

Tips for:

**POSITIVE COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN PARENTS
AND TEACHERS**

“The single most important determinate of a child’s success in school, and ultimately throughout life is not family status, education level, income, or I.Q. It is whether that child’s parents are involved in his or her education.”

Anne T. Henderson
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Author, Beyond the Bake Sale:
The Essential Guide to Family-School
Partnerships;
The New Press 2007



A Guide for Parents



Developed by
The Parent Academic Liaison Program
San Diego Unified School District
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Positive Communication Between Parents and Teachers

One of the key goals of the San Diego Unified School District is to encourage school, family, and community partnerships to work together to improve academic performance and development of children.

Our schools are educating an increasingly diverse student population which is growing up in varied home environments. Parents/guardians and teachers need to collaborate to improve student achievement and school performance.

Family members and educators each have a distinctive yet interrelated role to play, and each has an important voice to be heard. Good communication between home and school is important to keep you in touch with your child's educational needs and success.

The No Child Left Behind Act Section 1118 requires schools to increase their efforts to involve parents in their children's education. Two-way communication between responsible concerned adults in the home and at school is essential to building this partnership.

The tips offered in this brochure can help parents initiate constructive and consistent communication with teachers to establish a reciprocal relationship focused on student success and development.



Five Things You Should Know

1. Your involvement matters a lot. Parents are powerful. Research shows that students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades & test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, graduate from high school, and go on to post-secondary education.

2. Schools need you. Teachers and principals want parents like you to be more involved. Helping your child at home, volunteering in classrooms, attending parent-teacher meetings, serving on school committees – all help is needed. When parents get involved, students do better in school and schools become better places.

3. You can be involved in many ways. You can be involved as a teacher – establishing a learning environment at home. You can be a supporter – volunteering at school & taking part in school activities that promote learning. You can be an advocate for children – taking part in making key decisions about programs or pressing local and state leaders for additional resources for students.

4. You should be able to get answers to your important questions. *How do I know that my child is safe? What is my child expected to know and be able to do in reading, writing, math and other subjects? How is learning being measured? What will the school do to help if my child is behind? What can I do to help? Ask your child's school to provide you with answers.*

5. You should be treated with respect. You may not be an educational expert, but you, along with other parents and taxpayers, are the real owners of the school. Shared responsibility for student success is critical. Schools cannot do it alone. You are the most important person in your child's life & you have the right to be treated as a fully equal partner in your child's education.

More tips to enhance parent-teacher communication:

- ✓ Write a note on your child's homework to let your teacher know if the work was easy or difficult. Include the number of minutes it took to complete.
- ✓ Make an appointment so that you have time to talk with the teacher if you have a concern, and let the teacher know what you want to talk about.
- ✓ Talk about your concerns in a positive, problem-solving way.
- ✓ Avoid blaming or criticizing the teacher—especially in front of your child.
- ✓ Let your child know about talks you have had with her/his teacher.
- ✓ Demonstrate to your child that open, two-way communication between home and school is a good sign of teamwork.
- ✓ Tell the teacher about any major changes in your child's life (death in family, birth of sibling, divorce, etc.) that may affect his/her schoolwork.
- ✓ Show the teacher your appreciation when he/she does something special for your child.

Do you want to be a true partner with the teacher for your child's education?

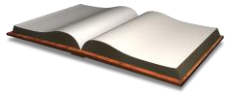
Answer these following questions to see how you can improve your communication with your child's teacher:

Do you:

- ★ ask for suggestions about activities you can do with your child to build on what he/she is learning at school?
- ★ let your child know that you support the teacher's classroom rules and work goals?
- ★ let the teacher know your strengths & talents; identify any gifts you are willing to share with students: gifts of the head, heart, and hands
- ★ contact the teacher to let him/her know about things at school that your child likes?
- ★ communicate with the teacher when you have questions, concerns, or suggestions to improve your child's learning experience?
- ★ tell the teacher that you want to work together to solve problems?
- ★ show respect for the teacher and school?
- ★ thank the teacher for his/her effort?

If you answered "YES" to these questions, congratulations! You have open and positive communication with your child's teacher. On the following pages are some tips to help you build on this strength.





Get the information you need at the beginning of the school year.

- ✓ Attend to the school/classroom open house or back-to-school night.
- ✓ Have the teacher's phone number and know convenient times to call.
- ✓ Read the school handbook so that you understand school rules, and district policies.

Let the teacher know that you want to be involved in your child's education.

1. Attend all to parent-teacher conferences and other school meetings.
2. Speak with the teacher to clarify academic and behavioral goals for the year.
3. Ask the teacher how you can help support student success and development at home.
4. Volunteer to help the teacher in class or with special events.
5. Offer to share your talents, skills, culture, career and/or experience with the class.
6. Ask the teacher about opportunities for you to visit the classroom, and observe or participate.
7. Mark your calendar with special school activities and events so that your child is prepared for both of you to attend together.
8. Share information about your child's accomplishments at home or in extracurricular activities.



Let the teacher know that you want to be informed regularly about your child's schoolwork and behavior

- ★ Give the teacher your home and work numbers and a convenient time to reach you.
- ★ Tell the teacher that you want to hear about both positive and challenging issues with your child.
- ★ Read and respond to all notes, phone calls newsletters, etc.
- ★ Ask about class rules, routines, and what students will be learning.
- ★ Talk to the teacher as soon as you have a question or concern about your child.

