



# Tips for Establishing and Maintaining Positive Parent-Teacher Relationships

Positive relationships begin with good communication. Your approach to the initial interactions with your child's teacher can help you and your child feel positive about the school year ahead. Once you know which professional will be teaching your child in the classroom, consider scheduling a visit to introduce your child and make plans for how you will communicate during the school year.

## YOUR CHILD'S STORY

You know your child better than anyone. You can tell your child's story directly to their teacher and establish a personal connection.

- **Tell your child's story!** Share your child's story using materials that reflect your family. This may involve your child by sharing drawings, written notes or an experience book that you have created to share personal experiences.
- **Make a video!** Work with your child to plan, script and record a video that can be shared with the teacher. This is a great social language activity. Help your child decide what their teacher needs to know about them and what they want to share.

## TECHNOLOGY MATTERS!

It's essential that your child's teacher recognizes the importance of well-functioning technology so your child always has the best listening/learning experience.

- **Find out what the teacher knows about hearing loss:** Asking open-ended questions will set the stage for you to share about your child's hearing loss, the devices they wear and what assistance they need in the classroom. Most teachers want to do all they can to make a positive listening and learning experience for your child.
  - *What has been your experience working with a child with hearing loss? I would like to tell you about what my child can hear with their hearing devices. Could I show you how the technology works so together we can create a troubleshooting plan?*
  - *My child hears best in a noisy classroom with the use of an FM or remote microphone. Have you ever used one of these systems? I would like to show you how it works. How do you see using the device in the classroom so that he can learn from you?*
- **Create** a quick "how to troubleshoot" for your child's device with simple steps detailed on an index card. Keep one in your child's backpack and give one to the teacher to keep handy.
- **Share videos** from your child's technology device manufacturer. Many of the companies have resources for teachers to better understand the way the device works and how to troubleshoot.
- **Demonstrate the device:** If your child wears a remote microphone, provide resources from the manufacturer so their teacher may learn on their own. You may also provide a "quick start guide" that will make it easy for the teacher to learn how to use the device. Meet with the teacher one-on-one to show them how to use the device.



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## ... KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT

If your child is familiar with the classroom and school expectations before school starts, they'll know what to expect in the classroom and beyond.

- **Make a Parent-Teacher Connection:** During your introductory visit, find out more about what to expect of your child's classroom experience.
  - *How do you like to communicate with parents (email, phone, personal note, text)?*
  - *What can I do to prepare my child for the first week of school?*
  - *What are your procedures/expectations for homework?*
  - *What would you like me to know so I can support my child's learning at home?*
  - *How do you foster positive social relationships in your classroom?*
  - *What role does support staff play in the classroom?*
  - *What can I do to support you in the classroom (volunteer opportunities, preparation of events)?*
- **Make a Child-Teacher Connection:** You'll want you and your child to participate in any introductory times the teacher may schedule for the class. Use this time or the introductory visit you scheduled for your child to become more familiar with their teacher and classroom by:
  - *Taking pictures of the classroom, emphasizing the learning centers for you and your child to talk about, or make an experience book after your visit.*
  - *Taking a picture of each classmate or their cubby to help your child learn the names of their new friends.*
  - *Having your child ask the teacher questions to get to know them such as - What are your favorite treats, outings or hobbies?*

## ... SETTING HIGH EXPECTATIONS

You'll want your child's teachers to hold the bar high for social and academic achievement. In many cases, children with hearing loss perform as well as, or better than, their hearing peers.

- **Share your experience teaching your child.** Describe how they learn best, what motivates them and what you notice about their learning. Define what they can already do that will help the teacher know you value high expectations and want your child to do well.
- **Maintain consistent communication.** Ask your child's teacher about consistent weekly and/or monthly check-ins. Find out the teacher's preference for communication. Over time, communicate what is working well so the teacher can continue with successful strategies. Also communicate what is challenging (in a positive way) so the teacher can make changes to better support your child.
- **Share your positive vision.** Help set the stage for your child by setting a positive example and letting your child's teacher know that you feel it will be a great year for your child and the teacher.



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## FOSTERING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUCCESS

Social-emotional development is a critical consideration for children with hearing loss and skills can be facilitated in the school environment to ensure your child develops healthy and lasting relationships with their peers.

- **Attend “back to school” events** so your child can meet the other students in their classroom and you can meet their parents. Find out the names of at least two or three families as a start.
- **Model introductions for your child** and practice so they will be more comfortable introducing themselves to new children.
- **Talk about your child’s social development:** Let your child’s teacher know how your child likes to play and communicate with peers. Provide some examples of interactions you have observed. Share any concerns you have and share what you have tried in previous settings. Be open about behaviors you are worried about. If your teacher understands some of your child’s behaviors, they can be proactive and provide positive responses when they occur in the classroom.

When parents and professionals partner together, children who are deaf or hard of hearing achieve listening, spoken language, literacy and academic skills that lay the foundation for a lifetime of success.