

# Connecting With Families

## HOW TO CONNECT

When it comes to building a relationship with families, the more contact, the better. When teachers make positive connections with families, families are more likely to engage in a partnership with the teacher, support learning at home, and be open to working through problems together.

### Take advantage of every opportunity to establish a rapport with families:

- ◆ Share information about yourself with families
- ◆ Provide families with your contact information
- ◆ Be available before and after school
- ◆ Send personalized notes home with students
- ◆ Use Positive Postcards
- ◆ Make positive phone calls
- ◆ Seek out face-to-face conversations
- ◆ Stay connected through e-mail
- ◆ Make the most of classroom newsletters
- ◆ Invite parents into the classroom to help or even just observe
- ◆ Do a satisfaction survey with parents, make adjustments based on their suggestions

### Back to the Basics

**Don't underestimate the power of simple gestures. The little things really DO make a difference!**

- ◆ Make eye contact
- ◆ Smile
- ◆ Engage families in conversation whenever you see them
- ◆ Ask questions; show that you are interested in what they have to say
- ◆ Remember things they have shared with you previously and ask for an update

### Get Technical

**People are utilizing technology to get connected and stay informed more than ever before! Take advantage of technology to connect with families:**

- ◆ **Use e-mail;** Send positive notes to parents about their child, send the classroom newsletter, reminders about important dates and classroom celebrations electronically.
- ◆ **Take LOTS of pictures and share them with families;** Incorporate them into classroom newsletters, put them on your classroom website, send home or e-mail pictures of students to their parents (*remember not to attach student names to pictures for confidentiality reasons though*)
- ◆ **Classroom Website;** Keep your classroom website updated with classroom expectations, important dates, classroom news, pictures of centers and activities, suggestions for parents to support learning, and kid-friendly websites

### SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

***“Welcoming, honoring and connecting with families creates a school community in which everyone says they feel like members of a family. Parents respond to this culture by becoming loyal members of the school community, and by taking part in their children’s education in ways they had never envisioned.”***

- Karen Mapp, *Beyond the Bake Sale*