Fun Ways to Involve Families in their Child’s Learning

You can involve families in your program every day. Your interest areas are full of opportunities for family members to get involved. Here are some ideas for fun ways to help families to become part of the family child care home.

**Art**
- Use photos of family members as inspirations for portraits and paintings.
- Ask family members to donate fabrics or materials from home that represent their heritage.
- Ask family members to bring in a picture of their favorite piece of art.
- Invite each family to create a quilting square for a program quilt.
- Invite family members to share their hobbies: sewing, painting, sculpture, photography, woodworking, etc.
- Send home activity cards describing ways children and families can make art together.

**Blocks**
- Take full-body photos of family members, cut out the image, and laminate. Offer as a paper doll or attach to a block.
- Ask families to take pictures of interesting buildings or structures they see. Place photos in a basket to offer inspiration for building structures.
- Ask family members to take pictures of their homes or businesses. Include in the block area for inspiration.
- Make a map of the community and encourage families to add their homes, places of worship, or businesses.
- Invite family members to bring in props to support block play: hard hats, construction belts, materials to use for ramps, etc.
- Interview family members about important places in the community.

**Dramatic Play**
- Ask family members to donate clothes, shoes, cookbooks, and other items that represent their heritage.
- Encourage family members to donate props that represent their own jobs: restaurant menus or ordering pads, calculators, aprons, etc.
- Place photos of families in frames and include in the dramatic play area.
- Ask family members to tell the children about their jobs (or plan a field trip to a family member’s workplace). If children are interested, develop a dramatic play area that represents that workplace.
| Science                  | - Invite family members to help with *take-aparts*. Provide a safe item, like a clock, that children and families can explore by taking it apart.
|                         | - Invite families to go on nature walks with the program.
|                         | - Ask families to bring in natural items from their yards or communities: interesting leaves, pinecones, rocks, etc.
| Technology              | - Work with children to send emails to family members during the day.
|                         | - Create a program website or blog that families can visit.
|                         | - Ask family members to help you develop a program website or blog.
| Library                 | - Video- or audio-record families reading a story or speaking in their native languages.
|                         | - Ask families to describe their favorite books from childhood. Check them out from the library and provide them in your book area.
|                         | - Create a program books with photos of families.
|                         | - Send home materials for families to make their own family books.
| Outdoors                | - Ask family members to volunteer to help clean or maintain the playground.
|                         | - Invite family members to come play.
|                         | - Offer a family field day or an event to encourage physical activity.
|                         | - Plan a family picnic or other outdoor event.
|                         | - Ask families to donate materials to enrich outdoor play: PVC piping, cartons, tires, etc.
| Toys and Games          | - Invite family members to sit at a buddy table and play board games one-on-one with a child
|                         | - Ask families to describe their favorite games as children. Ask them to teach the children how to play.