

Parenting Together

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Building the Parent-Teacher Partnership

It has been said that parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Yet, as time marches on and children prepare to enter the classroom, parents are no longer their child's only teacher. From that first day of school on, parents are thrust into a whole new world of parent-teacher conferences, back to school nights and the exciting, yet elusive completion of the kindergarten registration packet.

Among the many transitions that happen during this timeframe is the beginnings of a relationship or partnership with the classroom teacher. Children are often quick to form that relationship, but for parents this is new territory. You are learning to trust another adult to teach and model important knowledge and life skills to your little one!

Not surprisingly, this relationship (as with many) is based on trust, communication, and respect -- all important life skills to model and teach to your child - and yes (!), despite the presence of a new (and hopefully) amazing classroom teacher, you are still (and will always be) your child's most important teacher!



"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them..." - Rita Pierson

May 8th is National Teacher Day, and to honor this day and the teacher(s) in your life, we will explore the importance and benefits of building a positive parent-teacher partnership.

While this partnership is certainly important for parents and teachers, there are also a surprising number of benefits to your child.

When parents and teachers partner together, children succeed!

On the Same Team

Parents and teachers have very similar goals. These goals often include success, achievement, and happiness (to name just a few). When parents and teachers play on the same team, children win and often show increases in their:

- Motivation to learn
- Attendance at school
- Positive attitude toward homework

According to one professor of education, Dr. Diane Levin, a positive parent-teacher relationship

"...demonstrates to your child that he can trust his teacher because you do. This positive relationship makes a child feel like the important people in his life are working together."



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The Book Nook

My Teacher for President
By Kay Winters

A Letter to My Teacher
By Deborah Hopkinson

Because I Had a Teacher
By Kobi Yamada

Teachers Can

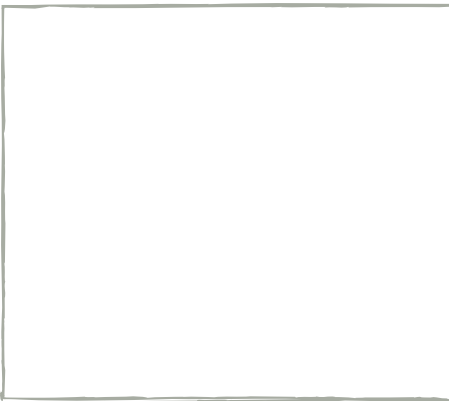
To create the best learning environment, teachers and parents have to work together, which means there are things that parents and teachers can reasonably expect from one another. While you can't control how others will manage their end of the partnership, there are a few things that you can (and should) expect from your child's teacher:

(1) Communication - this could include emails, newsletters, phone calls, and classroom webpages; (2) Invites - parents can often volunteer or visit the classroom; and (3) Parent-Teacher Conferences - a time to meet and discuss your child's progress in the classroom. Before meeting with your child's teacher remember to:

Ask your child if there is anything she wants you to discuss.

Bring a list of your questions and a pen to take notes.

Review your child's homework and recent assignments.



Parents Can

Just as there are many things parents can expect of teachers, teachers also have a few expectations for parents.

Consider these strategies for developing a positive partnership with your child's teacher:

- Give space: let your child and teacher develop their own unique bond
- Avoid the blame game: If something challenging happens in the classroom, approach the teacher with empathy and ask how you can work together toward a solution
- Consider your influence: watch what you say around your child. If you have strong opinions about a teacher, don't let it influence your child's relationship.



A Partnership

For children that struggle in the classroom or at home, a positive and strong partnership between parent and teacher can be everything. While you will always be your child's most important teacher, there is also a special place for our classroom teachers who care and educate our children.



In the end, this partnership helps to ensure that your child is greeted by a caring and supportive adult in the home and at school.

On May 8, National Teacher Day, make sure to thank a teacher, and while you're at it, give yourself a big pat on the back too.

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References

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- Reading Rockets - Building Parent-Teacher Relationships
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- Kids Health - Parent-Teacher Conferences
<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/parent-teacher-conferences.html>