

Teacher Check, Connect and Expect Parent Contact Procedure for Classroom Teacher(s)

The critical outcome for this conversation is to establish the early foundation of a home-school partnership. Think for a while about this before making the call. Your frustration is understandable if the child has been misbehaving or if parents have been difficult to work with, however, it is important to work out any anger or frustration BEFORE you call. It is also good practice to plan and practice your response to comments that may 'trigger' your frustrations. Parents are much more likely to engage if listened to and spoken to positively and supportively. This conversation is NOT designed to tell the parent that their child has been 'bad' and therefore he needs to be on a contract to address his behavior. They've likely heard about their child's behavior before and therefore are likely to 'tune out' or become defensive as soon as they feel their child is being criticized. A better approach is to be complimentary, curious, and state that you'd like to help the child to be more effective or successful in school. Working as a team with parents is always the best way to help the child.

Preparation: Before You Make the Call

1. Be prepared with at least three specific positive statements you can make regarding the student and write them down.
2. If behavioral referrals have been made, have them with you in case there are questions from the parent (however you do not need to refer to them).
3. Have the Teacher Check, Connect and Expect materials and procedures with you in case there are questions.
4. Practice the call before you make it.
5. If the parent does not speak English, make preparations for a translator (it is usually recommended that the child not be used as the translator).

During the Call

1. Begin the conversation with something positive about the child. Remember to smile even though you are on the phone.
2. Briefly discuss your concerns about behavior, but don't dwell on them.
3. Be deferential to the parent (e.g., "You are the expert regarding your child." "Is there anything you know about "Billy" that might help me to work better with him?" "Is there something you do that works well or anything that's worked in the past with other teachers?").
4. Be non-judgmental. Avoid blaming or anything that could even sound like blaming. Accept in advance that the parent may not share your values or priorities.
5. Expect success. Always speak in the highest regard of the student and communicate your belief in him – belief that he can be successful.
6. Validate the parent's feelings. If a parent needs to vent or complain, validate their feelings rather than trying to solve their problem (e.g., "Yes, it is really frustrating when you try so hard and it feels like very little progress is being made").
7. Establish that 'Billy' has been recommended/offered to try a Teacher Check, Connect and Expect program because we want (a) to give him what he needs to be successful at school and (b) to provide supports before he experiences any more frustration in school.
8. Speak of Teacher Check, Connect and Expect as a way to:
 - a. Provide just a little more positive attention and support for him/ her;
 - b. Provide all of us with more information about how to best work with him/ her;
 - c. Help make it be more likely that (s)he'll experience more success in school; and
 - d. Work as a partner with you (home-school partners)
9. Ask the parent if they want to meet in person to discuss the program or discuss it on the phone.
10. If the parent chooses to meet in person, determine a time and location.
11. If the parent wants to continue the discussion on the phone, explain the process of Teacher Check, Connect and Expect, including the review meeting in 4 weeks and the data you'll review at that time.

Tell the parent that with their verbal approval, the program can begin as soon as the process is practiced with their child (within 2 school days).

12. Tell the parent that you will send information home which explains the program.
13. Tell the parent that there is a team that supports the Teacher Check, Connect and Expect system and a representative from that team will help facilitate the meetings.
14. In cases where you can predict a negative response from a parent – take the time to make a personal response plan. A personal response plan is a plan to remind yourself of what your own ‘triggers’ are, and to plan a response that can keep the conversation on-track (typically using validation and affirmation of the parent) even if the parent isn’t supportive of the program.
15. Ask the parent if they have any questions or concerns.
16. End the conversation or meeting by thanking them for taking the time to talk and for working together to support their son/daughter.

After the Call

1. Send home a short note and the program information.