



Building belonging inside and out

In early childhood education



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Today's agenda

- What is belonging?
- Framing the conversation
- Examples and tips within layers of belonging
- Q & A discussion
- A bit about your sponsor

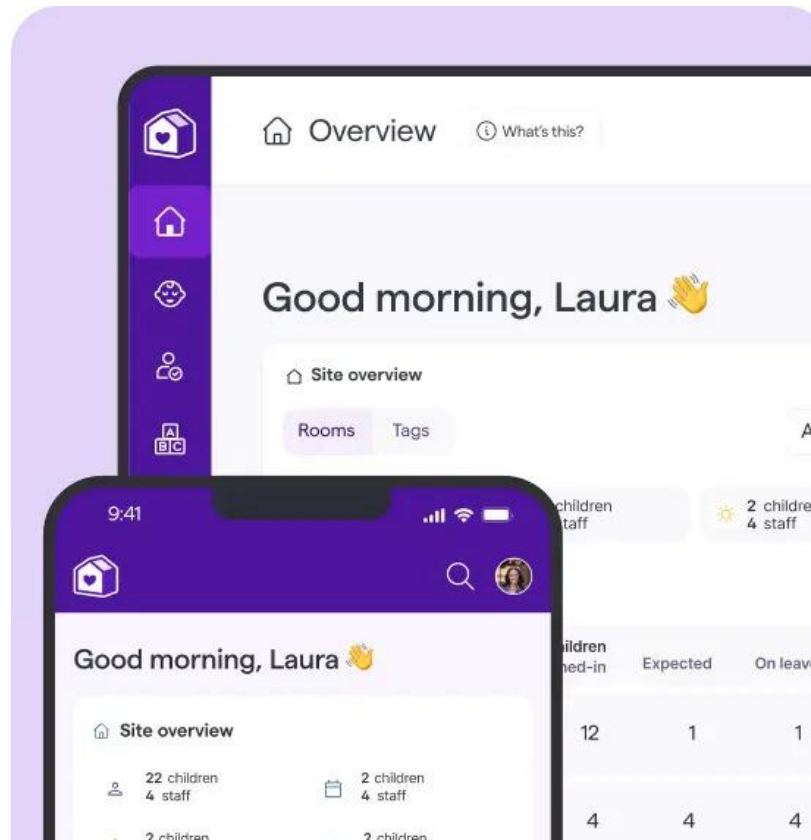




A moment for the sponsor

Your modern, intuitive all-in-one childcare management software.

Automating your admin, saving you hours so you can get joy back in your day and doing what matters most: playing, engaging and teaching the future generations



BELONGING

Noun

The feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group or place.

@_TheOtherBox
#DiversityDictionary

” BELONGING

is when I walk into a room
and I don't need armour.

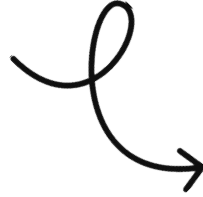
— Shannon Cohen —

Founder of the Rockstar Women's Movement



@tobelonging
tobelonging.com

Let's begin



How do you define belonging?

- What does belonging look like for the children in your classroom?
- What does belonging feel like for your staff?
- Where do you personally experience belonging?



Ecological systems Theory

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

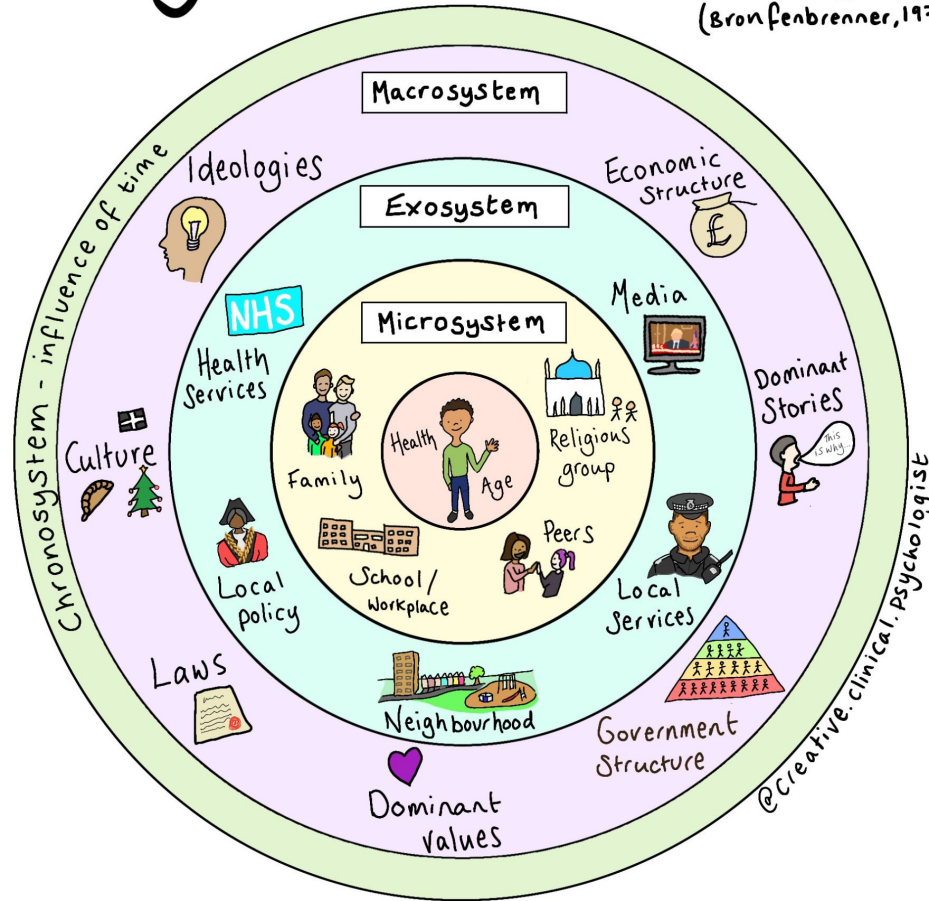


Photo Credit: Juliet Young



BOSTON SQUARE Early Learning Center



BUILDING COMMUNITY

We believe in fostering strong relationships and creating inclusive environments where all children, families, and staff members can find belonging.

HONORING CULTURE

We believe in honoring the rich cultural origins and languages of our diverse community, and we embrace differences as being essential to learning and growth.

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

We believe that parents and families are children's first teachers, and we strive to cultivate strong partnerships built on open communication and mutual respect.

SUPPORTING WHOLE CHILD LEARNING

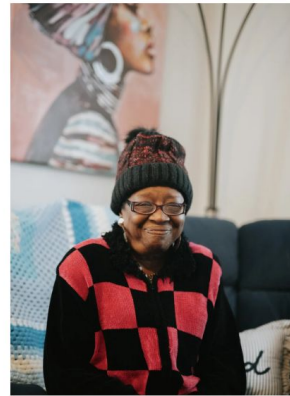
We believe in nurturing children's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing alongside their academic growth, and we instill a love of learning by welcoming curiosity and prioritizing play.

Building layers of belonging



Driving Questions to Build Community Belonging

- Where are you located?
- What are the stories of this place?
- Who are the people loving and leading this community?



Argie Holliman

Neighbor for more than 40 years

"I love the neighborhood. Our kids grew up and went to school together. Now they have kids. Neighbors still know each other and look out for those in need, especially senior citizens. We own our homes and take a lot of pride in our community."

— Argie Holliman

Building Community Belonging in Boston Square

- Original building was a church
- Controversial Project History
- Neighborhood Association
- Neighborhood Advisory Council

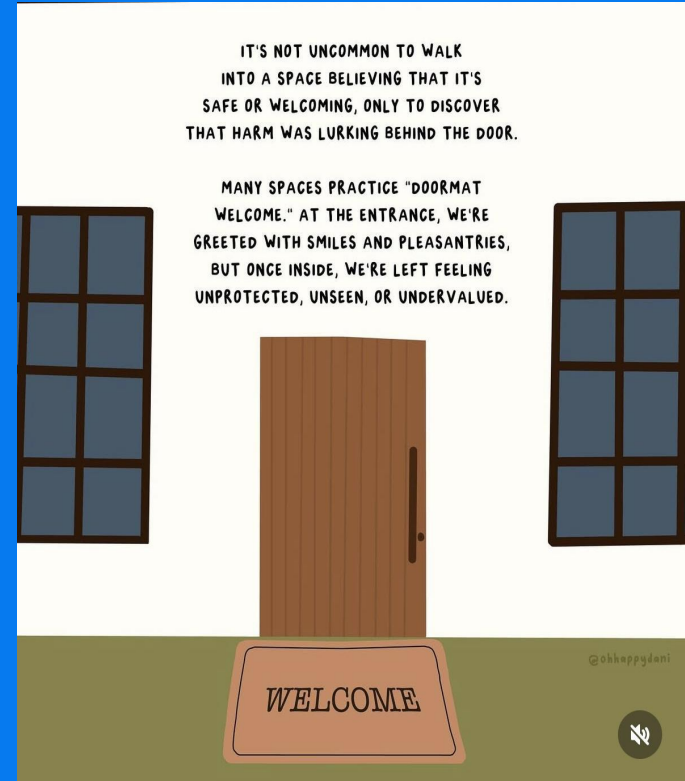


Practical Tips for Building Community Belonging

- ★ Reflection
- ★ Power of the Pause
- ★ Being too judgy

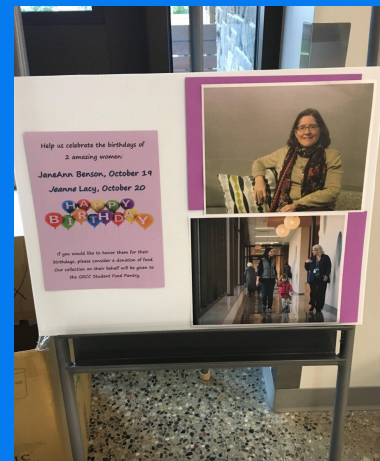
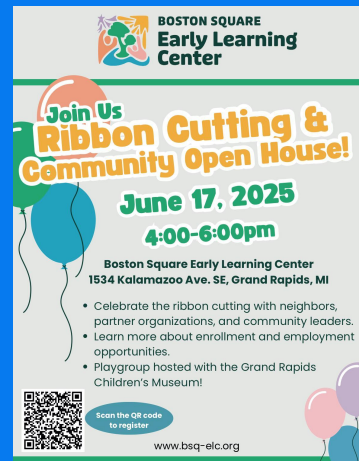
PEOPLE ARE TOO QUICK
TO PASS JUDGEMENT,
AND TOO SLOW TO
SELF REFLECT.

@Sincerely_lyss2



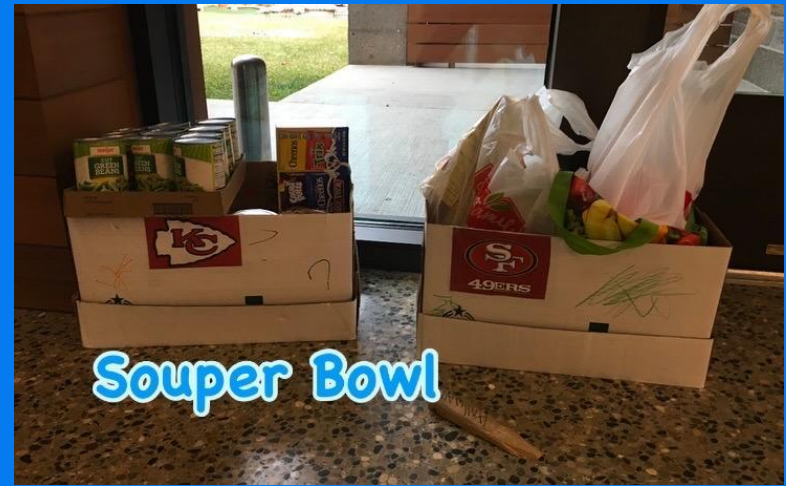
Practical Tips for Building Community Belonging

- ★ Invite them in
- ★ Celebrate them
- ★ Visit them



Practical Tips for Building Community Belonging

★ Collaborate with them



Driving Questions to Build Staff Belonging

- Who are you as individuals?
- Who are we together?
- How can we practice mutuality?



Building Staff Belonging in Boston Square

- Flags
- Communication and conflict styles workshop
- Vision Boards



Practical Tips to Build Staff Belonging



There are 5 Pillars to Belonging at Work

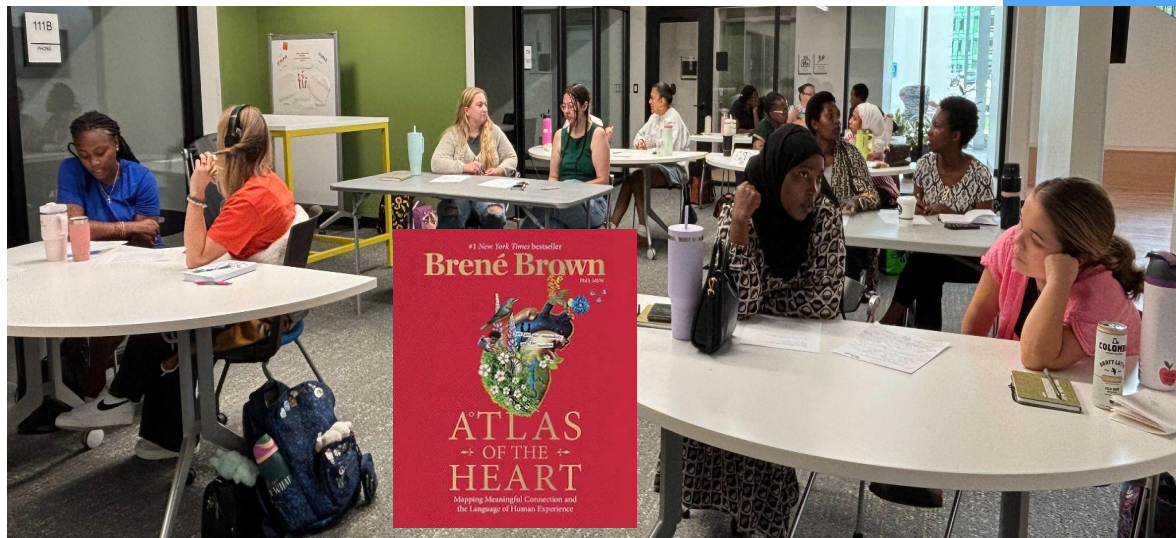
Welcomed

Known

Included

Supported

Connected



Practical Tips to Build Staff Belonging

Create a Belonging Statement

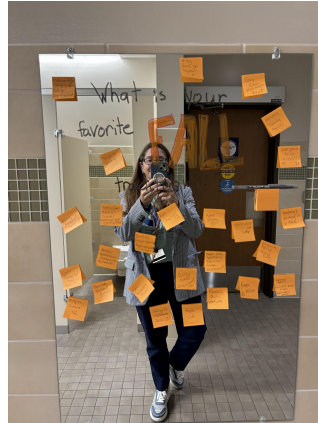
"When quality teachers have a sense of belonging and share the vision of a school, they are much more likely to stay, even in difficult to staff schools."

- Kevin L. O'Gorman & Jacqueline E. Jacobs
in Education Week Teacher



Practical Tips to Build Staff Belonging

- ★ PLAY together
- ★ Ask for feedback
- ★ Onboarding/Welcoming
- ★ Highlight Best Work
- ★ Genuine Feedback
- ★ Stay Interviews
- ★ Question of the Week
- ★ Know Your Staff



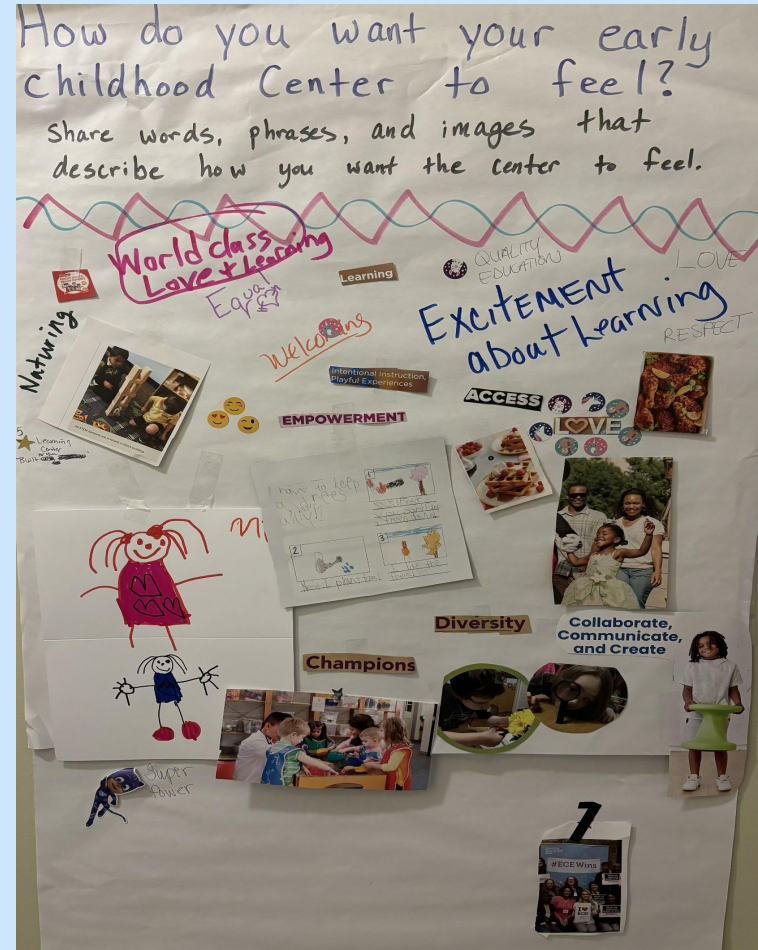
Driving Questions to Build Family Belonging

- Who are the families connected to our program?
- How do families want to be be informed and included?
- Where might families see themselves represented in our program?



Building Family Belonging in Boston Square

- Community Conversations
- Home Visits
- Community Ribbon Cutting and Open House



Practical Tips to Build Family Belonging

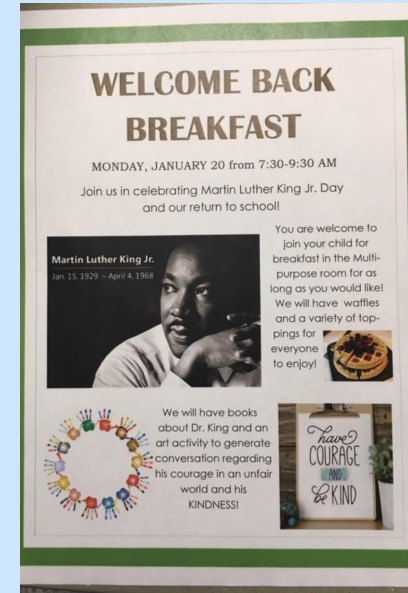
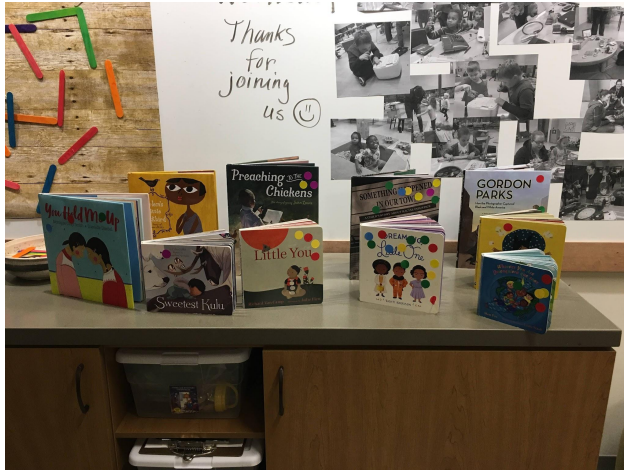
- ★ First interaction matters
- ★ Know their names
- ★ Multiple ways to stay engaged



office
hours

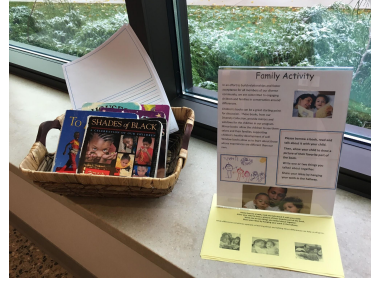
Practical Tips to Build Family Belonging

- ★ Ask for what they need and use it to inform programing.



Practical Tips to Build Family Belonging

★ Have Fun growing and learning together creates Connection.



Wood is our art theme this month!
Let's make a wood collage.
Choose some wood pieces and stick them to the background or to each other, as in the photo above.
Use 1 glue dot for each piece of wood.



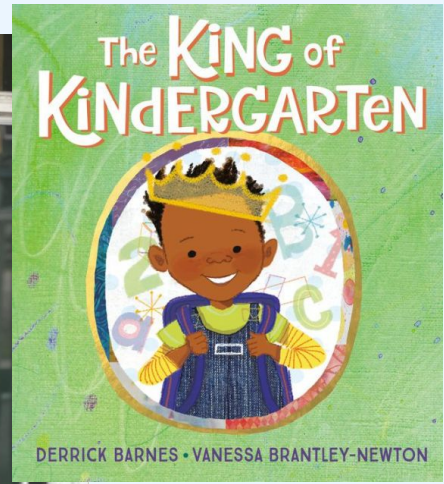
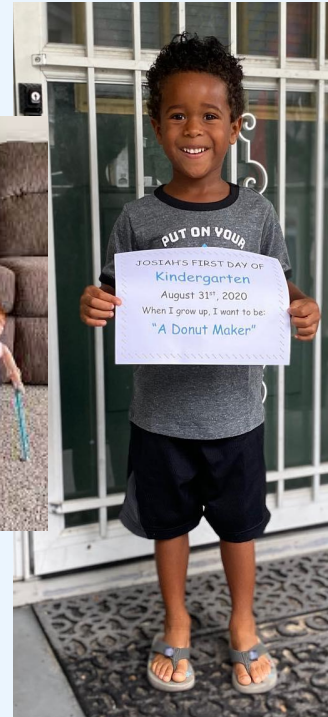
Driving Questions to Build Child Belonging

- Who are the children in our program?
- How might the children in our program see reflections of themselves?
- How might our program represent and prepare for children who are not yet participating?



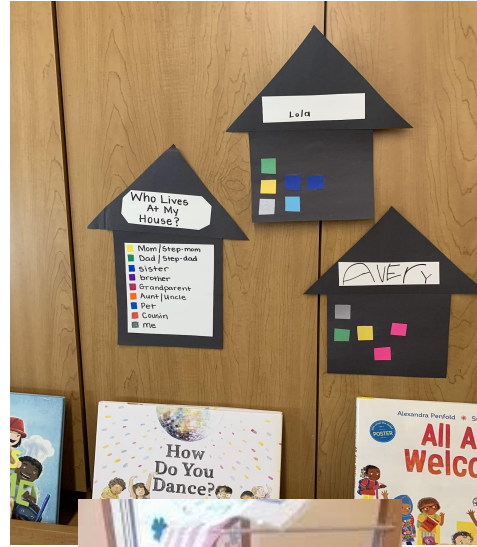
Building Child Belonging in Boston Square

- What type of art is on your walls?
- What do dolls and action figures look like?
- What types of books are on your shelves?
- What kind of music you you play?
- What kinds of food do you serve?
- What languages are used when labeling in the classroom?
- What do staff look like? Are there ethnic-racial patterns in staff roles?
- How do all children see themselves in the environment? (mirrors)
- How can you prepare the environment for children to also learn about others who are different from them (windows)



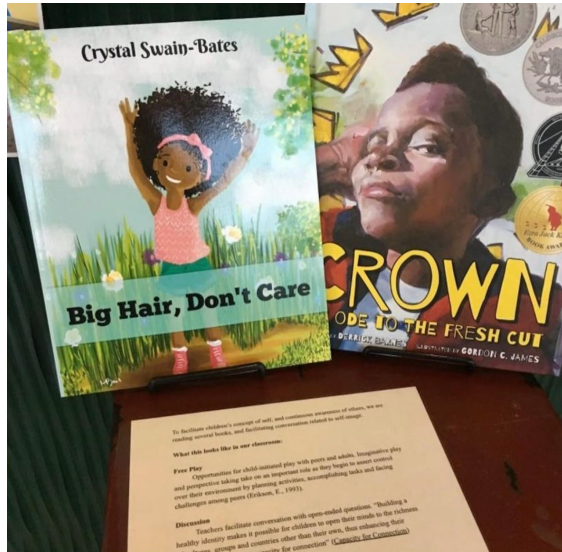
Practical Tips to Build Child Belonging

- ★ Grandparents Names
- ★ Documentation
- ★ Home Visits



Practical Tips to Build Child Belonging

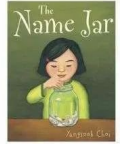
- ★ Child Centered Curriculum
- ★ Name Documentation



WHY READ **BELONGING** PICTURE BOOKS ?

SELF-ACCEPTANCE

Understanding and valuing who you are, even when you feel different.

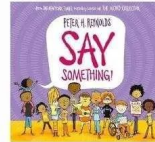
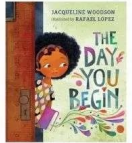


INCLUSION

Welcoming others and making space for everyone to feel seen and valued.

CONNECTIONS

Forming positive relationships through shared experiences and understanding.

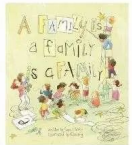


VOICE & AGENCY

Encouraging children to express themselves & know their voice matters.

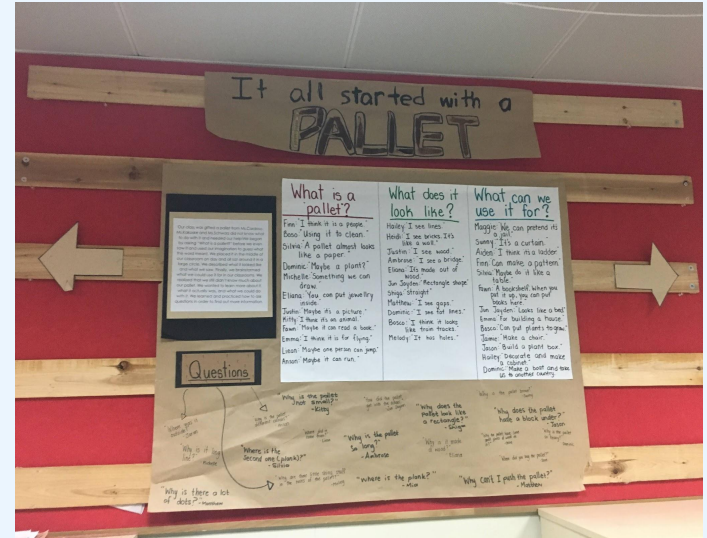
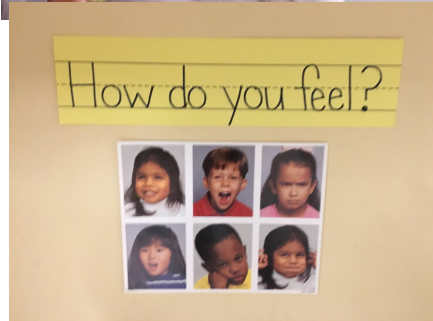
SAFETY & TRUST

Creating spaces where children feel safe, supported, and respected.



Practical Tips to Build Child Belonging

- ★ Stay Curious
- ★ Food Bias
- ★ Name Small Group



Any questions?

Q&A



The best of community does give
one a deep sense of belonging
and well-being; and in that sense
community takes away loneliness.

Helen J. R. Givens



A brief word from today's sponsor,
Family

Interested in learning more about **Famly?**

Throw your answer in the chat

a. Yes, of course!

b. Not right now, but definitely will keep it in mind!



Thank you!

Connect with us



JaneAnn Benson



Dr. Anissa L. Eddie



Meghan Cornwell