

HOT TOPICS

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Presented by Parent Network of WNY - September 2017

When families, communities and schools work together students succeed. It is important for families to feel welcome in their child's school and to have an understanding of what their children are learning and doing in class. There is real value in parents and family members feeling connected to the teacher, principal and other families. Communication is key to building a team of people who will work together to support a student's success.



COMMUNICATION TIPS

Listen actively to others. If you don't understand something ask the person to repeat or rephrase what they said. "I didn't completely understand what you meant... could you please explain it again?" It is also helpful to restate what you heard. "Just so I am sure I understand the plan is to..."

Think about your subtle (non-verbal) communication. Ask yourself... Will someone feel comfortable approaching you? Is the tone of your voice friendly, firm but calm? Are you looking the person in the eye to show them you are listening or speaking confidently?

Be clear and concise. Think of exactly what needs to be said in that moment. Use as few words as possible.

Speak with confidence. Organize your thoughts and speak clearly. Remember as

parents and family members you have important information to share with the team.

Show empathy. Not every member of a team will agree all the time. When you disagree it is important to acknowledge the other person's point of view. Using a phrase such as "I understand why you think this is a good idea" shows the person you have been listening and creates an opportunity for you to share your different viewpoint.

Be open-minded. It is important to get your point across. Also being willing to listen and have a conversation with others who you may disagree with will lead to more productive conversations and meaningful results.

Provide feedback. Thank everyone for their support and acknowledge a good conversation. "Thank you for your time, this was very helpful."

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An effective advocate is organized, prepared as well as ready to listen and ask questions that are focused on the needs of the student/child. Creating a binder to have available for all conversations is very helpful. Including a copy of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), evaluations, a phone log and notes from previous meetings will all be helpful if you need to clarify something. Summarizing the information covered in the meeting with any decisions made is also helpful.



Parent Network has many resources to help support, educate, connect and empower parents and family members of children and youth with disabilities and learning challenges.

For tips on effective advocacy check out our website at <https://parentnetworkwny.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Advocacy-PN-FactSheet32917.pdf>

To learn more about successful communication:



Evidence shows when families, communities and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits.

TAKING PLACE

November 30, 2017

Time: 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Salvatore's Italian Garden
6461 Transit Rd.
Depew, NY 14043

For more information & to register:

www.wnyfamilyengagement.org

Effective communication skills combined with the right information can lead to positive and long lasting change.