

# THE 8 BEST TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

## 1 TAKE ALL PARENTS' CONCERNS SERIOUSLY.

Acknowledge the commitment of all parents (don't speak of low involved or uninvolved parents). Try to avoid making quick judgements about parents.

## 2 EXPRESS MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Make clear what the school expects from the parents and ask what parents expect from the school.

## 3 INVEST IN TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION.

Communication does not only mean 'to inform', but it also includes asking questions. Try to establish mutual interaction, dialogue and exchange of information. Knowledge of children's home situation helps teachers to be adaptive to their needs.

## 4 HELP TEACHERS TO STIMULATE PARENTS' HOME INVOLVEMENT.

Of all types of parent involvement, home involvement (including talking about school and showing interest in school) is the strongest predictor of school success. Invest in teacher competences to invite parents to show their involvement at home.

## 5 DON'T TRY TO CHANGE PARENTS, BUT CHANGE YOUR WAY OF COMMUNICATING.

If communicating with parents is difficult, try to search for a solution in the school. Invest in developing different ways to communicate with parents. Use formal communication (newsletters, parent-teacher conferences), but also informal communication (hallway conversations, phone calls or short text messages).

## 6 INCLUDE CHILDREN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION.

Actively engage the children in communication between school and families. This contributes to a good relationship between teachers and parents and to stronger feelings of parents' involvement.

## 7 COMMUNICATE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES.

Don't only contact parents in case of problems, but also when positive things occur, such as a celebration, an achievement or an exciting event.

## 8 RESPECT CHILDREN'S NEED FOR AUTONOMY.

Too much communication with parents about their child can foster children's feelings of being controlled and supervised, which can negatively affect their sense of autonomy and their well-being.

Check [www.socialschools.nl](http://www.socialschools.nl) for more knowledge and information

2016 - these tips were written by Associate Professor Eddie Denessen  
in cooperation with Social Schools

