



# Family Liaison Self-Reflection Rubric

## A Tool to Strengthen Early Childhood Family Engagement

*Version 2.0*



**Jamie Heng-Chieh Wu, Ph.D.**  
Principal Investigator

**Amy Mason, MA**  
Project Coordinator

**Holli A. Schluker, BA**  
Research Technologist II

**Community Evaluation Programs**  
Office for Public Engagement and Scholarship  
University Outreach and Engagement  
Michigan State University



**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

University Outreach  
and Engagement

**CLINTON COUNTY**  
**RESA**  
Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency

## RUBRIC OVERVIEW

The Family Liaison Self-Reflection Rubric is designed to support Strong Beginnings, Michigan's pilot preschool program (launched in 2021) for low-income three-year-olds. Family engagement and relationship building is an essential part of Strong Beginnings. Family liaisons operate in each program classroom and are uniquely positioned to assist Strong Beginnings' students and families meet their needs and growth by providing information, referrals, and support. They are community-builders within the program and their responsibilities include:

- Assisting administrators and teachers in family communications and support,
- Facilitating families' transition into preschool and outside communities,
- Supporting families' interactions with their child at home.

While there are several guidelines for family engagement practices in early childhood education, previous tools often lack empirical data. Possible issues preventing data collection and analysis are tools being too long, disconnected from lived experiences, or a lack of capacity to collect and analyze data. To fill this gap, the Community Evaluation Programs at University Outreach and Engagement (Michigan State University) partnered with the Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA) and Strong Beginnings' administrators and family liaisons to create an evaluative reflection tool for Strong Beginnings' family liaison position. Three themes were identified by the Strong Beginnings' communities that capture family liaisons' work: **relationship building with families, family support and advocacy, and program team collaboration.** By focusing on these areas of growth and development, family liaisons can be better equipped to support children and their families' holistic wellbeing and growth.

The Rubric's guidelines were derived from ongoing feedback and revisions from Strong Beginnings' administrators and family liaisons and resulted in a tool applicable and relevant to their work. Special attention was given to making the assessment brief, with straightforward questions, and respectful of the various stages and contexts family liaisons operate in. Because families often have different backgrounds and needs, this tool is not designed to provide a fixed list of responsibilities for family liaisons. Instead, the Rubric provides recommended practices, space for self-reflection, and professional development opportunities unique to family liaisons' role as community-builders. To learn more about Strong Beginnings, visit <https://cep.msu.edu/projects/strong-beginnings-program>.



## RUBRIC INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Open the file or print:** The Rubric is designed in a PDF format. You can use it on your computer or tablet, or simply print it out as regular rating sheets.

**2. Read the items and rate:** We recommend that you spend some time getting acquainted with the Rubric before you start the self-reflection and rating. Some people find it helpful to rate through an ongoing process; others like to rate the whole Rubric when the self-evaluation is finished. You may choose to pilot it beforehand to familiarize yourself with it.

**3. Rating scale:** The rating scale is from 1 (low) to 5 (high); we provide specific descriptions for scores 1, 3, and 5. You may find sometimes that your ratings are above the lower score but not yet reaching the higher one. If you find yourself in between rating scores (e.g., 3 and 5), it is perfectly fine to rate a situation as a 4.

**4. Note-taking:** You may use the blank space below each item to take notes and provide rationale for scoring. We have found note-taking very helpful, especially when sharing the results with your peers or for improvement purposes.

**5. Total score:** A summary of the scores is available at the end of the Rubric. You may review the scores to find strengths and areas for improvement.

## FUNDING

This Rubric was developed by Michigan State University's Office of University Outreach and Engagement as a part of the evaluation of the Strong Beginnings pilot preschool program for three-year-old children. These activities are supported with funds through the State School Aid Act, Section 32t, awarded by the Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency (CCRESA), under the direction of the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential,

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

Wu, J.H., Mason, A., and Schlukebir, H.A. (2024). Family liaison self-reflection rubric 2.0: A tool to strengthen early childhood family engagement. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Jamie Heng-Chieh Wu, Ph.D.**

219 S. Harrison Rd.

East Lansing, MI 48823

Phone: (517) 353-8977

Fax: (517) 432-9541

E-mail: wuhengch@msu.edu

© 2024 Michigan State University



## ATMOSPHERE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

**1. I find ways to use all children's and families' names to show my interest in them.**

**Example:** I ask families how to pronounce their names.

1	2	3	4	5
I know <b>some</b> of the children's and families' names.		I know <b>almost all</b> the children's and families' names.		I find ways to use <b>all children's and families' names</b> to show my interest in them.

**List your activities and practices here:**

**2. I chat regularly with all families in-person or check in with them over the phone.**

**Examples:** I share positive stories about each child. I ask about dietary restrictions for family events.

1	2	3	4	5
I chat with <b>some families</b> at least once every two weeks.		I chat with <b>about half of all families</b> at least once every two weeks.		I chat with <b>almost all families</b> at least once every two weeks.

**List your activities and practices here:**

### 3. I return families' calls, texts, and emails within 48 hours.

**Examples:** I ask families a their preferred communication styles and availability. When things take longer to find out, I let families know I haven't forgotten them.

1	2	3	4	5
Families <b>hardly ever</b> reach out to me.		I return families' calls, texts, or emails, though it sometimes takes <b>more than 48 hours</b> .		I return families' calls, texts, or emails <b>within 48 hours</b> , either offering a solution or letting them know I am working on it.

**List your activities and practices here:**

### 4. I follow up with individual families to see how my support to them was helpful.

**Example:** I chat with families to see how they might have used the support I provided with them individually or through group messages.

1	2	3	4	5
I <b>have not needed to follow up</b> with individual families because I have not had the opportunity to offer my support.		I <b>often follow up</b> with individual families to see how my support to them was helpful.		I <b>almost always follow up</b> with individual families to see how my support to them was helpful.

**List your activities and practices here:**

**5. I promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families.**

**Example:** I speak with families about how they want to engage in the program and then connect them to opportunities.

1	2	3	4	5
I use <b>verbal and body language</b> to make families feel welcome.		I <b>find multiple ways families can engage in the classroom</b> such as co-facilitating events, making traditional foods, doing talent shows, or volunteering.		I find multiple ways families can engage in the classroom, <b>especially families from a minority or marginalized community.</b>

**List your activities and practices here:**

**FAMILY SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

**6. I strengthen families by providing resources, active listening, and encouraging them to be their own advocates.**

**Example:** I encourage families to connect with each other and share the resources they find helpful.

1	2	3	4	5
I <b>pay attention to social cues or check with teachers</b> to provide resources to specific children or families with signs of distress.		In addition to helping families meet their immediate needs, I <b>empathize with families, brainstorm with them about possible solutions, and highlight their strengths.</b>		In addition to providing services and active listening, I <b>find ways to help families connect with each other, look for outside resources, and to be their own advocates</b> when the opportunity arises.

**List your activities and practices here:**

**7. I chat with families about their child’s interests and how they integrate them into their daily activities at home.**

**Example:** I learn each child’s interests and what classroom learning is happening to provide relevant suggestions for activities families can do at home.

1	2	3	4	5
I chat with <b>some families</b> about their child’s interests and how they integrate them into their daily activities at home.		I chat with <b>about half of families</b> about their child’s interests and how they integrate them into their daily activities at home.		I chat with <b>almost all families</b> about their child’s interests and how they integrate them into their daily activities at home.

**List your activities and practices here:**

**8. I make sure families have support to address their child’s social, emotional, and behavioral needs.**

**Example:** I ask families about their bedtime routines and share resources if there is a need.

1	2	3	4	5
<b>Families do not talk to me</b> about their child’s social, emotional, and behavioral development.		I have <b>talked to about half of families</b> regarding what support they need to address their child’s social, emotional, and behavioral needs.		I have <b>talked to almost all or all families</b> regarding what support they need to address their child’s social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

**List your activities and practices here:**

## PROFESSIONAL TEAM BUILDING

### 9. My working relationship with classroom teachers is both positive and effective.

**Example:** The classroom teacher keeps me updated on what's going on in the classroom.

1	2	3	4	5
My working relationship with teachers is in its <b>early stages</b> . We are learning how our responsibilities should be divided.		My working relationship with teachers is <b>developing</b> . We sometimes run into conflicts and need to talk more about how we can better support families.		My working relationship with teachers is <b>mature</b> . We rarely run into conflicts and regularly discuss how we can better support families.

**List your activities and practices here:**

### 10. My administrators provide me with strong support.

**Example:** My ECC and ECS understand my role and support me along the way.

1	2	3	4	5
My working relationship with my administrators is in its <b>early stages</b> . We are learning how to work together.		My working relationship with my administrators is <b>developing</b> . We use meetings to touch base and get business done.		My working relationship with my administrators is <b>mature</b> . We use meetings to brainstorm ideas and work as thought partners.

**List your activities and practices here:**



## FAMILY LIAISON SELF-REFLECTION RUBRIC

ATMOSPHERE AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	AVERAGE SCORE	
1. I find ways to use all children's and families' names to show my interest in them.		
2. I chat regularly with families in-person or check in with them over the phone.		
3. I return families' calls, texts, and emails within 48 hours.		
4. I follow up with individual families to see how my support to them was helpful.		
5. I promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families.		
FAMILY SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY	AVERAGE SCORE	
6. I strengthen families by providing resources, active listening, and encouraging them to be their own advocates.		
7. I chat with families about their child's interests and how they integrate them into their daily activities at home.		
8. I make sure families have support to address their child's social, emotional, and behavioral needs.		
PROFESSIONAL TEAM BUILDING	AVERAGE SCORE	
9. My working relationship with classroom teachers is both positive and effective.		
10. My administrators provide me with strong support.		
<i>The total rated scores/the highest possible scores X 100%</i>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>%</b>

## LITERATURE

Center for the Study of Social Policy (2018, October). Strengthening families self-assessment tool for center-based early care and education programs. *Self-Assessments for Programs*.

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2018). Family-centered practices checklist. *Practice Improvement Tools*. <https://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-family.asp>

Maryland Family Engagement Coalition and the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development (2022, August). The early childhood family engagement framework toolkit: Maryland's vision for engaging families with young children. *Maryland Family Engagement Toolkit*.

National Implementation Research Network (2013). Core competencies for family advocates. *MAHS Form 7020 - Family and Community Engagement Practice Profile*.

SC ABC Quality (2017, December). Early childhood family engagement toolkit. *ELAC Family Engagement Workgroup*.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. (2018). *Relationship-based competencies to support family engagement: Professional development assessment for family services professionals*.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (2022, August). *Using the Head Start parent, family, and community engagement framework in your program: Markers of progress*. National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Prosperity Agenda (2017, August). Family-centered coaching: A toolkit to transform practice & engage families. *Family-centered coaching toolkit*.