



THE GOVERNOR JOHN ENGLER  
**CENTER FOR  
CHARTER  
SCHOOLS**  
CENTRAL MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY

# SUPPORTING PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



## Definition

Parents are a child's first teachers, and the home is a child's first classroom. As key resources for learning and growth, parents help to shape a child's social, emotional and physical development so that they can thrive in school and beyond. Supporting student success starts with a shared agreement among families, schools and the community to work together, and it involves committed actions to make it happen.

## Strategies to Strengthen Parent/School Partnerships

- 1. Build relationships from the beginning** — Start with a positive message to set the right tone at the beginning of the year. As soon as you get your class roster, send out a message introducing yourself and ask parents what their child enjoys about school and what's challenging for them. Then, follow up with a phone call. Track how often and why you contact parents during the year.
- 2. Communicate struggles early** — In general, parents would rather know that their child has areas where they need more support. When you notice a child struggling or taking more time to grasp a concept, pass that information along to parents in a kind and supportive way such as a simple note that gives parents the knowledge that their child is still working on a skill and how they can help at home.
- 3. Give parents the opportunity to help** — Parents want to support their children, and most will jump at the chance to be able to. Often, having difficult conversations with parents gives them the chance to help. Teachers can't solve every problem alone. Collaborating with parents can help students achieve greater success. Also, provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the school in various volunteer positions or through the PTA or other school support groups.
- 4. Don't forget the positives** — Pointing out positives is equally important and can show that you know and care about your students beyond their test scores. Parents don't see their children working on group projects or interacting with academic material in the same ways that teachers do. When teachers communicate strengths and unique talents, it equips parents to build on these areas at home. Communicating the positives can let parents know you see their whole child.
- 5. Determine the best tools** — When communicating with anyone, it's important to know the best tool to reach them. With all parents, it's worth considering whether text, email, or phone is the right method, and the language that the parents prefer to communicate in. Explore technology tools such as "Talking Points" or "ClassDojo" or "Language Line" for parents with limited literacy skills.
- 6. Explain ways parents can help at home** —
  - » Set up a daily family routine, including healthy eating and sleeping habits.
  - » Provide a place and time at home for homework.
  - » Check on assignments, homework and projects.
  - » Talk each day with your child about their activities.
  - » Promote literacy by reading to your child and by reading yourself.
  - » Limit and monitor TV watching, gaming, social media and computer time.
  - » Express high expectations and standards for your child's learning.
  - » Attend parent-teacher conferences, Open House and Back-To-School events.
  - » Participate in decisions that affect your child's education.
  - » Tap into community resources with visits to a library, museum, zoo or theater and encourage participation in after-school clubs, sports and art activities.

## Resources

- » [CAPTA.org](http://CAPTA.org)
- » [Teachertube.com](http://Teachertube.com)
- » [Edutopia.org](http://Edutopia.org)
- » [Teachingchannel.com](http://Teachingchannel.com)