

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Aaahhhhh. A new school year begins. New teachers and expectations for children are often a source of excitement and anxiety for both students and parents. A healthy relationship between a parent and a teacher is a must in order to ensure that a child has a rewarding educational experience; whether the child is in pre-school, elementary, junior high, or high school. However, maintaining a supportive relationship between teacher and parent is not always easy and conflicts can arise. These conflicts add to frustrations and takes away from a child's education.

Especially if your child is a bit of a troublemaker, or is having difficulty in class, one of the best things you can do as a parent is to establish effective and regular communication with your child's teacher. This allows you both to be on the same page as far as your child's progress and behavior are concerned, and to maintain consistency between home and school.

Here are a few tips on how to communicate with your child's teacher:

1. **Make the First Contact.** If you know your child is going to be acting out in the classroom, or if you know that your child has academic areas in which he or she has consistently struggled, it is a good idea for you as the parent to make the first contact with the teacher. Regardless of whether the teacher is interested in establishing open communication with all the parents, you can set up a time to meet and discuss your child, and figure out further plans for communicating throughout the school year.
2. **Learn Classroom Expectations.** In order to effectively maintain communication with your child's teacher, it is best to first learn what is expected of your child in the classroom. That way you can be asking your child how these things are going, and you can be training him or her in these behaviors at home as well. If your child is supposed to sit still at his or her desk for 30 minutes during math time, then set up a similar setting at home and have him or her mirror that behavior during homework time.
3. **Have Regular Phone Conferences.** Although it is often not possible for working parents to meet regularly face-to-face with their child's teacher, quick phone conferences can go a long way in maintaining communication. Find out what time of the day would work best for the teacher to receive a phone call, and check in weekly or monthly to see how your child has been doing. If you can learn about what the problems have been, then you can work on these same things at home. During these phone conferences, you can also provide the teacher with valuable information and tips on how to encourage good behavior and academic progress in your child.