

Section 4 Communication

SD Toolkit for Engaging Parents and Families

Tools in Section 4 will provide ideas and resources that will help in building effective communication between home and school and school to home. Effective educators design their communication with families in ways that invite families to respond back with their ideas, suggestions, questions, and concerns in order to build relationships.

Communication

12 Conversation Starters on What Parents Want You (Teachers) to Know

Ideas on how to start conversations with families

5 things Teachers Would Like Parents to Know

A blog on parenting from the New York Times.

3 Things Parents Wish Teachers knew

A blog on parenting from the New York Times

7 Effective Communication Ideas

Article from TeachHub on building effective communication

Colorin Colorado

A bilingual site for educators and families!

20 Tips for Developing Positive Relationships with families

Click here for WIDA website

Resource for supporting the education of language learners.

Click here for resources on communication

Collection of tools and tips makes positive parent communication easy and stress-free! You'll find teacher notes, parent contact scripts, resources for parent conferences, and more!

Click here for tips on engaging parents

20 creative ideas for engaging parents and why it is important - a poster to print and display.

[Click here parent teacher communication resources](#)

This is a great site that offers teacher resources for all grade levels, all subjects, advice from veteran teachers on how to handle many different kinds of issues that come up throughout the school year. GREAT SITE

[Click here to-engage parents using Google Drive](#)

5 Ways to Use Google Drive for Parent Engagement.

[Click here for tips on dealing with an ADHD child](#)

ADHD Resources and Stories from the Trenches.

[Click here for parent surveys](#)

Surveys for volunteers, post interim progress reports, post report cards, and end of the year surveys.

[Click here for tips on parent/teacher-conferences](#)

Learn more about parent-teacher conferences and how you can use the meeting to ask questions that will help your child.

[Click here for alternatives to saying "you're so smart"](#)

A graphic for teachers with suggestions on other ways to say “you’re so smart”

[Click here for tips in dealing with students refusing to work](#)

Tips for teachers when dealing with a student who just won’t work.

[Click here for weekly behavior charts and parental communication forms](#) (TPT)

Free weekly behavior charts and parental communication forms for teachers.

[Click here for infographic on calming an anxious child](#)

Phrases for parents to use when their child is anxious.

[Click here for free planner templates and lots more!](#)

Fantastic site for resources to use with different kinds of graphic organizers etc.

[Click here for American Institute of Research](#)

AIR is one of the world's largest behavioral and social science research and evaluation organizations that is research based.



South Central conducts home visits with families. A great way to build a relationship with families. This sets the tone that the school values and recognizes what families contribute.

Choose Communication Tools that Work

[Click here for 5 technologies with explanations](#)

This is a wonderful site for using technology for communicating with parents. It has step by step instructions on how to use these apps, has video explaining how to use them!

Technology has provided many tools that will assist in building communication with families. Here are links to many common sites used by educators for communication:

1. Remind App and Website <https://www.remind.com/>
2. ClassDojo Classroom Management App <https://www.classdojo.com/>
3. SeeSaw: The Learning Journal App <https://web.seesaw.me/>
4. Weebly <https://www.get.weebly.com>
5. Twitter <https://www.twitter.com>
6. Boomerang Email Schedule <http://www.boomeranggmail.com/>
7. Smart Class Website <http://www.wix.com>
8. Facebook <https://www.facebook.com>
9. Talking Points- <http://talkingpts.org/>
10. Sayhi <https://www.sayhitranslate.com/>

In addition to these common sites, don't overlook your school website.

Bloomz <https://bloomz.net>

This one app is for all your parent communication

If you're new to [Bloomz](#), this terrific mobile and web app is used across the country. It connects teachers with families to share information about the school day – including formative assessment data. Teachers can also use Bloomz to communicate and coordinate with families, share photos and updates on daily activities, and send out reminders for special events.

QR Codes

[Article on QR Codes](#)

QR codes...google it! Use QR codes for Open House. Parents are able to scan the code and receive tons of information, including phone numbers, conference periods, and email addresses. You can even add the school logo. Use the link below to create a QR code:

<http://www.qr-code-generator.com/>

[Click here for technology resources](#)

This is a good site with many different resources for using technology.

Teacher/Student friendly Apps

[Click here on ideas to bring meetings to parents wherever they may be](#)

Suggestions on coming up with meetings to connect with parents who can't physically be there.

[Click here http://educationtothecore.com/2016/02/tech-focus-student-assessment/](http://educationtothecore.com/2016/02/tech-focus-student-assessment/)
Using technology to encourage parent-teacher communication.

[Click here for parent resources](#)

This resource is from Teachers Pay Teachers and is a GREAT reasonable resource for Parents for Pre-K to K. It gives examples on how they can be supportive and interactive with Reading, Writing, and Math at home.

Ideas for Communicating with Hard-to-Reach Parents and Families

[Click here for tips on strong involvement](#)

13 Keys to Strong Parental Involvement.

[Ways to courage family involvement in high poverty schools](#)

A blog that provides several suggestions on how to work with families.

[Click here for ways to engage high-poverty families](#)

ASCD article with Ideas for administrators and educators to engage families.

[Click here for help with Parents who don't seem to care](#)

It can be hard to deal with parents who don't seem to care. But the truth is, parents typically DO care. They just don't always show it!

Ideas for Reaching Out to Parents and Families of English Language Learners

[Colorin Colorado](#)

A bilingual site for educators and families!

[Click here for WIDA website](#)

Resource for supporting the education of language learners.

Toolkit for ELL

USDOE's toolkit for working with ELL families

US Department of Education New comer toolkit

This tool kit can help U.S. educators and others who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families.

Handling the Tough Conversations with Care

Challenging Conversations with Parents and Families

[Click here for Peppy Zesty Teacherista](#)

Dealing with Difficult Parents posted November 23, 2016 by Peppy Zesty Teacherista.

[Click here for suggestions on dealing with difficult parents.](#)

This short article has several different options of recommendations on how to deal with difficult parents.

[Click here for Rethinking Difficult Parents](#)

An article written by [Dr. Allen Mendler](#) talking about how changing your thinking can turn some of your most difficult parents into your strongest allies.

[Click here for suggestions on how to deal difficult parents.](#)

This site offers several short articles on parenting skills and has questions and answers in real life examples.

Open House/Back to School Nights

[Click here for back to school night speed dating](#)

You-tube video with ideas on communicating with HS students and families.

[Click here for middle school open house tips](#)

4 Tips for a smooth middle school open house.

[Click here for informational cards](#) (TPT)

Free Open House informational cards for teachers.

[Click here for open house ideas](#)

Suggestions and ideas for open house stations.

[Click here for ways to greet students](#)

27 Ways to Greet Students at the beginning of the year.

[Click here for free back to school packet](#)

Back to School Parent Packet FREE (early elementary).

[Click here for back to school form letters](#)

Form letters for back to school.

[Click here for different ideas on greeting-students](#)

27 different in ways to greet students as they enter the classroom/school building.

[Click here for video playlist - Back to School survival ideas](#)

From Edutopia a variety of videos to use/base your at your own back to school night.

[Click here for a great resource on getting to know your students.](#)

[Click here for ideas on parent volunteers](#)

50 great suggestions on how to use the parents who want to volunteer.

[Click here for parent volunteer sign-up sheets](#)

Pre-made sign up sheets for parents to volunteer, a good source for Open House forms.

[Click here parent/school reading skills for elementary](#)

Parent support for at home reading and back to school parent input forms (FREE)

[Click here for a flyer on 10 reasons to get involved](#)

A reproducible color flyer that can be handed out to parents and community members at open houses, back-to-school nights, and other times. Black-and-white and Spanish versions also available.

[Click here for MS back to school activities](#)

This 65 page bundle includes a wide range of activities and printables for Middle to High School in your first day or week of the school year. Fun Mustache Theme :)

[Click here for back to school PowerPoint](#) (TPT)

Back to school night powerpoint editable format slides

[Click here for graphic on success of child](#)

A handout to share with parents on how to help their child can be successful in school.



[Click here for directions for the Hopes and Dream activity and more.](#)

Set out a basket of ribbons and ask parents to write their hopes and dreams for their child on a piece of ribbon during Open House. Then tie their hopes and dreams ribbons to a wooden embroidery hoop.

PHOTO BOOTH: When we have our Meet the Teacher Night before school starts, I'm planning to have a photo booth in my classroom. Since it's a new program and that kids don't know each other at all yet, I thought it might be nice if on the first day, they come into the classroom greeted by pictures of themselves! I hope it will help them feel more welcomed and comfortable.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Making the Most out of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Here are some ideas for teachers on parent-teacher conferences

20 Questions to Ask at Parent-Teacher Conferences

A handout for parents and families related to preparing for their child's conference

[Click here for tips on parent-teacher conferences](#)

Tips for teachers to have a more successful parent-teacher conference.

[Ideas for Parent-Teacher Conferences](#)

An article from Edutopia that includes tips and resources from sources such as Scholastic, Reading Rockets, and Teacher Vision

[Re-imagining the Parent Teacher Conference](#)

An article from Harvard Family Research Project

[Tips for Parent-Teacher Conferences](#)

Article/suggestions from Harvard Family Research Project

Communication about Attendance

[Attendance Works.org](#)

This website has everything you need if you are looking for information and resources related to attendance. Check it out!

The resources below come from the attendanceworks.org website - but these have been downloaded to assist with easy access:

[Bringing Attendance Home](#)

This is a toolkit for engaging parents

[Attendance Works](#)

Teacher Toolkit information and resources for teachers on attendance.

[Building the Habit of Early Attendance](#)

This is a flyer to distribute to families of children in elementary school

[Building the Habit of Early Attendance - in Spanish](#)

The same flyer as above only in Spanish

[Middle School- High School Attendance](#)

A flyer for families of middle school/high school students on attendance

[Middle School - High School Attendance - in Spanish](#)

The same flyer as above in Spanish

[Make Every Day Count](#) -

Messages for Students and Families about Attendance

Parent Flyer on Promoting Good Attendance All Winter Long

Promoting Good Attendance - All Winter Long

A flyer for parents

Here are PowerPoints on Attendance set up in a continuous loop for display

Powerpoint on Attendance for Elementary

PowerPoint on Attendance for MS/HS



Rapid City's General Beadle elementary is sending out "nudge" letters as reported about in the following article. [Is your kid absent more than classmates? School 'nudge' letters tell parents just how much | The Seattle Times](#) A nudge letter is just what it sounds like – a letter to parents informing them of how many days their child has missed compared with other children in the school or in the same grade in the district. Parents often underestimate the total number of days their child has missed and the nudge letter provides them with this information.

<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html?src=pr>

National site for attendance, great ideas and information.

[Click here for the Perfectly Punctual Campaign](#)

This site has a variety of resources, handouts, and ideas related to a school-wide campaign for attendance. This site is now affiliated with Attendance Works.



McLaughlin – Attendance ideas

Relationships. Every child needs to have a connection or relationship with at least 1 adult and 1 student in the building

Tiyospaye Time/Homeroom—we organize each homeroom with a mix of students. 6-8 grade students (mixed class) and 9-12 grade students (mixed class)

- They stay with the same homeroom for three years in middle school and 4 years in high school. This person is considered their "advisor" and person who is looking after them year after year. This helps to build stronger relationships

M-Cash

- Students receive an M-Cash card (worth about 50 cents) each day they are on time to 1st period
- Students use to redeem things from school (gift certificates, concessions, snack shack, etc.)
- Funds are transferred from incentive account to another school accounts as money is spent. Money can stay in house, just moves accounts

There is signage outside the school reminding students of attendance percentages. Updated weekly

Attendance Team

- I have divided out phone calls for administrators (at times) to call students to get to school. Would like to see larger roll with staff in this in Tiyospaye

- Phone calls help to establish trust and lines of communication. Communicate to parents that attendance matters and build relationship

Administrative Assistant in school is vital as they help to maintain accurate records. This individual can find trends in skipping, tardies, and more.

Quarterly Prize Drawing - Any student with above 90% attendance for the quarter is entered into a quarterly prize drawing

Serve Breakfast at school - f schools have a separate cafeteria, serve breakfast at the school. We increased the number of kids eating at our school from 30 to 100 by doing this.

Be Positive - We don't give students a hard time for attendance, we let them know we are happy they came. We hope to see them on time tomorrow and encourage them to keep coming.

Transition

Kindergarten Flyer - a parent handout for children transitioning into Kindergarten

[Click here for Kindergarten Checklist](#)

A checklist for parents to prepare their child to start kindergarten.

[Family/childhood/immunization/information](#)

Middle School Flyer - a parent handout for students transitioning into Middle School

[Click here for Tips on Transitioning into Middle School](#)

5 Tips for teachers in preparing students for middle school.

[Click for ways to prepare for middle school](#)

Five Ways to Prepare your child for Middle School

[Click here for mind of middle school blog](#)

Great Resource for "Understanding the mind of Middle Schoolers"

[Click here for tips on how to redefine parenting for middle schoolers](#)

6 Ways To Redefine Your Parenting As Your Kid Enters Middle School

[Click here for Colome counselor weebly](#)

Information on graduation and transitioning into post-secondary.

[Click here for tips on transition into high school](#)

5 tips for parents to help their child prepare for high school

[Click here for ideas on starting High School](#)

Ideas for transitioning into High School

☒ Helping Students Transition from Middle to High School

There's always a period of adjustment when kids change schools, but the changes can be especially challenging between middle school and high school. Students entering High Tech High School come from so many different neighborhoods that their ties to their new classmates are limited. Freshman Orientation class helps students get to know one another, and starts to build a community. It's also a safe and supportive space where students can talk about their hopes and fears as they enter this new era of their lives.

[Transition Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Administrators](#)

An article published on May 16, 2013 by Matt Davis

[Click here for tips on managing stress](#)

10 ways to help middle- or high- schoolers manage their stress.

[Report on High School Transition](#)

Easing the transition to high school: research and best practices designed to support high school learning (National High School Center)

[Click here for study tips](#)

12 tips for studying while in college. Some great ideas for the high school senior leaving for college

[Click here for ideas on conversations about college](#)

Helpful tips for helping parents with early college awareness



Bowdle SD.

The idea of exposing students to higher education was something implemented when I was an administrator in Minneapolis. My students wore school uniforms, but they could wear college gear on "college swag Fridays". Each student picked a college of their choice, wrote a letter to the school explaining that they would be allowed to wear college gear on Fridays, and asked if the school would donate a shirt for them to wear. I also ordered a pennant for each person in the building who had attended college and hung them on their doors. I also collected about 200 pennants of my own that I displayed around the building. The conversations of our students began to change as I would hear them discussing different colleges in the hallways and at lunch. Teachers also reported that students began to ask them questions about the universities they had attended.

It takes **1000** hours of "lap-
time" for young children to
have the readiness skills in
place to learn to read.

- National Institute for Children's Health
and Development