

#### **TIP #4: COMMUNICATE WITH THE TEACHER EARLY**

Another major communication problem reported by both parents and teachers is not communicating early enough when a student was having difficulty in school. Often you can anticipate a problem. Your child may have had difficulties in the past. Do not wait. Also, do not think that just because the teacher has not contacted you that this means that there is no important information to communicate to you about your child's education.

#### **TIP # 5: COMMUNICATE OFTEN**

An additional major communication problem often reported by parents and teachers is the failure to communicate frequently and regularly. Regular and ongoing feedback from the teacher will allow you to better provide the specific help your child needs. Three things to keep in mind when planning regular communication with your child's teacher are discussed below.

**1. How to Communicate.** There is a variety of ways to communicate regularly with the teacher, including face to-face meetings, phone calls, or through written notes. You will need to work together with the teacher to decide on which method of communication would be the easiest and most helpful.

**2. What to Communicate.** It is important for the parent and teacher to discuss and agree on what concerns or problems need to be monitored. It is important to be specific about this information. Some examples include: specific information about homework assignments or tests dates, the child's level of participation, how well the child minded the teacher, or the percentage of work completed in class.

**3. How Often to Communicate.** How often you need to communicate with the teacher will depend on the severity of the problem. For more serious problems, you may need to have daily contact with the teacher.

#### **TIP #6: FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO**

Another major communication problem reported by both parents and teachers is not doing what was agreed upon. If you told your child's teacher you would communicate in a certain way or do a specific school or homework related task, do your best to follow through with what you said you would do.

## **PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**



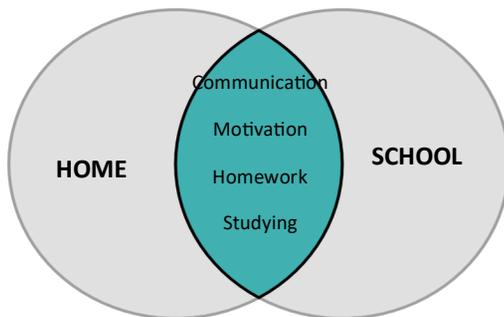
## **EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**



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# EFFECTIVE PARENT – TEACHER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

In teaching and raising children, certain activities are the main job of the home and other activities are the main job of the school. However, there are some important activities for which the home and school share jobs. See figure below:



In order to help your child do well in school, you and your child's teacher(s) will need to keep good communication. This brochure will describe some of the common problems in parent-teacher communication, and six important tips to communicate effectively.

## TIP #1: BE A PARTNER WITH THE TEACHER

Your child will benefit most if you and the teacher work together as partners in your child's education. Some parents have had bad experiences as students while others have had bad experiences communicating with their child's school in the past. These negative experiences can serve as barriers. It is best to believe that the school and the teacher care about your child. Begin your communication with a positive attitude and a willingness to be a partner with your child's teacher.

## TIP #2: GET COMFORTABLE WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND WITH THE TEACHER

Some parents feel uncomfortable in schools and talking with teachers. Below are some ideas that you can do to help you feel more comfortable at school.

**1. Chat with the teacher.** When you can, stop by and chat with your child's teacher. This will allow you and the teacher to get to know each other better. It will also make communication easier when it is time to have a more formal parent-teacher conference.

**2. Join an activity or program for parents at the school.** A good way to get to know more about the school is to participate in activities planned at the school.

**3. Talk to other people who spend time in the school.** If you feel uncomfortable at your child's school, talk with other parents or neighbors who know the school and can provide you with information.

## TIP #3: FEEL FREE TO MAKE THE FIRST CONTACT WITH THE TEACHER

A major problem with communication between parents and teachers is the failure of either the parent or the teacher to make the first move. Teachers have reported that some parents did not take the lead to communicate by phone or in person, even when the school provided opportunities such as parent-teacher conferences. Similarly, parents feel that problems in communication are due to teachers failing to begin the process of communicating with them. As a parent, you should feel comfortable with starting off the communication with your child's teacher and that you have the right to do so.