

Getting Involved With The Teachers

Email or Paper Happygrams. Write a brief note of thanks whenever your children demonstrate new skills or express excitement about something that happened in school. The short time you spend on this happygram will greatly enrich your parent-teacher partnership.

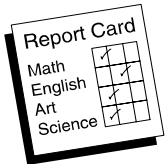
Email or Telephone talk. To keep in touch with teachers between formal conferences, use email or the telephone for occasional “catch-up” conversations. If you phone, ask teachers beforehand for the best times to call.



Ask for advice. Teachers like sharing their specialized knowledge with concerned parents, so don’t hesitate to ask for advice. Teachers can assist you with behavior problems, homework hassles, and how to reinforce at home what’s learned at school.

Lend a hand. Even busy parents can pitch in when teachers call for help with school projects. Let the teacher know how much time you have and what talents you could offer. No matter how small, your contribution will be a help to the teacher and noticed by your child.

Respond to report cards. When report cards come home, take time to thank the teachers in a quick note.



Teachers usually spend their own evening and weekend hours to write these reports, and your thanks will help them feel appreciated. If you’re pleased with your children’s progress, say so. If any of the grades or comments disappoint you, ask what you can do to help your child improve.

Beat the clock. Punctuality counts. When a teacher sets a specific time for a conference, make every effort to be there on time. Teachers often schedule many conferences back to back, and one late parent can throw everyone off schedule.

Be prepared. Bring a list of questions to parent-teacher conferences. Prepared questions help you stay focused, keep you from rambling and prevent the conference from running overtime.

Information, please. Be sure to give teachers any information about changes in home circumstances that may affect your children’s behavior or performance. A death in the family, an extended sickness, a separation or divorce – even the loss of a pet can put a strain on children that spills over into the classroom.

Banish blaming. Take a “no fault” approach when your children experience difficulties in school. Blaming teachers or classmates only strains relationships. Join forces with teachers to reach a common goal: helping your children overcome difficulties and find success.

Schedule short a conference if needed. If you think that your child’s teacher may have caused a problem, schedule a conference with him or her and share your concern. You may find that the teacher is unaware that the situation exists or has a different take on it. When parents bypass the teacher and complain to the principal, the teacher does not have a chance to explain or correct the problem. If you are not satisfied after the conference, explain to the teacher that you appreciate her time, but that you need to escalate the matter to the principal.