

## Who do I call when I need help with an issue, concern or question?

**FIRST** - Call the person closest to your child. Communicate directly with the person first. Decide whether your question requires a face to face meeting or can a phone call clarify the question or concern?

### GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

### SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

### THERAPIST

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND** - If you cannot resolve the question after attempts at direct, positive communication, call the next person in the chain of command.

### SUPERVISOR

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

### PRINCIPAL

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**THIRD** - If all other means of communication fails to address the concern, then call the Director.

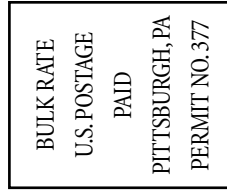
### SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Best time \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

**LAST RESORT**.....the Superintendent!



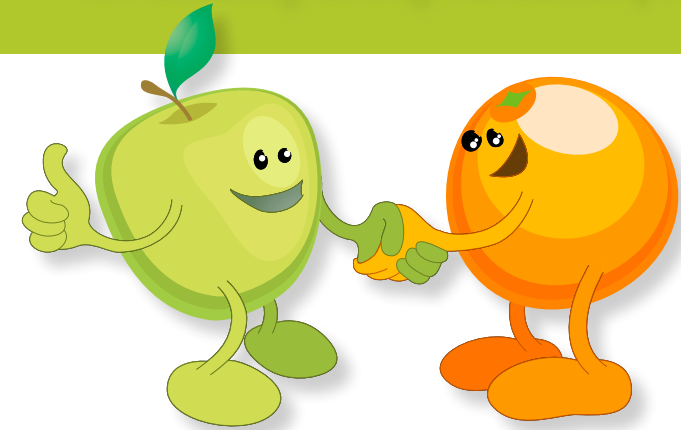
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# Communication Tips

## for Building Strong Partnerships



## Expect Successful Partnerships

Adapted by the PEAL Center from information distributed by the CADRE 2008



Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership Center

# Communication Tips for Building Strong Partnerships

This is a collection of effective communication skills that can be used to encourage solution oriented conversations.

## 1 Know who and how to contact the right person to address your concerns.

- Identify your concerns and the outcomes you would like to see.

*“We really need to focus on...”*

- Focus positively on the issue at hand and strive not to allow negativity to take control.

*“I’m sure we’ll find a good solution to...”*

- Talk to the person closest to your child first. Use this brochure to collect the phone numbers of the people on your team.

## 2 Use reputable resources.

- Know what you’re talking about.
- Is the concern based on hearsay?
- Use data and documentation.
- Learn about the subject.

Misconceptions and misinformation are barriers to success. For information and help contact the PEAL Center at [www.pealcenter.org](http://www.pealcenter.org) or PaTTAN at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

## 3 Make a list of your concerns, questions and possible options and outcomes.

Look at your list and decide which question needs to be taken care of first. Identify who can help you with your question.

- Does everything need to be discussed at one time?
- What are the absolute priorities?
- What can be addressed at a later date?
- Is this something that will require a meeting or will a phone call be sufficient?

## 4 Practice what you want to say and HOW to say it.

*“What’s most important for Zach right now is...”*

- Stay centered on the child
- Focus on the positives
- Be clear about your goals
- Listen. Ask questions. Clarify.

**90% of communication is non-verbal** so try to be aware of your facial expressions and body language. Folded arms, heavy sighing, and rolling eyes send a negative message. Manage your anger and refrain from using an intimidating tone of voice.

## 5 Questions that begin with “why” or “who” create more defensiveness than those that begin with “what” and “how”.

*“How can we help Jim feel safe on the playground?”*

*“What are some of the skills we can focus on?”*

*“How can we find time for our team meetings?”*

- Communicate to express, not to impress.
- First understand, and then...be understood.

## 6 Be direct if you do not understand something that is being said. Ask the speaker,

*“Do I understand correctly...”*

*“I just don’t understand what you are saying. Can you explain it in a different way or give me some examples?”*

Keep asking until you understand.

## 7 Communicate your real “interest” beneath your “position”.

Saying, “I want Jim to have 3 periods of speech per week” is a **position**.

Underlying this statement is an **interest** in *having Jim be able to talk to his friends at the lunch table, be able to express his needs, and answer questions with yes and no.*

If the team understands the interest, they can start working on solutions.

Some people have difficulty expressing themselves. Be patient and listen for their true meaning.

## Final Tips

Try not to finish somebody’s sentence or put words in their mouth, even if you think you know what they are going to say.

Reframe the sentence for clarity.

*“So what I think you are saying is... Is that right?”*

Try not to worry about the educational lingo and remember.... you are an expert about your child.

Be open to brainstorming some solutions.

Say what you mean in a way that does not place blame but rather identifies the concern.

*“I know that there’s a way to work this out together, so that we begin to see the results we’re looking for.”*

*“Let’s see what kind of ideas we can come up with to take care of this concern.”*

Present options in a collaborative way.

*“we can”* ...instead of *“you should”*  
*“yes”* ...instead of *“yes, but”*