REVIEW OF PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION METHODS

Non-Responsive

- PARENT
  - Doesn’t pick up call when seeing school on caller ID
  - Student’s backpack contains yesterday’s handouts
  - Needs several reminders for signatures on important papers
- TEACHER
  - Is not available for phone conversations
  - Does not answer emails from parents
  - Is short and evasive when communication connection is made

Unstructured

- PARENT
  - Writes in communication book “as needed” and not daily
  - Takes care of needs as they arise; otherwise, not heard from
- TEACHER
  - Usually not an initiator
  - Contacts parent when something goes wrong

Plan in Place

- PARENT & TEACHER
  - Regular (daily or weekly) communication plan in place
  - Method of communication works for both
  - Understanding on both parts how to communicate for further clarification (phone, email, text)

Overwhelming

- PARENT
  - Sends lengthy, unedited emails several times a week
  - Calls school office during class time and demands to speak with teacher
  - Does not allow enough time for teacher to respond to requests
  - Talks to everyone but the teacher: the principal, the program coordinator, school district administrators
- TEACHER
  - Contacts parents for minor infractions
  - Leaves the parent feeling as if they are the cause of the problem or should be the ones to find a solution
  - Wants signatures on documents that have not been explained
COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

PARENTS
As an extremely valued team member:
• You know your child best
• Your input gives the team insight
• Your support strengthens your child
• You are your child’s strongest advocate

Best Practices

Daily Exchanges
• Communicate as if your child was the most important student in the school – he/she is!
• Learn the teacher’s mode of daily communication and ask for modifications if current method is not helpful enough
• Remain active and involved in your child’s daily school life

Exceptional Circumstances
• Let the teacher know about new growth and new challenges
• If you wonder if something is worth communicating, it most likely is and will be helpful information

Conflict Resolution
• Communicate for information, not confrontation.
• Consider writing your position on an issue as a way of clarifying your thoughts
• Stay with an issue until it is resolved to your satisfaction
• Take a day to consider alternatives suggested by other team members before accepting or rejecting

TEACHERS
As a pivotal team member:
• You are invested in your students’ success
• You are the gateway to the educational world

Best Practices

Daily Exchanges
• Communicate for a child who can’t always speak for him/herself.
• Schedule time (and keep it sacred) for preparing daily communication to the parent
• Include endearing information about the child’s day
• Communicate vigorously even when the parent is not involved

Exceptional Circumstances
• Call or write a note for the POSITIVE events
• Communicate difficult information by staying with facts and withholding opinion

Conflict Resolution
• Communicate for information, not confrontation.
• Have data to support your student’s abilities
• Rely on the IEP team to help resolve conflicts
• Remind yourself that you are part of a team that is working for the benefit of the student – it’s not an “us against them” mentality
A CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parent ______________________ Teacher ______________________

WHAT METHODS DO I USE TO COMMUNICATE? (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Communication Notebook</td>
<td>☐ Communication Notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Email</td>
<td>☐ Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ School phone</td>
<td>☐ School phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Home phone</td>
<td>☐ Home phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Cell phone</td>
<td>☐ Cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Text</td>
<td>☐ Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ In person before &amp; after school</td>
<td>☐ In person before &amp; after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW OFTEN DO I PREFER TO COMMUNICATE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Daily</td>
<td>☐ Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Weekly</td>
<td>☐ Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Every reporting period</td>
<td>☐ Every reporting period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT COMMUNICATION STYLE DO I PREFER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Reciprocal: a communication notebook where parent and teacher respond daily</td>
<td>☐ Reciprocal: a communication notebook where parent and teacher respond daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ One-way: teacher sends home daily note</td>
<td>☐ One-way: teacher sends home daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Emails: scheduled and as needed</td>
<td>☐ Emails: scheduled and as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Phone calls: scheduled and as needed</td>
<td>☐ Phone calls: scheduled and as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
<td>☐ Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVAILABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☛ I will return messages within _______ hours -or- _______ days</td>
<td>☛ I will return messages within _______ hours -or- _______ days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☛ I will respond to emails within _______ hours -or- _______ days</td>
<td>☛ I will respond to emails within _______ hours -or- _______ days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☜ You can call me as early as _______</td>
<td>☜ You can call me as early as _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☜ or as late as _______</td>
<td>☜ or as late as _______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Margaret Oliver  OliverByYourSide.com
INDIVIDUALIZED COMMUNICATION PLAN

Student ________________________ Date __________________________
Parent _________________________ Teacher _______________________

We choose to communicate via (state methods):

Regular communication will occur: DAILY WEEKLY OTHER
If OTHER, please describe:

Contact Information (complete agreed-upon methods):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email _____________</td>
<td>Email ___________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell ______________</td>
<td>Cell ____________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home ______________</td>
<td>Home ____________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work ______________</td>
<td>School __________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent: I answer my emails within ________________________________.
Teacher: I answer my emails within ________________________________.

Parent: I return phone messages within ______________________________.
Teacher: I return phone messages within ______________________________.

Parent: Call me between the hours of ____________ and ____________.
Teacher: Call me between the hours of ____________ and ____________.