

# Building Successful Communication Between Teacher and Parent or Guardian

Engaging a parent or guardian in meaningful two-way communication will bridge the opportunity and academic gaps for students. This will establish a trusting relationship that will support the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students, including English learners.

## What if communicating in English is a challenge for the parent or guardian?

The school must provide an interpreter if the parent or guardian needs one.

- Work with your principal to ensure that interpreters your school selects are skilled and trained in your school's policies.
- Inform the parent or guardian how far ahead to let the school know about the need for an interpreter.
- Reassure parents or guardians that they can also bring a friend, family member, or community member to meetings to provide support. This may include asking clarifying questions on behalf of the parent or guardian.

## What is the benefit of communicating with a child's parent or guardian?

Both the teacher and the parent or guardian want to help the child be safe and successful. Communicating with a parent or guardian allows you to build a supportive relationship that helps the child to succeed.

One benefit is that information shared about the child will help you understand the child better. This can help inform instructional decisions, improve the child's learning experience, and ultimately improve outcomes. Parents or guardians have key information about:

- The child's experiences in a former school.
- What the child is good at doing and where the child might need more help.
- The language the child speaks at home, family traditions, and cultural values.



## How can I communicate with the child's parent or guardian?

Communicate with the child's parent or guardian regularly. Communicate about the child's successes and challenges. You can communicate by e-mailing, calling on the phone, texting, or sending a handwritten note.

- Multiple methods of communication may be used to ensure that the parent or guardian receives information about the child's progress, as well as information about school events that occur throughout the year, like open houses and parent-teacher conferences.
- When calling the parent or guardian, ask whether it is a good time to talk, or whether another time would be better.
- Inform the parent or guardian about the best way to contact you.

## What should we talk about?

It is helpful to discuss how to support the child's learning and well-being. Talk to the parent or guardian about:

- How learning more about the child helps the teacher better instruct and provide resources to the child.
- The child's interests, skills, and past experiences in school, or about anything that may affect the child's feelings, mind, or body.
- What the child is learning at school and how to make instruction more accessible.
- The child's greatest strengths and challenges.
- Ways to help the child learn at home and at school.
- Upcoming quizzes or tests and how to make them more accessible for the child.



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**See parent-educator toolkit at: [www.nceo.info](http://www.nceo.info)**

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