

# Tips for building strong relationships with families

Meaningful connections with your students' families are built on understanding, expectations, trust, respect and collaboration. TalkingPoints has compiled a list of steps you can take to create and maintain those relationships throughout the year.



## Make it Personal

You matter deeply in the lives of your students and families. To build strong relationships with them, start by connecting on a personal level. Help your families get to know you as a person by sharing parts of your story with them, such as why you decided to become a teacher. This will build trust and understanding and will encourage them to share their own stories in return.

### TP Tip

Bring your introduction to life by using the attachment features on TalkingPoints to send photos and videos. Share a family portrait and a short video explaining who you are. You might ask families to send theirs in return.



## Establish Expectations

You have high academic standards for your students, and you work hard to make them clear and understandable in your curriculum. Can you do the same with parents? Of course! Making your expectations for families clear - and understanding their expectations of you - is part of building strong relationships between school and home.

Parents and guardians may be unclear about their role in their child's learning due to many factors, such as a lack of formal education, lack of understanding of the school system, or a negative relationship with schools. Consider these factors and make it clear how you expect families to support students in your class. Do you expect them to read with their child for 20 minutes every night or sign weekly progress reports? Let them know so they can make plans to contribute to your classroom and their child's learning.

### TP Tip

Use your TalkingPoints account to send a PDF document outlining your syllabus and expectations for the year. Include your available hours in your plans so families know when and how to contact you.



## Maintain Positive Communication

Frequent, encouraging communication with families is crucial to cultivating a positive classroom culture. By sharing positive updates regularly, you build rapport with families. You also build trust and understanding in the event that you have to deliver negative news.

### TP Tip

Remind families you care by using TalkingPoints to schedule bi-weekly or weekly check ins with them. By sending a few individual shout-outs about student successes each day, you help families feel more positive and more likely to engage with you and their child's school in the future.



## Trust Intentions

Every teacher wants their students to succeed. Every parent wants their child to succeed. These facts should be the foundation of each relationship you build throughout the school year.

If challenges arise, remind yourself of these common intentions. Keep them in mind when you message with families and communicate about difficult news.

### TP Tip

Send individual messages through TalkingPoints to family members to have one-on-one conversations about their child's goals. Reassure parents, when challenges present themselves, that your main objective is to help their student succeed.



## Ask for Input

Just like you are the expert when it comes to educational practices, your students' families are the experts when it comes to their child—and their family's needs. Families need to feel seen and heard in order to become active stakeholders in their child's learning.

### TP Tip

Ensure families feel included in the learning process by asking questions and soliciting feedback in your announcements and messages. You can also share polls on TalkingPoints to ask for family input.

