



# Formative Parenting

*Cultivating Character in Children*

*A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania*

## **Home Ways for School Days, Part 3 PARENT – TEACHER RELATIONS**

Parents who chose Catholic education enter into a partnership for the soulful formation of the child. Partnership implies that teachers recognize parents as the primary educators and parents view teachers both as professionals and formation agents. Parents and teachers appreciate and support the vocation of the other.

This sacred partnership implies respectful tones, courtesy and self-control whether in conference or in writing; extending the benefit of the doubt to the other, exercising charity to respond rather than react to a matter of controversy, holding sacred the reputation of the other, and practicing the discipline of confidentiality. Formation partners recognize that gossip fractures relationship and compromises school success.

This newsletter suggests HOME WAYS that foster a successful home-school relationship.

### **Student Preparedness**

Just as a surgeon requires the necessary medical instruments in order to function effectively, students must be prepared to participate fully in their education. Student preparedness for school success includes the following functions.

A good day begins with the sleep of the night before! Wake to a calm routine, eat a protein breakfast, take possession of the day's materials (school bag, project, lunch, signed permission slips, P.E. clothes, musical instrument, etc.), arrive to school on time, organize learning tools (textbooks, notebooks, writing utensils, etc.), produce completed homework, copy assignments, establish a system for filing paperwork, tests, quizzes, etc., eat a nourishing lunch, and pack all necessary materials for home. Before going to bed preview tomorrow and pack whatever items will be required for a successful day.

### **Report Card Disposition**

Consider the report card as a written summary of four areas of performance already known to the student, parent and teacher.

- **Academic Performance** represents quizzes, tests, classwork, homework, projects, and participation in class. Regularly review and sign written work, correct errors, and make adjustments in study habits as needed. Maintain a personal grade book so that you can estimate the general average on any given day. At the first sighting of a "red flag," discuss your concerns with the child and then initiate communication with the teacher.
- **Effort** represents the degree to which the student comes prepared for class, stays on task, participates in class, cooperates with teacher instructions and expectations, obtains required parent signatures, copies assignments

accurately, completes them neatly and accurately, submits homework on time, and meets deadlines.

- **Conduct** represents the consistency with which the student cooperates with teachers, adults and peers. Students are viewed as cooperative when they include others, listen, practice patience, demonstrate a positive attitude, show respectfulness, interest, and enthusiasm in class, follow directions, keep on task, practice self-control and make a positive change in behavior if they are corrected.
- **Attendance** affects learning and socialization. Try to schedule routine medical visits for after school hours and free days or, if that is impossible, return your child to school as soon as possible. Hold your child responsible to obtain and make up whatever work was missed. Honor the published school calendar when planning vacation. If that is not possible, make arrangements to obtain and keep up with the daily school work. Vacation “out of time” on your part ought not to create responsibility on the teacher’s part. Apply the sage rule that if a child is too sick to attend school, he/she is also too sick to leave the house for any activity, have friends over, or use electronic forms of entertainment.

### **Parent-Teacher Conference**

Precede a conference with prayer and thoughtful planning. “Speak the truth in love,” that is, respectful, constructive conversation that is directed to improvement of an issue rather than a judgment about a person. Plan a clear, concise agenda. Communicate the agenda in writing before the meeting so that the teacher will be prepared to respond. Speak only for yourself; resist the temptation to represent others. At the conference, begin and end with encouragement – words that express appreciation for a particular, observable characteristic of the teacher. Assure the teacher of your continued support and confidentiality.

### **Holiday Gifting**

Teach your child to show appreciation for the teacher on the occasions of Christmas, Teacher’s Appreciation Day, teacher birthday or feastday, and at the end of the year. A homemade card or letter that conveys a sincere sentiment of gratitude is far more precious than any material object. If you do choose to give a material gift, be sure to have your child create a personal communication.

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