



OAFCCD *Parents As Partners*

Fact Sheet # 2

Strategies for Effective Partnerships

Establishing positive working relationships with the members of your in-school team is essential to an effective transition to school for your child.

1. Communication is the key to successful partnerships. Include all those who have valuable input and information about your child, therapies, and their progress:

- Speech-language pathologist
- Audiologist
- Early Interventionist
- Psychologist
- Occupational therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Neurologist
- Developmental paediatrician
- Babysitter
- Tutor
- Preschool teacher
- Family members

Share information about your child if it will help your child to be successful. This does not just apply to childcare or school settings. For example, if your child has low muscle tone around the mouth, and they are taking swimming lessons, they may be physically unable to blow bubbles, which is a requirement when taking swim lessons.

2. Work together with the school towards your common goal: setting up your child for success in school.

- Define clear, relevant goals for your child
- Establish roles for each team member; if you are not sure why someone is there, ask!
- Work together to problem-solve and set up the best solutions for the issues at hand
- Set timelines; how long will we try the new approach? When will we meet again?
- Assign responsibilities

3. Communication from school to home usually happens much more often than communication from home to school. To get the most from your school you need to take responsibility for changing this.

To develop a good relationship with benefits for all, communicate positive information with the teacher, rather than only getting in touch when there is a problem.

Here are some benefits of 2-way communication:

- Learn about your child's progress
- Learn about your child's difficulties
- Clear up misunderstandings
- Learn what you can do at home
- Learn about how your child is developing socially and emotionally
- Learn about how your child behaves in class and the discipline that is used
- Learn about what is expected of your child
- Learn about the teaching strategies used
- Get to know the teacher personally
- Share information about your child... interests, attitude towards school, likes and dislikes, talents, etc.
- Help the teacher to understand how your child learns and important assessment facts
- Give the teacher feedback on her effectiveness
- Develop plans together
- Resolve conflicts

4. Be informed about what you need to know. To help your child you need to know about your child, about the school system and about what your child needs to be successful.

1. Your child's special needs – is there a diagnosis? Do you understand it? What are the functional and/or academic problems associated with this condition?
2. What are your child's strengths – socially, personality, character, academic, talents and abilities?
3. What are your child's learning needs? What is his learning style? Which teaching strategies work best for him to learn? What coping strategies does he use? Does he have special technologies that help him in the classroom environment? How are his social skills? Can he ask for help?

5. Communication with the school can take many forms:

- Meetings
- Notes
- Voicemail messages

In all forms of communication, be sure to:

- State the purpose of your communication
- Set dates and times for meetings and follow-up
- Keep a record of the time and date of the communication and who was involved.

For more ideas about how to develop successful partnerships with schools, attend an OAFCCD *Parents As Partners* workshop or look for more resources check the OAFCCD *Parents As Partners* website.