

Communication Tips

For Families of Children with Disabilities

Working and Communicating Positively with School Staff



Looks Like



Sounds Like

Communicate Clearly



Reminding people of your child's strengths.



"Please remember that the disability is just a part of who my child is. He/she has many strengths and unique characteristics."



Listening to others with an open mind and offering your ideas.



"I agree that my child needs to improve his/ her reading comprehension. Can we adjust his/her schedule so that he/ she will receive intensive instruction during the regularly scheduled reading block in an inclusive setting?"



Taking a step-by-step approach to problems and offering your ideas for solutions. Express your understanding that things can change over time.



"I'm not sure this strategy will work with my child, so let's try it and talk about this again in ___ weeks. If this doesn't work, I have another idea that we could try."



Jotting down notes before, during, and after you meet with your child's individual educational plan (IEP) team members. Use concrete and specific examples when you share concerns.



"I'd like to share some concerns from our last conversation. I think there may be some misunderstanding about my son's/ daughter's communication support needs. He/ she needs to have a special switch in order to communicate his/ her choices. He/ she uses this device at home to make choices about foods, activities, and clothing."



Asking questions to understand both sides of an issue. Get a second opinion from other teachers or the school administrator.



"I'm not sure I understand why my son/ daughter has been placed in a different reading program. Can you explain what you are basing this decision upon? I think I would also like to hear about the new reading program from the reading coach."

Make a Plan



Contacting your child's school as early as possible.



"I'd like to meet before next school year to plan for my child's transition to grade and his/her support needs."



Making special appointments to talk about specific concerns or problems.



"I'm concerned about some homework assignments my child is bringing home. What would be a good time to discuss this?"



Agreeing upon a common system of communication.



"What's the best way for us to regularly communicate throughout the year?"

Show Your Support and Willingness to be a Partner



Recognizing the teacher's expertise.



"I know you are a highly able teacher who has a lot of things to juggle every day! Please let me know how I can help you."



Participating in the School's Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) self-assessment process, family- school activities and/or committees.



"I'm available to volunteer for the BPIE, PTA, School Advisory Committee, Booster Club, Family Resource Room, etc."



Sending positive messages to staff. Let them know you care about their efforts to educate your child and want to build a positive relationship between school and home.



"We really think your extra efforts are paying off for my son/ daughter. He/ she has never enjoyed going to school until now!" "I'm thrilled with my child's progress this year, but would like to know how I can do more to help at home."



Keeping your child's behavior in perspective.



"Is what my child doing typical for kids his/her age or is this something to do with his/her disability?"



Scan the QR code to check out FIN's other family resources for a deeper look into inclusion!

To find out how to contact your FIN Facilitator call 1-888-232-0421 or visit the FIN website at www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com.

