

Connecting with Your Child's Teachers

BRIDGING HOME & SCHOOL

Think back to your own school years. Did your parents know how to connect with your teachers when you transferred to middle school? Did your parents only interact with your teachers when there was a problem?

Research shows that children with involved parents experience higher academic success. The benefits of parent involvement are not limited to early childhood programs or the elementary grades. Studies show that active parents can positively impact their children's education through high school and beyond.

There is also evidence that children learn best when teachers and parents work together. This is why it is important that you have a good working relationship with your child's teachers.

Sometimes teachers reach out first, but we can share the responsibility for creating and maintaining strong parent/teacher communication. What are some ways to connect with your child's teachers?

- Introduce yourself in person at the start of the school year. Let the teachers know that you will be contacting them on a regular basis to discuss your child's progress. Ask the teachers how they prefer to be contacted—by telephone, email, or by letter. Indicate how you prefer to be contacted.
- Ask each teacher how your child's performance will be evaluated. This is best accomplished at the beginning of the year. Find out how teachers will prioritize homework, classroom participation, and test scores.
- Discuss with your child's teachers how decisions are made at school. Are important policies decided by the school staff? How are parent voices included in the decision-making process?
- Be appreciative when teachers enrich your child's experiences in learning. Let a teacher know when your child is excited about a project, lesson, or field trip.