The Types of Relationships Parents and Center-Based Providers Form and How They Are Negotiated

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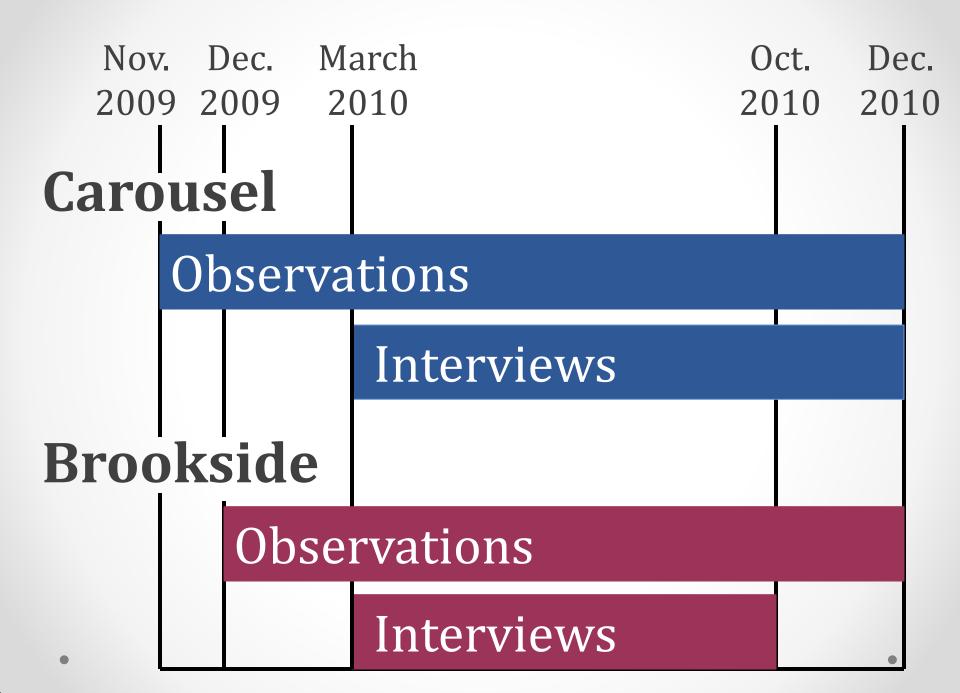
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Introduction

- Partnerships advocated in the ECCE literature (e.g. DAP)
- Benefits for children, parents, and providers

Research Questions

- What kinds of relationships do parents and center-based child care providers create?
- What strategies do they employ to create these relationships ?



Interviews

	Parents			Center Staff	
	n	Gender	Race/ethnicity	n	Race/ethnicity
Carousel	11	9 Female 2 Male	7 African American 2 White 1 Puerto Rican 1 Jamaican	7	5 African American 1 African 1 Latina
Brookside	14	12 Female 2 Male	1 African American 9 White 2 Asian 2 African	10	5 African American 1 White 4 Latina
Total	25			17	

What kinds of relationships do parents and providers create?

	Collaboration	Trust	Communication	
			Frequency	Nature
Basic	None	Superficial	Infrequent	Cordial
Familiarity				
Working	Low	Beginning	Frequent	Friendly
Relationship		to develop		
Partnership	High	High	Frequent	Friendly,
				two-way
Independent	Low	High	Frequent	Friendly
Discordant	Low	Low	Moderately	Disagreement,
			frequent	at times open
				conflict

What strategies do they employ to create relationships?

Introductions and small talk

"To kind of build a relationship, just ask them how they're doing. Ask them basic questions that you would anybody else to just kind of make small talk, you know, to be polite and make them feel special too." –Loretta, the mother of two children at Brookside Presenting Themselves as Warm & Approachable

"You know just being in the field there is just a way to speak to (parents)...Just being warm, not being rough with the words or the attitude, just being... you know, talking at a nice level." –Danika, a provider at Carousel

- Explicitly Stating Expectations for Frequent Communication
- Going Out of the Way to Engage In and Be Available for Communication

"When I'm leaving, I see them walking in, they might stop me and ask me how the child's doing. And I'll try to give them a minute or two, but I say, "I am leaving." But I don't brush them off like "Well there's a teacher downstairs."... I still give that minute or two." –Samantha, a provider in a two year old room at Brookside

- Finding Common Interests
- Carefully Selecting Conversation Topics & Language

"You can make a suggestion, like a friendly suggestion, without insulting them ... So just 'Can you bring some extra Vaseline for him ... because he gets dry, I noticed that his lips were dry.' Kinda trying to say stuff like that, rather than, 'Do you think you should put lotion on him or something?' There is just a way you have to communicate that. Communication is just so important." –Ameera the preschool teacher at Carousel

Conclusions

- Need to explore the value of relationships other than partnerships.
- Creating strong relationships requires time and effort from both parents and providers.
- How relationships are formed may differ across settings (e.g. center, day care home).

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