


Building Relationships with Families

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**Parents often
need as
much support
from
professionals
as their kids**

The greatest positive influence for the entire family unit begins with a home/professional relationship entrenched in the same feelings of trust, safety, and belonging that we strive to achieve with children in our classrooms/therapeutic setting.



**This lays the
foundation for
successful
educational and
quality-of-life
outcomes**

Relational Trauma

- **Many adversities and traumas occur in the context of close relationships – Allan Schore**
- **Some forms of chronic stress (i.e. early neglect) may be experienced as traumatic since the brain develops in an experience expectant manner and seriously unresponsive care dashes the inbuilt expectation of safety and nurture – Howard Bath**

Educational Trauma

An emotional response due to harmful systemic practices perpetuated by educators and school staff that often have harmful long-term effects on students.

Relationship-Building with Parents

Trust, Safety & Belonging

Relationships - Why they are important...

Here's what happens:

1 Your brain takes in what's happening around you.



2 Your brain talks to all its parts - your body, your brainstem, your limbic area, your whole cortex.

3 Your brain pulls all them together and assigns it meaning.



Your relationships will impact the kinds of energy flow and information being sent to your body and brain. This includes positive and negative information.



Relationship-Building Strategies

Positive Relational Supports

Emotional Attunement

- Nonjudgement & Understanding
- Acceptance of their Story
- Active Listening
- Strengths & Empowerment
- Safe Space

**Being able to listen in a way
another person needs to be
heard**

- - **Mark Freado**



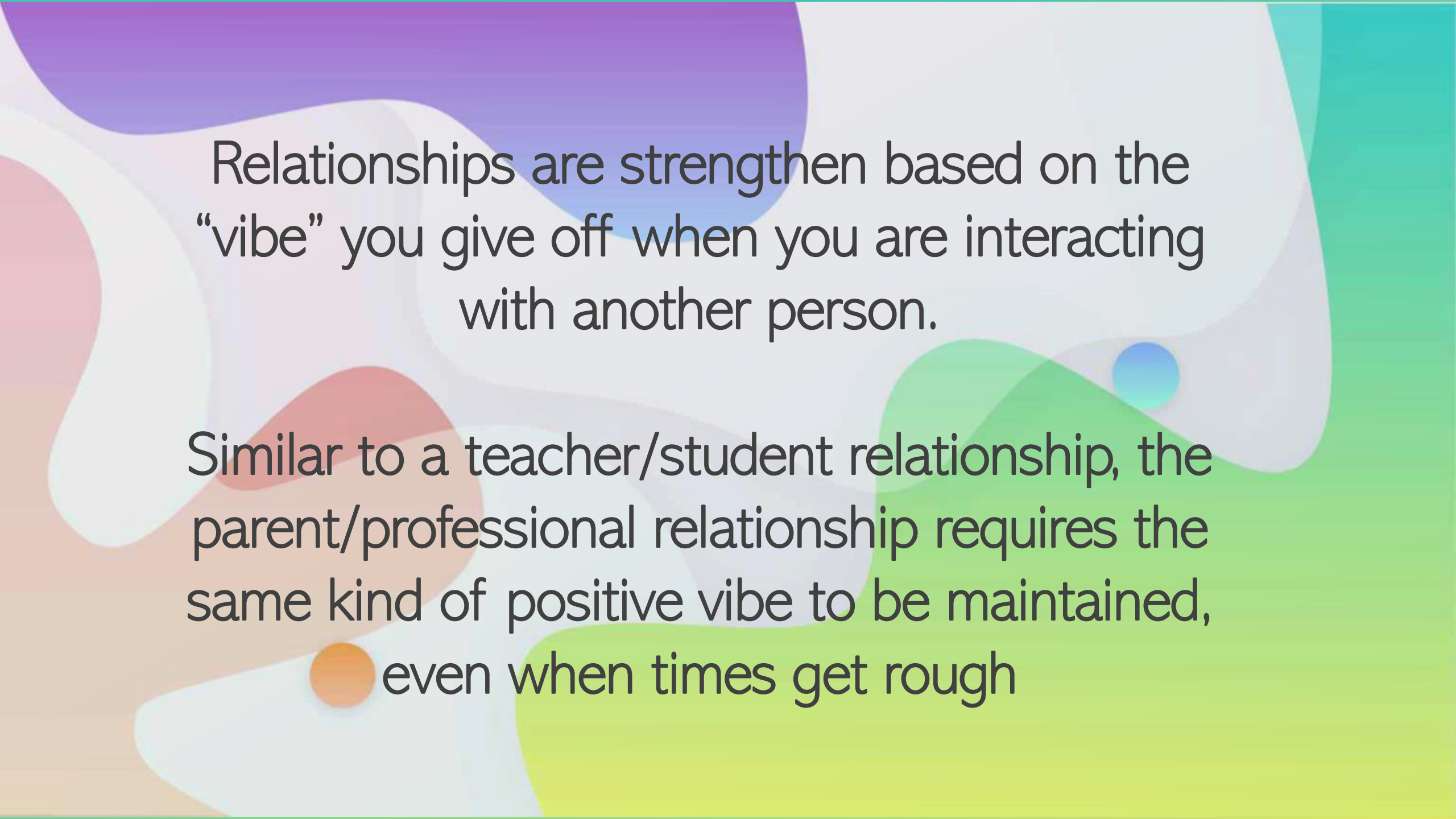
Parent/Professional Connections for Learning

Building Connections for Learning

- Safe Boundaries
- Cultural Openness and Acceptance
- Open Communication
- Active Listening & Continued Empowerment

Building Connections for Learning

- **Mirror Neurons**
- **Coregulation & Rhythmicity**
- **Ending on a Good Note**



Relationships are strengthened based on the “vibe” you give off when you are interacting with another person.

Similar to a teacher/student relationship, the parent/professional relationship requires the same kind of positive vibe to be maintained, even when times get rough

- Asking our opinions and honoring our wishes when applicable
- Listening to our worries
- Empathy for our situation
- Be willing to address our own trauma
- Creating an environment based on my child's unique needs

Parent Feedback

Important aspects of building relationships

- When professional truly cares about my child & makes an effort to connect with them, especially when he can be difficult to connect with
- Helping me sort through a lot of information – big decisions & small decisions I would never have thought of
- Providing exercises & engaging activities that challenge both our daughter and us

Parent Feedback

Positive Experiences

- When professional does not express much emotion or goes by the “textbook, answers” instead of considering my individual child
- When doctors don’t listen to parents & push aside our child and concerns
- No support when choosing to participate in any therapeutic programs
- Professionals unwillingness to familiarize themselves with different types of approaches
- We spent a lot of money on programs and the professionals still didn’t listen to our needs for our son
- No one wants to celebrate our son’s developmental milestones because they are delayed. They are happening, just not in the ‘normal’ timeline that every expects.
- Professional who was demanding and expectant of the child, and my child was not complying, looked to me and asked me to do something about it.
- When deciding which services to keep or discontinue, being threatened with “you are going against medical advice”

Parent Feedback

Negative Experiences

- *Support groups**
 - Social media
 - Personal conversations
 - Presentation
 - Newsletters/Emails
- *Consistent Check-ins**
- *Invites to Community Events**

Parent Feedback

Important Factors to Support Families

“Understanding our child is just living in his purest form and his needs and behaviors are not a reflection of me.”

-Ciera, Mom

