

Top tips on developing a good communication strategy

By Aimee Bates, editor and author
Part 3 of a series of 12 of Macmillan's Home-School Link

Does your school already have a communication strategy? If not, don't worry, this article aims to make you feel more confident about setting up one of your own. It's really worthwhile having a strategy to help you achieve the benefits of effective communication demonstrated in the first article in this series.

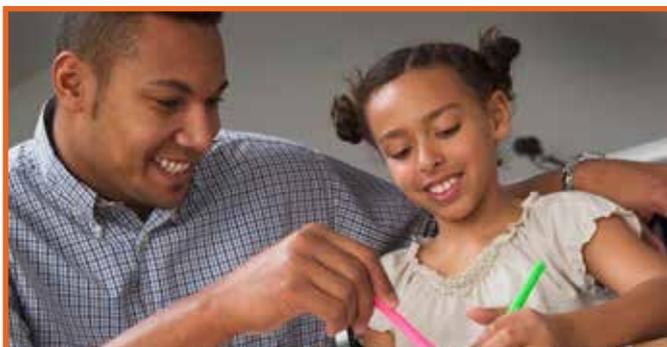
Even if your school does have a communication strategy, it's a good idea to read these top tips to ensure you are getting the most out of it. There may be some suggestions that you'd like to try!

1. Set expectation early!

- Make contact with parents (phone call or letter) to introduce yourself and set expectations as soon as you learn that their child will be in your class.

2. Give feedback on a regular basis; be available

- Provide parents with regular feedback of their child's performance.
- Put aside a set time every week when parents can talk to you if they need to. Ensure they know that you will be available and how to contact you.
- Try to have individual contact with each home once a month.



3. Share good feedback

- Share good feedback with parents; don't just contact them when there is a problem.
- Send completed work home with the child so that they can show their parents what they've been doing in class.
- If there is a problem, set up a separate dialogue with the parents.



4. Make the most of opportunities for two-way communication

- parents' evenings
- parent-teacher organisations (PTA)
- send home a folder of work every month for parents to review and comment
- phone calls
- email / school website

5. Invite parents to be involved

- Encourage parents be involved in school events and initiatives.
- Show parents how to play English games with their child at home.
- Make sure all parents attend parent workshops.
- Invite parents to volunteer to help, for example, school trips and reading.



Further suggestions

- Remember your school's objectives and image when communicating with parents.
- You could use a reward system: something as simple as rewarding stars for good work and behaviour or as sophisticated as *English World's Home-School Connect*.
- If your English course provides template letters to parents, make use of them. Check the course website to see what resources might be available for contacting parents.
- Many Macmillan courses provide letters in the local language detailing what will be studied – see if they're available for your course.
- Identify forms of communication that work with parents in your class. These might include: newsletter, letter, phone calls, social media, email, text message.
- Consider other communication strategies for engaging parents: annual school calendars; tea towel with hand-drawn self-portraits by the children; articles in local papers; school trips; flyers to be given out to members of the local community; posters; school website; communication that focuses on getting fathers involved.
- Are there parents in your class who do not speak the local language? Consider using a translator to make sure these parents are not excluded.



All of our Home-School Link articles, quizzes and tips can be found at www.macmillanyounglearners.com/home-school-link.

No time to read? We've put everything into short videos highlighting the key points with the author, Aimee Bates.

Don't forget to check back every month to see what's new!

What is most important to you? Is there something you are currently unhappy about in the way you communicate with parents? Think about the suggestions above and identify the ones that would make a difference.

Can you think of all the communication strategies available to you? Talk about them with a colleague. Which are your favourite? Which have the highest response rate and why?



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