Sleep is a really great place to explore relationships with families, particularly because it's that place where the home comes into the setting and the care setting can reflect back to the home because parent sleep is a very important issue at night, not just in the day.

I think it's a really good place to get those communications going and establish relationships with families.

I think so.

It's a genuine opportunity to build trusting relationships, to establish communication pathways, and to practice open two-way communication.

Absolutely, but I think, also, it's one of those places that can be more tricky, where

there are places where they can be challenging with different set of opinions.

Absolutely, diverse expectations and the need to really listen and work with families.

I think that, you know, in Family Day Care, it starts off when the educator and the family meets, so I think it's that, that beginning the foundations of creating that relationship and asking the questions around what their needs are for their child, and that does change too.

As the child gets older, those needs around sleep and around everything does change.

So I think it's building those foundations and being, you know, communicating differently with the family, and having lots of communications that, whether that's on drop off or pick up, but I think it's the constant things that we found with families.

Yeah, I agree. And I think it's about recognising for your-- Educators are recognising that they will have really diverse-- families will have really diverse views about what's important for them, and to listen to those ideas, and to talk about what's also important for you as an educator.

So it isn't just about listening and taking that information in, and thinking, "Oh, well, I'll just do whatever I do normally in my environment."

But listening and negotiating about what needs to happen, so that families go really confident that their voices are heard, that we recognise that in a partnership, it is two people negotiating here.

It's two people having a conversation, determining what the interests of children here.

So I think one of the things educators bring to that space is they have a knowledge, a working knowledge about child development and why sleep is important and, also, why children grow out of that.

And for families, they're not necessarily knowledgeable about that yet, so I don't see

our role as teaching families.

I see our role as facilitating an opportunity to have a conversation and to grow both our understanding about what are the needs of their child--the individual child.

I think that it's really important that we recognise that individual needs are different.

So one 4-year-old might need a rest, another 4-year-old might not need a rest.

And that when we start to negotiate that with families and we bring the child's voice into that, we can easily be able to build really great, solid partnerships.

And I think it comes out over time and it's one of the things that I got from being an educator was that families, in some way, look to you to guide them in some ways. But, for me, to actually say, what you know about your children is more than I'll ever know.

Your knowledge about your child is important, so let's talk about what you know as well, and so partnerships grow and flourish as a result of that.

The way that I approach that with the parent is ask if they could trust us to know and

when the child is not just coping and just may need to go to sleep.

And, I guess, I would say as I said to you before, we're not going to sit down and check the child and say, "Don't go to sleep." And, you know, we haven't had a parent who doesn't respect our view on that.

And they tend to agree, and we haven't heard any issues.

We've not ever had a parent come back and be unhappy with us because their child did go to sleep.

Because, I think, if it that does happen, it's for a reason.

So we try to have conversations with the parents individually about that.

We try to reach a compromise, where we might say, "Well, look, before they go into that deep phase of sleep, might encourage them to wake up after 10-15 minutes." But we really do say that if the child is in a deep, deep sleep, we cannot prevent the child from going to sleep, particularly if they're falling asleep sitting up.

That's always what would have been our biggest challenges, meeting the needs of the parents and the family when they go home, but then, really, weighing it against the child's ability to cope in the afternoon if they haven't had sufficient sleep.

So what these educators are saying is that building trusting relationships and working in genuine partnership with the parents is really important to all elements of their practice, and, certainly, sleep, rest, and relaxation and the early years learning framework reminds us that one of the key characteristics of a genuine partnership is parents having opportunity to share in decision-making about their child.

And I think that even in the tricky times, when there is a difference in views and expectations, working with parents to find a solution is the key to that--always in the interest of the child.