

# Communication is the key to a strong parent-teacher team

Research shows that parent involvement in education has a positive effect on student success at school. When teachers and parents work together, the results can be powerful. To foster effective two-way communication:

- Set the tone. It's natural to have questions when the school year begins. Ask questions respectfully. Show support for your child and the class, and encourage the teacher to keep you informed.
- Be positive. When you talk with the teacher, enjoy hearing about your child's strengths. But also prepare to hear about her weaknesses. Remember to remain calm. You and the teacher both want your child to do well. Addressing struggles is the only way to find solutions.
- Role-play. Some parents are nervous about talking with the teacher. If this describes you, consider practicing with a friend. If you aren't comfortable speaking English, bring an interpreter with you. Still worried? Using email may put you at ease.
- Choose words carefully. It's more effective to make polite requests instead of demands. A helpful tip is to use the word *we* instead of *you*. ("How can we stay in touch to help Jordan?") is less aggressive than "You should tell me if Jordan is falling behind.") Remember: The teacher isn't your opponent; she's your teammate.

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