

3. Individualize communications.

- If a student lives in 2 households, ask for a schedule and be prepared to send multiple communications and documents to each house.
- For families who are non-native English speakers, try to use the family's primary language. [Google Translate](#) may not be perfect, but will show you are trying.
- If a student has a complex disability, the family will need to provide extensive supports at home, just like you do for instruction. Consider that when sending work home.

4. Focus on the positive.

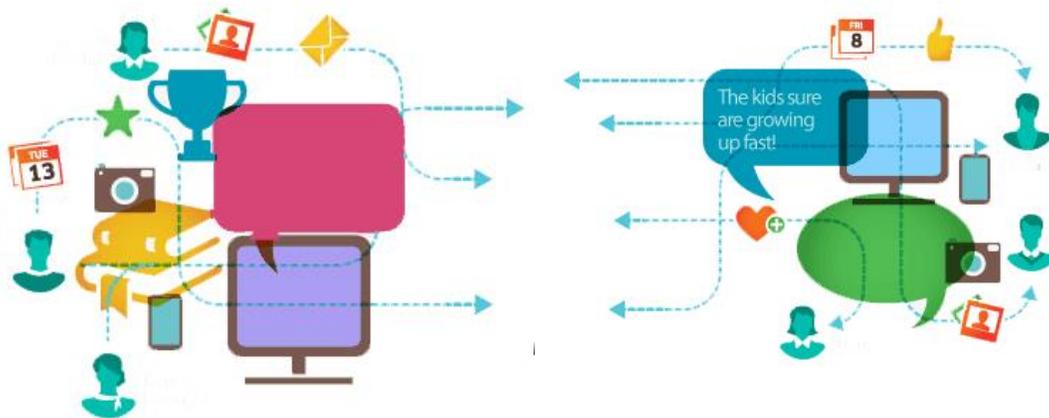
- If you need to communicate a problem, then also share successes twice as often.
- Presume competence and hold high expectations; send age-appropriate assignments that are adapted for successful completion.
- Presume positive intent on the part of parents; they are doing the best they can.
- For students with limited verbal communication, consider having a peer write a positive note about the day in the student's home-school communication book.

5. Consider a monthly class newsletter.

- Explain the focus of instruction for the coming month.
- Highlight student accomplishments, including a picture of a wall of student work.
- Make sure the diversity of your class is represented.
- Include your students with disabilities in all aspects of your news.
- For students with limited verbal communication or who are learning English, offer an adapted version with pictures and/or other languages.

6. Things to remember:

- Be thoughtful about the words you use, especially in writing. Humor, which is easily understood in person, may not come through in print.
- If families are not responding to your written communications, try a phone call.
- Communicate clearly, positively, and always with an eye on finding solutions.
- Follow up phone calls with emails documenting your communication to make sure you share understanding – even just to say “thank you!”



***“Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care
for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good.”***

Buddha