

# Understanding and Communicating with Today's Independent School Parent

Jane Keller – The Harker School

Joe Connolly – The Harker School

CAIS March 7, 2011

Jane Keller and Joe Connolly, The Harker School

# Understanding and Communicating with Today's Independent School Parent

## Introductions

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Parent Teacher Conference

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# Agenda

Understanding the independent school parent

Tips for success in communicating with parents

Partner Role Play – You be the teacher/parent – part 1  
Discussion

Partner Role Play – You be the teacher/parent – part 2  
Discussion

Role play for the whole group!  
Discussion

Questions and Answers

Feedback Forms

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# Understanding the parent

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# **Understanding the parent**

Realizing your role in the parent/teacher  
relationship

-You have the power

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## **Understanding the parent**

Appreciation for the parent's role in the relationship

-Parents are usually intimidated when meeting with school personnel

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# **Understanding the parent**

Expect the unexpected

-Give yourself time to think

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# Understanding the parent

## Gaining perspective

-“Spend a day in the NICU”

-“He’s my only child”

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# Understanding the parent

It's not personal . . .  
even when it IS personal.

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# Understanding the parent

Parents will defend their child . . .

every time

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# Tips for success

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## **Tips for success**

### Resist the Gossip

- Can lead to negativity
- The perception becomes the reality

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## **Tips for success**

Assumptions make an &%@ out of you  
and me

-Assumptions can torpedo the  
conversation before it beings

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## **Tips for success**

Use BIG chairs . . . sitting behind your desk establishes control

-Be equal in your desire to help the child

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## **Tips for success**

Understand the difference between  
questions and objections

-What grade did my child get on that test?

-I think you give too much homework.

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## **Tips for success**

Let the parent finish asking the question

-Be careful about interrupting

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## **Tips for success**

Use active listening

-Two ears and one mouth

-Mirror vs. Mimic

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## **Tips for success**

Be wary of the WHY question

-Somebody is trying to get control of the conversation.

## **Tips for success**

Be careful about being defensive

-Especially after getting a WHY question

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## **Tips for success**

“We catch more flies with honey . . .”

-Approach emails and phone calls with positive attitudes . . . Smile!

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## **Tips for success**

There is value of “How” we talk and deliver messages . . . with body language

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# Partner Role Play 1

Please pair up  
One parent, one teacher  
Defined roles  
Discuss after your role play

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# **Partner Role Play 1**

Whole group discussion

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## **Partner Role Play 2**

Please pair up  
One parent, one teacher  
Defined roles  
Discuss after your role play

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# **Partner Role Play 2**

Whole group discussion

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# **Partner Role Play 3**

Volunteers?

Role play for the whole group

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# **Partner Role Play 3**

Whole group discussion

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# Questions and Answers

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# Feedback

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