

Effective communication consists of meeting with the teacher, being a positive partner in the learning experience and keeping the lines of communication open!

- Offer to help by signing up to donate items or volunteer your time.
- Provide information that will help the teacher get to know your child as an individual; include allergies; behavior issues (tends to become distracted for example), learning issues, or changes in family life.
- Ask the teacher about her/his expectations regarding homework and what to do if there are problems with homework.
- Find out the best way to contact the teacher. Ask for times when it's convenient to talk. Don't expect them to be able to talk if you happen to be at the school and run into them.
- Write short notes (written or as an email if allowed) and follow up with a phone message to the school if you do not get a response in a few days. Be sure to include you email and or phone number.
- Be diplomatic especially in email; choose words carefully; open with phrases like can we talk about...? Use I statements such as 'I am confused about'....so you do not put the teacher on the defensive.
- Don't be afraid to talk to other school personnel if needed. A school counselor might be able to intervene if you are unable to communicate with a teacher.
- Be a partner in your child's learning. Assist with homework, help your child learn time management skills, talk about school matters at home.
- Send a note of appreciation to the teacher when things go well in class (you may want to mention it to the principal or give them a copy).
- It may be difficult to hear what teachers have to say if they deliver bad news about your child. Try to focus on solutions and work with the teacher to come up with a healthy plan to help your child learn. *(Tips from National PTA)*

Additionally, keep these basics in mind when communicating with a teacher...

- Turn off your cell phone
- Make eye contact and stay focused on the conversation
- Ask questions for clarification
- Minimize emotional responses or reactions; temperament control
- Be on time for scheduled meetings and respond to teacher correspondence in a timely fashion
- Get to know teachers on your own, don't worry about what other parents may tell you about a teacher