Why is improving the communication between parents and the school important?

- Communication can improve the relationship of parents with the school community thus, creating an alliance between the two parties.
- Communication creates a relationship with parents and family members which will assist in supporting and engaging the student in the educational process.
- Communication makes parents and families “active participants” in their child’s education.

Start the School Year off Right

- Send postcards to each of your students and their parents to introduce yourself and include your expectations for the upcoming year and contact information.
- Have a school open house prior to the beginning of the school year. Serve refreshments and conduct parent workshops about how they can help their child succeed in the coming year. This helps to set the tone of collaboration for the upcoming school year.
- Compile and distribute a school-wide and grade-level newsletter periodically. Include faculty spotlights; student applause for academic, social, and athletic accomplishments; and event announcements. This is especially useful in areas which parents may not have access to computers.

*The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*

-George Bernard Shaw
Communicating with Parents

Use Media

- Create an email group list for parents of students enrolled in your classroom. Use this to easily remind parents of assignments, upcoming events (such as field trips, report card dates, and holidays), and teacher meeting times.

- Have a clearly outlined and updated website for your school and classroom. Make sure the site contains: contact information, lunch menu, holidays, community events, classroom assignments, report card issue dates, and absence policy.

Communicating about Individual Students

- For those students who struggle to meet behavioral or academic expectations: Catch them being good. Take all opportunities to recognize these students in a positive way. Send positive notes home (handwritten notes, email) and offer lots of praise as an incentive.

- Use the sandwich method when communicating difficult news with parents (one constructive statement between two positive statements)

  Mary helped me incredibly yesterday by passing out papers to the students. She is such a helpful student. Unfortunately, she struggled to complete the assignment which focused on her math facts. Mary indicated she was struggling so I wanted to discuss with you how we can work together to help her in this area. She’s very motivated to learn them.

- Use graphs and charts to communicate academic performance of students to parents. This can easily convey gains and areas of concern and helps to facilitate a collaborative relationship between teacher and parent.

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