Top Ten
Strategies used by real teachers for communicating with parents
Studies confirm that parent involvement makes an enormous impact on students’ attitude, attendance and academic achievement. This issue is thought to be so important that the Federal Government has passed legislation to encourage parental involvement. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has been written to encourage parents to be involved in their child’s education. Parents must be informed of their child’s education plan and are encouraged to take part in the planning. Recently, the No Child Left Behind Act has been introduced. This law intends to provide a quality education for all children. It empowers parents to make choices concerning their child’s education. A strong home-school connection is crucial in getting parents involved. Following are suggestions for creating a positive relationship with parents based on effective communication.
Top Ten Teacher Ideas:

10. **Give parents a copy of the books**
   - If funding in your districts allows
   - So parents to follow along and help with homework

9. **My teachers say ….**
   - Grade sheet that each teacher signs at the end of the week
   - Includes: comments, grade, missing assignments and whether a child stayed after school

8. **What’s your agenda say**
   - Signing the students daily agenda’s for homework
   - Parents check at home to make sure each assignment is then done
7. Organization Organization Organization

- Phone log
- Filing IEP’s

6. “I need to be honest”

- This gains trust
- Parents believe that you want the best for their child

5. “Just calling to let you know…”

- Positive and negative comments
- Set up a weekly time to call and discuss the week
- Ask if it is ok to talk at that time
- When leaving a message state weather it is an emergency

4. Let’s get technical

- EMAIL
- Saving emails to and from parents
- Website of homework assignments
3. **Introduce yourself**

- Write a letter to parents in September to describe yourself and classroom expectations
- Send a list of the rules and expectations so parents also know the expectations for their child

2. **Keep in Touch**

- Frequently contact parents
- Weekly phone calls

1. **Becoming a team**

- Parents and teachers working together
- On the same side
- Sharing the work load and responsibility equally
**Overcoming the Barriers**

I think we can agree the parental involvement in a child’s education has many benefits. But it is not always easy to communicate with parents. You may have tried to call a parent and found that the phone had been disconnected or you have sent home a note and received no response. We have identified some common barriers that hinder effective communication and strategies to overcome these barriers.

**Teacher’s Time**
Parent Coordinators

- Organize parent volunteer
- Phone calls to parents
- Monitor room when meeting with parents

Visit with parents during the day

- Lunch time
- Planning period

Provide stipends

- After school visits with parents
- Weekend visits with parents

Freeing teachers from routine duties

- Teachers do not act as lunch monitors
- Teachers do not act as hallway monitors
- Parent coordinator
- Parent volunteers
Parent’s Time

Early notices of meetings/activities

- Send several notices
- Include upcoming events
- Use e-mail

Homework hotlines/ voice mail systems

- Daily assignments listed
- Recorded directions for assignments
- Message for teacher if help is needed

Offering same event more than once

- Vary the time
- Smaller groups
Keep parents informed

- Update parents who don’t attend meetings/events
- Monthly newsletters

Home visits

- Parents lack transportation
- Many dependents at home
- Helpful to become familiar with home environment

Hold events near families’ homes

Transportation

- Organize car pooling
- Bus tokens available
- Staff pick up parents
Language Barriers

Bilingual parent liaisons

Bilingual instructional aides

- Classroom newsletter
- Meeting notices
- Upcoming events
- Workshop materials

Bilingual counselors

Bilingual parent volunteers

Parent workshop in first language

Translation services

Wireless microphone broadcaster

AM radio station
Cultural Barriers

Home-school liaison who lives in community

- Shares values of parents
- Knows what’s going on in the community

Training for parents and staff specifically on bridging cultural differences

- Offer workshops
- Newsletters
- Books

Needs assessment

- Discover what parents need in order to participate
- Discover what is important to the parent
- Education goals of parents for child
- Areas in which the school could be helpful
- Feedback on school programs
Community Partnerships

- Sharing information and resources
- Connection between curriculum and the real world
- Assist in child care
- Before and after school programs
- Homework assistance
- Parenting education classes
- Provide extracurricular opportunities that enrich the children’s lives

Parent center

- A place parents feel comfortable in school
- Notice of events
- Parent education resources
- Place to meet with other parents and teachers
References

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Resources

