



Communicating with Your Child's School through Letter Writing

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It is important to be able to effectively write a letter and communicate appropriately with your child's school and teachers. This is true whether your child has a disability or not. Having a good relationship between home and school can really benefit your child.

If your child does have a disability, he or she will most likely have an IEP or a 504 Plan and letter writing will provide both you and the school with documentation of ideas, concerns, and suggestions you have, and give the people involved the opportunity to go back over issues and suggestions point by point.

The number one statement I always tell parents is, "Make sure you document EVERYTHING you send and receive that is school-related." Also, keep all documents that come home like letters, reports, assessments, and any follow-up paperwork organized and in one place. Having a way to go back to this information will help

especially if there are any miscommunications that may occur.

"You should keep a file of all letters, records, and all your communications with the school. Record the times, dates, and names of people you have spoken with or write to, and the subject matter of the conversation. Also, follow up any spoken conversations about your child's care with an email or letter." ~ [Center for Parent Information & Resources](#)

One of my favorite things I use for daily communication between my kid's teachers and myself is a home to school contact folder. This will allow you, your child's teachers, and if your child receives therapy at school, any therapists, to be able to communicate daily. Should any new problems or any new issues come up in the home or at school, you can put it in the folder and the teacher will know about it once she checks the folder. It has saved a lot of time

versus trying to call and leave messages to relay to the teachers or having to schedule meetings to discuss.

If you are writing to request a meeting, it is a good idea to include both the student's teacher and the school's Special Education Coordinator. I find it important to know who's who in your child's school. If possible, try to attend school functions (especially the parent-teacher conferences and open houses) to get to know the teachers, staff, and any therapists, that will be working with your child.

Following are some letter writing pointers:

1. Where do I begin? Keep your letter short and on point. Start writing using the questions below as your guide to keep on point.

- ◆ Why am I writing the letter?
- ◆ What are my specific concerns?
- ◆ What are my questions?
- ◆ What is the outcome I would like to see in regards to the content above?
- ◆ How do I want to receive my response? (e.g. a letter, meeting, email, phone call, or something else

2. Any letter you write should include the following basic information:

- ◆ Date (Month/Day/Year)
- ◆ Include your child's full name, DOB, his/her teacher's name, and current class placement.
- ◆ Say what you want, rather than what you do not want. Keep it simple.

- ◆ Set a timeframe for a response (e.g. Please respond within the next 10 business days.) If the matter is urgent, you can state this and request less time.
- ◆ Give your name, address, email address, and a contact phone number.

When I write my monthly articles, I always write more than one draft and edit it as needed. Once you have your final draft, have someone else read it to make sure it is to the point, appropriate, and does not have any grammatical errors. When typing a letter via email or on a computer, make sure to use spell-check.

Finally yet importantly, sometimes we may have anger and frustrations but it is not a good idea to show it when you are writing a letter to your child's school. If you are angry or frustrated, before writing your letter, take the time to cool down. You don't want to point blame or have other negative emotions come off in your letter. Remember, you as the parent/guardian and the teacher(s) all have your child's best interests at heart and good communication between you can make a big difference in your child's academic success.

For more information on communicating with your child's school through letter writing, check out the [Center for Parent Information & Resources](#) for detailed information as well as sample letters.



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