

How to Communicate with Your Child's Teacher and School

Children are more successful at school when their parents/guardians/family and teachers communicate with each other.

This communication can happen in writing, by phone, by email, or in person.

When you talk to your child's teacher, you help the teacher understand more about your child. The teacher can also help you understand how your child is doing at school.

This guide will tell you more about how your child's teacher and school will communicate with you, and how you can communicate with them.

If your child is in pre-primary

The early childhood educator (ECE) will phone or email you to introduce themselves and to give you their contact information (email and phone number). They will also ask how you want to be contacted. You can choose to have them call or email you. You can also tell them if you need an interpreter.

If your child is in grades primary to 12

When the school or teacher has information for you, they will usually send it to you in writing.

You may receive a newsletter, letter, or other papers (forms, permission slips, etc.). Information may also be shared by email or posted on the school website.

This information could be a general notice, information about a school event, or a permission form for you to sign, such as a form, so your child can go on a school trip.

Here are some ways you can make sure you don't miss any information from the school:

- Remind your child to give you any information the school sends home for you.
- Look in your child's school bag for letters or other notices from the school.
- Create a space in your home for school notices. Tell your child to put school notices in this space.
- Check your email account for messages from the school.
- Check the school's website for new information.
- Ask the school to call or email you when they have information.

If you need help

You can call or email one of the following:

- your child's teacher or ECE
- parent navigator
- English as Additional Language or French as an Additional Language teacher
- school counsellor
- school office
- SchoolsPlus staff
- YMCA School Settlement or YREACH staff
- Immigration Francophone staff

If you want to talk to the school or teacher/ECE

Sometimes you may have information you need to share with your child's school or teacher/ECE. Or you may have a question you need to ask. Here are the ways you can reach them:

- Phone the school or teacher/ECE. If you have to leave a message, be sure to say your full name, your phone number, your child's full name, and the best time for them to call you back.
- Email the school or teacher/ECE. Be sure to include your full name and your child's full name.

If you need help talking to the school or teacher/ECE

- Request an interpreter.
- Ask YMCA School Settlement/YREACH staff or Immigration Francophone staff to help you.

General meetings

Most pre-primaries and schools will hold a general event for parents and guardians at the beginning of the school year, or the start of a new semester in high school. The school may call this a "curriculum night," "meet the teacher night," or "open house."

At these events, you can meet the people at the school, such as your child's ECE or teacher, the school administration, and others. You can also learn about your child's school program, walk around the school, and get to know more about what goes on during the school day.

If you need to talk to your child's teacher or ECE about how your child is doing in school or concerns you have, email or phone the teacher/ECE to make an appointment.

Meetings with the ECE or teacher

If your child is in **pre-primary**, the ECE will make an appointment with you to talk about how your child is learning. This meeting may be held over the phone, through emails, or by virtual meeting (such as Zoom).

If your child is in grades **primary to 12**, you will be invited to a Parent-Teacher Meeting through phone, virtual meeting, or in person. These meetings happen twice a year. You can find the dates on the school calendar. Information, including how to book the appointment, will also be sent home with your child or emailed to you.

These meetings give you a chance to talk with your child's teacher. You can talk about your child's progress in school, your child's report card, and any concerns you or the teacher may have about how your child is doing, and what support your child may need.

How to prepare for the parent-teacher meeting

- Talk to your child before the meeting so you know what the child likes about school and what they find difficult.
- Think about the questions, concerns, or information you want to ask the teacher. Write these down so you don't forget.
- You can also ask for an interpreter if you do not speak English or French. Ask the YMCA School Settlement or YREACH staff, or Immigration Francophone staff. The school may also have someone on staff that speaks your language. Ask the school ahead of time for this help. You can also take your child with you.
- Arrive at the school 5 minutes before your meeting.
- Talk to your child after the meeting. Tell them about the good things that you and the teacher discussed, as well as any concerns you or the teacher had. Explain any plans you and the teacher made to address these concerns.
- After the meeting, stay in touch with your child's teacher, even when things are going well.

Here are some questions you may want to ask your child's teacher:

- How is my child adjusting to school?
- How is my child progressing in (name the subject)?
- Is my child getting extra support in any subjects?
- What kind of support is my child receiving?
- How can I help my child at home?
- How is my child getting along with other students?

PowerSchool Student-Parent Portal access

PowerSchool is a student information system that manages student information such as demographics, attendance, behaviour, achievements, and schedules electronically. Both students and parents/guardians can access information by logging into PowerSchool's Student-Parent Portal. Ask school administration at your child's school for a username and password.

The Student-Parent Portal will give you real-time information about your child's:

- attendance
- grades
- assignments
- teacher comments
- school notices

You can find more information about the portal in the "Students & Parents" section of our website: [Students & Parents | Education and Early Childhood Development \(ednet.ns.ca\)](https://www.ednet.ns.ca/Students-Parents).

Your information is kept confidential

Your child's teacher/ECE will not share information about your child's experience, schoolwork, or family situation with other families or community members. The teacher may consult with other school staff to ensure your child receives the best support. This will also be kept confidential. The teacher will ask you to sign a consent form if they have to go to an agency outside the school to get support for your child.

By law, teachers have a duty to report to community service partners, such as the police, in the following situations:

- if a child is in danger of hurting someone else or themselves
- if the teacher suspects or is aware that a child is being abused or neglected
- if the court orders the teacher to report
- if the child asks the teacher to report
- if the teacher is asked to report through the *Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act*

Contact information

For more information, contact your Regional Centre for Education (RCE) or Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP).

- [**Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education**](#) (AVRCE)
- [**Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education**](#) (CBVRCE)
- [**Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education**](#) (CCRCE)
- [**Conseil scolaire acadien provincial**](#) (CSAP)
- [**Halifax Regional Centre for Education**](#) (HRCE)
- [**South Shore Regional Centre for Education**](#) (SSRCE)
- [**Strait Regional Centre for Education**](#) (SRCE)
- [**Tri-County Regional Centre for Education**](#) (TCRCE)
- [**SchoolsPlus**](#) brings a range of services and supports, and is available in every school in Nova Scotia

For support in your community, contact:

- [**YMCA School Settlement**](#) – available in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM)
- [**YREACH**](#) – available province-wide (outside of HRM)
- [**Immigration Francophone**](#) – available through your School Settlement Worker