communicating with our providers as their sponsor is also just as significant. Each month, you will receive in your calendar update emails a Motivational Moment poster. These are uplifting messages for providers to remind them the work they do for children is important and appreciated. Take these along during your monitoring visits to inspire your providers and keep that positive connection. You can write a happy note to go with them for a more personal touch. If you are not visiting the provider that month, send the poster to them through the mail with a card telling them good work and that you're thinking of them. Sometimes everyone needs a little motivation to keep going strong.



## PASS THE BLOCK

**OBJECTIVE** Pass the block around the room between participants with varying degrees of communication.

**MATERIALS** **Blindfold for each participant**  
**Large block or cube**

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Round 1: Ask the participants to pass the block to one another while they are completely blindfolded. Participants are not allowed to speak during this round.  
*(Due to safety issues, it would be best for the participants to be in a stationary position such as sitting around a table.)*
- Round 2: Take blindfolds off and ask the participants to pass the block to one another again. Participants are still not allowed to speak.
- Round 3: Ask the participants to pass the block to one another in any way they choose. This round participants can finally speak again, without a blindfold.

### DEBRIEF

Which round was most difficult? Why?

How did the difficult round compare to Round 3?

What was significant to Round 3 compared to other rounds? *(Participants should refer to the ability to communicate)*

Why is communication so important?

Key question: As providers, we are the key connection between the children during the day until they are with their parents again in the evening. If we did not communicate with their parents, what kind of problems would that cause? How would the parents feel if they were not aware of what their child was doing during their time with their child care provider?

### NOTES

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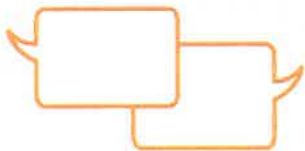
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### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



#### OPEN DISCUSSION

- a. How does your child care facility connect with parents?
- b. What are some different ideas to add to the customizable Parent Connection newsletters?
- c. How do you involve parents in your child care facility?
- d. What type of education do you provide for parents?

#### NEWSLETTER PLANNING

Each month features Life in 3D. Based on the theme for the month, create your own lesson plans and begin making an outline for each newsletter. Of course, ideas and activities may change but you will have a basic plan and start for each month.

#### HELPFUL IDEAS:

<b>January</b>	Blast Off	Soar around to learn about space and rockets that take you there.
<b>February</b>	Love is Flying	Learn about modes of flying and air travel.
<b>March</b>	Spring Bikes & Wind	Have fun outside on wheeled vehicles and make pinwheels for the wind.
<b>April</b>	Weather & Flowers	Learn about spring weather and the flowers that bloom.
<b>May</b>	Hot Air Balloons	Learn about this colorful balloons that you can ride in!
<b>June</b>	Camping	Experience the great outdoors.
<b>July</b>	Beach Life	Enjoy the beach and seafood.
<b>August</b>	Farm Life	Learn about life on the farm.
<b>September</b>	Lighthouses	Learn about boats and the lighthouses that lead their way.
<b>October</b>	Sunflower	Learn about sunflowers and other flowers of the fall.
<b>November</b>	Pumpkins	Experience math, science, activity and cooking with pumpkins.
<b>December</b>	Winter & Snow	Learn about the joys of the winter season.

# QUIZ

## Parent Connection Life in 3D: Making Connections

1. What craft activity can parents do at home with their child in December?

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2. Why is communication important between sponsors and providers?

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3. What are some ways you can customize each newsletter?

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4. Why should you include information about the CACFP in your newsletters?

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5. What does the newsletter include?

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6. How can you receive your newsletter each month to customize?

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7. What recipe is suggested in March for parents to make with their child at home?

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8. What physical activity can parents do with their children at home in June?

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9. What recipe can parents make with their children in September?

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10. Think about your current communication system. How you can use the newsletter each month to improve the system?

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