

What About Communication? Parent Guide #21

Communicating with your child's teacher helps your child make an easier move into kindergarten.

Parents who keep in touch with teachers are more satisfied with their child's school experience. As partners, parents and teachers learn how to work together.

Parents and teachers have different viewpoints that are important to share:

- You see your child playing with family members and learning from family activities. You see things from a parent point of view.
- The teacher sees your child playing with other children and learning from school activities. They see things from a teacher point of view.

You can take the first steps:

- Does the teacher use email or have a preferred way to communicate?
- Write notes to the teacher and respond to any letters sent to you.
- Call the teacher if you have questions and respond to any messages.

- Attend school nights and special programs.
- Volunteer to help in the class. Do what you can when the teacher asks for help.
- Look over your child's work and talk to the teacher about your child's progress. Find out how to support learning at home.
- Attend parent-teacher meetings. Ask for other meetings if you have questions or concerns. Share your child's strengths, talents, and interests. Work together on learning goals.
- Use voice mail, if available, to leave messages for the teacher.
- Check out your child's school website.

Tips for talking with teachers and staff:

- Prepare ahead of time: What are your questions?
- Choose a good time: Find out when the teacher is free to talk.
- Come ready to listen: The teacher has lots to share, too.
- Be open to ideas: The teacher wants to work with you.
- Give and expect respect: You and the teacher are partners.

Adapted from *Transitions: Parents Are Key*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Bureau, 2000.