

Strategies for Communication

Strategies to reach our families must be as diverse as they are. Teachers can use these parent communication strategies to involve as many parents as possible with the school.

- **Start on the first day of school:** Build a foundation of communication by starting off early in the year. This allows for relationship building to happen, and provides opportunities to share information on ways things happen in your classroom or school.
- **Multiple ways to communicate:** Get to know families and their preferred way of communicating. Ask families what works for them as far as communication. Keep track of and adjust your strategies based on what families share and things you see work.
- **Celebrate success:** Communicate to celebrate student successes, progress, strengths as well as to troubleshoot hard situations.
- **Positive communication:** Be respectful and positive in your communication. Families are experts in knowing their child, and they are natural partners to supporting their child's growth and development.
- **Choose your words wisely:** Avoid jargon and write clearly and concisely.
- **Listen deeply:** Take time to listen when families are interacting with you or sharing information about their child. Families may not always use direct communication, but when they do it is important to listen without judgment or interruption, and to follow up on the information shared.

Develop two-way communication

- **Be sensitive:** Plan for in person communication with some families or on certain topics. While it is more efficient to use technology to communicate, families need in person communication when you are first building a relationship with them and when talking about certain topics (either to celebrate or to troubleshoot).
- **Link families to learning:** Include home-facing components in a few lessons each week to help families support learning at home.
- **FAQ:** Anticipate questions and give families opportunities to ask questions.
- **Ask families about their child and themselves:** Families know their children best and can share the best ways to engage with each child, the child's likes and dislikes, as well as strategies for managing behavior. Families can also share information on the strengths and goals they have for themselves and their child.
- **Join families at their table:** While it may be convenient to invite families to the school, it is not always possible or comfortable for families to be in that space. Consider communication strategies that go beyond the school walls and consider joining families at ball games or community events, and scheduling home visits.

Writing for Busy Families: 6 Principles



More Is Worse

- Use fewer words
- Include fewer ideas
- Make fewer requests



Make It Readable

- Use shorter, more familiar words
- Use shorter sentences
- Use straightforward sentences that a reader can understand after a single read
- Check readability (e.g., [link](#)) and aim for a 5th grade reading level or below when possible
- Consider translating into commonly spoken languages (e.g., [link](#))



Make It Navigable

- Make the purpose immediately clear
- Integrate ideas so related content is together
- Visually separate distinct topics
- Consider headings for distinct topics
- Present ideas in an effective format (e.g., tables or figures if useful)
- Consider grouping all asks together



Use Formatting Wisely

- Use formatting to draw attention to the most important items
- Remove formatting from information that is not critical
- Limit the number of formatting types in a single message



Emphasize Value For Readers

- Make it clear why readers should care



Make Actions Easy

- Make next steps and action items clear and precise
- If there are no next steps, state that explicitly
- Make next steps and action items as easy as possible to follow through on
 - Provide in one place all information needed to act
 - Reduce the number of steps and effort required to act
 - If requesting a meeting, consider proactively proposing a specific date, time and duration

Find more information here:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17_G-lk1vDwX_Z2qeSn7linlFmB8rX7Z8pVyOeGnObIA/edit?pli=1#slide=id.p



Email aasb@aasb.org for trainings, testimonials, suggestions, and examples.

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Family Communication Tracking

Use this tool to track how and why you are communicating with families and to plan follow up actions.

Student Name	Type of Communication	Date	Who did you communicate with?	Reason for communication	Notes	Action-oriented follow-up steps	Resources, family needs	Family strategies for supporting learning at home	Ways family would like to engage in student learning

Checklist for Communication

Student name:

Parent/Family member name:

Phone:

Email:

Who else can we connect with:

Other family/parenting team member names:

Communication preferences:

I would like to be updated:

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Other:

I would like updates via:

- Text
- Phone
- Email
- Other:

I would like updates on
(check all that apply):

- Progress
- Learning challenges
- Positive and challenging behavior
- Topics discussed in class
- Ways to support learning at home
- Other:

Please use a few words to describe:

Your child's strengths:

Your child's personality and hobbies:

Additional Notes: