

# Reading Assignment

## *Supporting Parents as Notetakers*



# Supporting Parents as Notetakers

**I would like to involve parents in the anecdotal notetaking process, but many of our parents are concerned about their writing skills (spelling, punctuation, and grammar). Can you give me some ideas for ways I can reassure them and help them feel comfortable enough to get started?**

*—A Head Start teacher*

Obviously, if parents are sharing their apprehensions with you, they trust you already and feel that you are there to help. The fact that they are asking to be involved shows you have already overcome a major hurdle. So, use what you already know about providing support to help the parents feel comfortable about sharing their observations. Here are some ideas:

- **Share control.** Ask them for ideas about what would feel comfortable. Do the parent's observations have to be shared in writing? Does the parent want weekly calls from you? Some parents may feel more comfortable being “mentored” by another Head Start parent. Others may ask you to come by for home visits more often to get a better idea of the environment they are writing about.
- **Focus on parents' strengths.** For example, if the parent has kept a baby book on their child, and feels proud of it, suggest they approach note taking with the same attitude. Point out that just like their baby book, their anecdotal notes will be a record of the child's milestones, “cute quips,” and everyday activities. This could take the pressure off and make note taking feel less like school work.

## Supporting Parents as Notetakers (continued)

- **Provide positive feedback.** Acknowledge all efforts. Reassure parents that notes are just a means of communicating between classroom and home, with both teachers and parents sharing the child’s wonderful moments. Assure them that they’re not going to be graded on their work. Jot down positive comments on the notes parents do send in. Be sure to mention the KDI reflected in the note! (Nothing is more reassuring than concrete proof that what one is doing provides worthwhile information.)
- **Practice “reflective listening.”** Draw out the parent. Is the parent asking for help in improving writing skills? If so, are there opportunities in your area to help with this? Many areas have various family literacy projects going on, so check them out and be able to provide information on them to the parent.