

## *Reflection:* Define Your Setting

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What kind of program are we?

What populations do we serve?

What is our mission or vision statement? If we don't have a mission or vision statement, what do we most wish for the children to gain from their experience at our program?

What makes us unique?

What are our strengths and weaknesses as an organization?

How do we offer professional development? Can we improve upon this?

What is my role in the team?

Is my role in this team supporting the mission or vision statement or desired outcomes of the program?

## *Reflection:* Leadership Virtues

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How do I exhibit courage in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I exhibit impartiality in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I express empathy in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I demonstrate judgment in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I portray enthusiasm in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I demonstrate humility in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

How do I express imagination in my work with children, my team, and my colleagues?

What are the areas in which I can improve?

Is there a leader in my setting who can help me improve in these areas?

## Reflection for Team Leaders: The Invisible Work

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Read through the scenario and imagine your own classroom and team, and think about how you typically respond to this type of situation.

It's one of those days in your classroom! The weather has prevented you from taking children outside, and they are bursting with energy. Two children in your classroom seem to be pressing each other's buttons and butting heads every few minutes. Someone just knocked over a vase, and water and flowers are strewn on the floor. As you turn to get some towels, someone slips in the water and bursts into tears.

Freeze this moment to answer the following questions:

What is the expression on your face right now?

Are you moving slowly and purposefully, or are you rushing to put out fires?

What is the tone of your voice? Is it low and calm or loud and agitated?

Are you making reassuring eye contact with your team or avoiding eye contact? Or are you rolling your eyes?

Are you taking deep breaths, taking quick and shallow breaths, or holding your breath?

Is anyone responsible for these mishaps?

Are you actively modeling for your team how to respond in this type of situation?

How are you indicating what the greatest priority is in this moment?

## Reflection for Assistants: The Invisible Work

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Read through the scenario and imagine your own classroom and team, and think about how you typically respond to this type of situation.

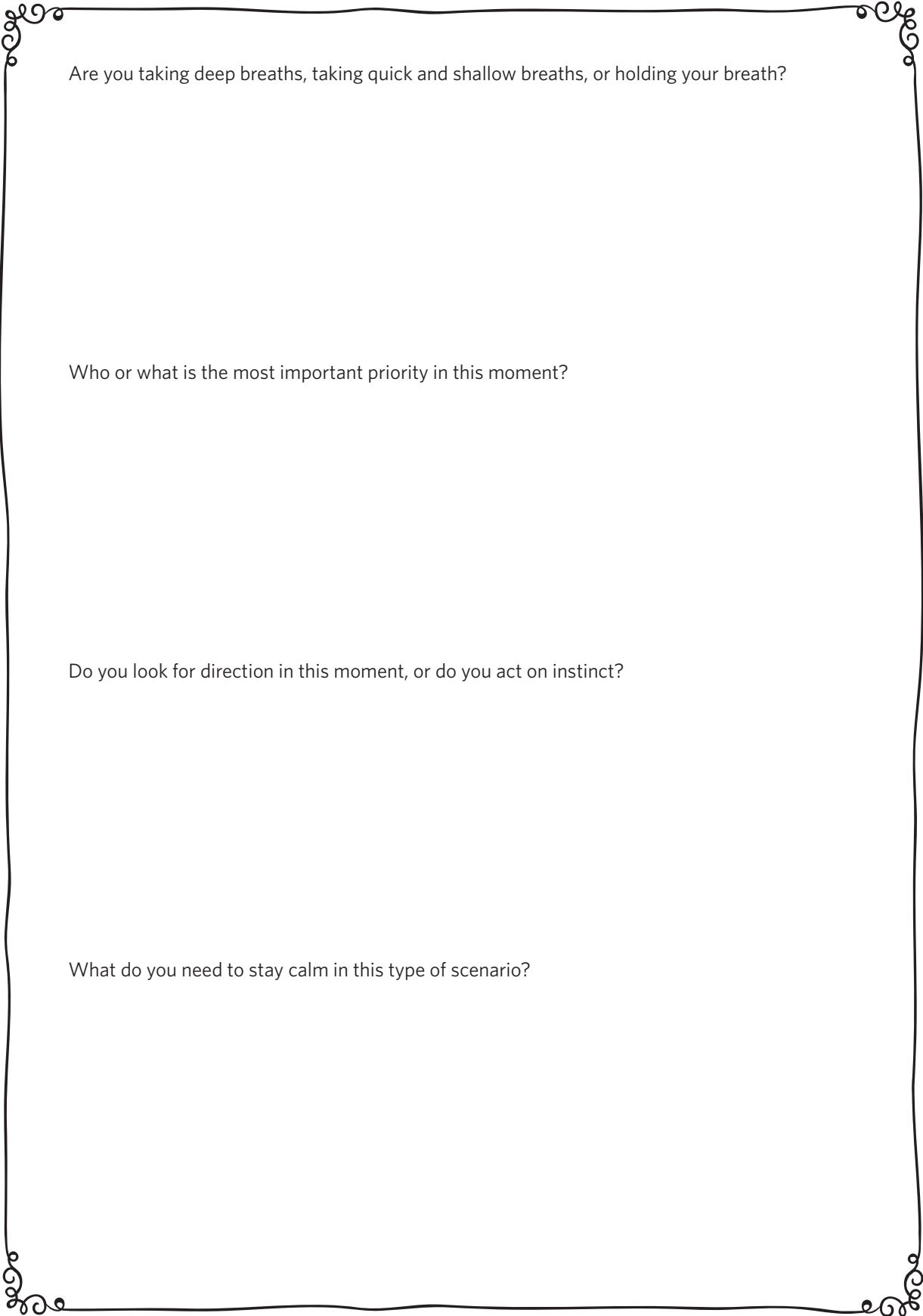
It's one of those days in your classroom! The weather has prevented you from taking children outside, and they are bursting with energy. Two children in your classroom seem to be pressing each other's buttons and butting heads every few minutes. Someone just knocked over a vase, and water and flowers are strewn on the floor. As you turn to get some towels, someone slips in the water and bursts into tears.

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Are you taking deep breaths, taking quick and shallow breaths, or holding your breath?

Who or what is the most important priority in this moment?

Do you look for direction in this moment, or do you act on instinct?

What do you need to stay calm in this type of scenario?

## Reflection:

### Setting the Tone for the Team: Working with Children

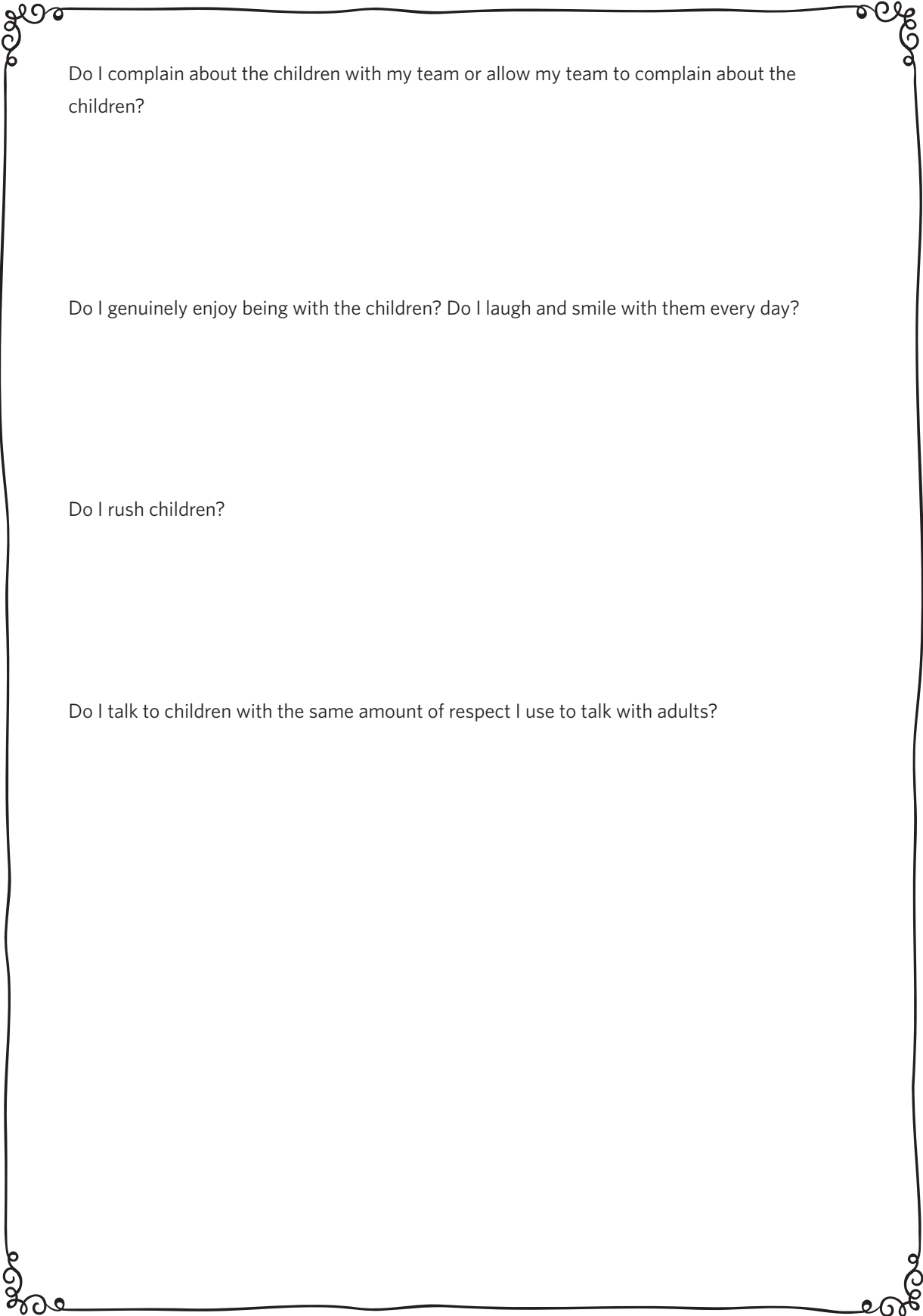
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What happens in my classroom when a child falls apart, whether the problem is missing a caregiver, having wet pants, or being overly tired or hungry? Do I model care and compassion by meeting the needs of this child, or do I let one of my teammates handle it?

When a child presents behavioral challenges for my classroom, do I set a tone of compassion and sensitivity? Do I roll my eyes, sigh, or become exasperated?

Do I fight for children in my classroom by adjusting my teaching style, changing the environment, or spending more time with them, or am I quick to pass them off as unmanageable?

Do I dig deeper for the sake of a child with challenging behaviors by soliciting more information from the child's family or other experts?



Do I complain about the children with my team or allow my team to complain about the children?

Do I genuinely enjoy being with the children? Do I laugh and smile with them every day?

Do I rush children?

Do I talk to children with the same amount of respect I use to talk with adults?



## *Reflection:* The Role of the Assistant

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What are your responsibilities in the classroom?

What are you contributing to the classroom that is unique to you?

Does the lead teacher have a clear vision for the classroom that you support?

If not, what would you like to see change?

What do you consider the lead teacher's strengths?

Do you feel the communication in your team is clear and healthy? If not, why not?

Do you feel your classroom is an optimal learning environment for children? Why or why not?

What do you think your team is doing well?

What do you think your team could improve?

Do you feel comfortable giving feedback to the lead teacher? If not, why not?

## Reframing Reflection

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You arrive at school in a great mood. You bounce into the classroom to find your teammate quietly preparing for the day. You say, "Good morning!" She mumbles a reply but does not look up from her task or make eye contact. What is your first thought or response?

1. You think your teammate must be mad at you, and your mind starts to race with what you might have done to elicit this rude response. The good mood you were in disappears. Now you feel offended.
2. You think your teammate must have had a hard morning at home. You ask her gently if she is okay and if she would like to talk about anything. Then you let it go and think, "She will talk when she's ready, and it most likely has nothing to do with me."
3. You ask your teammate if she's okay, and if she doesn't respond in a friendly way, you worry you have upset her. You spend the rest of the day walking on eggshells.
4. You react some other way. (Briefly describe it.)

A parent is rushing to drop off his child in the morning. You overhear him talking quickly to his toddler and sighing with exasperation at how slowly his child is moving. The child keeps getting distracted by things on the way to the classroom, and you see the look of impatience on the father's face. He meets your eye and frowns. What is your first thought or response?

1. This parent is too hard on his child. He should not have had kids in the first place! You give him a stern eye and speak only to the child as they arrive.
2. You think, "This parent must be very worried about getting somewhere on time," smile at both of them, and offer to help the child so the parent can go.

3. You think this parent is being rude to you and wonder what you did to offend him. You act polite but curt toward him.
4. You react some other way. (Briefly describe it.)

Write your own scenario:

1.

2.

3.

4.

## *Reflection:* Are You Listening?

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You can offer your teammates every opportunity to be heard with an open mind free of judgment. How do you know you are listening with an open mind? Next time one of your team members comes to you with a concern, take a moment to notice your physical and emotional response.

- ◆ Do you tense up, expecting the worst?
- ◆ Do you cross your arms or legs or avoid eye contact?
- ◆ Do you hold your breath or breathe faster?
- ◆ Do you tune in and out of what your colleague is saying, while your mind races with ways to defend yourself or with quick fixes for the problem?
- ◆ Do you interrupt, or do you wait for your colleague to finish speaking?

If you answer any of these with a “yes,” then you may not really be listening.

## *Reflection:* Interests versus Positions

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Describe in a few sentences or less a conflict you have had in the workplace.

Break down the conflict into positions, identifying the positions by the people who held them.

Write the outcomes the parties were hoping for and the basic needs of each party.

Find the hidden interests for each party.

Identify any shared interests.

Propose two to three solutions with shared interests as the goals.

Reframe the conflict, addressing the basic needs of each party.

## *Reflection:* Lead Teacher Role and Responsibilities

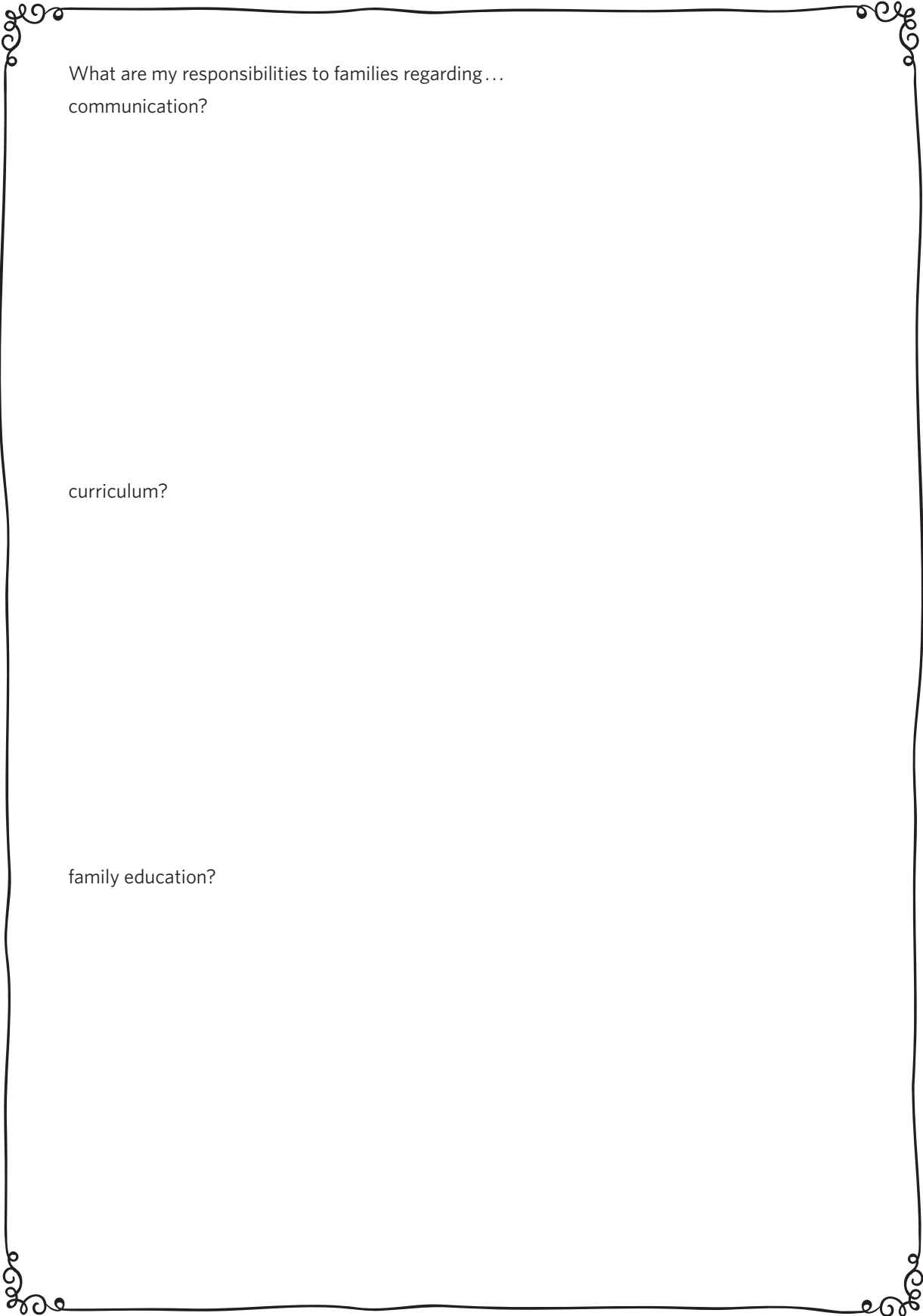
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What are my responsibilities to the children in my classroom regarding...  
safety (state guidelines, school guidelines)?

learning outcomes (curriculum, goals)?

emotional growth and development?

physical growth and development?



What are my responsibilities to families regarding...  
communication?

curriculum?

family education?

What are my responsibilities to classroom teachers regarding...  
communication?

support?

feedback?

What are my responsibilities to my program regarding...  
professional development?

collaboration with colleagues?

participation in and enhancement of curriculum?



## Reflection: Assistant Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

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What are my responsibilities to the children in my classroom regarding...  
safety (state guidelines, school guidelines)?

learning outcomes (curriculum, goals)?

emotional growth and development?

physical growth and development?

What are my responsibilities to the families regarding...  
communication?

curriculum?

family education?

What are my responsibilities to the lead teacher regarding ...  
communication?

support?

feedback?

What are my responsibilities to my program regarding ...  
professional development?

collaboration with colleagues?

participation in and enhancement of curriculum?

## *Reflection:* Meaningful Contributions

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Why did you choose to work in early childhood?

Why did you choose to work in this particular program?

What are your favorite things about working with young children?

What are the hardest aspects of working with young children?

What would you be if you weren't an early childhood teacher?

Name three things you love to do besides working with children.

## Reflection: Group Norms

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List at least ten essential elements of your ideal classroom.

What do you consider the essential elements of collaboration in a team?

What are your pet peeves in a classroom setting?

## *Reflection:* Risk Taking

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### **Section A: Complete individually**

How do you define risk?

What would taking risks look like in your professional life?

What would taking risks look like in the classroom?

### **Section B: Complete as a team**

Take turns listening to each teacher's risks, and offer ideas for a safety net for each. What could you do to allow your teammate to take professional risks?

Set one concrete goal for taking a risk in the classroom.

## Reflection: Peaceful Conflict

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How do you define conflict?

What did conflict look like in your household when you were growing up?

What does conflict look like in your home now?

How comfortable are you with conflict on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being extremely uncomfortable and 10 being completely at ease?

What are your first reactions to conflict between children? Between adults?

What do you need in order to resolve conflict?

Do you need resolution to move on after conflict?

Think of the personal relationship in your life that has the most conflict. Name three things about this person that make your relationship a challenge.

Does your own personality include any of these qualities?

If someone in your life is upset, do you often assume the cause was something you said or did? Why?

How do you want to approach conflict in our team?

## *Reflection:* Goal Setting for Teachers

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What are your strengths as a teacher?

What unique qualities do you bring to your classroom?

What are three goals you have for developing your teaching practice?

What do you need in order to accomplish those goals?

With what area of teaching do you struggle?

What do you need in order to grow in this area?

Is there anything specific I can do to support your professional growth in our classroom?



## Midpoint Team Check-In Survey

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On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor, 2 to 4 being good, and 5 being excellent, rate the following aspects of our classroom. Please include any specifics in the space provided.

Prepared learning environment for children: 1 2 3 4 5

Clarity of roles within our team: 1 2 3 4 5

Cooperation and collaboration in our team: 1 2 3 4 5

Support for your professional growth by lead teacher: 1 2 3 4 5

Trusting bonds with families, relationships with families nurtured: 1 2 3 4 5

Alignment of our classroom with philosophy, best practices, and current research: 1 2 3 4 5

Space made for each team member to make meaningful contributions to the classroom: 1 2 3 4 5

Anything else you'd like me to know: 1 2 3 4 5

# Team Year-End Feedback Survey

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Your name:

Your title:

Please list three things you love about working in this classroom.

Please list three things that could be improved in this classroom.

Do you feel supported in your role in this classroom? If yes, in what ways?

Is there anything I can do to be more supportive of your role in this classroom?

What advice would you give to a teacher starting out in your position in this classroom?



Do you feel children get what they need in this classroom? Give examples.

Do you feel families get what they need from this classroom? Give examples.

Do you think we function as a team in this classroom? Give examples.

Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me! I appreciate learning from you and working to improve our classroom.

# Year-End Family Survey

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Your name:

Were you satisfied with your child's experience in this classroom?

Do you feel that your child grew emotionally, academically, and physically in this classroom?

Please list three things you liked about your experience with this classroom.

Please list three things that could be improved in this classroom.

Do you feel that we were supportive of your child and family this year? Give examples.



Is there anything I can do to be more supportive of you and your family?

What advice would you give a new family starting out in this classroom?

What do you think made the biggest impact on your child's learning in our classroom?

Is there anything else you'd like me to know?

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me. I appreciate your perspective and am committed to continuously improving children's learning in my classroom.