

7 Things To Tell the Teacher

by Emily Graham

What can you tell a teacher that will help him do his job better? You might be surprised. While your child's teacher is the expert in education, no one knows more about your child than you do. It's just as important for parents to tell teachers about issues at home that may affect school performance as it is for teachers to report how children are doing in the classroom.

Students do best when parents and teachers work together as partners. The start of a new school year is a great time to open a dialogue with your child's teacher. Not sure where to start? Here are seven things teachers wish you would tell them. Sharing this information with a teacher will help her better understand your child's needs and lay the groundwork for a cooperative relationship throughout the school year.

Health conditions: If your child is diabetic, uses an inhaler, is allergic to peanuts, or has a serious health condition, her teacher should know. It's also helpful to let the teacher know whether your child has been diagnosed with conditions like ADHD, which may affect behavior and concentration.

Family issues: Fill in the teacher if your family is going through a major change that could affect your child, such as a divorce, a death in the family, or a move. Even if your child seems to have adjusted well, alert teachers so they can watch for behavioral changes.

Personality traits or behavior issues: Maybe your son is painfully shy and is worried about making friends at a new school. Or perhaps your kindergartner has been having tantrums at home and you're concerned she'll do the same at school. It's best to make teachers aware of these issues before they become a problem at school.

Strengths and weaknesses: Your daughter is a star student in math but is embarrassed to read aloud. Your son loves language arts but struggles with science. If you tell teachers these things up front, they'll have more time to help your children improve in the areas they need it most.

Learning style: You've spent years teaching your kids, from potty training to tying shoelaces, so you have a good idea of their learning styles. If your child learns better through hands-on activities than through listening to explanations, mention that to his teacher. Also share any teaching strategies that you've found work well with your child.

Study habits: Does your son speed through math homework but labor over reading assignments? Do your daughter's grades suffer because she spends so much time at skating lessons? Tell teachers about your children's study habits and any issues they face in completing the work. Teachers often can offer suggestions to make homework time go more smoothly.

Special interests: Knowing more about your child's hobbies or interests can help the teacher forge connections in the classroom. Let the teacher know that your young son loves a particular comic book superhero and that your middle school daughter is a gifted painter.