Communicating with Parents

Practicum in Education and Training
Communicating with Parents
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Contacting Parents
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Discuss

- [http://www.schooltube.com/video/0fe3d817b8903937e5bf/Parent-Conference](http://www.schooltube.com/video/0fe3d817b8903937e5bf/Parent-Conference)
Great Beginnings…

• First days of school
  • What should be discussed?
  • How can you be in contact?

In general, parent conferences are considered bad. How an you get off to a good start? What are ways that teachers can do this? [Note: write responses on the board]
How is a meeting different than a conference?
Would you put any restrictions on parents in the classroom? How could you make it positive?
Are phone calls more personal than e-mails or text messages? Would you call or text from your personal phone? Why?
Will every child’s parents have internet?
• Keep a folder on each student that records events in the classroom or has special papers on file for parents to review.
• Post the weekly lesson plans and schedule. Let parents know what topics are being studied.

What do you need to keep in the folder? Why?
Could this also be shared in a newsletter or on a Web Page?
Keep Communication Going

- Send home “happy notes”
- Give parents copies of developmental checklists, individualized lesson plans, and other material that pertain to their child.
- Develop a calendar of events to be sent out at the beginning of each month.

Why do parents need to hear good things about their children? For some children some of this information may be shared in an ARD. This might be on the web page. What dates would be included?
Overview

- Exchange important information on the first day of school.
- Conduct regular parent conferences.
- Conduct regular meetings as needed.
- Encourage parents to visit their children in the classroom or observe.
- Call parents and share information by phone.
- Send newsletters home.
- Keep a folder on each student that records events in the classroom or has special papers on file for parents to review.
- Post the weekly lesson plans and schedule. Let parents know what topics are being studied.
- Send home “happy notes” with highlights or accomplishments of the student’s day.
- Give parents copies of developmental checklists, individualized lesson plans, and other material that pertain to their child.
- Develop a calendar of events to be sent out at the beginning of each month.
Parent-Teacher Conferences

• Who?
• What?
• When?
• Where?
• Why?

Note: The teacher may present this PowerPoint to the class and/or put the interns in groups of 2 - 4 and have them to create a visual of one of the teacher tips.
1. Schedule parent conferences early in the school year for initial, get-acquainted session.

2. Schedule plenty of time for parent conferences.

Don’t wait until you have a problem then schedule the conference.
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3. Be prepared! For each parent conference:
   - have the student’s work available, plus grades and any progress reports
   - anticipate possible parental questions
   - have textbooks and other class materials present

[Note: Read or have a student-intern to read the slide, then discuss it.]
Have textbooks and other class materials present in case a parent would like to look at the resources.

5. Arrange the conference area so that parents are comfortable.

Always call them by their sir (last) name – but do not assume that it is the same as the child’s last name.

Have extra chairs in case there are additional visitors with a parent. Have crayons and paper available in case a younger sibling attends.
6. Use the "sandwich method" for talking to a parent about the student. Sandwich a negative problem between two positive comments. Highlight the student's abilities or interests.

Why is this important? Give an example.
7. Be specific in your comments. Make concrete suggestions for improvement. Use common language, not words that only teachers might understand.

What are some “teacher words” (jargon - words that are esoteric to the profession) Be careful with acronyms.
8. Always listen the parent. Ask for parent's opinion and be open to suggestions. Portray acceptance and warmth toward every student and parent. Allow time for parents’ questions or concerns.

Remember communication is not just talking it is also listening. When you listen give your full attention. Listen with your eyes and your ears.
Resources and References

Textbooks:
• Putting It All Together Education and Training. The Curriculum Center for Family and Consumer Sciences Texas Tech University. 232 – 237, 279-280. www.depts.ttu.edu/hs/ccfcs