



IMPROVING COMMUNICATION:

Bridging the Connection Between Teachers & Families of Students with Disabilities

Parent Survey

All survey responses are confidential, and no individual information is disclosed.

Schools will not be able to identify responders.

When to Share

- Annual Case Conference Committee meeting
- When changes are made to the IEP
- Parent teacher conferences
- As necessary

How to Share

- **In Person:** At the end of a Case Conference Committee Meeting
- **By Mail:** Allow several weeks for a response
- **Electronically:** Share the [survey link](#) via email or text so parents can easily access it.

Tips for More Effective Communication

- Treat parents as partners and value their input.
- Ensure communication with families and proactive from members of the Case Conference Committee (CCC).
- Provide multiple means of communication (phone, text, email, etc.)

Communication During the IEP Process

- Talk with families to develop clear goals for the student.
- Teach collaborative strategies to the case conference committee, with an emphasis on including families. All CCC members have valuable information to share.
- Verify and update contact information in Indiana IEP and local student information system.
- IEP documents are to be written in the family's language.
- Progress monitoring is a way to communicate regularly on the student's progress in their program.
- Assist family members in understanding the components of the IEP.

Culturally-Responsive Family Engagement

- Establish a routine of sharing information and making decisions together. Position parents as experts on their child's team.
- Provide teacher training focused on racial and linguistic diversity to reduce inaccurate assumptions.
- Create a strategy to learn and understand culturally-based approaches the family uses that can be incorporated into the child's education program.
- Translate documents and use interpreters to translate communication. (Students should not act as interpreters.)
- Expand families' knowledge of the school culture and its expectations for family involvement.



Tips for Improving Communication

When to Call Home

- **Introductions:** Contact families early to develop positive relationships with all members of the CCC.
- **Scheduling Meetings:** Offer families multiple options.
- **Celebrations:** Contact parents to celebrate student successes in any learning environment.
- **Making Changes:** Obtain consent from families before making changes to the IEP.
- **Invitations:** Invite families to attend CCC meetings but also parent-teacher conferences, school presentations, sporting events, and other activities that the student participates in.
- **Offer Support:** Conduct parent workshops on how to interpret and respond to progress reports, report cards, and standardized test scores.
- **Ask for Support:** Invite family members to participate in school activities (regular instructional support, lunchroom monitors, tutoring, special event participation, etc.).

Optimizing Connection with Families

- Parents may demonstrate support in different ways.
 - Reach out to find ways in which families can connect with each other.
 - Learn the composition of the family and identify whom to contact regarding school .
- Parents may view teachers as experts and don't feel comfortable questioning their plans.
 - Expand families' knowledge of the school culture and its expectations for family involvement.
 - Establish a routine of sharing information and making decisions together. Position parents as experts on their child's team.
- Language differences may create confusion for parents.
 - Translate documents
 - Use interpreters to translate communication (students should not act as interpreters)
- Celebrate diversity by incorporating culturally-based approaches.
 - Avoid scheduling special events on important cultural or religious holidays.
 - Support ongoing, team-based structures, such as a special education parent advisory council, so that underrepresented families can build stronger relationships with staff and provide input to the school.
 - Draw upon local cultural organizations that are relevant to your families, and collaborate together to support families around key needs.

