

# REALIZE *more*

An online information, sharing and community resource for individuals with disabilities, parents, carers and professionals

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## Maintaining good relationships with parents and carers

Any parent or carer needs to feel listened to and valued. Never forget that they are entrusting you with the most precious thing to them. Having established a good relationship with parents/carers it is, like in any relationship important to put time and effort into maintaining a good relationship.

### Useful tools in maintaining good relationships with parents/ carers

- **Phone calls home**

When parents see that school is calling, their first reaction is often "What's wrong?" Make it a goal to call each student's parents/carers once within the first two weeks of school, just to let them know how well their child is doing. Focus on something positive that their child has done.

- **Parent/Carer Communication Books**

Create a Communications book for each child. Explain to parents/carers that you will use this to communicate what their child has been doing throughout the day and it will particularly highlight what they have achieved. It is also a place where they can ask questions, give feedback and comment on what their child has been doing.

- **Weekly newsletters**

Sending out weekly newsletters is an easy, effective way to inform parents/carers about important dates or events and communicate about what's happening in the classroom.

- **Special Occasions**

At certain times of the year such as the lead up to Independence Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day you could plan an open morning for parents/ carers to come along to your class to participate in activities with the children such as arts and crafts relating to independence day, perhaps the children could practice and perform a song for their mother for mother's day and make a craft together or decorate cupcakes.

- **Get parents/ carers involved**

If parents/carers are actively involved in their child's learning, children will have greater chances of success. Inviting parents/ carers into your classroom gives them the opportunity to see what happens in the classroom and understand how "things work" in the school and builds positive relationships between parents and teachers.

Regular opportunities can include family members supporting reading time or helping to run clubs at break and lunch times.

Do you have opportunities in your class for parents/ family members to participate? There are a number of one off opportunities you could offer such as helping on trips, "Share and tell" where parents/ family members come to share what their job is e.g. if they are a fire fighter maybe they could bring the fire engine for the children to see and climb aboard?

Or run a short session on a subject/ skill for example if they have particular skills in art, they could run an art session (This would need to be pre-agreed with yourself and be appropriate to the children's learning).

If appropriate and the child and family member was happy, perhaps they could run a short disability awareness session on their child's disability. You would need to ensure you had already established an accepting environment within your classroom.

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