

REVIEW OF PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION METHODS

Non-Responsive

- PARENT
 - Doesn't pick up call when seeing school on caller ID
 - Student's backpack contains yesterday's handouts
 - Needs several reminders for signatures on important papers
- TEACHER
 - Is not available for phone conversations
 - Does not answer emails from parents
 - Is short and evasive when communication connection is made

Unstructured

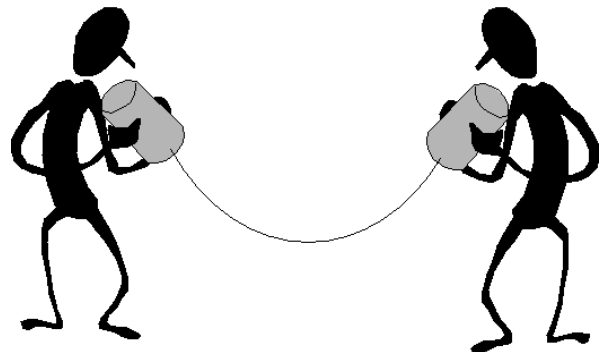
- PARENT
 - Writes in communication book "as needed" and not daily
 - Takes care of needs as they arise; otherwise, not heard from
- TEACHER
 - Usually not an initiator
 - Contacts parent when something goes wrong

Plan in Place

- PARENT & TEACHER
 - Regular (daily or weekly) communication plan in place
 - Method of communication works for both
 - Understanding on both parts how to communicate for further clarification (phone, email, text)

Overwhelming

- PARENT
 - Sends lengthy, unedited emails several times a week
 - Calls school office during class time and demands to speak with teacher
 - Does not allow enough time for teacher to respond to requests
 - Talks to everyone but the teacher: the principal, the program coordinator, school district administrators
- TEACHER
 - Contacts parents for minor infractions
 - Leaves the parent feeling as if they are the cause of the problem or should be the ones to find a solution
 - Wants signatures on documents that have not been explained





COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES



PARENTS

As an extremely valued team member:

- You know your child best
- Your input gives the team insight
- Your support strengthens your child
- You are your child's strongest advocate

Best Practices

Daily Exchanges

- Communicate as if your child was the most important student in the school – he/she is!
- Learn the teacher's mode of daily communication and ask for modifications if current method is not helpful enough
- Remain active and involved in your child's daily school life

Exceptional Circumstances

- Let the teacher know about new growth and new challenges
- If you wonder if something is worth communicating, it most likely is and will be helpful information

Conflict Resolution

- Communicate for information, not confrontation.
- Consider writing your position on an issue as a way of clarifying your thoughts
- Stay with an issue until it is resolved to your satisfaction
- Take a day to consider alternatives suggested by other team members before accepting or rejecting

TEACHERS

As a pivotal team member:

- You are invested in your students' success
- You are the gateway to the educational world

Best Practices

Daily Exchanges

- Communicate for a child who can't always speak for him/herself.
- Schedule time (and keep it sacred) for preparing daily communication to the parent
- Include endearing information about the child's day
- Communicate vigorously even when the parent is not involved

Exceptional Circumstances

- Call or write a note for the POSITIVE events
- Communicate difficult information by staying with facts and withholding opinion

Conflict Resolution

- Communicate for information, not confrontation.
- Have data to support your student's abilities
- Rely on the IEP team to help resolve conflicts
- Remind yourself that you are part of a team that is working for the benefit of the student – it's not an "us against them" mentality

A CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parent _____ Teacher _____

WHAT METHODS DO I USE TO COMMUNICATE? (check all that apply)

Parent

- ☐ Communication Notebook
- ☐ Email
- ☐ School phone
- ☐ Home phone
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Text
- ☐ In person before & after school
- ☐ Other:

Teacher

- ☐ Communication Notebook
- ☐ Email
- ☐ School phone
- ☐ Home phone
- ☐ Cell phone
- ☐ Text
- ☐ In person before & after school
- ☐ Other:

HOW OFTEN TO I PREFER TO COMMUNICATE?

Parent

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Every reporting period
- ☐ Other:

Teacher

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Every reporting period
- ☐ Other:

WHAT COMMUNICATION STYLE DO I PREFER?

Parent

- ☐ Reciprocal: a communication notebook where parent and teacher respond daily
- ☐ One-way: teacher sends home daily note
- ☐ Emails : scheduled and as needed
- ☐ Phone calls: scheduled and as needed
- ☐ Other:

Teacher

- ☐ Reciprocal: a communication notebook where parent and teacher respond daily
- ☐ One-way: teacher sends home daily note
- ☐ Emails: scheduled and as needed
- ☐ Phone calls: scheduled and as needed
- ☐ Other:

AVAILABILITY

Parent

-  I will return messages within _____ hours -or- _____ days
-  I will respond to emails within _____ hours -or- _____ days
-  You can call me as early as _____
-  or as late as _____

Teacher

-  I will return messages within _____ hours -or- _____ days
-  I will respond to emails within _____ hours -or- _____ days
-  You can call me as early as _____
-  or as late as _____

INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNICATION PLAN

Student _____ Date _____

Parent _____ Teacher _____

We choose to communicate via (state methods):

Regular communication will occur: DAILY WEEKLY OTHER

If OTHER, please describe:

Contact Information (complete agreed-upon methods):

PARENT

Email _____

Cell _____

Home _____

Work _____

TEACHER

Email _____

Cell _____

Home _____

School _____

Parent: I answer my emails within _____.

Teacher: I answer my emails within _____.

Parent: I return phone messages within _____.

Teacher: I return phone messages within _____.

Parent: Call me between the hours of _____ and _____.

Teacher: Call me between the hours of _____ and _____.