Supporting Those Involved with Child Maltreatment

Ways to Support the Child
- Provide predictable routines so that the child knows what to expect.
- Allow for natural expression of anxiety through talk and play.
- Give simple explanations for things that worry the child.
- Teach healthy ways of relating such as nonviolent problem-solving.
- Encourage healthy relationships based on equality and fairness.
- Establish policies for pick up. Make sure that you have clear written policies for who can pick up the child and who cannot.
- Have a plan in place in case an abusive parent arrives to pick up the child without permission.¹

Ways to Support the Parents
- Maintain a supportive relationship with the family and acknowledge how difficult and stressful their situation can be.
- Remain non-judgmental in your approach to the family.
- Be consistent and nurturing to the parent and child.
- Make time for parents who are going through difficulties.
- Establish frequent “check ins” with family to see how things are going and how they are coping.
- Encourage and build on the positive traits and healthy interactions already present in the family.
- Compliment parents on their efforts and successes.
- Assure family that you will still continue to provide quality care to their child.
- Maintain confidentiality with staff and other families.
- Assess whether referrals to community resources are needed.
- Don’t expect the family initially to be grateful for your efforts. They may be too overwhelmed to recognize your concern for them and their child.²

Ways for Directors to Support the Staff
- Share what is known about the outcome of a report to the authorities with the staff who were involved.
- Allow staff to verbalize feelings while maintaining confidentiality.
- Acknowledge staff feelings and focus on the positive outcomes for the child and the family.
- Encourage activities that reduce stress.
- Encourage staff to maintain normal relationships with the parent and child.

¹ Reprinted with permission from UCSF California Childcare Health Program
² Modified with permission from Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance

This is a reference document from the ECELS Child Abuse and Neglect Self Learning Module