

## Tips for Talking with Parents about Concerns

Clear communication with parents about classroom performance and assessment is important but often difficult for teachers. These tips are meant to be a guide to help teachers relate information effectively to parents.

### Keep Parents Informed

Inform parents about school/program policies around assessment at the beginning of the year. Throughout the course of the year be sure that parents are aware when assessments are scheduled and how soon results will be available. Be sure to explain the purpose of the assessments. This information can be communicated in parent handbooks, newsletters, weekly reports or on websites.

### Meet with Parent

When communicating concerns about assessment results or classroom performance, speak with parents face to face if possible. Begin by thanking the parents for coming to speak to you and then make a point of noting a strength or an endearing attribute of their child. Go on to explain that you would like to discuss some concerns and would like to get their input and help in developing a plan to assist their child improve his/her skills.

### Body Language is Important

Be conscious of your body language, remember that your attitude is often communicated non-verbally. This will help to lay the foundation of a productive conversation and a cooperative parent-teacher relationship.

### Be a Good Listener and Work as a Team

Be sure to listen to parents. Ask what concerns they have. Share strategies for helping their child by finding out what the child likes to do at home and offering suggestions of things parents can do at home to provide carryover of skills being worked on at school.

### Please, No Surprises

Remember that parents do not like surprises so continually report progress and concerns as they arise. Ask parents what is the best way to communicate with them i.e., phone call, note, e-mail. Also, encourage parents to contact you with any questions or concerns and let them know the best way to reach you.